

Mr John McGrath; Mr Terry Waldron; Mr Rob Johnson; Mr John Kobelke; Mr Max Trenorden; Mr Shane Hill;  
Mr Murray Cowper; Mr Mick Murray; Mr Peter Watson

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## ROAD SAFETY SYSTEM - INDEPENDENT REVIEW

### *Motion*

Resumed from 21 March on the following motion moved by Mr J.E. McGrath -

That this house acknowledges the loss of 64 lives on Western Australian roads this year, nine in the weekend just gone, and calls on the government to undertake a comprehensive and independent review of the road safety system.

**MR J.E. McGRATH** (South Perth) [4.02 pm]: A few hours later than this time last week, I moved the abovementioned motion. Disappointingly, the road toll now stands at 73, which bears testimony to the fact that road safety is a very serious issue. The opposition feels duty bound to raise it in the hope that we can achieve some positive outcomes.

As I pointed out last week, it is a matter of great concern to the Minister for Community Safety, the Premier, the Commissioner of Police, the Office of Road Safety and the community that despite the efforts of the Office of Road Safety and our police enforcement officers, the road safety message does not seem to be getting through to Western Australian motorists. In the past week there have been terrible examples of senseless losses of life. We have all been left wondering how we can achieve a reduction in the road toll. Such is the exasperation of some people that they have suggested that cars be banned altogether. As has been well documented, 2005 was a good year in road safety with only 160 fatalities. In 2006, when there were early signs that it was not going to be a good year, Mr Dorrington, chairman of the Road Safety Council, said -

We've come from 257 deaths down to 162 last year, so we are getting better all the time. But when I say that, here we are again, you know, we're 15 ahead of last year, and you do start thinking what more can we do.

I have moved this motion because people are looking for answers. I understand that the Office of Road Safety is also looking for answers. If we as a Parliament can assist in any way, it is our duty to do so. That is why the opposition called for an independent review into road safety last year. To refresh members' memories, I will explain how the opposition intended that review committee to work. The membership of the review committee was to comprise a chairperson, who would be a member of the community with some knowledge of road safety. That person would be appointed by the government. It would also comprise a member of the government, a member of the opposition, a representative from the Office of Road Safety and a fifth member who would be decided by the minister. That was basically the make-up of the review committee. The minister responded by saying that the current review of road safety would finish this year and that the Office of Road Safety would be embarking on a new strategy. Monash University has been contracted to undertake the research for what could be another five-year road safety strategy. The minister was not inclined to agree to an independent review because he felt that the Office of Road Safety was in the process of doing its own review. I am not so sure about that. However, I see his point that an independent review committee might cover ground that has already been covered. Last week I mentioned that there might be an alternative way. I stress that this is a bipartisan attempt to achieve a positive road safety outcome.

This issue has become a matter of some urgency because the road toll now stands at 73, and it is escalating quickly. This time last year the road toll was 48. Those figures reflect a considerable and worrying hike in the number of fatalities on our roads. Indeed, that is another 25 fatalities in the same period. We had a bad year last year and we could be headed for a worse year this year. Based on current trends, unless people begin to act more responsibly, four times 73 could mean 280 fatalities this year.

Another trigger for this debate was a media statement released by the Royal Automobile Club. The RAC is a very highly respected agency in Western Australia that represents many thousands of motorists. It has representatives on the Road Safety Council, so it is a part of the body that tries to implement road safety in this state. In a media release dated 13 March 2007, the RAC stated -

Poor implementation of its road safety strategy, delays in the completion of road safety projects and the failure to get the road safety message through to young drivers means the State Government only scrapes in with a C grade on its road safety report card . . .

"The State Government is in the final 12 months of its four-year Road Safety Strategy and they have failed to deliver on many key elements," according to David Moir, Executive Manager of Member Advocacy at the RAC.

"This must be a failure in the Government's eye. Their goal was to make WA the safest state in Australia, but four years on we are near the bottom of the class."

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Community Safety Minister John Kobelke has just returned from a trip to Europe and the UK to gather more ideas about road safety, ready for the next strategy.

“We would argue that WA already has a number of good, proven ideas contained in the current ‘Arriving Safely’ strategy, they just need to be implemented . . .

“The Government has delivered on its Safer Cars programme but has fallen behind in Safer Roads and Safer Drivers.

“We need less talk and more action.”

