

ROAD SAFETY — FIRST AID AWARENESS

Statement by Minister for Road Safety

MR D.R. MICHAEL (Balcatta — Minister for Road Safety) [9.10 am]: Last Friday, 15 March, I attended the St John Ambulance headquarters in Belmont along with our local member Cassie Rowe, the member for Belmont, for an important launch event that will lead to lives being saved on our roads. We met two inspirational people, Nicole Tolhurst and Rod Baltovich, the total stranger who saved her life after a car crash because a first aid course was fresh in his memory. When Mr Baltovich saw her Kia Mentor collide with another vehicle at a Palmyra intersection and then crash into a brick wall, he did not hesitate to help. Ms Tolhurst was slumped over the steering wheel and turning blue until her rescuer leaned in through the passenger side and lifted her head up to a normal position, allowing her to start breathing. He then called 000 and stayed by her side until paramedics arrived to take over. Ms Tolhurst survived, and she and her rescuer are still in touch, many years after the crash.

This real-life scenario was the inspiration for a new television campaign, *Anyone Can Save a Life*, which is a partnership between the Road Safety Commission and St John WA. It encourages all drivers, but particularly new drivers, to learn a few simple techniques that could save a life after a crash. We know that about 15 per cent of road deaths could be avoided with early first aid intervention, particularly to address blocked airways. The key message in this campaign is that it is important to refresh first aid knowledge, and St John WA has made this easy with a short online course. I have completed this course myself and found that a few things have changed over the years, so I would highly recommend it. The course is free, and it takes only 15 minutes.

Since St John WA launched the first version of this online course, more than 170 000 people have taken the time to learn the skills to potentially save a life. Thanks to the Road Safety Commission, this knowledge will now reach a broader audience. Post-crash response is one of the five priorities of the state government's Driving Change road safety strategy. The first few minutes after a crash can be the difference between life and death.

I would like to remind everyone that Easter is next week, and WA roads will be extra busy. Double demerits will be in force from Thursday, 28 March to Monday, 1 April. The Easter break may also be an opportunity to visit the St John WA First Aid for Me website and look for the 15-minute courses. It might be the most important 15 minutes of your life.