

To Whom It May Concern.

I am writing to you to raise my concern at the new towing salvage charges that may be brought into effect in the coming months.

My first concern is the capping of Salvages charges to an Hourly Rate. As an operator of tow truck for the last eleven years, of which seven of these as a licenced smash operator, it seems to me that I am going to be penalised for my experience that I have acquired. A salvage procedure may take me 45min to an hour may take a new inexperienced operator extremely more, therefore under this proposed schedule they will be making more money than I will , which I believe hardly seems fair. In every salvage procedure that I have undertaken over the years, each and every one has had its own challenges and obstacles, so to apply set charges is almost impossible. It needs to be charged at a degree of difficulty. The amount of extra equipment used on the job, the number of time you need to re hook and reposition your truck & the conditions that you are faced with on a daily basis.

Secondly the scrapping of waiting time which under this proposal is all inclusive in the base fee is extremely unfair. In some instances we have to wait our turn for a job under the Allocation system that is in place, only to get to the location of our job to find that the Police aren't ready for us to move the vehicle at this time. If we leave the scene they will re allocate our job and we miss out. Therefore we **have** to sit there and wait. It is not uncommon at a fatal accident to be waiting a couple of hours and of course this now is included in our base fee – we are again disadvantaged. If you call any other trades person out to a job only to tell him he can't start doing his assigned job, he is going to charge you from the time he arrived, why are Tow Operators treated so differently to any other Tradesperson – I start to honestly believe that there is no respect from Tow Operators, and let's face it, we are needed - who would be clearing your roads.

My concern is, that if these changes are brought into effect that a lot of experienced drivers will leave the industry and move onto something else, leaving the door open to people that are not suited to this job and causing the Towing Industry to head down the same path as the Taxi Industry. Accident Allocation System was brought into effect to clean up the Industry let's not take it back to where it was 25-30 years ago.

I look forward to receiving any correspondence to this matter and hopefully someone will realise that these changes are not for the better of the General Public, Tow Operators or the Proprietors of the Towing Depots. Maybe the Insurance Companies might rub their hands together, but again let them walk in our shoes before they start complaining about charges. I take photos of all salvaged accident scenes I attend (a requirement in my place of work) if I can't justify it I can't charge it, and let me tell you I have never been asked for a photo to be forwarded to an Insurance Company – and yes you tell us that along with all the other work we do the time to locate, download and email these photos, if requested, are also included in our base fee. It seems our base fee has a terrible lot of attachments to it.

Smashes on our roads – Examples of Salvage involved in securing Accident Related Vehicles

- I understand there are quite a lot of photos attached, but I ask you take the time, to look at them before making judgement on our Salvage Rates. Keep in mind that every accident attended is totally different. Our salvage is currently based on degree of difficulty and every charge is backed up with photos and you can see. Please don't make judgement on an average costs from tow invoices obtained. Every area, every accident is so incredibly different, every person that we have to deal with has a different attitude to the events that have occurred. There are so many aspects of attending an accident.
- The time, be it in the middle of the day or in the middle of a rainy night
- The weather – rain, hail, flood or shine
- The Location
- The impact
- The Persons involved, their stress/anger levels
- The Knowledge of the allocation systems – all involved.
- The degree of difficulty etc. etc.
- We believe that we are entitled to so much more respect than we receive, even from fellow Emergency Workers.
- I am passionate about my job, but it is getting harder & harder each & everyday, dealing with the Public & Law enforcers that do not understand the Accident Allocation System - More education is needed all round.

Final thought

Work is carried out to the best of my ability and with all knowledge and most importantly my safety as a concern, people keep in mind that every day I'm out on the road, I don't know if I'm going to get side swiped by another car or some equipment breaks and possibly injuring me.

Even with police or CFA on scene people do not care about what my job involves, but to us Accident Towing drivers, our job is just as, if not as important than any other Emergency Services - why??? Because without our quick attendance and work experience that we have obtained (keep in mind that every accident scene we attend is totally different in all ways) we have these accident scenes cleared with as much delay as possible, we free the roads for the public. So yes I'm just as important as everyone else out there

In a large amount of accidents attended, car parts are being either torn off by impact or cut off by CFA to free trapped persons, I have to load these large parts back into the vehicle or onto the tilt., deal with hazardous waste, acid from batteries, sharps, blood (mind you, all care is taken but we are still subject to these) and we are constantly reminded that it is our job to clean up the mess, although we do see the new Police ads - "We're sick of Cleaning Up your Mess - keep in mind we do a lot of that too! but my job title and therefore in most cases you're on your own to clean/clear it up.

