

ROAD SAFETY INITIATIVES

559. Mr J.J.M. BOWLER to the Minister for Road Safety:

With the terrible spate of run-off-road crashes that occurred last week, can the minister please update the house on what the government is doing to improve road safety in regional and remote Western Australia?

Mrs L.M. HARVEY replied:

I thank the member for Kalgoorlie for his question and, indeed, his interest in road safety, particularly in regional areas. Last Friday was a terrible start to the weekend for families and friends of three Western Australians who tragically lost their lives in regional Western Australia in three separate single-vehicle run-off-road crashes. These tragedies have brought the road toll this year to 128, which is one more than at the same time last year. It is a regrettable state of affairs, and we have three networks of family and friends who are now suffering grief and trauma as they try to cope with the loss of those loved ones.

Every death and serious injury on our roads is alarming, which is why in 2009 the Liberal–National government endorsed the Towards Zero strategy that is aimed and designed to reduce road crash trauma and fatalities by 40 per cent by the year 2020. It is a challenge. We have 18 000 kilometres of state roads and 140 000 kilometres of local road network. Probably the most significant problem that we have in regional and remote areas is in single-vehicle, run-off-road crashes. That is why we have put in the 2012–13 budget \$20.1 million for road safety treatments that will address this problem of run-off-road crashes. The problem we have is that we need to retrofit these safe system treatments. Some of the treatments include sealing the shoulders of roads, which we expect can reduce road crash trauma by around 40 per cent; audible edging, which we expect can reduce road crash trauma by around 20 per cent; and then there are safety barriers, which can reduce road crash trauma by up to 90 per cent. This would not have been possible had we not hypothecated 100 per cent of the speed and red-light camera infringement fines into the road trauma trust fund. This has given us the ability to have an unprecedented \$87 million to spend on road safety initiatives, of which \$21.6 million, metropolitan members will be happy to know, will go to metropolitan intersection crashes, which are a big problem that we have in the metropolitan area with road crash fatalities and road crash trauma admissions.

In conclusion, I thought it would be timely to update members that we are coming into a long weekend. Effective midnight on Thursday, we will be in double demerit point mode for the long weekend. I encourage all members to be mindful of the way that they drive and to make sure that they can assist us in preventing road crash trauma and fatalities. Members will potentially face losing their licence under the double demerit point regime should they choose to exceed the speed limit. In addition, if that is what members choose, I will welcome their voluntary contribution to the road trauma trust fund. Members' voluntary contributions will be well spent in trying to prevent these road crash deaths and trauma admissions.