

# Attorney-General's annual report on the infringements system

2009–10

DEPARTMENT  
OF JUSTICE

## INTRODUCTION

This annual report on Victoria's infringements system provides an overview of the infringements system for 2009–10 and outlines key trends since the commencement of the *Infringements Act 2006* (the Act) and the associated regulations and Guidelines in July 2006.

### Infringements Reporting

The *Infringements Act 2006* requires enforcement agencies to submit six-monthly reports to the Attorney-General. The statistics presented in this report are the sum total of the agencies' six-monthly snapshots of infringements-related action taken during 2009–10.

### Principles underpinning the system

An **infringement notice** is an administrative method for dealing with minor criminal offences, where the person alleged to have committed the offence has the option of paying a fixed penalty rather than having the matter decided in court.

For the State, the infringements system streamlines the resolution of minor offences, provides a direct and efficient response to minor breaches of the law and frees court time for more serious criminal matters. For the offender, enforcement by infringement notice provides an opportunity to 'expiate' the offence by paying the penalty, without incurring a conviction for the offence.

# **INFRINGEMENTS ADMINISTRATION**

## **Infringements Standing Advisory Committee**

One key means of engagement with a diverse range of stakeholders is the Infringements Standing Advisory Committee (ISAC), which is convened by the Department of Justice and comprises representatives of: Victoria Police, the Department of Transport, the Magistrates' Court, the Department of Planning and Community Development, the Federation of Community Legal Centres, the Financial and Consumer Rights Council, Youthlaw, the Homeless Person's Legal Clinic, the Infringements Court and VicRoads. Committee members act as representatives for their respective organisations.

ISAC meets on a quarterly basis to consider developments in infringements policy and practice. It provides an opportunity to canvass views from a wide spectrum of stakeholders.

## **Infringements System Oversight Unit**

The Infringements System Oversight Unit (ISOU) is a unit within the Department of Justice. The ISOU is responsible for:

- monitoring the operation of the infringements system and new infringements policy initiatives
- providing advice to the Attorney-General and government on infringements policy
- effecting necessary legislative instruments
- undertaking key system improvement projects
- promoting the objectives of the Act through providing information to stakeholders, including regular 'regional roadshows' aimed at improving communication with regional infringements system stakeholders
- assessing the appropriateness of offences for enforcement by infringement notice and advising on infringement penalty levels
- providing advice, as requested, to infringements system stakeholders on their rights and responsibilities.

# INFRINGEMENTS ISSUED: ANALYSIS AND TRENDS

## Infringements Issued by Agency Type

Over 120 enforcement agencies in Victoria are authorised to issue infringement notices. In 2009–10, those agencies issued **4.65** million infringement notices, slightly less than the 4.66 million infringements issued during 2008–09.

**Figure 1 Infringements Issued by Agency Type**

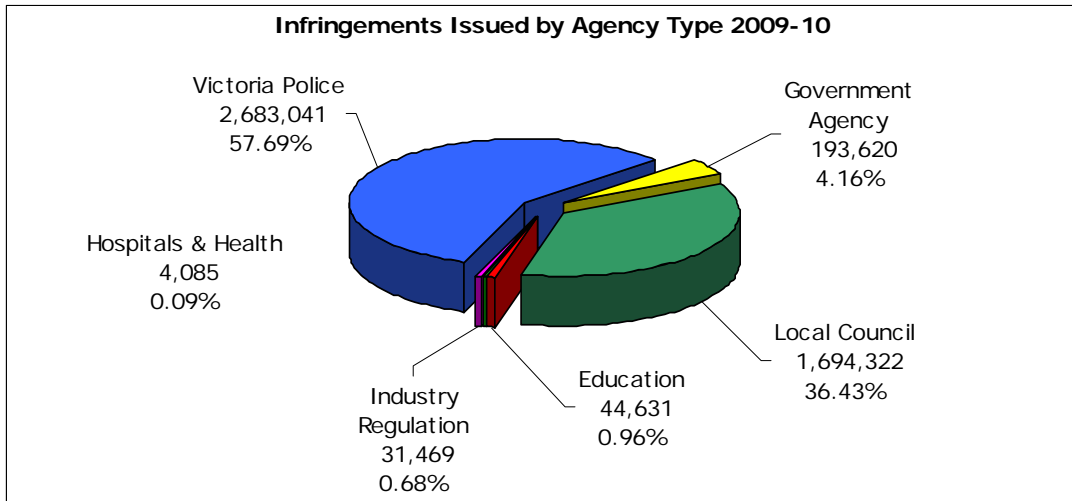
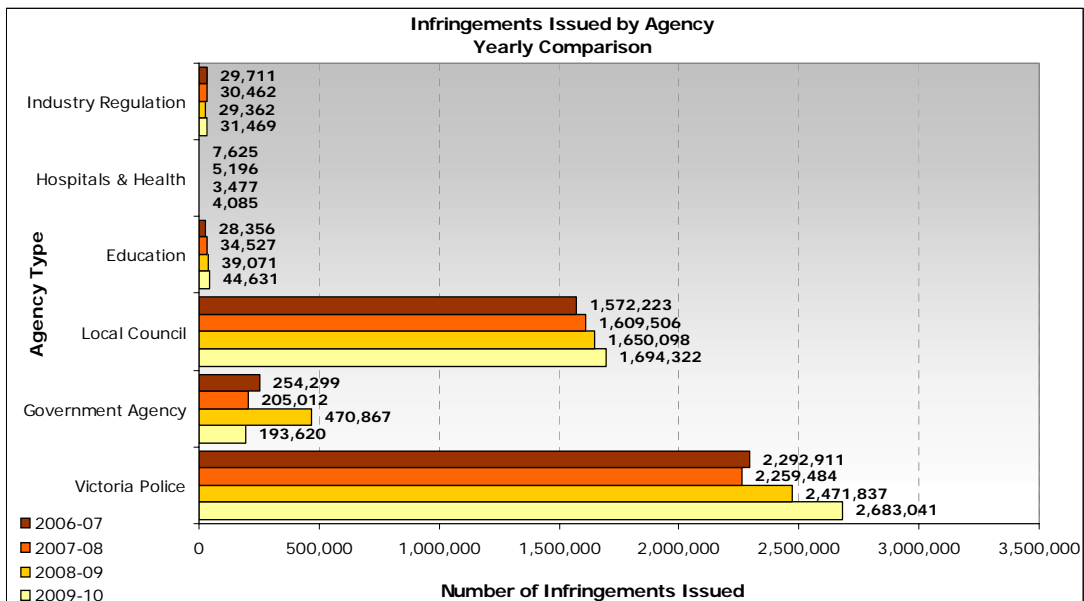