When organisations such as the RAC make those kinds of statements, we must take notice. The RAC gave the government a report card on the progress of its 2003-07 road safety strategy Arriving Safely. The report card gave the government a D for safer drivers, a C for safer roads and a B for safer vehicles. For its overall performance, the government received a C. That was the one area in which the RAC said that the government was making some headway. The RAC found that some additional funding was provided for programs targeting road safety problems but a boost of \$200 million is required for Main Roads WA to address road safety deficiency. For example, it pointed out that many major highways have only two-star safety ratings. It also pointed out that long delays in setting the criteria for the \$103 million safer roads program and insufficient attention to crash history are prime factors in identifying needs. Under the category of safer drivers, the RAC found that there were delays in identifying and implementing measures to target high-risk groups; for example, novice drivers. I know some action will be taken on novice drivers this year but it has not been taken yet.

The RAC also found there were lower levels of random breath test checks and long delays in a new program to target repeat drink drivers. I believe that program will be rolled out later this year. It is proposed that interlocks be installed in cars driven by repeat drink-drivers. However, the RAC is saying that it still has not happened and we are nearly at the end of the road safety strategy Arriving Safely 2003-07. It is taking a long time for some of these things to happen. A speed camera program has not been evaluated, there are long delays in processing associated infringements and the implementation of a new police system, and there are lower levels of screening of vehicles by speed cameras. There have been a lot of complaints by people who are getting infringement notices four months after going through a Multanova. That is a long delay, especially as people may lose their licence. They may be a dangerous driver but because of the process, they are on the road for four months.

The RAC also said that the government has been unable to implement a program to deter speeding by motorcyclists. This has had quite a bit of publicity. Unfortunately, because of the danger of having a normal front-end plate on a motorcycle, they are not required to have one. Therefore, motorcyclists are not being picked up by Multanovas. We think motorcycles should have a plastic licence plate or cameras should be installed that can take photos of offending vehicles from behind.

In the overall rating, WA fatality rates are much higher than targets and worse than the rates in most other states. There were increases in fatalities in 2006 and 2007. There were concerns with increases in hospitalisations of road users involved in road crashes. The RAC referred to poor implementation of the state’s road safety strategy, delays in safety projects, with carryover of associated funding and inadequate government commitment, and inadequate engagement of safety measures for road users, particularly youth and in rural areas. The RAC is saying that some of these strategies of the Office of Road Safety have been quite good but this government has not implemented them in the time that it should have. That is a real issue.

I will make another point on the way the Office of Road Safety is run. A lot of people in Western Australia probably do not understand how it works. Above the Road Safety Council, which consists of stakeholders from various sectors, is the Ministerial Council on Road Safety. The ministers on that council - I know we have had some changes of ministers in the past, so I hope these are up to date - are the Minister for Community Safety, the Minister for Health, the Minister for Education and Training, the Minister for Local Government and the Minister for Planning and Infrastructure. These ministers are all expected to have a very serious commitment and concern for road safety. I would like the minister to tell us how often these ministers get together and what sort of input they have into the overall road safety strategy, because the Ministerial Council on Road Safety does sit above the Road Safety Council.

During a visit to Joondalup recently I had a briefing with some members of the police force. We talked about road safety. They had a number of points to make about their experiences on the roads. I believe we should talk to these people because they are on the front-line. Computer boffins and universities can do all sorts of studies but the people who do the front-line work are the members of our police force. They said that of the last 51 fatal accidents, one-third of the fatalities were not wearing seatbelts. We know that that is a real problem. When the Premier wanted to increase the fine imposed for not wearing a seatbelt to \$500, I supported his stronger stance on seatbelts because I think it is a real worry. People who do not use their seatbelts are totally irresponsible and

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they should be penalised. I have a problem with fines because too many people do not pay fines. A lot of people are driving on our roads who have not paid fines and they have lost their licence. They do not seem to care. That is one of the big issues we have with our society. These people do not carry on in the responsible way we expect them to as citizens.

The police at Joondalup said that the reasons for fatalities were driver attitude, education, no seatbelts, fatigue and alcohol. They claim that the effect of alcohol is not as bad as it once was. We understand that that has changed since the days before we had random breath testing and things like that. A lot more people used to drive under the influence of alcohol. The police say that it is not as big a cause of fatalities as it once was. The other issue that the police have a concern about is motorcycles. They say that motorcycles should have front plates. The government should be urged to do something about that as quickly as possible. In recent times there has been a spate of fatalities involving motorcyclists.

**Mr A.J. Simpson:** Most involving cars as well with motorbikes. Cars are more at fault than motorbikes.

**Mr J.E. McGRATH:** The statistics show that motorcyclists are also leaving the roads and failing to take bends. If a motorcyclist loses control, he can easily hit a car, the same as a car can hit a motorbike. It is an anomaly if a motorcycle can go through a Multanova without getting fined and a car cannot. The police say that fines are not the answer. They say that offenders can even arrange to pay their fines over time. When they fall off the time payment, they get behind and they do not pay. Then they drive without a licence. We have to understand that there are people in our society who do not care about things like that. I am sure I speak on behalf of all members when I say that if we lost our licence, we would not drive or if we got a fine, we would pay it. There are some people who do not care. They do not worry about those things.

