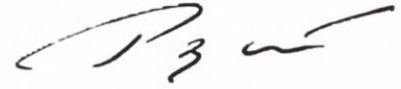


Each campaign has a cost. For those involved at the battlefield, the personal financial and emotional effort is enormous, often to the point of exhaustion. Although the task is largely thankless, the combatants have the satisfaction of knowing that those for whom we speak, enjoy

many rights they continue to take for granted only as a result of such efforts.

Our forthcoming conference will give each of us the opportunity to express our thanks to those who have contributed so much over the last year. It is appropriate that we honour these champions at that time.

Our conference is therefore also a time of celebration when we can through comradeship be thankful for our successes and be reminded of the enormity of our ongoing vocation.



Third-party rises

Compensation payout 'reforms' rejected

By Political Reporter
ANNABEL CRABB

MOTORISTS will incur a 3.1 per cent rise in compulsory third party premiums – or \$7 a vehicle for city motorists – under changes announced yesterday.

The rise comes on top of an 8 per cent increase introduced in the May State Budget.

The Treasurer, Mr Lucas, angrily blamed the Opposition Leader, Mr Rann, and the Australian Democrats State parliamentary leader, Mr Elliott, for the increase.

He said it was forced by their rejection of reforms to compensation payouts.

He refused to blame Independent No Pokies MLC Mr Nick Xenophon, who played an integral role in the dismantling of the reform bill.

Mr Xenophon is being wooed by the Government to rethink his position on the sale of ETSA. A deadlock conference between the Houses of Parlia-

THE NEW FEES

Metropolitan area	Rural area
Four-cylinder sedan was \$332, now \$339.50.	Four-cylinder sedan was \$259, now \$264.
Six-cylinder sedan was \$401, now \$407.50.	Six-cylinder sedan was \$328, \$333.
Panel van/light truck was \$430, now \$439.	Panel van/light truck was \$328, now \$333.

ment yesterday knocked out most of the Government's reforms, which included severe cutbacks to victims' eligibility for pain and suffering payouts.

Mr Lucas said planned savings to the Motor Accident Commission of \$17 million had been "gutted" by Labor and the Democrats.

"These actions by Mr Rann and Mr Elliott are disgraceful and vehicle owners will have to pay even higher CTP premiums not only this year but in future years," he said.

Registration fees for a car in

the metropolitan area will rise by \$7, while taxi drivers will be hit with a \$56 increase and heavy vehicle owners will pay \$19 more a year.

The Opposition police and emergency services spokesman, Mr Pat Conlon, said the Government was merely trying to deflect public anger over "slugging motorists yet again".

"The truth is this: what the Government tried to do was plunder compensation for people injured in motor vehicle accidents," he said.

The legislation had at-

tempted to extend, from seven days to six months, the period for which victims have to be incapacitated to claim pain and suffering compensation.

Under the agreement brokered in the deadlock conference yesterday, the period will remain at seven days – a triumph for plaintiff lawyers, who campaigned against the changes on the grounds that 83 per cent of claimants would be disqualified. An Australian Plaintiff Lawyers Association spokeswoman, Ms Angela Bentley, said she was "delighted to hear that the status quo on the impairment period will prevail".

Mr Xenophon now has moved to establish a parliamentary select committee to inquire into the MAC. "It seems that the MAC has been hijacked by bean counters where the important social and public policy role of CTP insurance has been marginalised," he told Parliament.