

ALCOHOL INTERLOCK SCHEME

21. Mr F.A. ALBAN to the Minister for Police:

The Road Traffic Amendment (Alcohol Interlocks and Other Matters) Bill 2014 passed through the Legislative Council last night. Can the minister please advise the house of the necessary steps to put the alcohol interlock scheme in place?

Mrs L.M. HARVEY replied:

I thank the member for Swan Hills for this question and his ongoing interest in road safety matters. It was indeed a very big day in Western Australia when this legislation passed through the Legislative Council last night, which will allow us to introduce an alcohol interlock scheme as part of our repeat drink-driver strategy in Western Australia. Members are probably aware of the shocking statistics around alcohol-related fatal crashes. Alcohol is a factor in 25 per cent of fatal crashes in this state, and one in 10 of our serious-injury crashes involve alcohol. The cohort of people who fall into the remit of our repeat drink-driver scheme are obviously the people we need to target if we are to drive down road trauma in Western Australia. Having had this legislation passed, the next step is to work on the regulations. We will start working with the companies that will provide the interlock devices right across the length and breadth of the state. We believe we can cover 90 per cent of the state with our alcohol interlock program. We must also make sure that some quality assurance is in place.

The key part of this program that needs some front-end work is that all the offenders who have been convicted of an alcohol or drug offence and fit the profile for this program will need to undergo a medical examination, a liver function test and an assessment of their awareness of the road rules by undergoing a theory and a practical test before they can have their licence reissued after serving their period of suspension. After a period of suspension is served following a conviction for an alcohol-related offence, the licence is reissued with an alcohol interlock condition. A monitoring system will be in place and those offenders who are part of the scheme will need to report to one of the service providers who will download the data each month. If those offenders make two or more attempts to start their motor vehicle when they have an over-the-limit alcohol reading, they will be compelled to undergo a six-session alcohol counselling course to get them to understand the danger of their behaviour and put in place strategies to help break their drink-driving cycle.

I am very excited about this program. Alcohol interlocks are proven to reduce recidivism for repeat drink-drivers by 64 per cent. This is a key part of our repeat drink-driver strategy. The member for Swan Hills is probably aware that this was first proposed in Western Australia in 2004.

The SPEAKER: Can the minister please wind this up, please?

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: To be able to get this legislation through Parliament in the short space of time from when I started to drive the program is a significant achievement.