I do not know what the figure is but the minister may be able to tell me how many people have had their licence suspended. The police tell me that thousands of people are driving without a licence and some may not know they have lost their licence.

**Mr J.C. Kobelke:** Obviously, we don't know the number because then further action would be taken, but there are enough caught to give one the suspicion that it is much higher than it should be.

**Mr J.E. McGRATH:** The minister would know at any one time how many licences have been suspended.

**Mr J.C. Kobelke:** One would hope so.

**Mr J.E. McGRATH:** The minister would not know how many of those people are driving, but he would know how many people have suspended licences.

**Mr J.C. Kobelke:** Sometimes these are kept on different systems and they're not easily extracted. An interjection from the member for Riverton might give you a more accurate answer.

**Mr A.D. McRae:** The number of suspended licences is known but the police advise you they don't know how many of those people with suspended licences are actually in breach of that suspension and out on the road. That's an impossible thing to know because people can do that on a daily basis. There are a very specific and known number of people with suspended driving licences and that database is kept at the licensing business unit within DPI.

**Mr J.E. McGRATH:** The police find that when they do these roadside tests with the computerised devices, they can do licence checks. They find that a lot of people are driving with a suspended licence. A person is not covered by third party insurance if he drives without a licence. It is a serious offence. When I got my licence, I was told that one of the most serious traffic offences was driving without a licence.

**Mr A.D. McRae:** Doesn't that suggest to you that somewhere in the core of this problem is a disregard for the rules of the road that have been developed on the basis of known safety requirements? This disregard is an increasing problem across the population.

**Mr J.E. McGRATH:** Yes, in a lot of spheres.

**Mr A.D. McRae:** By not wearing a seatbelt or driving with a licence that is not in a proper condition, it shows a disregard for the rules and laws that have been established over a long time.

**Mr J.E. McGRATH:** It is a cultural thing. The police told me that they believe that people whose vehicle registration expires will continue to drive because they do not care.

**Mr A.D. McRae:** I understand that.

**Mr J.E. McGRATH:** The police tell me that the magistrates do not like the fines enforcement register because it is just not working. I hope we can look at these things. We have an agency that is trying to look at everything,

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but we should try to get more people involved. As members of Parliament, we have many people come into our office to have their say on road safety. Many of them have good ideas.

Another suggestion the police made was to have a downgrading of licences. If people are known to be bad drivers, perhaps their licence could be downgraded to, for example, a P-plate driver's licence. They could be told that they had demonstrated that they were not responsible on the road and, as a result, they would be issued with a restricted licence.

The police told me that another problem is that once a person's suspension from driving a vehicle has expired, the person can obtain another licence without undergoing any test. I understand that P-plate drivers are required to sit the test again. People can lose their licence for six months for drink-driving or reckless driving and when their term of suspension expires, they can just get another licence. Some people have suggested to me that those people should be made to earn that licence by again sitting a written or physical test.

**Mr A.D. McRae:** Are you aware of the changes we made last year to licensing conditions for people who exceed the demerit point threshold?

**Mr J.E. McGRATH:** Yes, and I do not agree with that. Double or nothing - that is played at the casino. If people lose 12 demerit points, they do not deserve another chance. I have been driving for a long time and have been issued with plenty of speeding tickets, but I have never lost my licence through the loss of demerit points. Have any members lost their licence because they have reached the demerit point threshold?

**Mr R.C. Kucera:** I have never lost one point - touch wood.

**Mr J.E. McGRATH:** The member for Yokine was a policeman and I would be disappointed if he had lost a demerit point.

I am aware of what happened last year, but the opposition feels that people who lose 12 demerit points have been given plenty of warnings along the way through infringement notices.

**Mr A.D. McRae:** That goes to the cultural point. Where the controlled licence system has been introduced, the evidence is that for the overwhelming bulk of people it changes their driving behaviour.

**Mr J.E. McGRATH:** I understand that. It is a cultural issue and we need to look at it.

The police said that they have an issue with driver training and suggested that police should visit schools to give schoolchildren better tuition and make them realise that a licence to drive a vehicle is a great responsibility. Perhaps students could be given written tests before they apply for their learners' permits. Some schools include road safety as part of the school curriculum. Perhaps that is an area on which we need to focus. We must look at the issue of road safety in a broad sense to try to save lives. It is a cultural and attitudinal thing. We could start by getting police to visit the schools.

