

Chairman; Mr John Kobelke; Mr John McGrath; Mr Terry Waldron; Mr Tony O'Gorman; Mr Murray Cowper;
Mr Paul Papalia; Mrs Judy Hughes

Division 3: Premier and Cabinet - Service 7, Support for the Implementation of the State's Road Safety Initiatives, \$2 128 000 -

Mrs D.J. Guise, Chairman.

Mr J.C. Kobelke, Minister for Community Safety.

Mr I. Cameron, Executive Director, Office of Road Safety.

Mr P. Gregson, Principal Finance Officer.

The CHAIRMAN: This estimates committee will be reported by Hansard staff. The daily proof *Hansard* will be published at 9.00 am tomorrow.

The estimates committee's consideration of the estimates will be restricted to discussion of those items for which a vote of money is proposed in the consolidated account. This is the prime focus of the committee. While there is scope for members to examine many matters, questions need to be clearly related to a page number, item, program, or amount within the volumes. For example, members are free to pursue performance indicators that are included in the budget statements while there remains a clear link between the questions and the estimates. It is the intention of the Chairman to ensure that as many questions as possible are asked and answered and that both questions and answers are short and to the point.

The minister may agree to provide supplementary information to the committee, rather than asking that the question be put on notice for the next sitting week. For the purpose of following up the provision of this information, I ask the minister to clearly indicate to the committee which supplementary information he agrees to provide and I will then allocate a reference number. If supplementary information is to be provided, I seek the minister's cooperation in ensuring that it is delivered to the committee clerk by 8 June 2007, so that members may read it before the report and third reading stages. If the supplementary information cannot be provided within that time, written advice is required of the day by which the information will be made available. Details in relation to supplementary information have been provided to both members and advisers and, accordingly, I ask the minister to cooperate with those requirements.

I caution members that if a minister asks that a matter be put on notice, it is up to the member to lodge the question on notice with the Clerk's office. Only supplementary information that the minister agrees to provide will be sought by 8 June 2007.

It will also greatly assist Hansard if when referring to the program statements volumes or the consolidated fund estimates, members give the page number, item, program, amount in preface to their question.

I am advised that members are keen to get through road safety in half an hour, which is admirable.

Mr J.C. KOBELKE: Members should not speed!

The CHAIRMAN: We will give it our best shot! Member for South Perth.

Mr J.E. McGRATH: I refer to the line item "Less income" on page 97 of the *Budget Statements*. Can the minister explain the difference between the \$22.42 million income budgeted in 2006-07 and the estimated actual income of \$15.96 million for the same year? Is that drop largely due to the police's industrial action last year?

[Dr S.C. Thomas took the chair.]

Mr J.C. KOBELKE: There is no indication that the police industrial action caused that decrease. The major cause is the backlog in processing red light camera fines. A third of red light and speed camera fines comes through to the road trauma trust fund, which constitutes part of that figure. There has been a reduction in that revenue. In addition, there was an Insurance Commission of Western Australia grant, which is for one year and not the next. The 2006-07 figure is roughly comparable with the 2005-06 figure, which went up substantially. There was also the RAC's Safer Vehicles campaign, in which a bit under half a million dollars came in.

Mr J.E. McGRATH: What is the government doing to speed up the processing of camera infringement notices?

Mr J.C. KOBELKE: That is a police processing matter that, in the interests of time, can be dealt with in the next division.

Mr T.K. WALDRON: I refer to "Major Achievements For 2006-07" on page 98 and the rolling out of road safety forums in 2007-08. How many forums will be conducted? Where will they be conducted? I am interested in this issue, because I ran a successful forum in Narrogin. The member for Albany and others are

Chairman; Mr John Kobelke; Mr John McGrath; Mr Terry Waldron; Mr Tony O'Gorman; Mr Murray Cowper;
Mr Paul Papalia; Mrs Judy Hughes

keen to hold forums in their areas. How many forums can the Road Safety Council hold without being overloaded?

