

JOONDALUP DRIVER AND VEHICLE SERVICES CENTRE

531. Ms E.L. HAMILTON to the Minister assisting the Minister for Transport:

I refer to the measures taken by the Cook Labor government to increase the availability of bookings for driving assessments.

- (1) Can the minister advise the house what action has been taken to make it easier for learner drivers to take their practical driving assessments?
- (2) Can the minister update the house how this government is increasing capacity for driving assessments in Perth's northern suburbs?

Mr D.R. MICHAEL replied:

I thank the member for Joondalup for that excellent question and for her and members of the North Metropolitan Region's continued advocacy on this issue on behalf of their constituents. I am told that the member had a petition with 1 500 locals contacting her office about this issue.

- (1)–(2) We all know the demand for practical driving assessments in WA is very high. The government continues to look at all options to alleviate the current pressure on the system. I am very excited and pleased that earlier today I was able to join the Minister for Transport to announce that the Cook Labor government will open a dedicated driver assessment centre in Joondalup in November. The Joondalup centre will provide practical driving assessments for all classes, including C-class, aged and over 55s, heavy vehicles and motorcycles. Customers will also be able to transfer interstate and international drivers' licences at the new centre. What is more, the Joondalup driver assessment centre will be open six days a week, Monday to Saturday, from 7.00 am to 6.00 pm, which will help people, especially young people, who work during the week. An additional eight customer service staff will also come onboard to assist customers when applying for their learner's permit or WA photo card, sitting their theory and hazard perception test, and to issue provisional licences when learner drivers pass their test. I am also pleased to advise the house that the Department of Transport will recruit an extra 24 driver assessors to be based at the Joondalup centre. With more driver assessors available, it is expected around 130 practical driver assessments will be delivered at Joondalup each day, in addition to the PDAs already being carried out around our state. The opening of the Joondalup site is the government's latest measure to improve the availability of these assessments, and will help deliver about 35 000 additional assessment slots each year.

The move online of DoT Direct for learners and licence class upgrades has increased customer security and proven to be very popular. Customers are signing up to the self-service portal in the tens of thousands. There were 18 600 DoT Direct sign-ups in June, and a record-breaking 30 900 sign-ups in July. Customer service officers have assisted nearly 6 000 new learner drivers with signing up to DoT Direct at a document verification service centre or agent. In total, that is a sign-up rate of 88 per cent of the total number of new learner drivers, reapplications and licence variations. Since the PDA bookings have moved behind DoT Direct, a search limit was implemented to stop bots from sweeping the system to bulk book available tests. There has been a major improvement in security. I am told that those bots have almost gone to zero in the system. More tests are available, improving the customer experience, and we are now releasing an average of 370 PDAs a day. Those PDAs are being released into the system during the day, not just at nine o'clock in the morning. I am told that quite frequently at the end of a business day there are still spots left in the system that people can access. A minimum of 41 assessments are being booked by the overseas driver's licence holder call centre daily. In total, 410 PDAs are made available to our customers via the online booking system in the overseas driver licence holder call centre every day. Another initiative is a campaign under development that might alleviate the need for learner drivers to come back for repeat tests. I have said before that I got mine on the third go. I would like to thank Terry from Warwick Police Station in 1998 for that one! The smart lane campaign will focus on the importance of being well prepared for a practical driving assessment. I am told that 70 per cent of drivers who go for their first test fail. Some of them are not ready to have their first test. The new campaign will give learners the best chance at passing that first test, and provide advice on navigating the learner driver journey.

The work I have outlined to ease the pressure on driver vehicle service centres is an example of the Cook government listening to local communities about their needs. I look forward to many of those learner drivers passing their tests soon.