

WHEATBELT HIGHWAY SAFETY REVIEW

Statement by Minister for Road Safety

MRS L.M. HARVEY (Scarborough — Minister for Road Safety) [12.10 pm]: I would like to inform the house of developments arising from the wheatbelt highway safety review, a key road safety initiative I launched last year. Highway safety reviews have been used extensively and successfully in other states of Australia, resulting in significant improvements in road trauma outcomes.

The first ever highway safety review for Western Australia was conducted over a nine-month period in the wheatbelt region, an area of the state that has continued to experience high rates of fatal and serious injury road crashes. The review found that in the five years to the end of 2013, almost 200 people had been killed or seriously injured in crashes on the wheatbelt sections of Toodyay Road and Great Eastern Highway, and Great Southern Highway between Chidlow and York. These serious crashes mostly involved a single vehicle running off the road. Twenty nine of the serious crashes also occurred at intersections.

Following forums with the community and a technical assessment of the routes, the review identified significant opportunities for improvement in the road environment. The lack of passing lanes and their placement, dangerous intersections, the condition and width of the roads and the challenges of faster and slow-moving traffic were all considered critical road safety issues to be considered. In direct response to this review, \$3.8 million has been allocated from the road trauma trust account for project and development costs associated with future upgrades to the wheatbelt end of Toodyay Road, the route identified as the worst performing of the three studied. The investment being made will enable environmental reviews and clearances to be sought and pre-construction activities to be conducted. This initial work will pave the way for significant upgrades to be progressed on Toodyay Road.

It is also planned to establish a Great Eastern Highway road safety alliance, building on the successful industry collaboration model used in other regions. The Road Safety Commission will also increase its engagement in the region and utilise existing networks to further engage with wheatbelt communities. A detailed report and recommendations are being finalised by the review group and will be released soon.

I would like to acknowledge the agencies that have contributed to the wheatbelt highway safety review, and I look forward to advising the house of further road safety initiatives in the wheatbelt as they are delivered.