Figure 1 shows the number of infringements issued by each agency type. Victoria Police continues to issue the largest proportion of infringement notices (57.69 per cent), with local councils also issuing a substantial proportion (36.43 per cent). Victoria Police has the power to issue a wider range of infringements than any other enforcement agency. Similarly, local councils issue infringements under numerous pieces of legislation and have consistently issued over 35 per cent of infringement notices in each of the last four years.

**Figure 2 Infringements Issued by Agency – Yearly Comparison**



Most agency types have recorded an annual increase in the number of infringements issued in each of the four years since 2006.

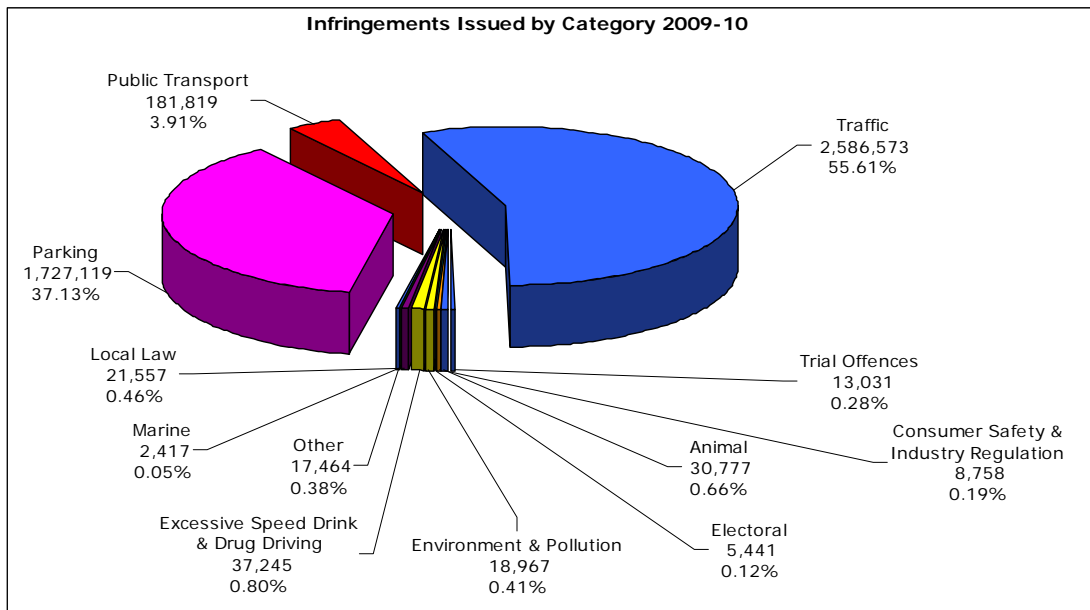
The only agency group to issue significantly less infringements in this financial year than they did in 2008–2009 was ‘Government agencies’. This reduction is attributable to the unusual increase recorded in 2008–2009, due to the large volume of fail to vote fines issued by the Victorian Electoral Commission.

### Infringements Issued by Type of Offence

As in previous years, traffic-related offences (speeding, red light offences, using a mobile phone while driving, parking offences, excessive speed / drink and drug driving) comprise the largest proportion of infringements issued in 2009–10. Since 2006–07, infringements for traffic-related offences have consistently made up around 90 per cent of all infringements issued.

Infringements for traffic-related offences are issued on-the-spot by Victoria Police and authorised officers from local councils, as well as by the Traffic Camera Office at Victoria Police following detection by road safety cameras.

**Figure 3 Infringements Issued by Category**



## **FINES AWARENESS: INFORMATION SERVICES**

The Department of Justice undertakes a range of activities and initiatives to increase public awareness of rights and responsibilities under the Act, as well as seeking to improve the infringements system and assist enforcement agencies to observe the policies and principles underpinning the system.

During 2009–10, some key initiatives included the re-design of the ‘Cameras Cut Crashes’ website, the redevelopment of the Victorian fines website, roadshows for enforcement agencies and a publication to assist workers who help people with infringements issues.

### **The ‘Cameras Cut Crashes’ Website**

This website can be found at [www.justice.vic.gov.au/camerascutcrashes](http://www.justice.vic.gov.au/camerascutcrashes).