Police numbers is a real problem. Some police made the point to me that they think it might be difficult to get more people into the police force, but an option is for police to work a 44-hour week, if they do not already do so. The police officers who are prepared to work extra hours could be sent to the hotspots where there is bad hoon behaviour. The police would be prepared to do that.

**Mr R.C. Kucera:** There is certainly no shortage of overtime in the metropolitan area. They can have all the overtime they want.

**Mr J.E. McGRATH:** That is what the Joondalup police told me. They told me their area grows by the size of Kalgoorlie each year. They have a massive task to try to control the crime and the road rage and hoonish behaviour. They are doing a terrific job under extremely difficult circumstances.

I mentioned to the minister last week that I had a meeting with Iain Cameron, the executive director of the Office of Road Safety. I understand that the office is doing its best to combat the problem. However, the problem is that the message is not getting through. Obviously, the public is not listening. The senseless loss of lives on our roads makes people wonder why money is being spent on road safety campaigns, including television advertising. People continue to not wear seatbelts. It is a sad state of affairs.

The opposition wants a review of the road safety system. We understand that the Office of Road Safety is currently involved in a five-year strategy plan. However, a review of how the whole system operates would be a worthwhile exercise. It would demonstrate to the people of Western Australia that we want to inform them how the Office of Road Safety works. Most people who have a driver's licence would not know who is on the board of the Office of Road Safety or what bodies comprise the Road Safety Council. All they see is Grant Dorrington on the TV telling them they must slow down; therefore, they think that he makes the rules. He is the most

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unpopular person in Perth. The road safety system is bigger than that. It should be more transparent and the people of Western Australia should be able to have their say.

An independent review will give all sectors of road safety and the public the opportunity to have an input. If the minister will not do that, at the very least we should use Parliament House as the venue for a forum on road safety. I mentioned that last week before the debate was adjourned. I would like to see the members of the Ministerial Council on Road Safety attend that summit. The public could be invited to attend. It would attract a lot of media attention. The Office of Road Safety could explain how and why it has come up with its strategies. The public would then be a little better educated on how we, as a Parliament, intend to address the issue of road safety. A precedent has been set and I refer to the drug and water summits that were held in this chamber. Road safety is a matter of great importance.

As of today 73 lives have been lost on our roads, and that is too many. We are looking for answers. I am not saying that the opposition has the answers. I am sure that neither the government nor the Office of Road Safety has the answers. However, collectively, we can do something by having an input into it. Let us, in a bipartisan way, make a concerted effort to encourage the public to understand that we are looking at this issue sensibly and with commonsense. We are disappointed that people are not getting the message, but let us take them along with us rather than try to hit them with a big stick. Using a big stick will not work. As I said last week, if we increase speeding fines, the people driving five or six kilometres an hour over the speed limit will be caught and they are not the ones who are being killed on the roads. The people who are causing major carnage are those who are driving at 40 and 50 kilometres an hour above the speed limit. My personal view is that we should take their cars from them so that they cannot drive. Let them catch a bus. I am sure that every member in this chamber, except the member for Yokine, has paid a speeding fine at some stage. Even the member for Moore, who I said last week had never been given a speeding ticket in his life, admitted to me that in the past few months he was given a ticket. He should come clean and tell us what it was for.

**Mr G. Snook:** Driving through a red light.

Several members interjected.

**Mr G. Snook:** I paid up.

**Mr J.E. McGRATH:** We have all been guilty of breaking the law on the road. I do not think that the way to send this message is by telling everyone who speeds that they will be hit with a big fine. People who speed excessively should be hit with a very serious penalty. People who are totally irresponsible on the roads and who want to drive at 40 or 50 kilometres an hour over the limit should not be on the roads. We should be tough on them but we must be very careful not to hit average drivers in the hip pocket.

**MR T.K. WALDRON (Wagin) [4.31 pm]:** I usually comment on road safety issues because road safety is something I take very seriously. I congratulate the member for South Perth on his motion. His motive for moving it is very genuine. The present road statistics are pretty frightening. Given the road safety figures for previous years, it is a shame that they are sneaking up again. Although some people have argued that that has occurred because there are more cars on the road and those types of things, over the previous few years the toll has come down. Therefore, obviously something is not going right now. Although the increased toll seems to be occurring in short bursts, the trend now appears to be continuing and that is of considerable concern. I, too, think we need a bipartisan approach to this problem because it is a huge issue for every one of us on the roads. Members of this place and their families are frequent road users.

There is no doubt that the Road Safety Council has good intentions. Its aims are terrific and obviously its strategies have been successful in the past. However, when things are not going right, we must analyse what we are doing and realise that maybe some of the policies that we thought were terrific are not working as well as we think. Pride and sticking to something because it was our idea should not get in the way of reconsidering the way we do things. It is very important for the Road Safety Council to get around and listen to not just interest groups, but also the community generally to try to form some different opinions with the aim of trying different strategies. At present, not everything is working.

