

**ROAD TRAFFIC (VEHICLES) AMENDMENT (OFFENSIVE ADVERTISING) ACT**

*Statement by Minister assisting the Minister for Transport*

**MR D.R. MICHAEL (Balcatta — Minister assisting the Minister for Transport)** [1.28 pm]: I today wish to update the house on the Road Traffic (Vehicles) Amendment (Offensive Advertising) Act 2023. This new legislation came into effect last week on 1 November, and it aligns Western Australia with other jurisdictions that have implemented similar legislation to prohibit offensive advertising on vehicles.

The act provides the Department of Transport with the power to cancel or suspend the licence of, or refuse to license, vehicles that display offensive advertising. This is a first for the Department of Transport, as prior legislation was concerned with the roadworthy condition of a vehicle, not with the artwork or slogans that may be displayed on a vehicle. During the development of this new legislation, Australia's advertising regulator, Ad Standards, provided examples of offensive advertising that was displayed on vehicles and had already been reported in other jurisdictions. The advertising included examples of discrimination and sexually explicit content, and even jokes making light of horrific crimes. Making it even worse, this form of advertising is portable, so it has the potential to be viewed by thousands of people on any given day, including young children.

I am pleased to say that these sorts of disgraceful messages on vehicles are now prohibited. Members of the public are encouraged to report the licence plate number of an offending vehicle and lodge a complaint through the Ad Standards website. The complaint will be assessed by the Ad Standards community panel against the Australian Association of National Advertisers' code of ethics. If the advertisement is found to be in breach, the advertiser will be given notice by Ad Standards to modify or remove the advertisement. If the advertiser fails to comply, the case will be referred to the Department of Transport for action. The Department of Transport will provide two opportunities to remove the offensive advertisement, provide evidence that it has been removed, and sign a declaration to notify the chief executive officer of the removal. Failure to comply will result in the chief executive officer cancelling the vehicle licence. The requirement to remove the offensive advertising will remain on the vehicle record even after the vehicle licence is cancelled. This will prevent a new licence being granted until the offensive advertising has been removed and the chief executive officer has been notified. This legislation sends a strong message to business owners or individuals who choose to display degrading content on their vehicles—just do not do it. The community deserves to feel safe while using Western Australian roads and not be subjected to crude slogans.

I thank the staff at the Department of Transport, the Minister for Transport and members of this and the other place for their support of this legislation, even those who made very colourful contributions, like the member for Landsdale. I am confident that the measures taken in this new legislation will remove offending vehicles from our roads and help make our community and state a safer place for all.