

MEDIA RELEASE

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Dametto stands up for 4WD owners

HINCHINBROOK MP Nick Dametto has called on the Department of Transport and Main Roads (TMR) to end the uncertainty over vehicle lift modifications in a bid to stop 4WD owners being unfairly targeted by police.

The Katter's Australian Party MP said he was extremely concerned by the ad-hoc "Operation Lift" on the Gold Coast earlier this month, which saw police stop more than 60 4WD vehicles and issue some motorists with defect notices for having a lift of greater than 50mm.

TMR quietly "clarified" its lift regulations for vehicles with Electronic Stability Control (ESC) from 75mm down to 50mm without notifying the wider 4WD community, including industry body, 4WD QLD.

That was despite a review currently underway into vehicle lift modification requirements by the State Government.

"This operation has completely blindsided law-abiding modified 4WD owners who were of the understanding they met the legal limit for vehicle lifts," Mr Dametto said.

"I respect the fact that police were only doing their job when it came to enforcing the law, but it's my understanding that TMR's updated vehicle lift modification guidelines were never conveyed to 4WD QLD or the wider 4WD community.

"That is incredibly unfair to motorists and it's obvious this whole situation has been poorly handled by TMR."

Mr Dametto feared a similar police operation could be conducted in North Queensland, which is home to thousands of modified 4WD owners who frequently use their vehicles to explore the great outdoors or to work on their farms.

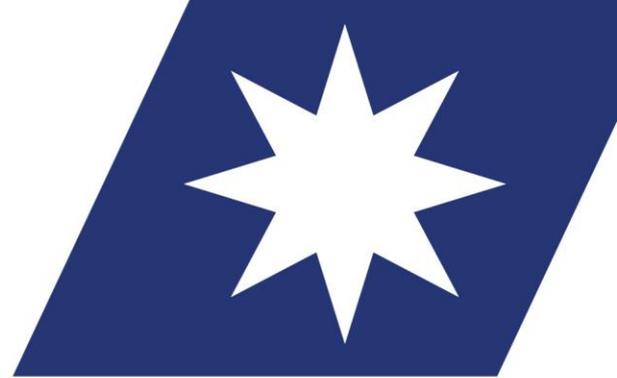
"The entire region, including my electorate of Hinchinbrook, is home to some of the best 4WD adventure trails in the country and I'd hate to see law-abiding motorists get caught up in this before the review is complete," he said.

4WD QLD president Shane Rose said while some 4WD owners were found to have deliberately made several illegal modifications, it was the everyday drivers who suffered the most during Operation Lift.

"Unfortunately, what was caught up in that were your mum and dad drivers with their basic 4WD vehicles with only a small lift and slightly larger tyres. But with this recent clarification of the rules, it now makes their vehicles illegal," he said.

NICK DAMETTO

Member for Hinchinbrook



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4WD QLD is calling on the State Government to align TMR's vehicle standards with NSW's Vehicle Safety Compliance Certification Scheme and a removal of the former Newman Government's unnecessary Type 2- "Illegal Modifications" section of the Anti-Hooning laws which unfairly target modified 4WD owners.

Mr Dametto will deliver a Question on Notice to Police Minister Mark Ryan in parliament this week calling for the Type 2 rule to be scrapped.

"Hopefully we can align ourselves with NSW and Victoria in regards to lifts for ESC-equipped 4WD vehicles," Mr Rose said.

A review is currently underway into vehicle lift modification requirements covered by the Queensland Code of Practice. It recommends increasing the maximum certified combined lift from 125mm to 150mm and the maximum certified lift by suspension from 50mm to 75mm for 4WDs.

TMR aims to introduce the changes next month but Mr Rose said there needed to be some guidance over rules for vehicle certification before any changes were introduced.

"They haven't clarified what tests owners need to have done on their vehicle to comply with the proposed new rules," he said.

Mr Dametto called on Main Roads Minister Mark Bailey to urgently explain how the proposed new rules would be implemented and give certainty to Queensland's 4WD community.

"Mr Bailey and TMR need to rectify this situation and avoid mass confusion like we saw on the Gold Coast with Operation Lift earlier this month," he said.

"Law-abiding motorists deserve nothing less."

—ENDS—

Photo caption:

4WD QLD President Shane Rose is calling on the Department of Transport and Main Roads to end the uncertainty over vehicle lift modification requirements.

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