

MOBILE PHONE USE WHILE DRIVING

8057. Mr A.P. O’Gorman to the Minister for Police

- (1) Could the Minister advise of any plans to stop the increasing number of people who continue to text, read messages and participate in phone discussions on their mobiles while driving?
- (2) Is the State Government planning to research, implement or invest in any telecommunications-tracking technologies which assist police in detecting people who are using their mobile phones while driving and, if so, what are the capabilities of this technology and when might it be available?
- (3) Does the State Government have any plans to increase penalties for people using mobile phones while driving and, if so, what increased penalties are being considered?

Mrs L.M. HARVEY replied:

- (1) The Western Australia Police Road Policing Strategy, lists as a priority targeting unsafe road-user behaviour, such as drivers being distracted by mobile phone use. WA Police and in particular The Traffic Enforcement Group continue to strenuously enforce the traffic laws in relation to this issue.

For the period 1 January 2012 to 15 June 2012 WA Police have issued 6005 infringement notices for mobile phone offences.

To enforce these traffic laws

- Motorcycle patrols are utilised during the high traffic periods on the freeways and major arterial roads. Motorcycle riders have the ability to move through slow moving or stationary traffic to detect offending drivers.
  - Unmarked patrol vehicles conducting intelligence lead patrols in areas of high offending rates, for example industrial areas.
  - Police motorcycle riders commute to and from their place of work. This practice increases police presence on the roads and detection of these offences during peak traffic times.
  - WA Police utilise Strategic Traffic Enforcement Program (STEP) funding to increase traffic patrols, with the priority of enforcing traffic laws, and targeting unsafe road user behaviour.
- (2) There is no current technology that would meet that requirement. Technology would not be able to discriminate between:
    1. A passenger using their mobile phone lawfully,
    2. A driver using their phone unlawfully, and
    3. A driver using an approved hands free device.
  - (3) The Road Safety Council has commissioned an independent review of penalties for road traffic offences including the unlawful use of mobile phones while driving. The review will be completed later in the coming months.