Mr J.C. KOBELKE: The forums are an important part of putting together the new road safety strategy and of engaging people at the local level, particularly because of the involvement of members of Parliament. I thank the member for Wagin for being a trailblazer by running the first forum. We can build on that success. Mr Cameron is in a better position to provide details of how many forums have been held and at what locations.

Mr I. Cameron: We have conducted four so far in this financial year following on from the one in Narrogin last year. We have another eight planned at this stage, largely because of the response, as the minister said, from local members. We are very pleased with that. We are also investigating a few gaps and we are looking to get confirmation from other areas to fill in those gaps. Our aim is to have a mixture throughout the metropolitan area of Perth and throughout regional Western Australia.

Mr T.K. WALDRON: Will they be conducted in the metropolitan area as well as the country?

Mr I. Cameron: Yes.

Mr A.P. O'GORMAN: The fifth dot point on page 98 reads -

The Department, in conjunction with Main Roads, will conduct an Intelligent Speed Adaptation demonstration project to stimulate community demand for technology to assist drivers observe the speed limit.

What is ISA and what will the demonstration entail?

Mr J.C. KOBELKE: The Office of Road Safety should be commended for taking the lead in this matter. It has joined with Victoria in that regard. Intelligent speed adaptation is a GPS system that is fitted to a car. It is hoped that it will become available as a commercial product. The Office of Road Safety and, importantly, Main Roads have been involved in proving them up so that they can be purchased commercially. ISAs can indicate with a digital display or a warning beep when a driver exceeds the speed limit on any section of road. Under the current system, a driver can set an over-speed, but that has no bearing on what the speed limit is on a particular section of road. When I was in Sweden a few months back, I travelled in a car that was fitted with an ISA device. As we drove along and moved into different speed zones, the indicator changed to tell us what the speed was in that zone. It is up to the companies that market the product to decide whether to install a beep, a voice warning or a digital display to alert the driver to the speed limit on a given stretch of road. If the product is mass produced, it will be available at a reasonably moderate price and, therefore, more people will use it and be conscious of the speed limit on the street on which they are driving. In that way, they are less likely to be caught speeding. In terms of the working up of the proposal, Main Roads has in place a digital map of the roads in Perth and it is rolling it out throughout the rest of Western Australia. That is available, even to the point that when a driver comes along to a school zone, a school speed zone is indicated. The system has to be sophisticated enough so that when speed zones are changed that update happens automatically and drivers are advised of that change. I think 20 of these devices are about to become available for trial use. Three of them have been available to check out the system and make sure that the digital speed map is there. However, there will be a rollout of 20 devices in the next few months to get a higher level of acceptance, to work out what would be attractive to drivers and encourage them to use it, and also to make sure that we have ground proofed the system fully. Another 30 will be rolled out later in the year.

[5.10 pm]

Mr A.P. O'GORMAN: Will they be given to the general public?

Mr J.C. KOBELKE: No, because we are looking to see whether we can get public acceptance of them. The maintenance of the digital road speed map will be a matter for Main Roads. The issue of putting the product on the market is going to be left in private hands. I have indicated that Victoria is doing something similar. A product like this needs a reasonably large population that is interested in it to establish a market. Given that Western Australia and Victoria are doing it, potentially other states would come on board. We obviously want to have a standardised system so the product can be manufactured and hopefully sold at a moderate price. The trial is to get some community leaders to use it, and hopefully show that it works to help promote it. We are a bit cautious about promoting a particular manufacturer, but we believe it is something that really can improve the safety of vehicles by giving drivers a direct advisory notice of the speed they are travelling at and what the speed limit is in a given area.

Mr A.P. O'GORMAN: Can we install one of those in the member for Murray's car so we can keep him on his toes?

Mr J.C. KOBELKE: Can I just say that I am very keen to have one in my car and to promote it.

Chairman; Mr John Kobelke; Mr John McGrath; Mr Terry Waldron; Mr Tony O'Gorman; Mr Murray Cowper;
Mr Paul Papalia; Mrs Judy Hughes

The CHAIRMAN: Members! Is the member for South Perth asking a further question on the same topic?