**Mr A.D. McRae:** There was a road safety forum held in Geraldton last Friday.

**Mr T.K. WALDRON:** I knew that, because Grant Dorrington rang me when he was there. I ran a road safety forum in Narrogin last year, and the member for Avon will run a forum as will the member for Albany. They are fantastic ideas.

**Ms M.M. Quirk:** The member for Collie-Wellington also ran one.

**Mr T.K. WALDRON:** Yes. They are great. I found when I ran the one in Narrogin, and I am sure the experience for everyone else was the same, although a forum cannot solve all the problems of safety, it helps to

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highlight the importance of road safety in our own regions. Local people take the matter on board and create some priorities. Some local councils have formed committees on road safety and are running things locally. I think we need to address the issue locally. Although the Road Safety Council, the minister and politicians can espouse the importance of road safety and address the broader picture, local people must be involved. Something that I always mention in these speeches is that we never want to discourage local people from getting involved. Many service clubs are doing great work out in the community. That work might not always be exactly in line with the tried and true methods, but we should always encourage local groups to run subsidised courses for kids who have obtained their licence for the first time. If we keep chipping away at the local level, while the Road Safety Council delivers the overall message, that is probably the best way to address this issue. There is not one answer.

The member for South Perth mentioned many different strategies such as Multanova cameras, road safety messages and talking to kids at schools. It reminds me of the battle against salinity: there are many ideas for what should be done, all of which are worthwhile, but their success depends on how we coordinate them and how persistently we work at them.

The suggestion that we hold a review or a summit is a good one. Sometimes people criticise those sorts of events for being just big talkfests about issues that go through to the keeper. It is a bit like planning: sometimes we plan, but how often do we stick to the final detail of the plan. We tend to follow our basic plan, but in the end our plan changes. I have always found that the process of deciding on a plan is what counts because it provides a point for revisiting and a basis to work from. The minister and the Road Safety Council should give strong consideration to holding a summit or a review of some sort. There is probably quite a bit of merit in doing that.

I still think education is very important for our young ones. Everywhere I go now I hear about the importance of learning for children in their first three years. I am not talking so much about road safety in those first three years. Road safety should not dominate the school syllabus, but schools should be consistently sending little messages to kids so that by the time they reach their mid-teens, it is well ingrained in their minds that driving a car must be taken very seriously because it can kill them. The other day I read - the minister said the same thing - that our primary schools and secondary schools have a helluva lot to deal with. The other day my youngest daughter, who attends Willetton Senior High School, said that she was learning about road safety at school. She is going to bring home the information and show me what she is doing. I think that is a great. It is an example of how her attention has been focused on road safety at school. That is the kind of thing we need to do. I think kids are aware of the importance of road safety. In my road safety forum about 85 children in that 16 or 17-year-old age group attended. It was interesting to listen to them. As we get older we think we are in touch with young people but we are not always. We lose touch to some degree. That day those kids talked about their habits when they go out, how they get home and peer group pressure etc. We forget that we did things that are similar to what kids do today. We must keep talking to kids and they must have leaders among them. They are their own best helpers. Recently my daughter, who has had her licence only since October, phoned for my wife and I to pick her up. She had been involved in a disagreement because she and her mates had taken the keys from another girl who wanted to drive her car. She had gone berserk. Funnily enough, my wife picked her up because I had had a couple of drinks myself and could not go. The girl probably had had a few too many drinks and was going to get in the car. The kids stopped her and almost caused a young women's catfight. However, that girl was very thankful later and apologised to the others. We must involve the kids because they too can drive the agenda.

We often talk about 17 to 25-year-olds because, undoubtedly, they represent the increased statistics in that area. However, not only the kids speed. I drive an average of about 75 000 kilometres a year, as do many other members, and I see people of all age groups behaving badly on the roads. Many drivers in the 30 to 45 age group think they have been there and done that and are good drivers because they have a number of years' experience. We have probably all thought along those lines to some degree and perhaps been guilty of passing another car at the wrong place or roaring past another car at about 145 kilometres an hour. In those situations, if something goes wrong, we are in trouble. It is not just the kids. I spoke with Grant Dorrington about the number of deaths of motorcyclists. Next week I hope that Mr Leisk and his son, who are well known motorcyclists, will meet with Grant Dorrington to offer their assistance and provide their thoughts about what can be done for motorcyclists. It is important to use the expertise of specialists in certain areas and to get them involved. People might not agree with everything they have to say and the Road Safety Council might not take everything on board, but it is another initiative that could help us; therefore, we should not turn a blind eye to it.