In lots of cases there is always the threat that onlookers are not paying attention, trying to photograph the accident scene, not looking ahead etc. and putting my life at risk. This is usually the problem when it is not a straight forward pick up, or drive on smash, when the car has to be salvaged on to the tilt, position of the truck taking up lanes, me getting underneath the car while other cars are driving past me while I'm not looking at traffic and concentrating, the possibility of a driver driving into me because he or she is looking the other way. We are not assisted by Police at every accident we attend to. They may have been called away before we have salvaged the vehicle, so we are left there unassisted with traffic driving around us. Every minute I'm on the road it is important to, and some body is trying to put a price on it and hour terms.

Finishing up, we are a small group of people that carry out a service to the General Public that not many people are prepared to deal with, and the fact that it is not always that easy to obtain a Smash Licence. It can be a dangerous job but somebody has to clean up the mess!!!! And it a lot of the cases it is us Towing Operators who actually are literally cleaning up the Mess! Without a lot of respect from others. Be it the public, Police officers, essential services and the Government if they think that we will continue to put ourselves at risk for around \$66 per hour when it could quite easily be turned around and we find ourselves severely injured



I expect that you may find some of these photos confronting but please take the time to run the slide show and see just what Salvage is entailed at the Accident Scenes that I & my fellow drivers attend, before you make judgement on setting an hourly salvage rate. I find it extremely unfair that a judgement can be set by looking at an average figure on some tow dockets/invoice obtained. I truly believe that we have currently worked on a "Degree of Difficulty" with photos always taken by us to justify our charges. I thank you for your time and await your decision. I would be more than happy to discuss this with you at any time.



As you can see from the Photos above salvage of accident related vehicles can be extremely difficult and this is why currently we base our salvage rate at a degree of difficulty'.

The majority of accidents that we attend are in a rural area. Most, if not all are at 90km to 100km high impact accident.

Salvage descriptions

- Vehicle can be from 5m to 300m off the road
- Vehicles can be in & over storm drains that vary from a depth of 1m to 8m, on their roof, side, wheels missing & with major damage. Also cut apart for rescue, thus leaving behind large car parts for us to manually handle.
- Imbedded in and wrapped around trees from 2m to 50m from roadside
- Through barbwire, timber, tin and concrete fences. (including fencing wire which becomes entangled in & around the vehicles running gear. Can be sliced into, jammed into and wrapped under the vehicles.
- Finding vehicles, boards & builders trailers in paddocks that have rolled numerous times, spreading their contents over a wide area & some of these items can be over 25kgs in weight.
- Impaled on & sitting on top; of tree stumps, sign posts, fence posts, fallen trees, railway tracks & SEC poles
- Cars torn into multiple pieces or cut into multiple pieces for rescue
- Cars in water from 1ft to 2m deep - which drivers have to wade into to hook up the vehicle. These waters become contaminated with all toxic fluids from the vehicle. ie. Battery acid, oils, fuel etc.
- Retrieving vehicles from the side of cliff faces, this is quite dangerous & requires abseiling down to the vehicle using your winch cable - one slip - and who know what situation we find ourselves in.
- Collection of all the parts & pieces to an aircraft that has fallen from the sky and has strewn parts over a vast area.

There is not always a lot of room to manoeuvre our tray trucks around for easy loading as most of the roads in our area are single carriage ways with high embankments or deep storm drains. A lot of side pulls & re-hooks & repositioning of the truck is required

The DANGERS in this line of work are a vast variety. Not only do you have to worry about leaking fuel, leaking gases, ignition points from damaged wiring earthing out, to battery acid burning your skin. Bio hazards spattered all over the vehicles in small & large quantities from injured persons. Sharps left in vehicles and BEST of all a passing vehicle thinking it funny when they attempt to come as close as they can possibly get to you in there vehicle while your trying to hook up an accident damaged car, FUNNY for them maybe, but we're not impressed. We do this job because yes we choose to and it makes a living to provide for our families, but at what risk? It's certainly getting harder & tougher out there all the time.

Winter time we are on our knees in mud & slesh hooking on chains & winch cables surrounded by the odd rat in the pitch black of darkness, as in a lot of the areas we attend there are no street or city lighting out here. In the Summer time it's trying to avoid kneeling on a snake - Have any of you ever stopped to think about our work conditions when you make your judgement on the pricing you set for us to do our Job?

Do we get offered counselling after attending a fatality? No we are just here to clean up everyone else's mess. We also deal with the grieving families that have lost loved ones, we deal with the persons that don't have the money to pay for the job we've just done, be it large or small. If you have read my notes at Slide # 82 I would be more than happy to have some feed back on how you expect us to deal with this.



This vehicle is currently still sitting in our storage shed, NO INSURANCE, NO MONEY, SO YOU GUESSED RIGHT - NO PAYMENT STILL NOW (3 Feb. 2012) - WE HAVE MADE SEVERAL TELEPHONE CALLS TO THE OWNER (ALL COSTING US TIME & MONEY) AND HE STILL BELIEVES TAC WILL BE PAYING US - HE BELIEVES WE ARE SHAFING HIM (his words).