



# Sight impaired man told to 'write a letter' to resolve fine

## A VICTORIAN OMBUDSMAN ENQUIRY

A \$39 fine issued by Fines Victoria quickly snowballed into \$145 worth of penalty fees when a sight-impaired man suffering dyslexia was told to 'write a letter' if he wished to challenge his penalty.

"I loaned my car to my cousin and he parked in a loading zone," explained Richard.

"He got a fine for \$160.

"I had to go to court to fight it, but I thought 'I'm not going to do that, I'm just going to pay it myself.'"

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Richard entered into a payment arrangement with Fines Victoria and had been paying off the fine in instalments, unaware that he had missed his final payment.

Owing to late fees, Richard's unpaid \$39 final instalment ballooned out to \$184.

Richard called Fines Victoria and was advised that any complaint made had to be done in writing.

"I use to be an accountant, I'm use to writing letters," said Richard.

"I've got diabetes and am on dialysis three times a week and my eyesight has gone. I can't even read a newspaper without a magnifying glass.

"I can't write letters anymore."

Unable to escalate the matter internally without submitting a formal, written complaint, Richard reached out to the Victorian Ombudsman for help.

"It was just interesting that Fines Victoria had never encountered something like this before," he said

**"There must be a procedure in place. It's like not having a ramp in a building for people who need a wheelchair."**

A week after contacting the Ombudsman, the Department of Justice phoned Richard, advising him Fines Victoria hadn't followed correct protocol, and they should have directed Richard's call to the Justice Department for a resolution in the matter.

Richard was able to pay the final instalment of his fine, after the penalty fee was removed.

"I would happily cop it; the \$180 fine. But I'm the type of person who, when I see a wrong, I try to correct it.

"That's why I rang the Ombudsman."