Mr J.E. McGRATH: Yes. Will it apply only to main roads in country areas?

Mr J.C. KOBELKE: All speed-zoned roads. As the member is aware, many country roads have the open speed limit of 110 kilometres an hour, so that is clearly laid out. However, where a section of road has a speed limit other than 110 kilometres an hour, it would be part of the digital mapping process. Main Roads has responsibility for those roads; they have to put out and check on the signs. When they do that they simply log it in their global positioning system and it becomes part of that digital speed map.

Mr M.J. COWPER: When will we have some continuity in speed zones across Western Australia, particularly in regional areas where there are 100 kilometre-an-hour zones and 110 kilometre-an-hour zones right next to each other and where some roads are far superior to others?

Mr J.C. KOBELKE: That matter is the responsibility of Main Roads. The Road Safety Council is conscious of how we make sure people adhere to those speed limits; therefore, the setting of the speed limits is an issue. Although it may be discussed at the Road Safety Council, the responsibility for that lies with Main Roads.

Mr J.E. McGRATH: I refer to "Details of Controlled Grants and Subsidies" on page 105 of the *Budget Statements*. The Office of Road Safety was budgeted at \$15.9 million in 2006-07, but appears to have spent only \$10.7 million. Can the minister explain why we have this very unusual circumstance in which a government agency could not spend all of its allocation?

Mr J.C. KOBELKE: The budgeting here is quite complex. The main reason for that is that \$7 million for the Safer Roads program that was handled by the Office of Road Safety is now handled by Main Roads. Therefore, it has transferred across to the Main Roads budget. If the member looks at the Main Roads budget, he will find an extra \$7 million has come in which was previously sourced under the Office of Road Safety.

Mr J.E. McGRATH: While we are on the subject of Safer Roads, we raised this subject yesterday with the Minister for Planning and Infrastructure. There was some concern about Safer Roads money going mainly into the Reid Highway upgrade. It was under the category of finalising environmental approvals, completion of investigations and calling tenders for the design and construction of 2.6 kilometres of dual carriageway and a new bridge over the Swan River. Although this is obviously a good project for Main Roads, we were wondering if the minister was comfortable with Safer Roads money going into a project like that. Would Safer Roads money be better targeted at black spots or areas where there was a high incidence of crashes? This money is funding a new section of road. The Minister for Planning and Infrastructure said we should refer that question to the Minister for Police and Emergency Services.

Mr J.C. KOBELKE: I am having difficulty coming to grips with the multiple parts of this question. The member mentioned black spots. That is a separate bucket of money for Safer Roads. We committed an extra \$80 million over four years for road safety.

Mr J.E. McGRATH: I understand that minister, but the question we are asking is: who decides how much of the Safer Roads money goes into these Main Roads projects? Is the minister happy that Safer Roads money could be used for a new road when some people might say that if it is a Safer Roads project, it should be going into an existing road that may have been determined as having a high fatality rate or needs improvement?

Mr J.C. KOBELKE: My understanding from the specifics of the question the member asked is that that decision is made by the Minister for Planning and Infrastructure, but the Office of Road Safety gives advice.

Mr J.E. McGRATH: The Minister for Planning and Infrastructure indicated yesterday that it was the Minister for Police and Emergency Services' decision, so maybe there is a bit of a handball there.

Mr J.C. KOBELKE: I think we need to be careful regarding exactly what we are talking about. There is a range of different buckets of money, and my understanding is that the Department for Planning and Infrastructure makes the call on Safer Roads money. However, when looking at Safer Roads, the Office of Road Safety has a real interest. We look to see where we will get the best results because getting safer roads is one of the key elements of the road safety strategy.

Mr J.E. McGRATH: For the record, for *Hansard*, could the minister explain the aim of the Safer Roads program? What is the end result that the program is looking for?