During 2009–10, the ‘Cameras Cut Crashes’ website was significantly redeveloped. The updated site is designed to be user-friendly and interactive, and to promote key road safety messages and raise community awareness of the role that cameras play in road safety. New features and content on the site include:

- a searchable Google map making it easier for users to locate fixed road safety cameras and to download compliance certificates
- an interactive traffic safety quiz
- information on how cameras work, how locations are chosen, and how cameras are tested and maintained
- videos and images from Transport Accident Commission (TAC) speed campaigns
- a greater focus on research and evidence demonstrating the dangers of speeding and showing the effectiveness of speed enforcement

### **The ‘Fines’ Website**

The Victorian Government’s fines website was re-developed in 2009–2010 to provide more comprehensive information about the infringements system and a facility where people can log in and access their personal infringement details. The site also has an online payment facility. The redevelopment of the website makes it easier for Victorians to navigate the infringements system. The site can be found at [www.fines.vic.gov.au](http://www.fines.vic.gov.au).

## **Roadshows for enforcement agencies**

During 2006, the Department of Justice instigated its first “roadshows” for enforcement agencies, providing information sessions to enforcement agencies throughout Victoria. Since then, the roadshows have become an annual event. In the second half of 2009, the Department of Justice conducted thirteen sessions. The sessions focussed on information about processing and assessing internal review applications, dealing with financial hardship and payment plan issues and improving infringement data reporting. The sessions seek to enable enforcement agencies to engage directly with the department as well as with other enforcement agencies.

### **‘A workers' guide to fines’**

As part of seeking to ensure Victorians are aware of their rights and responsibilities under the infringements system, the Department of Justice worked with Victoria Legal Aid to prepare a new publication for workers who help people with infringement issues in Victoria. It explains what happens when a fine remains unpaid, and explains the options for dealing with the fine.

The booklet has information about:

- how the infringement system works
- options available to a person who disagrees with the fine
- the consequences if the person does not pay the fine
- where to get help.

A number of community sector and government agencies contributed knowledge to the creation of the booklets, indicating a broad commitment throughout the infringements system to provide accessible advice to members of the public. A workers’ guide to fines, and other Victoria Legal Aid publications, may be obtained from [www.legalaid.vic.gov.au](http://www.legalaid.vic.gov.au)

## **MAJOR INITIATIVES DURING 2009–10**

### **The 2010 Fee Waiver**

Victoria conducted a 7-week Fines Payment Incentive Program ('fee waiver') from 1 February to 19 March 2010. The fee waiver gave people the opportunity to have most of their existing fees waived by either paying their outstanding matters in full or by obtaining an order for instalment payments from the Infringements Court. Fees waived during the waiver period will remain waived provided that the person who enrolled in or complied with a payment order during the fee waiver continues to make the required payments under that order.

Victoria Police, all State government enforcement agencies and twenty local councils participated in the fee waiver. Together, these agencies accounted for approximately 95 per cent of all outstanding infringements issued in Victoria. At the commencement of the fee waiver, the Department of Justice sent over 523,000 letters to people with outstanding court orders and infringement warrants, notifying them of the fee waiver and encouraging them to take advantage of the waiver and clear outstanding matters.

To take advantage of the fee waiver, individuals were required to register their interest with Civic Compliance Victoria during the waiver period. There were more than 350,000 hits to the Victorian fines website, and more than 160,000 incoming calls made to Civic Compliance Victoria call centre during the fee waiver. Due to the volume of calls received, Civic Compliance Victoria undertook a "call back" process in the weeks following the fee waiver.

The fee waiver resulted in 128,628 defendants engaging with the system and dealt with 949,646 fines. At the end of 30 June 2010, over \$25.5 million in cash payments had been received and more than \$87.8million in outstanding fines came under a payment order for instalment payments. Fees valued at \$89.8 million had been waived and the fee waiver had resulted in people taking action to resolve outstanding fines of \$112.9 million.

### **The Infringements Trial**

Conventionally, infringement notices are issued for strict liability offences where the breach is readily detected, the offending behaviour is clearly defined, and enforcement does not require the issuing officer to judge or interpret the person's actions.

The 'Infringements Trial' is a three-year pilot project to enforce a number of common offences by infringement notice. The legislation underpinning the Trial commenced on 1 July 2008 and will sunset, unless extended, on 30 June 2011. The offences selected for the Trial are: shop theft of goods under \$600, wilful damage of up to \$500, careless driving, offensive behaviour, indecent language, failure by a drunk or disorderly person to leave licensed premises when asked to do so and offences relating to permitting, consuming or possessing liquor on unlicensed premises.

During the first two years of the Trial, approximately 21,000 infringements have been issued for Trial offences. Infringements for three offences – careless driving, offensive behaviour and shop theft – account for approximately 89 per cent of all infringements issued for Trial offences during that time.



## FAIRNESS

Fairness should be one of the key principles of an infringements system. Even though the infringements system is designed to manage a large volume of infringement matters, it nevertheless provides opportunities for the recipient to have the matter determined in court or reviewed by the issuing agency. These opportunities aim to provide a degree of flexibility, so that the individual's particular circumstances can be taken into account.

### Electing to go to court

The right to have the matter determined in court enables a person to bring evidence before the court, rather than have the offence dealt with as an infringement notice. For example, someone might elect to go to court where there are extenuating circumstances, new evidence or disagreements about evidence or any instance where the person prefers to raise matters before a magistrate or judicial registrar.

In the four years since the *Infringements Act 2006* commenced, the proportion of people electing to have their offence determined in open court has ranged between 0.5 percent and 0.7 per cent of all infringements issued.

In 2009–10, 32,806 people (0.7 per cent of those who received infringement notices) elected to go to court. By comparison, in 2008–09, 27,954 elected to have the infringement matter determined in court. This was approximately 0.6 per cent of all infringements issued during the 2008–09 financial year.

### Internal review

The right to internal review is set out in the *Infringements Act 2006*. The internal review process seeks to import a degree of flexibility into a largely automated system; so that individual circumstances can be taken into account in deciding whether to confirm or withdraw the infringement notice.

