

HOON DRIVERS

61. Mr P. ABETZ to the Minister for Police:

Could the minister update the house on how the government is tackling the problem of hoon drivers in the community, and advise how members of the community can assist the WA Police in this effort?

Mrs L.M. HARVEY replied:

I thank the member for Southern River for his question and for his continued interest in getting hoon drivers off our roads.

Mr P.B. Watson: Have you seen him drive?

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: The member opposite should withdraw that comment.

The SPEAKER: Minister, just answer the question, please.

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: The Liberal–National government has worked very hard on combatting this problem of hoon drivers in the community. I thank the member for Southern River for the opportunity to meet some of his constituents, as we did in Huntingdale on Saturday afternoon, to discuss these issues. These people who live with their streets being terrorised in certain circumstances by hoon drivers on our roads were very concerned about hooning in the community, and our discourse was very interesting.

Since we came to government five years ago, we have increased the period for which a vehicle is impounded for a hoon offence from seven to 28 days on the first offence, and from 28 days to three months for a second offence.

Ms M.M. Quirk interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Girrawheen, I call you to order for a third time. If you shout out again I will ask you to leave the chamber.

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: On the third and subsequent offence, the vehicle is confiscated. The proceeds of the sale of a confiscated vehicle go to road safety initiatives through the road trauma trust account. Vehicles of little value as well as unroadworthy vehicles are crushed. We have also provided community crime prevention program funding for mobile speed humps, and the member for Southern River’s community were quite interested in that program, as I recall.

For the interest of members, in January 2014 we impounded 116 hoon vehicles in one month. No longer can these 116 idiots drive their vehicles on our roads, which is having an impact on this scourge in our community. Members of the community play an important role in this space by reporting hoon drivers to the police, and we encourage the community to call the police assistance centre on 131 444 to report hooning activity when they see it. In addition, we encourage members of the community to write down the numberplates and description of hoon vehicles and call it through to the assistance centre or go online to the police website. When a person logs onto the police website at www.police.wa.gov.au, they can go to a section called “contact us” and report a range of offences. The website walks people through that process. The information submitted through that website is investigated by police and used to follow up on hoon drivers. Some of our tactics may be to track down the vehicle registration number, and quite often these vehicles have illegal after-market modifications and may be issued with a yellow sticker that also serves to get it off the road. The government has taken some very bold steps in the space of hooning and will push this further.

On 27 February 2013, which was during the election campaign, we made some announcements about what we would do in the space of hooning, and soon we will make some amendments to the Road Traffic Act to commit courts to order the confiscation of vehicles for reckless driving or wilful burnouts in built-up areas, particularly when an offence causes harassment, alarm or distress to one or more persons, damage to property, or was committed in an active school zone. We will also ensure that all hoon offences committed on built-up roads—those with a 50-kilometre-per-hour or less speed limit—will be subject to presumptive confiscation on a second rather than a third offence.

We will also change the legislation to allow the immediate and permanent confiscation of trail bikes. Trail bikes are not licensed for road use, and this legislation will allow for the confiscation of those bikes on a first offence provided the bike is the offender’s; that is, it is not stolen. Should the bike belong to the offender or their parents, it will be confiscated if driven on the road. Unlike members opposite, we have bold, well thought out policy proposals in this space.

Several members interjected.

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: I was listening for a policy opportunity in this space from those opposite. When we announced our policies about hoons during the election campaign, there was silence from those opposite—no policy, no strategy, nothing. There was no plan whatsoever for the community and no plan to combat hooning or antisocial behaviour on our roads. The policy vacuum on the opposition side of the house is the reason we were elected in March 2013. The community endorsed our policies, and I look forward to bringing our legislation to the house.