Mr J.C. KOBELKE: The expert on this is Mr Cameron and I ask that he assist with that.

Mr I. Cameron: As the member would be aware, black spot programs typically focus on spots and specific sites, tending to cover intersections and very short lengths of road. The Safer Roads program was an additional commitment to look at road lengths. Increasingly, as we begin to treat black spots we move down the cost-benefit list and it gets harder to get the same benefit. We know that crashes occur along lengths of the road

Chairman; Mr John Kobelke; Mr John McGrath; Mr Terry Waldron; Mr Tony O'Gorman; Mr Murray Cowper;
Mr Paul Papalia; Mrs Judy Hughes

network and sometimes that can be random. Therefore, the Safer Roads program was designed to complement a black spot program and a spot approach with a length approach in which different criteria would need to be used to identify suitable projects.

[5.20 pm]

Mr J.E. McGRATH: Would the Office of Road Safety be happy with Safer Roads money being spent on new road networks?

Mr J.C. KOBELKE: It would be judged in the particular case.

Mr J.E. McGRATH: There could be a completely new road; it could be deemed to be a Safer Roads project.

Mr J.C. KOBELKE: If the new road is going to bypass a dangerous section of road, it would deal with what is a major traffic problem. What the member is putting to me is very general. I understand what he is suggesting. In many cases a new road would not be seen as a safety issue but it does not mean that it could be ruled out that a new road might not have a major safety factor involved in it.

Mr M.J. COWPER: I refer to "Major Achievements For 2006-07" on page 98 and the department's implementation of a major statewide road safety campaign. We have a pretty disastrous road toll at the moment. Can the minister provide advice about what is being done to target the road toll given that nearly two-thirds of deaths are occurring in regional and country Western Australia? It is of major concern to us all.

Mr J.C. KOBELKE: I accept the concern of members opposite. To use the words of the member, every death on our roads is a disaster. We are having too many disasters. Although we clearly saw a tracking down last year, this year has jumped up to levels we have had in the past. We want to make sure that we have a downward trend rather than a plateauing or upward movement. The issue will be addressed in the initiatives we have coming forward. We have got to try to finish off a range of those this year for repeat drink drivers, novice drivers and random roadside drug testing. The legislation for the last item is now through the Parliament and will be implemented during the next six months. We see those initiatives as clearly having an impact. As the member is well aware, we have to do a range of things; it is very much a multifaceted approach. We need enforcement by the police. Police is the next division we will be dealing with. The police have put in a huge effort with the traffic enforcement group. We need to do this on a whole range of fronts. The new initiative, which I am very positive about, is hopefully a bipartisan approach. Both sides are talking about that and we need to make it work so that we can make sure we are working together with the community to get even better outcomes in reducing fatalities and serious injuries.

Mr M.J. COWPER: I am particularly interested in the fact that nearly two-thirds of deaths on our roads occur in country regions and that half of those deaths are caused by vehicles leaving the road because of a rollover or hitting a tree. Is there any strategy that can be put in place to target what to me is a glaring problem? It is a sore nose, if you like, and I want to know what the government is doing to address it.

Mr J.C. KOBELKE: A number of those deaths involve people not wearing seatbelts. As the member is aware, we have increased the penalty for not wearing seatbelts. The police have been more proactive on seatbelts. My understanding is that that applies to country areas as well. The traffic enforcement group is now doing more patrols on major roads out of Perth. The commissioner announced that some time ago. When the commissioner appears later the member can ask him about the weighting of that work, which is now going to country roads.

Mr M.J. COWPER: Referring to country roads and the traffic enforcement group, I understand that under road trauma funding there was a breakdown of the strategic targeted enforcement program funding, which comes from money raised by red light cameras. Can I be advised how the flow of money compares in this 12 months with the previous 12 months and what is the forecast for the next 12 months? I am happy to take the answer as supplementary information.

