

ROAD SAFETY — MOTORCYCLE CRASHES

181. MR N.W. MORTON to the Minister for Road Safety:

I refer to the media commentary about the recent motorcycle crashes in Perth. Can the minister outline the underlying factors contributing to these crashes and what the Liberal–National government is doing to address this issue?

Mrs L.M. HARVEY replied:

I thank the member for the question and for his interest in reducing the incidence of motorcycle fatalities in Western Australia. This is a serious issue. Over the past 16 months, from 1 January 2012 to April 2013, there have been 30 fatal motorcycle crashes in Western Australia. There is a misconception that these motorcycle fatalities are caused by the inattention of other motorists on the road. The police investigated each one of those 30 crashes and the results were quite astonishing. Seventy-six per cent of those crashes were caused by the rider. The investigation of these fatal crashes also showed a very disturbing level of risk being taken by motorcycle riders. When the drug and alcohol factors in those crashes were known, it was shown that over 65 per cent of those motorists had drug or alcohol levels that were over the legal limit or would have affected their ability to control their motorcycle. It was also disappointing to discover that one-third of those riders did not have an authority to drive a motorcycle; they were unlicensed. In addition, 87 per cent of the fatalities had prior traffic records for speeding, dangerous driving, drink-driving or careless driving.

My message to people who are considering riding motorcycles is: do not take additional risks. Motorcycle riders are already vulnerable road users. They do not have the benefit of airbags, restraints or crumple zones. When drugs, alcohol and speed are added into the mix, they are putting themselves at a much higher risk of becoming one of our tragic road fatalities. WA Police will be targeting motorcycle riders. Our message to motorcycle riders is: if they take these risks, they can expect some additional attention from police over the coming months. In addition to this, to try to address and reduce the incidence of motorcycle fatalities and serious injuries in Western Australia, I have written to the chairman of the Road Safety Council. I have asked the Road Safety Council to seek advice on what we as a government can do to try to reduce the number of fatalities of motorcycle riders. Due to this government's hypothecation of 100 per cent of speed and red-light traffic infringement penalties to the road trauma trust account, the government has the capacity to take the necessary action as recommended by the Road Safety Council when that is brought to my attention.