



# NORTHERN TERRITORY GOVERNMENT MEDIA RELEASE

10 September 2003

**DR PETER TOYNE MLA**

Minister for Justice

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## **CONSUMERS IN GROUND-BREAKING BIG WIN**

Twelve Territorians, who claim they were owed money by a car dealer who fled overseas, were today reunited with their money by Minister for Justice, Dr Peter Toyne, following the first ever court action of this type undertaken by the Office of Consumer Affairs.

Collectively, the twelve Territorians claim that Paul Reid's World of Wheels owed them approximately \$85,000 for the sale of vehicles placed on consignment with the business or for vehicles sold, requiring repairs under warranty.

Dr Toyne said the action taken to place a Mareva Injunction on the sale of Mr Reid's property by Government through the Office of Consumer Affairs had been successful and resulted in all consumers getting their money back.

"This is a big win for consumers and sends a clear message to all traders that the Office of Consumer Affairs will take action in cases where traders have acted dishonestly."

"This outcome represents the first time ever the Territory Government and the Office of Consumer Affairs have taken court action of this type against a business for breaches of the *Consumer Affairs and Fair Trading Act*."

"The support and actions undertaken by the Office of Consumer Affairs have been welcomed by all consumers involved in these unfortunate and costly transactions."

"It is very pleasing to see such a positive outcome for all the consumers who sought assistance from the Commissioner.," Dr Toyne said.

Mr Reid left Darwin last year for Canada after leaving his business in the hands of a manager.

The Office of Consumer Affairs became concerned about the activities of the dealership. The Office moved to revoke Mr Reid's motor vehicle dealer's licence in October and sought contact from consumers who had complaints against the business.

Acting in the interests of consumers unable to take individual legal actions, the Office of Consumer Affairs obtained a Mareva Injunction from the Supreme Court preventing the sale of Mr Reid's Stuart Highway property.

Following negotiations, a Deed of Release was executed allowing the sale of the property subject to the outstanding monies being paid to consumers via the Commissioner for Consumer Affairs.

**Dr Toyne met two of the consumers today in a cheque handing-over ceremony at the site of the former World of Wheels, Stuart Highway Berrimah. - Ms Pavlina Henwood received \$35,000 and Ms Jacqueline Taheny received \$3,037.75.**

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