

FORREST HIGHWAY — ROAD ACCIDENTS

**118. Hon NIGEL HALLETT to the Minister for Transport:**

Community concern has previously been raised about the number of crashes that have occurred on Forrest Highway at its junction with Old Coast Road in recent months. Given that one of the busiest holiday periods of the year is about to commence, can the minister outline any initiatives the government has taken to help ensure that the thousands of motorists travelling through this location can do so with increased safety?

**Hon SIMON O'BRIEN replied:**

I thank the honourable member for his concern for road safety, particularly with the commencement of the holiday period this evening. I am disconcerted by the traffic crash record at the intersection of Forrest Highway and Old Coast Road. It is a unique situation in that it is not an interchange and it is not a controlled intersection, but it is an intersection of two busy roads, which has perhaps exacerbated the situation. However, the thing that concerns me is that there have been a number of crashes there, and that should not be happening. One of those crashes, I regret to say, resulted in two fatalities. Therefore, it is imperative that we do something about that.

Main Roads Western Australia formed a focus group made up of experts from various fields, including behavioural science, road design, fatal crash investigation, local government and so on. At the time of the fatal crash, there was some superficial discussion, or argument, in the community about whether there should be a Give Way sign or a Stop sign at that intersection, but I think that is oversimplifying the situation and we need to look at the deeper type of behaviour. The focus group has come up with some short and medium-term solutions that are being implemented. It has also provided some longer-term solutions that may be deployed if we do not find an improvement in the results at this intersection.

The key to it all seems to be—I will be brief, but I know that a lot of members are interested in this —

**Hon Ljiljanna Ravlich interjected.**

**Hon SIMON O'BRIEN:** People are being killed on this road, and I know that members are concerned about that. Most of the problems seem to be with vehicles exiting Old Coast Road to turn right or to turn south across the northbound lanes of Forrest Highway. That can result in collisions, and 75 per cent of the collisions that have occurred have been right-angle collisions. There seems to be a problem with drivers of vehicles exiting Old Coast Road selecting an appropriate gap in oncoming traffic. Drivers need to improve their perception of the approach speeds of oncoming traffic, and also to be able to find their way through the layout of the intersection. It has been pointed out to me by the Commissioner of Main Roads that at this time, in the development of vegetation and so on around the area on a relatively new bit of road, and depending on the time of day and other atmospheric conditions, it can all look very grey from the point of view of a motorist exiting Old Coast Road. Some immediate action has been taken to improve safety at the intersection prior to Easter, and that includes the following measures. Firstly, some rumble strips have been put on Forrest Highway to help highlight awareness that a change in environment is ahead. There are some additional pavement markings—by “pavement”, I mean on the roadway—including white chevrons on the sides of the northbound Forrest Highway lanes, which provide a narrowing perception or effect to alert motorists there. There is a reduction in the speed limit from 110 to 80 kilometres an hour through that intersection for northbound vehicles, and there are also some colour treatments to highlight the median island. Therefore, the grey is broken up with a bit of red-coloured pavement and, in due course, a bit of greenery, as well as the white line markings.

We are doing all we can to improve the road environment, because it is not acceptable that we have an unsafe situation. We want to make sure that we do everything we can to mitigate that, and that is what we are doing. I certainly hope that every motorist in this location and elsewhere drives safely and responsibly and that everyone comes back safely after the Easter break.