

SOLVED

WITH RED TAPE BUSTER SHANE BOWERING



Forget about 112 number in a crisis

Emergency

LAST week we covered the issue raised by Deb from Eatons Hill, regarding her rights if she is motioned to pull over in a remote or dark area by what seems to be an unmarked police car.

Several readers asked if they should ring Triple-0 in such an instance.

Several other readers forwarded me an email that is doing the rounds, suggesting that in situations like the one Deb posed you can ring 112 and get police to look into the issue of the "unmarked" vehicle.

It tells the tale of a woman in a similar circumstances, on a dark road, with an unmarked car trying to pull her over. She rings police on 112 – not our Triple-0 – to pass a message through their dispatcher to the unmarked car, saying she will pull over in a public area.

Ten minutes later, four marked cars with sirens blaring surround the unmarked car, whose driver turns out to be a convicted rapist.

A reader who sent it in said a printout of the email was given to his son with his payslip, so it's well and truly out there.

I have contacted the Queensland Police Service and have been advised that readers must call Triple-0 in emergencies where the person believes that they are faced with a life-threatening situation.

With respect to ringing 112, this is the internationally recognised emergency number and should only be used if you were overseas and not aware of the emergency number for that country.

In Australia, it won't work on some phones, such as landlines and CDMA's, and valuable time could be wasted trying.

In Australia our emergency number is Triple-0 – this is available no matter what phone you have.



WRONG NUMBER: The '112 emergency number' email gives misleading information

Tell council to prune tree

ROBERT from Kallangur has an interesting twist on our previous reports about trees.

He has a problem tree that is growing on council land, but overhangs his property.

Dropped leaves and branches make it a significant nuisance and Robert believes it poses a danger to his property and fence.

Can he remove the branches overhanging his property, cut the tree down totally or have the council prune the tree?

Advice from council and the Department of Justice has identified that Robert can generally cut the branches back to the fence line.

However, some issues like Tree Protection Orders need to

Fence lines

be considered and Robert should contact the council before he removes the limbs.

Under no circumstances can he cut the tree down, given that it is on council land.

Believe it or not, if Robert does cut the limbs back to the fence line, he must do so in line with Australian Standards available at www.standards.com.au

Robert, for peace of mind, contact the council and get them to do the pruning. It's their tree, after all.

Depending on if there is a Vegetation Protection Order in place, the council should be able to accommodate Robert's needs.

If the trimming of the tree was going to adversely affect the health of the tree, then I think Robert has a good case to ask the council to remove it.

He has the right to enjoy his property without the council's tree causing a nuisance and council should at least trim the tree back.

While I am sensitive to environmental issues, being a keen gardener myself and having studied horticulture, there are times where trees on council-owned land are not situated in the right position and pose a danger to residents or are an unsuitable species for the area.

In these instances, councils must protect the rights of their ratepayers and either trim or remove these trees.

Parking

HEATHER from Roma is one of many people confused over whether she is eligible for a disabled parking permit and how to get one.

The confusion is understandable. The rules and guidelines are hazy. Essentially your doctor holds the key.

A disabled driver must complete a disability parking scheme permit application, available from Queensland Transport or on www.transport.qld.gov.au at a one-off cost of \$11.60.

There are blue and red permits.

Blue permit drivers are entitled to free parking in metered or regulated parking areas and disability parking bays.

They can use disability bays in on-street and off-street parking areas, including shopping centres and hospital car parks.

Drivers must be totally dependent on a wheelchair or need to use a wide parking bay because of their reliance on mobility devices such as walking frames.

Permits are also available for carers transporting three or more people with a disability (in this instance the permit is issued to the person with the disability).

The application form must be accompanied by a certificate from a doctor or occupational therapist.

Red permit drivers must have severe mobility impairment and be unable to safely use public transport or have difficulty walking safely between normal parking facilities and, say, the shopping centre entry.

Visual impairment itself is not sufficient – and this is where many people are confused.

But the department takes into account other medical conditions.

Again, applicants must have a medical certificate to support the application.

Red permit drivers do not get free parking in metered parking areas.

The fine for making a fraudulent application can be up to \$4500.

Feedback

REVELATIONS of donations by developers to Gold Coast councillors in the 2004 elections are significant.

Local Government Minister Desley Boyle has referred allegations to the Crime and Misconduct Commission to investigate.

The Minister should look more widely at this issue and order an investigation into donations to all our councillors.

Strange things seem to occur in relation to development approvals by councils. I'm sure you can think of one in your area.

For the peace of

mind of all Queenslanders we must be sure that councillors are considering developments on their merits.

I'm not for a minute suggesting there has been wrongdoing at the Gold Coast.

But an independent investigation of all councils across the state will either confirm or disprove whether decisions are being made in the best interests of us all.

Come on, Minister – let's ensure that ratepayers can have confidence in the system.

GOT A PROBLEM?

Contact Red Tape Busters founder Shane Bowering at PO Box 93 Clontarf Beach Qld 4019 or shanebowering@redtapebusters.com.au

Advice offered in this column is general in nature and readers should obtain specific qualified advice from experts in the appropriate field in all circumstances.

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