

POLICE — CANNABIS — AUTOPSIES

1474. Hon Dr Brian Walker to the minister representing the Minister for Police:

I refer the Minister to recent research undertaken in Canada, quantifying the number of autopsies in which traces of cannabis were detected both before and after legislation, and given that cannabis use can be tracked via post-mortem blood sampling, and I ask:

- (a) how many road fatalities were there in Western Australia in 2022;
- (b) how many of those fatalities let to an autopsy;
- (c) how many, if any, of those autopsies showed traces of cannabis in the deceased's system; and
- (d) how does that figure compare to those recorded in 2021?

**Hon Stephen Dawson replied:**

The Western Australia Police Force advise:

- (a) 175
- (b) All reportable deaths in Western Australia undergo a post mortem examination (autopsy) which can be either external or internal examinations by the State Coroner.
- (c)-(d)

<b>Road fatalities cases received by ChemCentre WA forensic science laboratory for the period of 2021 and 2022</b>		
	<b>Year</b>	
	<b>2021</b>	<b>2022</b>
Cases Pertained To Drivers	121	124
Cases Pertained To Drivers – Trace Detection (Cannabis)	27	29

Note:

- (1) Figures are provisional and subject to revision.
- (2) Figures for (a) are of road fatalities investigated by the WA Police Force Major Crash Investigation Unit between 01 January 2022 and 31 December 2022.
- (3) A trace detection has been defined as any confirmed detection of cannabis (tetrahydrocannabinol) in the deceased's system.
- (4) On 30 June 2023, Major Crash Investigation Unit received figures for (c) and (d) collated by ChemCentre WA Forensic Science Laboratory, with approval from the Office of the State Coroner.
- (4) Figures discrepancies between (a), (c) and (d), is due to road fatalities classed as occurring due to deliberate self-harm, are investigated by the Coronial Investigation Squad or the appropriate Police Districts, not by the Major Crash Investigation Unit.