Mr J.C. KOBELKE: I will clarify this because the member asked a question and he is very well aware of the funding while other members may not be. It is additional funding that has come from the road trauma trust fund through the Road Safety Council to the police to enhance their traffic and road patrols. It was specific funding that could be targeted to districts or regions where there was believed to be a need for a bigger effort to get cars on the roads dealing with traffic matters and traffic safety. The member is very much aware of that and an advocate of it. My understanding is that it is continuing; it is in here.

Mr M.J. COWPER: Can I get a breakdown of the money from the road trauma funding, including that allocated for STEP funding and that which is for TV advertisements and a breakdown of other items? I am happy to have it as supplementary information.

Chairman; Mr John Kobelke; Mr John McGrath; Mr Terry Waldron; Mr Tony O'Gorman; Mr Murray Cowper;
Mr Paul Papalia; Mrs Judy Hughes

Mr J.C. KOBELKE: The member is looking for time series data over the years? We can give the numbers for this year.

Mr M.J. COWPER: I do not know what the funding is this year; it might be \$29 million. How much of that will be spent on television adverts; how much on STEP; and how much on other items?

Mr J.C. KOBELKE: For the current year \$1.76 million is going into the program.

Mr M.J. COWPER: What about STEP funding? How much for TV advertising?

Mr J.C. KOBELKE: That is a separate question. We can provide that information.

Mr M.J. COWPER: It comes under the same funding, does it not?

Mr J.C. KOBELKE: I will get Mr Cameron to answer in a moment. The Office of Road Safety has the road trauma trust fund. We have guaranteed \$15 million a year for that. If the money coming through from the cameras falls below that, we have promised to keep it up to \$15 million. In fact, this current year I think we will have to put in money to make sure it stays at that level. That money is then used by the Office of Road Safety for a whole range of programs. The member has alluded to one of them. Mr Cameron will give a quick overview of the breakdown of the particular programs and the effort and what the money goes into. Is that what the member is seeking?

Mr M.J. COWPER: It is. If it assists the minister, I am happy to take it as supplementary information.

Mr I. Cameron: It is important to remember the context of STEP. STEP is additional money provided by the Road Safety Council for additional enforcement over and above police core business. It has been growing from about \$1.2 million up to, as the minister said, just over \$1.7 million. I stress that it is over and above agreed road safety benefits and core business. Approximately \$7 million a year is spent on community education campaigns, which includes mass media but also includes components such as brochures and pamphlets and information that community groups and road wise groups can use as well.

Mr T.K. WALDRON: I refer to the second major initiative for 2007-08 at page 98, which refers to a new road safety strategy. I have a general question for the minister about overtaking lanes on major country highways. Has the length of the lanes ever been considered for inclusion on the signs advising of overtaking lanes? In my travels over the past year I have seen three or four near misses when people driving in an overtaking lane did not realise that the length of the lane was not very long. Some lanes may go for two or three kilometres but others may go for only 800 metres. People get caught out with nowhere to go. Has consideration been given to such signs so that when people enter an overtaking lane they will know that it is not very long?

Mr J.C. KOBELKE: I think the member is making a valuable suggestion. It is really a Main Roads matter but the Road Safety Council could clearly take that on board. Talking of overtaking lanes comes back to a question on the Safer Roads program and the member for Murray talking about high fatality rates. Clearly, that is a key part of the answer that I did not give the member, because Safer Roads funding is going to improve overtaking lanes and provide for audible strips on the side of roads because a lot of accidents are single-vehicle run-off road crashes. People get drowsy, fall asleep, and drive into a tree. Hence the need for audible strips. There will also be shoulder sealing so that if drivers come off the side of the road they do not lose control of the vehicle. Safer Roads money is going into that on country roads. Albany Highway and Brand Highway are two examples of shoulder sealing.

Mr J.E. McGRATH: I refer to page 97. We talked earlier about fines. This question relates to research that the Office of Road Safety might have done. The minister mentioned that the government had put up fines on 1 January for a number of offences.

Mr J.C. KOBELKE: That is correct.

