

MOTOR VEHICLE REGISTRATION STICKERS

79. Mrs L.M. HARVEY to the Minister for Transport:

I am pleased to be part of a government that not only identifies red tape but also takes decisive steps to reduce it. As such, I would like the minister to update the house on the success of our government’s decision from 1 January last year to get rid of those annoying registration stickers from our vehicles. We recently heard a call from the opposition—wait for it; this is a beautiful phrase—for an “Annual Rego Reminder Day”. Could the minister please inform the house what possible benefit this could have for Western Australian vehicle owners?

Mr T.R. BUSWELL replied:

I thank the member for Scarborough for the question. She made a very interesting observation about the comments by my good friend Hon Ken “Goldfinger” Travers about his next blistering attack on public policy in Western Australia, supported I am sure by the Leader of the Opposition. I am very disappointed about his attacks on my new good friend the former member for Armadale. I was disgusted that the Leader of the Opposition said that she suffered relevance deprivation syndrome. That is not something he will ever suffer from as he has never been relevant!

I will move on. In May 2009, the government announced that light vehicles in Western Australia would no longer require registration stickers. That change came into effect in January 2010. The aim was to save money—about half a million dollars a year—and that is happening, and to save motorists —

Ms M.M. Quirk interjected.

The SPEAKER: I would like to hear the answer to the question. I formally call to order the member for Girrawheen.

Mr P.B. Watson interjected.

The SPEAKER: I know you have some ambition, member for Albany. I formally call you to order for the first time today.

Mr M.J. Cowper interjected.

The SPEAKER: It is not an opportunity for either the member for Albany or the member for Murray–Wellington to interject. All I want to hear is the Minister for Transport. Some of you may not want to hear the Minister for Transport. I do.

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: As I said, the aim was to reduce costs and to stop motorists from having to deal with those pesky registration stickers. There are a couple of things that are very important to understand.

Mr A.P. O’Gorman interjected.

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: We will get to that. Firstly, people still receive a reminder about six weeks before their licence is due to expire. Secondly, the Department of Transport established a website, which came online in December 2009, to enable people to check their licences online. About 55 000 to 60 000 people use that online facility per month.

Mr E.S. Ripper: What’s wrong with reminding them to do that?

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: We do remind them. Are the Leader of the Opposition’s ears switched on? He has a couple of ornaments hanging off the side of his head! He should hit the “on” button

Thirdly—this is very important; I want members to listen to this—the percentage of —

Mr W.J. Johnston interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Cannington, if you feel there is something that should happen in this house, I urge you to get to your feet, take the opportunity during question time and ask a question of a minister on this side of the house, not just continually interject when a minister is on his or her feet delivering an answer.

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: The third and very important point is that the percentage of renewals paid in 2010 is similar to the percentage of renewals paid in 2009. I cannot give an exact answer because the total percentage of renewals will not be known until we get to the end of March, which is the 90-day period of grace that sits at the end of the licensing period. I could say the figures are exactly the same but I am saying they are similar.

The other thing to understand—this is what got “Goldfinger” excited—is that in 2009 —

Point of Order

Mr A.P. O’GORMAN: The minister constantly refers to Hon Ken Travers as “Goldfinger” or some other sort of derogatory term. He is required to refer to him by his proper title. I ask that he withdraw and conduct himself appropriately.

The SPEAKER: I thank you for your point of order, member for Joondalup. I will monitor the situation as far as this minister or anybody else in this place is concerned with the way they refer to other people who might be in this place or the other place. I am sure the minister knows the grounds he is on.

Questions without Notice Resumed

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: In 2009, the owners of 2 680 vehicles were fined for being unregistered in Western Australia. In 2010 that figure had grown by a massive 90 per cent to 5 137. On seeing the increase in figures, the honourable gold-plated Ken Travers from the upper house made the following comments in his call for rego reminder day. He said —

... the Barnett Government’s decision to discontinue registration stickers resulted in an increase in the number of motorists facing court for driving —

Mr W.J. Johnston interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Cannington, I formally call you to order for the second time.

Mr W.J. Johnston: He did it again.

The SPEAKER: If you want to interject now, I will formally call you to order for the third time.

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: Is it any wonder that the member for Albany asked to be relocated?

Hon Ken Travers made two comments. Firstly, he said —

... the Barnett Government’s decision to discontinue registration stickers resulted in an increase in the number of motorists facing court for driving an unlicensed vehicle.

He went on to state —

“This is another example of the Barnett Government using fines simply to raise revenue.

Paul Murray asked him on the radio —

Can there be any other reason for the doubling in the number of unregistered vehicles ...

Hon Ken Travers replied —

Look, I’ve racked my brain ...

That would be a very short process. He said he had racked his brain, and in that fleeting second he thought that nothing else had changed in the past 12 months. Let us look at the past 12 months and see whether there have been any changes in technology. I will talk about that in a second. Have there been any natural changes, perhaps in March last year, that might have affected the licensing of vehicles, such as a major hailstorm, which impacted on 40 000 vehicles, some of which had licensing implications? Let us get back to technology. In talking about technology, as I rack my brain, I want to provide a quote to the house —

Mr A.P. O’Gorman: That doesn’t take long.

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: Very original! That nearly knocked me off my feet!

Andy Greatwood, an assistant commander of WA Police, stated —

The implementation of TADIS was a significant change in technology for our agency and most frontline cars now have the capability to check the registration expiry of vehicles while on patrol.

Ms M.M. Quirk: What is the cost? You haven’t factored in that cost, have you?

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: The quote continues —

I have witnessed examples where the expiry of all vehicles at an intersection are checked while waiting at a red light. This obviously increases detection rates.

Although Hon Ken Travers’s view is that nothing else has changed, police now have technology. I thought that maybe there were some more TADIS devices in police cars. The member for Girrawheen asked a very good question. She is right; the police have had them for a while. I will tell members how many they had on 31 December 2009. They had 400. Do members know how many they had on 31 December 2010? They had 1 040, of which 360 were TADIS devices. There has been a massive increase in technology provided to Western Australia Police under this government to enable them to do their jobs. What has that meant? It has meant that more unlicensed cars are pulled over and more people are charged with driving unlicensed vehicles. The reason there is a 90 per cent increase in the number of fines issued to owners of unregistered vehicles on the road is not

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Mrs Liza Harvey; Mr Troy Buswell; Mr Tony O'Gorman; Speaker

the lack of stickers. The evidence is clear. It is the improved resource given by this government to the police service of Western Australia.