

COALFIELDS HIGHWAY — ROELANDS HILL SECTION — SAFETY IMPROVEMENTS

Statement by Minister for Transport

HON SIMON O'BRIEN (South Metropolitan — Minister for Transport) [3.05 pm]: I wish to inform the house that I have taken steps to improve safety on the Roelands Hill section of Coalfields highway following the completion of a high-level safety investigation that followed a double fatality on that section earlier this year. The safety improvements I refer to include a lower maximum speed limit through the section, and better delineation of traffic lanes, with most of the work to be delivered by December. This lower maximum speed limit effectively eliminates the 110 kilometre an hour maximum speed limit for the entire length of Coalfields highway, replacing it with a maximum of 100 kilometres an hour.

Last Wednesday, I received a report from a safe system review group, which assessed the nine-kilometre Roelands Hill section of the highway to determine whether the road contributed to this crash, in which, tragically, two children were killed. The location of this crash was on a four-lane overtaking opportunity that had been constructed by the previous coalition government in the 1990s. The safe system review group, comprising police, Main Roads and Office of Road Safety officers, and the Curtin–Monash Accident Research Centre, found that the road condition was not a contributing factor to the double fatality, and that the section meets current standards and guidelines. However, the group did produce a number of recommendations for improving visibility and safety of the road environment through that section. I have accepted those recommendations and have approved funding of up to \$1.5 million for Main Roads WA to implement those recommendations as soon as possible.

The treatments include lowering the maximum speed limit on the Roelands Hill section from 110 kilometres an hour to 100 kilometres an hour, which will mean that the maximum speed limit on the highway will be 100 kilometres an hour; changing pavement markings to convert the overtaking lane into a climbing lane, which will more effectively separate slow moving vehicles from the faster moving vehicles; the installation of signs warning of slow moving vehicles; and an extension of the sealed shoulders to one metre in width, and the installation of audible edge lines over the full distance of this section. The signage and lane markings will be implemented from this week, and the shoulder works will be carried out in 2011. I emphasise that these works are in addition to those I announced last week, in which the government awarded a \$3 million contract for widening and reconstructing more than four kilometres of Coalfields highway between Collie and Allanson. That contract in turn is part of a much larger package of works to which the government has committed for the upgrading of Coalfields highway.

I now table the summary report of the safe system review group.

[See paper 2796.]

Consideration of the statement made an order of the day for the next sitting, on motion by **Hon Linda Savage**.