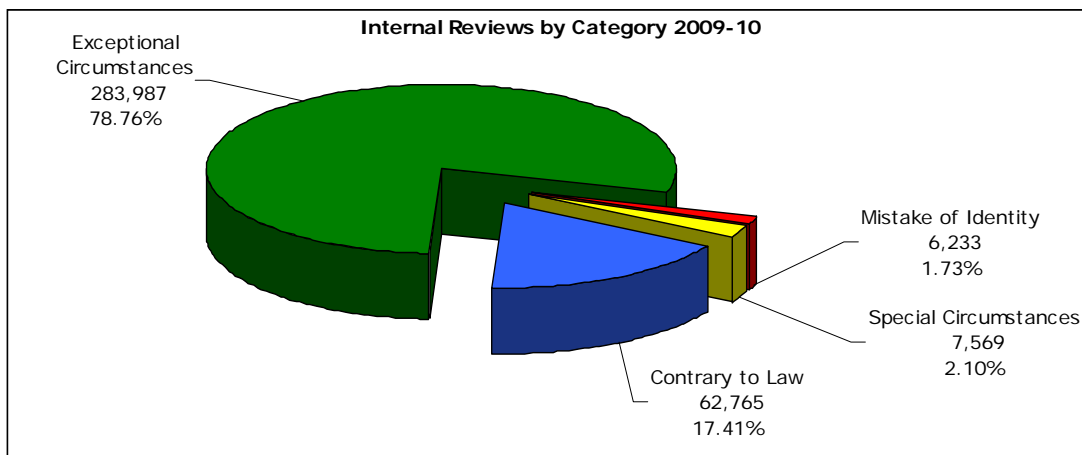
A person or someone acting on their behalf is entitled to apply for review of an infringement notice on any of the following grounds:

1. The infringement was issued contrary to law, or there was a mistake of identity in the infringement notice.
2. The person had special circumstances. These are defined in the Act to mean:
  - a. a mental or intellectual disability, disorder, disease or illness resulting in the person being unable to understand or control the conduct that constitutes the offence;
  - b. a serious addiction to drugs, alcohol or a volatile substance (eg: chroming) resulting in the person being unable to understand or control the conduct that constitutes the offence; or
  - c. homelessness, where this results in the person being unable to control the conduct that constitutes the offence.
3. There are other, 'exceptional' circumstances that justify withdrawing the infringement notice.

During 2009–10, enforcement agencies conducted 360,554 internal reviews. Since 2006, internal reviews have been conducted for 6-8 per cent of all infringement notices issued. In 2009–10, as in 2008–09, just under 8 per cent of all infringements issued were the subject of an internal review.

Figure 4 shows the percentage of internal review applications by each of the grounds ('categories') on which an internal review decision can be made. The exceptional circumstances category continues to represent the largest proportion of internal review applications. The reason for this is the other categories have specific criteria, whereas exceptional circumstances captures a broader range of circumstances.

**Figure 4 Internal Reviews by Category**



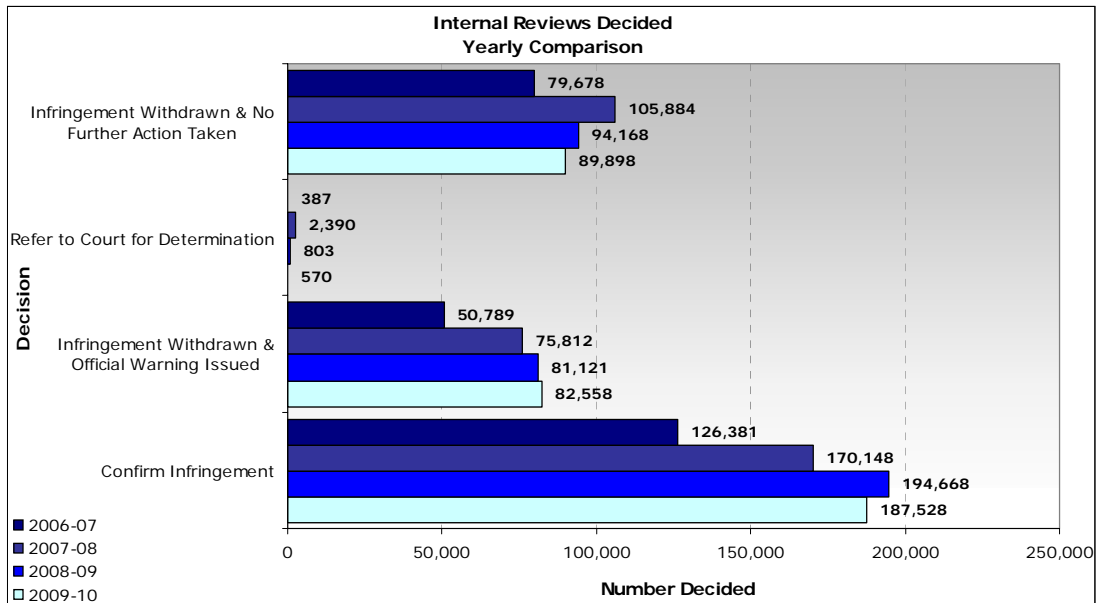
When an enforcement agency conducts an internal review of the decision to issue the infringement notice, it has several options under the Act. It may confirm the original decision, or decide to withdraw the infringement notice.

**Options available on an internal review:**

- **Confirm** – confirm the decision to issue the infringement notice
- **Special Circumstances/Referral to Court** – confirms the decision to issue the notice and refers the matter to Court
- **Withdraw** – withdraw the infringement notice and take no further action
- **Official warning** – withdraw the infringement notice and serve an official warning in its place

If the agency decides to withdraw the infringement notice, the agency has the option to issue an official warning. If the agency confirms a decision involving a claim of special circumstances, the agency must refer the matter to court.

