

ROAD SAFETY — NOVICE DRIVERS

712. Mr P. ABETZ to the Minister for Road Safety:

I am sure the minister is aware of my keen interest in road safety. I am proud to be part of —

Mr P.C. Tinley interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Willagee, it is a simple instruction. Please follow it. I formally call you to order for the first time today.

Mr P. ABETZ: As the member for Southern River I have a keen interest in road safety. I am pleased that the Liberal–National government, for four years, one month and 22 days has made road safety a top priority. With this in mind, could the minister please update the house on these achievements, with specific focus on restrictions for novice drivers?

Mrs L.M. HARVEY replied:

I thank the member for Southern River for the question and, indeed, his keen interest in road safety matters. In 2005 the Road Safety Council put forward a package of reforms aimed at novice drivers. We have discussed them in this place before. One of those reforms was to implement peer-passenger restrictions for novice drivers for the first six months of provisional licensing. The Minister for Road Safety at the time, the member for Midland, did not proceed with these recommendations. It was not until 2007 that the Minister for Road Safety, then the member for Balcatta, during debate in this place provided us with an insight as to why the previous government did not proceed with peer-passenger restrictions. I quote from the member for Balcatta —

... we have indicated that the peer restrictions will not be brought in for some time. We will bring in all the rest and see how it works, and we will hold off on those to see whether they are necessary. However, the restriction on late-night driving is something that we are definitely committed to, ...

In 2008, the previous government introduced late-night driving restrictions on novice drivers for the first six months of their licence. From midnight to 5.00 am, novice drivers are not allowed to drive unless they are going to or from work or study. Recommended peer-passenger restrictions were to be put in place between 9.00 pm and 5.00 am. Effectively, though, due to the late-night driving restriction, the additional restricted time would apply for only the three hours from 9.00 pm to midnight. Upon being appointed Minister for Road Safety one of the first questions I asked of the Office of Road Safety was whether an assessment had been done on the effect of the reforms on peer passenger restrictions for novice drivers.

Mrs M.H. Roberts interjected.

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: Perhaps if you had been doing your job instead of being president of WA Labor, you might have got this information.

Mrs M.H. Roberts interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Midland, I do not need to continually hear from you.

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: Thank you, Mr Speaker. I asked the Office of Road Safety to do an assessment on the effectiveness and whether any relevant information would indicate to me that there would be an impact on our KSI—killed or serious injury—trauma crashes among novice drivers should we introduce that peer restriction between 9.00 pm and midnight. I thought it was quite appropriate to seek that advice. The Office of Road Safety carried out an assessment —

Mrs M.H. Roberts: You committed to do it this year. Your government committed to it, on record.

The SPEAKER: Member for Midland, I formerly indicated to you that I did not need to hear from you. I am formally going to call you to order for the first time.

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: In keeping with due process I referred the peer-passenger restriction reform back to the Road Safety Council, which has now considered this matter. It has determined that the small additional KSI saving expected from introducing peer-passenger restrictions would not balance or outweigh the social impost of these restrictions on novice drivers. The member for Midland —

Mrs M.H. Roberts: You criticised me for not doing it; so you aren't going to do it.

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: You have raised this matter on a number of occasions now.

Mrs M.H. Roberts interjected.

The SPEAKER: Members!

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: I will put to the member for Midland her words, “I will be acting —

Mrs M.H. Roberts: She didn't do it; bad girl.

The SPEAKER: Member for Midland!

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: Let me quote her, "I will be acting —

Mrs M.H. Roberts: I am now not going to do it; good girl.

The SPEAKER: Member for Midland, I am formally going to call you to order for the second time today.

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: To quote the member for Midland, "I will be acting on the advice of the Road Safety Council and the experts", which is indeed what I have done as Minister for Road Safety. I would like to put on the record the Liberal–National government's commitment to improving road safety in Western Australia. We have provided unprecedented funding to the road trauma trust account by hypothecating 100 per cent of the fines and red-light camera infringement revenue into the road trauma trust account.

Mrs M.H. Roberts interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Midland!

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: Members, that money helps us to achieve the objectives of the Towards Zero strategy adopted by this government in 2009, which is aiming for a 40 per cent reduction in deaths and serious injuries resulting from crashes on our road. We are very proud of that achievement and, indeed, we should be; as a government, that was a great decision. We have been tough on drink and drug–drivers. Now as a result of this government's legislation —

Ms M.M. Quirk interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Girrawheen!

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: — any driver who blows over .08 in blood alcohol level will have their licence suspended at roadside. This government takes a no-nonsense, zero-tolerance approach to drink-driving. We have almost doubled the number of vehicles that are now being monitored for speed infringements through the digitisation of speed and red-light cameras.

Mrs M.H. Roberts: What is the road toll?

The SPEAKER: Member for Midland!

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: This has led to a decrease in the proportion of monitored vehicles speeding—a positive shift in driver behaviour. In addition to this, as a result of installing our red-light cameras, there has been a 72 per cent reduction in serious-injury crashes at the intersections in which these lights have been installed. We stand by our record as a Liberal–National government on road safety and we stand by our commitment. We have put our money where our mouth is. We are putting the money into the road trauma trust account and we will achieve the results.