

Canberra legal community condemns Barr Government's unfair CTP scheme

The Presidents of the ACT Bar Association (Steve Whybrow) and the ACT Law Society (Chris Donohue) and the ACT Director of the Australian Lawyers Alliance (Jamie Ronald) today expressed their dismay and frustration that the ACT Government is continuing to push through its flawed CTP scheme.

The Government introduced the *Motor Accidents Injuries Bill 2019* into the Legislative Assembly yesterday. The Government chose not to consult with the ACT Bar Association, the Law Society, or the ALA about any of the amendments contained in this new Bill.

It is alarming that the Government seems to have the support of the ACT Greens on the basis of a few faux amendments that will do nothing to alleviate the unfair and unjust outcomes that will flow from the proposed scheme.

While the ACT Greens are to be commended for trying to negotiate a better outcome with the Barr Government, their negotiations have been for naught.

The amended Bill, like the original, provides no tangible benefits to the community and simply promotes the interests of large insurance companies.

Contrary to popular perception, ACT CTP premiums are not the most expensive in the country – they are in fact middle of the range. In return for those premiums, Canberrans have access to the most fair and balanced motor traffic compensation scheme in Australia.

If this legislation is passed, this Barr Government / Greens deal will slash the benefits and rights Canberrans currently have – all for a measly \$14 annual reduction in their insurance policy. When you add in the costs of creating and staffing a whole new division of the ACT Civil & Administrative Tribunal, and establishing a new bureaucracy to manage the scheme, it is likely there will be no net gain to Canberrans at all.

On top of all this, while struggling with an injury, Canberrans will be expected to try and take on the big insurance companies alone, without legal assistance. You can bet the insurers will have lawyers, so why does the Government think an injured accident victim should do without?

It is difficult to understand why the Barr Government is so obsessed with stripping away the rights of Canberrans simply to benefit large insurance companies.

Canberrans deserve better.

20 March 2019

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