

DRINK-DRIVING PENALTIES

487. Mr F.A. ALBAN to the Minister for Road Safety:

I refer to comments made by the member for Midland regarding drink-driving laws on Channel 10 news on 29 August 2012. What penalties has the Liberal–National government put in place to ensure that those caught driving under the influence are treated differently from other drivers?

Mrs L.M. HARVEY replied:

I thank the member for Swan Hills for the question and for his interest in road safety matters and, indeed, for his interest in ensuring that the community of this state is well informed about the drink-driving regime that has been introduced by the Liberal–National government. To update members of the house on the member for Midland's comments a few weeks ago in response to an aggravated dangerous driving causing death charge, she said —

I don't think they should just be able to pick up driving where they left off. There should be a different regime. They should be kept to a zero-alcohol limit. They shouldn't even be having the first drink.

The member was talking about those people convicted of drink-driving offences and how unfair it is that, after the period of suspension is served, they are able to recommence driving as though the offence never occurred. The member for Swan Hills and other members of the house might be interested to know that the government also thought that that is unfair. The member for Hillarys brought legislation to this house a while ago that came into effect on 1 October 2011, which was a full year ago. Members would be interested to know that as of 1 October 2011, recently disqualified drivers are subject to a zero blood-alcohol concentration limit for three years. We thought they should be subject to a stronger regime so we introduced a stronger regime, which has, in fact, been in effect since 1 October 2011. Recently disqualified drivers who have been convicted of DUI or a second .08 offence have had their licences suspended. When that period of disqualification finishes, member for Midland, they do in fact have a three-year period during which they have to have a zero blood-alcohol concentration level. I am answering the member for Midland's statement of two weeks ago. Bear in mind that I gave the member for Midland two weeks to correct the record, but she failed to do so, so I am correcting it now so that the community of Western Australia understands the ramifications if people choose to get behind the wheel of a motor vehicle and drive when they have had too much to drink. Mr Speaker, with your permission I will table for members' interest a fact sheet about the drink-driving penalties in Western Australia, which came into effect over a year ago and which are also available online. All members should acquaint themselves with the rules and regulations of the Liberal–National government and ensure that the community is informed of the same.

[See paper 5220.]