**Figure 5 Internal Reviews Decided – Yearly Comparison**



While the overall number of internal review applications received in 2009–10 was slightly lower than in 2008–09, internal reviews have consistently comprised approximately 8 per cent of infringements issued during 2007–10.

**Figure 6 Internal Reviews Decided: Outcomes**

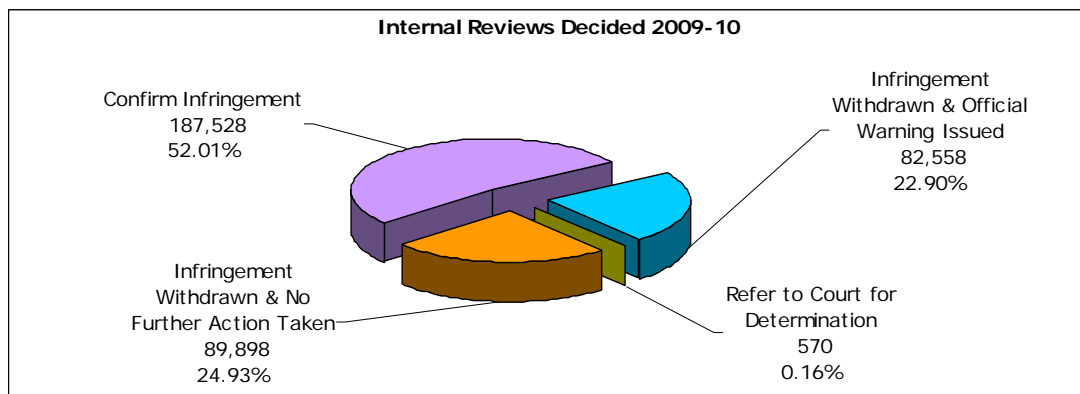


Figure 6 shows the outcomes of internal reviews decided by enforcement agencies during 2009–10. Approximately half the internal reviews decided (52.01 per cent) resulted in the infringement being confirmed. A further 570 matters (0.16 per cent) involving claims of special circumstances, were confirmed and referred to court for hearing and determination under s 17 of the Act.

This is very similar to 2008–9, when 53 per cent of internal reviews confirmed the infringement, 22 per cent withdrew the infringement and issued an official warning, 25 per cent of cases the infringement was withdrawn with no further action taken and less than 1 per cent were referred to court for determination.

## Enforcement orders

An enforcement agency may lodge an infringement penalty with the Infringements Court when a person has not paid a fine and has failed to take action in response to a penalty reminder notice. The Infringements Court will make an enforcement order requiring the person to pay the penalty and any associated costs.

If the order is not paid by the due date, an infringement warrant will be issued. This authorises the Sheriff to use the sanctions available under the *Infringements Act 2006* to enforce the penalty.

**Figure 7** Enforcement Orders Made



Figure 7 shows enforcement orders made between 2006 and 2010. In 2009–10, approximately 1,226,500 enforcement orders were made. This represents a slight increase on the number made in 2008–09. While there was an increase in the number of orders made from 2006–07 to 2007–08, the number appears to have reached a plateau between 2007 and 2010.

## Revocation of enforcement orders

A person against whom an enforcement order is made may apply to the Infringements Court for the order to be revoked. The person must state the grounds on which revocation is sought. If the infringements registrar is satisfied that there are sufficient grounds, the order will be revoked and parties notified of the decision. The infringement matter is then referred to open court for hearing, unless the enforcement agency elects not to prosecute. If the Infringements Court refuses the application and confirms the enforcement order, the applicant may, within the timeframes specified in the Act, request that the registrar refer the matter to open court.

Approximately 5 per cent of enforcement orders were revoked (64,580) in 2009–10, which is a very similar percentage to those revoked in earlier years. Between 2006 and 2010, approximately 4-5 per cent of enforcement orders made have been revoked following the consideration of applications for revocation.

As in previous years, the Infringements Court revoked the largest proportion (56,192 orders) with the Magistrates' Court subsequently revoking a further 8,388 on referral from the Infringements Court.

**Figure 8 Enforcement Orders Revoked**

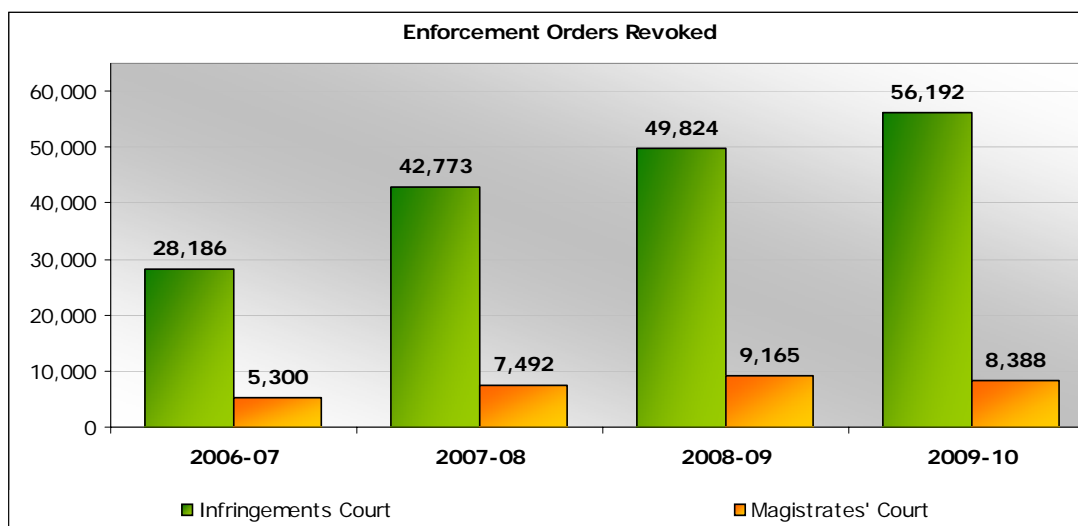


Figure 8 shows the number of enforcement orders revoked by the Infringements Court and the Magistrates' Court during the period 2006–2010. Consistent with its primary role in the revocations process, the Infringements Court has revoked the majority of enforcement orders and the number of enforcement orders revoked by the Infringements Court has increased each year. By contrast, the number of enforcement orders revoked by the Magistrates' Court decreased marginally between the financial years 2008–09 and 2009–10.

