

ROAD SAFETY — COUNTRY FATALITIES

481. Mrs M.H. ROBERTS to the Minister for Road Safety:

I note that the number of country road fatalities this year is now 62 compared with 41 at the same time last year and that in the same time in 2013, there were just 35 fatalities.

- (1) What responsibility does the minister take for the 50 per cent increase in country road fatalities this year?
- (2) Does she agree with the Premier's assessment from April this year that the cause is "a pattern of bad, irresponsible driving" in regional WA?

Mrs L.M. HARVEY replied:

I thank the member for her question on road safety.

- (1)–(2) The road toll this year is dreadful. Eighty-eight people have lost their lives on our roads, with a disproportionate representation in the regions. To that end, as a government, we have had a number of strategies that we have been working on. We have had the wheatbelt highway safety review looking at the crashes specifically throughout the wheatbelt, and that has identified some recommendations for government around education campaigns and also around sections of road that may need improvement, and we have already started to fund some of those improvements in the wheatbelt road network to ensure that we can get ahead of the game there.

Mr R.F. Johnson interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Hillarys, I call you to order for the first time.

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: Very shortly, the community will see some of our new education campaigns rolling out, targeting those causes of crashes. Specifically, the wheatbelt safety review revealed a consistent trend that we see right across regional Western Australia of very poor compliance with wearing seatbelts. We will be targeting those groups specifically. A lot of those crashes could be avoided. They involve speed. They involve alcohol. The vast majority are run-off-road crashes. We have allocated a record amount from the road trauma trust fund this year—\$146 million. A large proportion of that is going to the run-off-road crash program and places such as the Collie Coalfields highway, which we have already improved.

Mr M.P. Murray interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Collie–Preston, I have been lenient with you. I call you to order for the first time.

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: I am really proud of our investment in the south west with the Coalfields highway—\$22.5 million.

Mr M.P. Murray interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Collie–Preston, I call you to order for the second time. Minister, a quick answer.

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: An amount of \$17.5 million was allocated to Albany Highway to put in passing lanes. The wheatbelt highway safety review revealed to us that unsafe passing was a cause of —

Point of Order

Mrs M.H. ROBERTS: The minister is giving a general statement about road safety. I have asked what responsibility she takes for the 50 per cent increase. Does she take any responsibility for the increase?

The SPEAKER: I think she is answering what you asked, but I want a quick answer. We are making very poor process.

Questions without Notice Resumed

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: We have invested \$9 million for South Coast Highway and \$17.5 million for Albany Highway for passing lanes. Our record on investment in road treatment improvements and road safety is outstanding. We have allocated \$146 million this year compared with a paltry \$14 million when the previous lot were in government. We will continue with our education campaigns and road improvements. We will continue trying to inform motorists on better decision-making so that we can help to reverse this awful trend.