I agree with the many programs that target drink-driving and wearing seatbelts. Many accidents occur when single vehicles run off the road. Although it is sometimes caused by tiredness, speed or alcohol, many of those types of accidents occur by inattentiveness. I was talking to the member for Merredin about this recently. Most

**Extract from Hansard**

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people who often drive in the country can remember a moment when they have either done something with their phone, have leant across the back seat to get a book or have reached for a pen to quickly jot something down and, in doing so, have taken their eyes off the ball and have had a scare. That is a good thing because it sends us a message. The trouble is that the people who have been killed did exactly the same thing but rather than just getting a scare, they have lost control of their vehicle and died. It is too late for them. Many of us have probably been lucky at one time or another. I will not take up too much time because I know other members want to speak on this issue.

It is important to utilise sporting groups in our communities. When I worked for the West Australian Country Football League, it was sponsored by the Road Safety Council, which ran the Belt-Up campaign. That campaign did a lot of good. Some members might say that it was a failure because many people do not wear their seatbelts. However, I believe it made a big difference. Maybe that message must change; perhaps it has grown old and tired. Sporting clubs in country Western Australia in particular, but also in the metropolitan area, are great vehicles to get messages through to young people. Young women are a key also. From my experience of sport and social occasions, I can say that quite often the young women make the sensible decisions and often the young blokes will listen to them rather than to the other blokes. We should concentrate on their responsibilities. However, above all, we must take responsibility for this ourselves. Whenever I leave home, my wife always tells me to make sure that I come home to my loved ones. I think about that all the time. No-one wants to get killed. If a person dies, he is gone, and he leaves behind his children, family and friends. We must take personal responsibility for this issue. When I get in the car and am about to drive from Katanning to Willetton, it is my job to make sure that I get there. We must tell ourselves that each time we get into a car.

Members have mentioned the demerit point system and the incentives, which I believe are very good. About three years ago, the National Party raised an idea that was resurrected about a year ago but which has never been taken up. I believe that the idea deserves consideration. Whenever a driver incurs 12 demerit points, it means there is a problem because the driver continues to reoffend. It could be that the driver has just been unlucky but it could mean that the driver is consistently breaking the rules. That puts the driver at a higher risk. Drivers who have accumulated 12 demerit points could be given the option to have their demerit points reduced to nine points if they underwent a driving course to refocus them on what they should be doing, which would enable them to keep driving. That would be a positive step. People often say that the problem is not them; it is the other bad drivers. However, sometimes it is us. That initiative would be a way of targeting those people. We must keep highlighting these issues. It is not until someone we know is involved in a car accident that the reality hits home and we realise that it is not just another statistic in the newspaper or another figure that members have talked about; it is someone's mother, father, brother or sister. I support the motion. It is a good idea to hold a summit or review of some sort. I look forward to hearing the minister's response.

**MR R.F. JOHNSON (Hillarys)** [4.44 pm]: I support the motion before the house. I preface my comments by commending the member for South Perth for the tremendous job he has done in this area, for the amount of research he has undertaken and for the many hours of his time he has spent on this issue. He has done a tremendous job. I have said it many times and I will say it again: I believe that there are two main types of people who speed. The first is the people who speed unintentionally. By that I mean people who drive five or 10 kilometres over the speed limit. They could have been driving up an incline or they might have taken their eyes off the speedometer for a moment to look at the road and their foot has gradually pressed down on the accelerator slightly and taken them up to 10 kilometres an hour over the speed limit. That could occur in any speed zone, whether it is 50, 60, 70, 80, 100 or 110 kilometres an hour. They break the law by speeding unintentionally. Unfortunately, they break the law because they go over the speed limit, and they get dealt with. However, we should not be so hard on them, because they are not intentional speeders. They are the not the people who are causing the accidents.

**Mr M.P. Murray:** If they are not paying attention, they are.

**Mr R.F. JOHNSON:** I did not say that. I said that they may have taken their attention off the speedometer. It is dangerous to drive a car and look at the speedometer all the time. Drivers must look at the road ahead of them, to the left and right of them and in the rear-view mirror. Drivers must be aware of what is around them. A driver who is permanently looking at the speedometer is driving dangerously. Drivers must look at it every now and again to ensure that they are not driving faster than the speed limit. However, people can creep five or 10 kilometres over the speed limit. Every member would be guilty of doing that. I challenge any member to say that he has never unintentionally driven five or 10 kilometres over the speed limit. There is silence in the house. That is because members know what I am saying is true.

