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Call to revoke unlawfully issued COVID-fines

Redfern Legal Centre is calling on the NSW Government to revoke all COVID-19 fines that have been issued incorrectly by NSW Police to those undertaking lawful recreation.

Redfern Legal Centre is assisting a number of clients who have been issued a \$1,000 and \$3,000 COVID-19 fine for sitting in a park, away from others, not gathering and not in an Area of Concern.

Samantha Lee, solicitor with the police accountability practice at Redfern Legal Centre states, “The public health order allows for people in Greater Sydney and New South Wales, except for the areas of concern, to undertake recreation with one other person or with members of the same household.

“If police have issued a fine to someone just because they were sitting and not breaching the COVID rules, then that fine should be dismissed.

“We are concerned that the cases we are seeing are just the tip of the iceberg, and that many more people may have been fined by police when they were not doing anything wrong,” Ms Lee said.

The NSW Government website clearly states that the law does allow people to sit for relaxation, or to eat, drink or read outdoors.¹

“The actions of police should be accountable and transparent. Police are a government body and their actions should be reviewable. Accountability and transparency help to build trust in police and the process,” Ms Lee said.

Redfern Legal Centre is calling for better training of NSW Police and the legal issuing of COVID fines, and for the release of any NSW Police guidelines or Standard Operating Procedures to do with implementation of the public health law.

Samantha Lee, RLC Police Accountability Solicitor is available for interview. Contact Finn O’Keefe, RLC Communications Manager: 0424 548 019 | finn@rlc.org.au.

¹ <https://www.nsw.gov.au/covid-19/rules/changes#sport-recreation-and-entertainment>