Mr J.E. McGRATH: We are less than halfway through the year and already there have been 102 fatalities, which would indicate that people are not taking notice of increased fines. The Fines Enforcement Registry is already up about \$165 million in unpaid fines. What does research around the world show about penalising people with fines, and does the Office of Road Safety believe that that is still the way to go, given that many people do not pay the fines and then, when they lose their licences, drive without licences anyway?

[5.30 pm]

Mr J.C. KOBELKE: Fines are just one element of road safety and educating people. We seek to educate people in a very positive way, but sometimes the negative approach of a penalty is required. A number of factors are involved in the effectiveness of the penalty. If the penalties seem to be insignificant, some people simply ignore them, and there is a range of areas where that is the case. People know they would rather pay the

Chairman; Mr John Kobelke; Mr John McGrath; Mr Terry Waldron; Mr Tony O'Gorman; Mr Murray Cowper;
Mr Paul Papalia; Mrs Judy Hughes

fine on a penalty, and they just ignore it. We need penalties that are appropriate as deterrents for particular infringements. The second factor is the perception that the person will be caught. While penalties may be quite horrendous, if people believe that there is no enforcement and they will not be caught, penalties are not deterrent factors. Thirdly, a matter which causes us concern is timeliness. With the backlog we have, there is a timeliness problem. We need to take all those factors into account in making the deterrent factor work with fines. There is ample evidence that deterrents such as fines work, but we need to work on a range of administrative and implementation issues to get the maximum deterrent benefit from those fines.

Mr P. PAPALIA: I refer to the third dot point on page 98 under "Major Initiatives For 2007-08", which refers to further improvement of novice driver safety. Recent research was reported in the media yesterday about increased dangers and the reduction in safety for drivers, particularly novice drivers, with increased passenger numbers in vehicles. Is limiting the numbers of passengers for P-plate drivers one of the initiatives that is being considered?

Mr J.C. KOBELKE: We are bringing forward a comprehensive novice driver program encompassing a range of elements. The largest underlying driver for this initiative is the scientific evidence from other jurisdictions that the longer the formal training period in which novice drivers can gain experience, the less chance they have of being involved in accidents. We are seeking, through a range of measures, to establish a longer training period. It will be a minimum of six months. We are not mandating it straightaway, but we are looking to move to 120 hours of supervised driving, rather than 25 as at present. We are also looking to make sure that, as part of that extended training, during the six-month period the novice driver will not be permitted to drive late at night or in the early hours of the morning and will not be allowed to drive with peers in the car unless supervised. There must be exceptions to that, because a 17-year-old could have a child that has to ride in the back of a car. There are also 17 and 18-year-olds who have just been granted their licences who work at fast food or take-away outlets and need to be able to drive home after work. We must allow for those circumstances, but there is clearly an increased risk factor when young, inexperienced drivers are out with friends and enjoying themselves. The distractions that go with that are often part of the mixture that results in serious accidents and fatalities.

Mr P. PAPALIA: Following on from that question, and linking it to the road safety forums - I am hoping to have one in Rockingham in conjunction with the Minister for Education and Training - are these initiatives being exposed to the public during these forums, and is feedback being sought to establish whether there is public support for the initiatives? Obviously, many of these initiatives are very good and will be very effective, but that will be more so if they have widespread public support, and the road safety forums seems like a good opportunity.

Mr J.C. KOBELKE: I will just put this in context, and then ask Mr Cameron to give more specific detail about how those forums are run. In developing the next road safety strategy, we want to secure engagement right across the community. In previous road safety strategies, the Road Safety Council has done that, but in a more formal way, with perhaps not so much uptake at the local level. We are hoping that by running these forums with members of Parliament helping to instigate them, we will get much more local grassroots involvement. That is just the first step. In subsequent steps, we will look to see whether a reference group of members of Parliament can also be involved. We need to be clear that the Road Safety Council is driving this program. We are not in anyway taking the council away from it, but we want to add value to that program and involve a lot more people in the process that is unfolding. I will ask Mr Cameron to make specific comments about the structure that is being used to run these forums.