**Mr J.C. Kobelke:** I don't anymore.

**Mr R.F. JOHNSON:** I bet the minister does. I bet there were times when he went over the speed limit.

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**Mr J.C. Kobelke:** Not intentionally.

**Mr R.F. JOHNSON:** That is exactly what I am saying. The minister should listen to what I am saying. The minister is not guilty, in my view because he does not do it intentionally. Occasionally, he will drive over the 60 or 70-kilometre-an-hour limit. He might unintentionally drive 75 or 78 kilometres an hour in a 70-kilometre-an-hour zone limit. I do not believe that the minister should be penalised quite so heavily for doing that. That is one category of people who exceed the speed limit. I do not have a serious problem with them because they are very rarely responsible for causing an accident, unless there are other contributing factors such as illegally doing a right turn or something else that is illegal. However, driving between five and 10 kilometres an hour over the speed limit is not usually the cause of an accident unless there are other contributing factors.

The second category is the intentional speeders. They are the people who know what they are doing. They will drive 20 kilometres an hour over the speed limit, regardless of the speed limit. They will drive at 90 kilometres an hour in a 70-kilometre-an-hour zone, at 100 kilometres an hour in an 80-kilometre-an-hour zone, and they will drive at 130 or 140 kilometres an hour in a 110-kilometre-an-hour zone. They are the intentional speeders. They are the people who are driving recklessly, and in some cases they are driving dangerously. They are the people that we must come down on like a tonne of bricks because they are causing most of the accidents when speed is the factor and when it is not simply a matter of drink-driving, sleep deprivation or lack of concentration for one reason or another. They are the people who very often cause accidents.

I support the motion to have a complete review of road safety in Western Australia. I refer the minister to the budget estimates hearings last year when we discussed this matter. The member for South Perth and I put our genuine concerns to the minister. We were genuine when we said we would be happy to take a non-political, bipartisan approach to road safety. We have concerns about the Road Safety Council as it is presently made up. Quite frankly, it is not successful. Some people have been in their jobs for a long time. Are they really capable of coming up with new initiatives? I do not think they are. I have nothing against Grant Dorrington, but it is time for a change. The government and the opposition need to sit down together with other interested parties and people who have expertise in this area. It is better to go outside government, the bureaucracy, and even the opposition. It is better to go outside and get some input from people who specialise in road safety and the safety of vehicles.

A vehicle is a dangerous weapon. If a person who is licensed to own a gun and is a member of a sporting club is seen pointing that gun at somebody, what do the police do? They take the gun away. I would like to see the same thing happen to people who are using vehicles as a dangerous weapons. I am not saying that people speeding 20 kilometres an hour over the limit should have their vehicles impounded, but there should be a point at which people who flagrantly abuse the laws of road safety and endanger the lives of innocent people receive not merely a couple of demerit points or a fine of a couple of hundred dollars, but face much more serious consequences. For a start they need to lose their licences.

What do we do with people who drive their vehicles once they have lost their licences, and they know they are driving illegally? Do we fine them again? The government will not send them to prison. There is no point in fining them because many people do not even pay their fines, as the minister and the government know. Unpaid fines and infringements amount to \$132 million. These people do not bother to pay and they know they will not be sent to prison for it. Now, the new scheme is that they may be given a 10-hour community service order. That is not the answer. The only way people can be made to stop and think about driving dangerously and recklessly and putting innocent people at risk is by having their vehicles taken from them. Assets of crime in other areas are confiscated, so why not do the same to people who put lives at risk? I would have no compunction whatsoever about taking their vehicles.

We have seen reports recently of indigenous people who continue to drive their vehicles while under suspension and drunk. Unfortunately, it is a very high proportion compared to that in the total population of Western Australia. Not only are they breaking the law by driving without licences, they are also drinking and driving and putting people's lives at risk. That needs to be dealt with. What are we to do in that situation? It is no good fining them because they will not pay the fine. We will not send them to prison, and they will not complete community service orders, so we must take their vehicles. This is very harsh, but we must get serious about this and take the dangerous weapons away until they are prepared to behave responsibly on the roads. If somebody is stupid enough to loan a vehicle to someone whom he knows has lost his driver's licence, he is part of the conspiracy to allow a person to break the law even further. That person loses the car that somebody else has been driving under suspension and while drunk.