## Financial hardship

The *Infringements Act 2006* provides for a range of payment plan options at infringement stage to seek to accommodate people experiencing difficulty paying their fines.

## Payment plans

A payment plan can be an instalment payment plan, an extension of time, or a payment arrangement that incorporates both an extension of time and instalments. Extension of time payment plans tend to be the most commonly used option.

Payment plans may be managed by individual enforcement agencies or provided through a central facility. Payment plan activity has remained fairly consistent since 2006–07. As would be expected, given the volume of infringements issued, the agency with the largest number of payment plans is Victoria Police.

## Payment orders

A person who has an enforcement order made against them may apply to the Infringements Court for a payment order. A payment order is an order of the court allowing additional time for payment or payment by instalments. A payment order can be made by the Infringements Court any time prior to the Sheriff seizing goods or arresting a person under a warrant.

During 2009–10, the Infringements Court made over 221,600 payment orders, compared to 199,000 in 2008–09, and almost 160,000 in 2007–08. Instalment payment orders continue to comprise approximately 40 per cent of all payment orders in any financial year.

The higher number of payment orders commenced in 2009–10 reflects the impact of the fee waiver, which resulted in an increase in the number of people seeking to establish payment orders.

## **Community Work Permits**

When the Sheriff arrests a fine defaulter under an infringement warrant, the Sheriff may sign that person up to a Community Work Permit if the person does not have any goods that can be seized to satisfy the outstanding fine/s. This arrangement is similar to a Community Based Order in that it allows a person to undertake community work in lieu of payment of the fine at the rate of one hour per 0.2 penalty units owing.

The number of people commencing Community Work Permits has ranged between 1,000 to around 1,200 in recent years. In the 2009–10 financial year, 1,185 people commenced Community Work Permits compared with 1,239 in 2008–09 and 1,050 people in 2007–08. A Community Work Permit allows the person to undertake the work at intervals, better enabling people to complete the requirements of the Permit.

## **Special Circumstances**

The infringements system expressly includes recognition of special circumstances. The Act defines ‘special circumstances’ as mental or intellectual disabilities, disorders, diseases or illnesses, or serious addictions that result in a person being unable to understand or control their offending behaviour, or homelessness that results in the person being unable to control the offending conduct.

To seek to ensure that individual circumstances are considered and vulnerable people who are unable to control offending behaviour are diverted out of the infringements system, the Act provides a range of options where special circumstances may be taken into account:

- The issuing officer may apply discretion at the time the offence occurs in deciding whether to issue an infringement notice.
- Special circumstances are grounds for seeking an internal review by the issuing agency.
- An infringement matter involving a person with special circumstances may be referred to open court for determination.
- The Infringements Court may grant an application for revocation of an enforcement order on the grounds of special circumstances.
- Revocation matters involving special circumstances that are referred to Court under s 66 are heard in the Special Circumstances List at the Melbourne Magistrates’ Court.

## **Enforcement agency reviews based on special circumstances**

In 2009–10, there were approximately 7,570 internal review applications involving claims of special circumstances. As a percentage of internal review applications, this is similar to 2006–07 and 2007–08 (when there were 6,060 and 9,456 respectively). In 2008–09, there was a larger proportion of special circumstances internal review applications (16,150) compared to other years.

As in other years, special circumstances internal reviews continue to be a very small number of the total infringements issued (0.14 per cent in 2006–07, 0.23 per cent in 2007–08, 0.35 per cent in 2008–09 and 0.16 per cent in 2009–10).

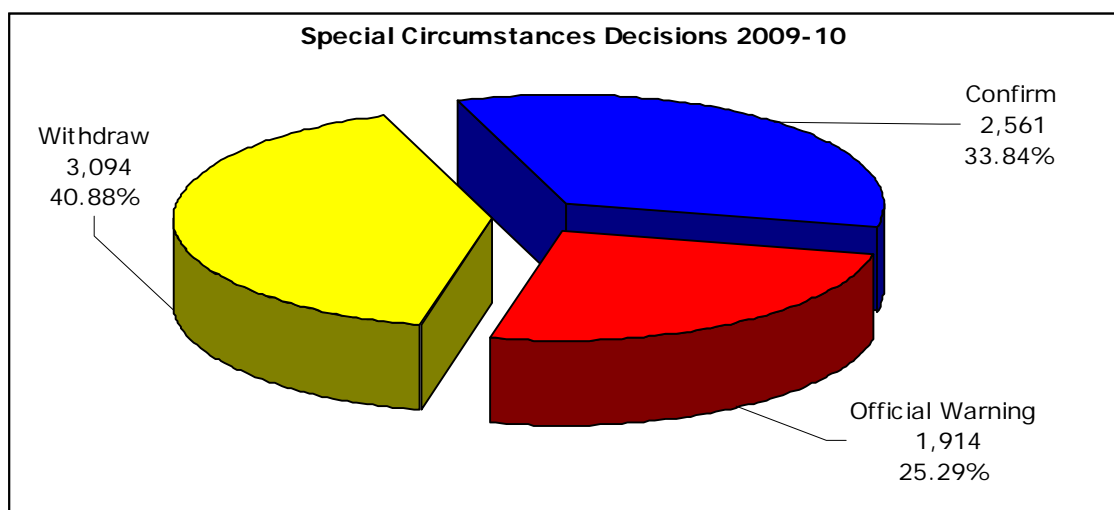
The outcome of a review on the basis of special circumstances may be that the infringement notice is withdrawn with no further action taken, the infringement notice is withdrawn and an official warning issued in its place, or the infringement notice is confirmed.