Mr I. Cameron: Novice driver issues do come up in these forums. We conducted extensive consultation in the development of those novice driver strategies, and the feedback was extremely positive. The least positive feedback was from young people themselves, but their parents were extremely supportive. As a way forward, as the minister said, we are looking to use the same type of process to engage the community in the next road safety strategy. The short answer is that options are available in road safety; the choices made depend on what the community is prepared to accept, and that is the flavour of the forums. There is a guided process; there is an agenda that covers all the issues in road safety. The participants in the forums are given handheld devices with which they can register their responses. It is a bit like the "worm" that is seen in political debates on television. Participants will record their individual feedback and then during the half day and the following half day, members of the community are able to discuss, raise and clarify issues. It is information sharing; it is individual voting and feedback, but there are also points throughout the forum at which people are able to discuss issues.

Mr J.E. McGRATH: This question refers to the sixth dot point under "Major Initiatives For 2007-08" on page 98 of the *Budget Statements*, which refers to the establishment of a road safety research centre in Western Australia. There has been some criticism of the fact that we go to Monash University to come up with a strategy applicable to our roads in Western Australia, so I welcome this initiative. What is the level of funding for the

Chairman; Mr John Kobelke; Mr John McGrath; Mr Terry Waldron; Mr Tony O'Gorman; Mr Murray Cowper;
Mr Paul Papalia; Mrs Judy Hughes

centre, and where does that funding appear in the budget? Is it possible that in future this centre will supersede Monash as the body that does the research for road safety strategies for Western Australia?

Mr J.C. KOBELKE: The Monash University Accident Research Centre is a body of world standing, and the Road Safety Council has used the centre for some years in different ways for its expertise and independent advice. The centre is contracted to help with the development of the next road safety strategy. That is appropriate, and I am very supportive of it. However, many things need to be done in seeking professional advice and doing research, and we are looking to see whether we can get some home-grown advice by having the expertise here at our own universities. That is not to lock MUARC out, but to have a local facility. I will ask Mr Cameron to briefly explain how that is being done.

Mr I. Cameron: There are two issues here. The first is that we are always in a competitive tendering environment for our research. I cannot answer whether in the future the successful tender will be MUARC or someone else, but all our research is done by competitive tender, and it comes down to value for money and getting the best possible advice. We are committed to a local research centre. Since the University of Western Australia stopped the work it was doing, we have been trying to build something locally. We have committed \$750 000 from the road trauma trust fund budget to do that. We are in negotiation with two tertiary institutions at the moment to secure a presence in Western Australia. We are committed, and we want to build a local presence with expertise in roads, vehicles and driver behaviour.

[5.40 pm]

Mrs J. HUGHES: I have a further question to that asked by the member for Peel about the novice driver initiative. Has any thought been given to young people who do not necessarily have access to an adult who will put in the hours to supervise them so that they can obtain their drivers' licences? Of course, a lot of young apprentices need their drivers' licences before they can even apply for an apprenticeship. Has some thought been given to those young people?

Mr J.C. KOBELKE: I thank the member for the question. She is absolutely right, and that is why we have not mandated it. We are encouraging people to extend the hours of supervised training. When we can put in place the programs to assist those people, we would like to mandate it. However, we cannot mandate it until we find a way of assisting those young people who might have great difficulty finding a parent or a friend to supervise them for those hours. If they had to pay for that supervised training, it would be prohibitive for most people.

Mrs J. HUGHES: The minister has said that he will not mandate it. Is the idea to encourage the parents who have the opportunity to do that?

Mr J.C. KOBELKE: I would like to mandate it. However, I think it would be counterproductive to mandate it until we have in place access and equity arrangements so that we do not disadvantage those people who would have difficulty getting someone to supervise them.

Mrs J. HUGHES: It will remain as it is for the time being?

Mr J.C. KOBELKE: Yes.

The appropriation was recommended.