

# Three strikes and you're out

By Erin Williams

FIRST-time hoon drivers will have their vehicle impounded for five days longer under tough new anti-hoon legislation.

Second-time offenders will have their vehicle immobilised or impounded for 28 days, while offenders facing their third hoon-driving charge risk having their vehicle crushed.

Police Minister Bob Cameron said the government was taking a firm stance to show drivers that "if they can't learn to use their cars in a safe and responsible way, then we'll take it off them".

"Serial hoon drivers pose a serious threat to law-abiding road users," Mr Cameron said.

"Any car that is unfit for the road and fits the penalty criteria will be crushed, with others that are fit to drive sold and the proceeds directed towards victims of crime."

Police already have the power to crush vehicles, but under new laws, hoons' cars

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deemed unroadworthy or unsafe will be given to the State Emergency Service for training purposes before being destroyed.

Road Safe Central Highlands chairman Noel Perry welcomed the measures.

"It will discourage them from driving in such a manner. It's a strategy to address the problem we have with young drivers," Cr Perry said.

He said the new policy could have been considered earlier, given that hoon driving had increased across Ballarat, but an election was looming.

The proposed amendments will clarify and simplify issues relating to ownership and vehicles subject to finance, and will allow police to impound cars for a wider range of offences.

"As the car does not meet Victoria's strict resale safety

standards and is owned outright by the driver, it will be used by SES volunteers to practice their road rescue skills before being crushed," Mr Cameron said.

More than 11,300 cars have been impounded in the four years since anti-hoon legislation was introduced. Only two have been crushed.

Victoria Police Deputy Commissioner (Road Policing) Ken Lay said the new laws were about getting unsafe vehicles off the road and working to a higher standard of road safety across the state.

The most common makes of car impounded by Victoria Police are: Holden (46.3 per cent); Ford (16.7); Nissan (7.8); Toyota (5.1); and Honda (4.3).

St Albans, Werribee, Hoppers Crossing, Mildura, Shepparton, Frankston, Mill Park, Craigieburn, Meadow Heights and Reservoir made up the top 10 areas for hoons to live.



**WARNING:** Road Safe Central Highlands chairman Noel Perry has welcomed tougher punishments for hoon drivers, which could see repeat offenders lose their car to the crusher. Picture: Lachlan Bence

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## Debaters face off, minus the worm

HOT ON the heels of the federal leaders' debate comes the Royal South Street Debating Challenge 2010, which kicked off on Monday.

The challenge heats, at the Anglican Church Diocesan Centre, run until today, with semi-finals planned for August 16 and finals for August 23.

Topics under debate this year tackle some serious issues and some not-so-important ones.

Some of the big issues the students will agree to disagree on are: Are present policies on immigration too strict? Should offshore drilling be banned? And is gambling wrong and should it be banned?

Other topics, not as



**CHALLENGE:** Ballarat High School year 7/8 debating team members Miquaellia Haywood, Amy Marree Nuttall, Morgan Desilva and Carissah Cain-Sultana won their heat at the Royal South Street competition.

serious but still able to stir passions, are: Is Aussie rules football better than soccer? Should jeans be an acceptable form of dress

everywhere? And are comics the best part of a newspaper? Yesterday Ballarat High School's year 7/8 team won their debate

over the Loreto College's team 2 on whether computer games are a waste of time.

The four-girl squad argued for the affirmative, that the games are a waste of time.

Team member Carissah Cain-Sultana said what she and the other girls got out of debating was really beneficial.

"It gives you a lot of self-confidence and teaches you persistence," Carissah said.

"You get really nervous at the the start and you tell yourself you can do it and when it's over it is a great feeling."

## Free travel for train commuters

BALLARAT V/Line customers affected by Tuesday's train delays will be able to claim a free train ticket.

A power outage at 5am threw Southern Cross station into chaos, with all metropolitan and regional trains affected by the outage.

Three peak-hour trains from Wendouree arrived late in Melbourne.

Public Transport Minister Martin Pakula yesterday announced that passengers still holding a valid ticket from Tuesday will be eligible for a free daily ticket.

Claims need to be completed by Saturday, August 31, and must be accompanied by a valid ticket from Tuesday.

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