Unlike other internal reviews, if the enforcement agency confirms the infringement notice (that is, rejects the excuse or reason provided in the application for internal review), the agency must refer the matter to open court for determination. This allows individual assessment of the person’s often complex needs by a Magistrate.

Special circumstances internal review outcomes are shown in Figure 9 below. The number of infringements confirmed following a special circumstances internal review application decreased from 5,485 in 2008–09, to 2,561 in 2009–10. This number is broadly similar to the number recorded in 2006–07 (2,764) and 2007–08 (2,552). The percentage of infringements confirmed following a special circumstances internal review application has been just under 34 per cent in each of the last two financial years.

It should be noted that where an application for review has been made on the grounds of special circumstances and the agency confirms the notice, the agency **must** refer the matter to court. All special circumstances decisions in which the infringement is confirmed are automatically referred to court.

**Figure 9 Special Circumstances Decisions: Internal Reviews**





## Revocation on the grounds of special circumstances

There are no legislative requirements as to the grounds on which an application for revocation can be made or determined. The infringements registrar may revoke an order if satisfied that there are sufficient grounds for revocation.

Since 2006, when the Act formalised and expanded the provisions for the consideration of special circumstances, applications for revocation involving special circumstances have formed a significant proportion of the total.

**Figure 10 Special Circumstances Decisions: Enforcement Orders Revoked**

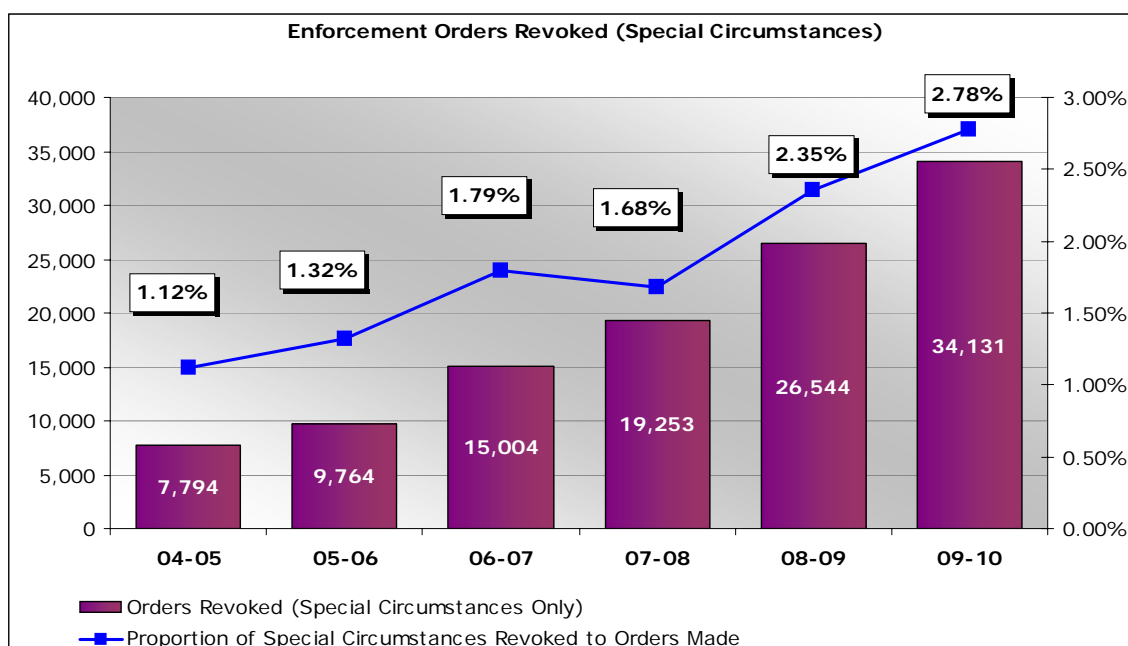


Figure 10 illustrates the trends in revocations based on special circumstances since 2004–05, prior to the commencement of the *Infringements Act 2006*. It shows that not only the volume, but also the proportion of special circumstances matters has risen since 2006, with a marked increase commencing in 2007–08.

The number of enforcement orders revoked on the grounds of special circumstances has shown an overall increase. In 2009–10 there were 34,131 enforcement orders revoked on the grounds of special circumstances. The number of special circumstances matters dealt with at revocation has more than doubled in the four years since the commencement of the Act.

## ENFORCEMENT OPTIONS

The majority of Victorians who receive infringement notices pay their penalties by the due date or upon receiving a penalty reminder notice. For those who ignore reminders and court enforcement orders, the *Infringements Act 2006* provides a uniform process for enforcement through sanctions.

### **Enforcement Orders and Infringement Warrants**

If an infringement notice remains unpaid, the relevant enforcement agency can lodge the infringement notice with the Infringements Court. The Infringements Court can then make an enforcement order requiring the person who received the infringement notice to pay to the Court the outstanding amount of the infringement penalty, as well as additional costs associated with the making of the order.

If the enforcement order remains unpaid, the Infringements Court may issue an infringement warrant, authorising the Sheriff to use enforcement sanctions to recover the outstanding amount.

The *Infringements Act 2006* provides for a range of enforcement sanctions, which have been gradually rolled out since the Act came into effect. Sanctions that the Sheriff may apply include wheel clamping, registration non-renewal, suspension of driver licences and vehicle registrations and Community Work Permits.

### **Suspension powers: Licence and registration sanctions**

Where a warrant has been issued against a fine defaulter, the *Infringements Act 2006* provides that the Sheriff may direct VicRoads to suspend the person's driver licence or vehicle registration unless or until the warrant is finalised. This is called a Notice of Intention to Suspend. Suspensions can be made seven days after the Sheriff has personally served a Notice of Intention to Suspend on the defaulter.

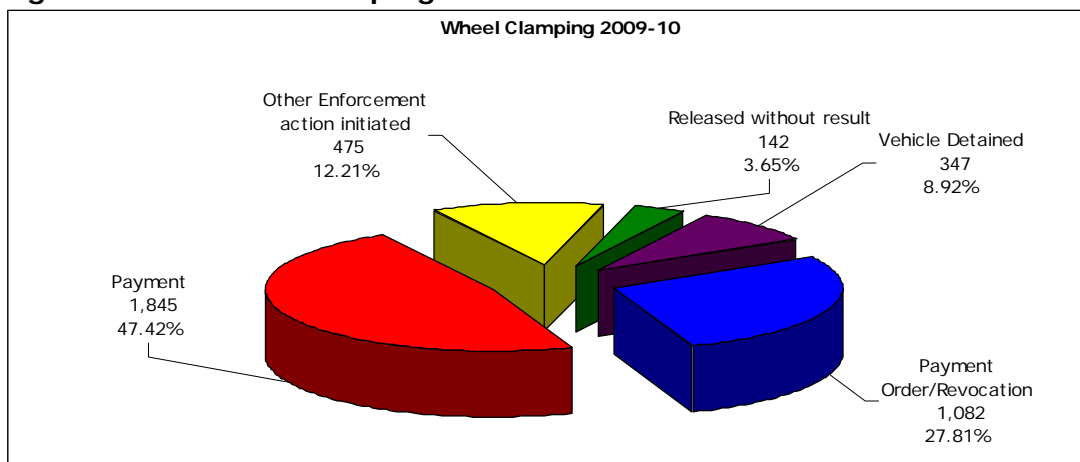
Notice of Intention to Suspend continues to be an effective sanction. During 2009–10, 3,468 people received a Notice of Intention to Suspend their driver licence, compared to 4,638 people during 2008–09. If the person clears their outstanding warrant within seven days, the sanction will not be applied and the person's driver licence or vehicle registration will not be suspended. In both 2009–10 and 2008–09, the mere notification of the intention to apply the sanction resulted in the person taking action to clear associated infringement warrants in around 70 per cent of cases, making actual suspension unnecessary.

For those people who did not clear their infringement warrant within seven days after the Sheriff had served a Notice of Intention to Suspend, VicRoads is then able to suspend the person's driver licence or vehicle registration. If a person's driver licence is suspended, the person may not lawfully drive a vehicle until the suspension is lifted. In 97 per cent of cases, the Notice of Intention to Suspend sanction process resulted in the person taking action to clear associated infringement warrants (either in response to the initial notice or following suspension of a driver licence or vehicle registration).

## Wheel Clamping

A person whose vehicle has been immobilised by a wheel clamp has a number of options to deal with their infringement warrant. They may, for example, pay the outstanding amount in full, apply for a payment order, or seek revocation of the enforcement order. Figure 11 illustrates the activity following a wheel clamp during 2009–10.

**Figure 11 Wheel Clamping**



In 2009–10, 3,670 motor vehicles were wheel clamped, an increase from 2,325 in 2008–09 and 2,138 in 2007–08. Infringement warrants issued against the registered operators of motor vehicles are valued at just under \$17million. In 2009–10, Sheriff’s officers applied wheel clamps to 3,670 vehicles, relating to 78,629 outstanding infringement warrants for approximately \$21million.

In 2007–08 and 2008–09, approximately 80 per cent of people who had their vehicle clamped took action to address their outstanding warrants. In 2009–10, this figure reached 90 per cent.

## Registration Non-Renewal

This sanction was introduced in July 2009 after a six-month trial in the first half of 2009 and has seen over \$8.1million worth of warrants cleared. Where an infringement warrant has been issued for one or more vehicle-related offences the Sheriff may direct VicRoads not to renew a person’s vehicle registration if that person has an outstanding infringement warrant. This also prevents the owner from selling the vehicle with its current registration.

Approximately 88 per cent of defendants who were unable to renew their registration as a result of this sanction had cleared their warrant (by paying the outstanding amount in full, entering into a payment plan or gaining revocation of the enforcement order) and 71 per cent of defendants had paid their warrant in full. After adjustments are made for irrecoverable matters, the percentage of cleared warrants is approximately 93 per cent. This figure excludes defendants whose warrant has expired since the sanction was applied, or those who had the sanction removed due to extenuating circumstances, such as the 2009 bushfires.

## **Tactical Investigations Unit**

A new initiative within the Department of Justice, the Tactical Investigations Unit (TIU) was established in June 2009 and now consists of seven dedicated Sheriff's Officers. Its focus is to pursue corporate and individual warrant holders with over \$5,000 in outstanding warrants, and any associated defendants (such as directors).

For the 2009–10 financial year, the TIU finalised 17,048 warrants to a value of \$4.7 million. Finalisation includes range of financial and non-financial options, such as obtaining revocation, Community Based Orders and in some cases, arrest. In 2009–10, there were 6,702 warrants finalised by payment in full, totalling \$2.1 million.