I will return to the hoon legislation, because I think the minister was very soft on that. For behaving in a hoonish and dangerous manner or exceeding the speed limit by more than 45 kilometres an hour, the driver loses his car for 48 hours, which is absolutely nothing. Every single person I have spoken to has agreed with what I said. They have said that 48 hours is nothing, and that it should be a month or three months. All I asked for was seven



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days, so that the driver cannot go and grab the car back after 48 hours. The driver will not have gone to court by then and will not have lost his licence, so he can get back into the vehicle and drive recklessly and dangerously again. That is stupid; it is putting people's lives at risk. If these people do not learn through education and losing the use of their vehicles for a very short time, the government must get tough. This namby-pamby approach will not work. The minister said that he could not make it a punishment, but I do not give a stuff whether it is called a punishment or anything else. To impound the car of somebody who has been driving 45 kilometres an hour over the speed limit, which is dangerous driving or reckless driving - almost certainly that driver will lose his licence when the case comes before the court - and just give back the car after 48 hours is reckless behaviour on the part of this government. The police should be able to get those people who have broken the law before a court, and have their licences suspended so that they are not able to drive vehicles. What do we do to somebody who has been found guilty of that, and is caught driving again? We should confiscate their vehicles. If we confiscate enough vehicles, people will soon learn the lesson. They will soon learn that this is a tough government. If the government does not get tough, when the opposition is elected to government, we will be the tough government.

**Mr J.R. Quigley:** But you'll be 80 by then!

**Mr R.F. JOHNSON:** I promise that I will not be.

As understand it, the minister intends to move an amendment to this motion, which I do not have a problem with because it will support looking at this issue in a bipartisan way. That is an excellent suggestion; I think both sides have agreed to it now. Unfortunately, it has happened a year after it was first suggested, but better late than never. Many areas must be considered in driving and road safety.

I do not agree with young people being able to drive a car on the roads of Western Australia at the age of 16. They are still children. The government still wants to treat them as children in the eyes of the law when they commit other crimes. The government does not want them named and shamed and all the rest of it. They are children at 16; I accept that, but they are also too young to get a V8 car and drive it. I did not think anybody should be able to apply for a licence until the age of 17. In the United Kingdom people cannot apply for car licences until they are 17, and then they have to go through quite a rigorous process of learning to drive. About 90 per cent of the youngsters in the UK go through driving schools, and are professionally taught how to drive. They would not get full licences until they are probably about 17 and a half or 18. Does the minister honestly think that it is right for 16, 17 or even 18-year-olds to be driving V8 cars on our roads, particularly country roads? A lot of our country roads are not all that good quality. People can drive fast on the freeway without having an accident because there are three or four lanes of good quality road. However, I know from having driven on many of them that country roads are often not of good quality, and they are a danger for people driving fast.

We must look at different aspects. A bipartisan forum would look firstly at increasing the age at which young people can apply for drivers' licences for cars. I suggest that the age be 17. I also suggest that young people aged 16 be allowed only to ride motorcycles with an engine capacity of less than 50 cubic centimetres. Riding a motorbike with such a low engine capacity is not a bad way to learn the rules of the road. It is probably a good thing to do, and a lot of other countries have taken the idea up.

Double demerit points apply on long weekends. That is a gimmick. Many people believe that is just a revenue raising measure. A speed limit of 60 kilometres an hour may have been in place on a particular road for the past 20 or 30 years. If the speed limit on that road is reduced to 50 kilometres an hour, and people exceed that speed limit by five or six kilometres, they will get done, with double the demerits and double the fine.

**Mr J.C. Kobelke:** It is not double the fine.

**Mr R.F. JOHNSON:** Okay, it is not double the fine, so it does not increase the revenue. However, people run the risk that they will lose their licence much more quickly, even though they have not been speeding intentionally. Like the minister and me, many people do not speed intentionally. They just forget that the speed limit on a particular road has been reduced, even though there has never been an accident on that road, and the speed limit has always been 60 kilometres an hour. In some areas it is necessary to increase the speed limit. A speed limit of 50 kilometres an hour may be fine on inner roads in estates or suburbs, but it is often too slow in the outer roads between suburbs. The forum needs to look at this matter. As I have said, double demerit points are a gimmick. If the government was serious about double demerit points, it would apply them not just during holiday periods, but every day of the year. People who drive at 30 kilometres or 40 kilometres over the speed limit should not be on the streets. I certainly do not want them to be on the streets.

[Member's time extended.]

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**Mr R.F. JOHNSON:** Another important issue is the quality of vehicles. Some people drive an old banger. It may be an old V8, and the bodywork is not very good, but it has been souped up to go very fast. Vehicles like that are a danger on the road. The vehicle may be 10 or 15 years old. However, it is not illegal to drive an old banger unless a police officer has issued the driver with a pink slip to take it over the pits, and a defect is found. We should consider adopting the system that applies in the United Kingdom, and I think also in the eastern States, under which a car must be tested regularly when it is more than three, or perhaps five, years old. A car that is less three years old should not have any defects with the brakes, lights, steering and tyres. However, if a car is five years old, defects may start to come through. The United Kingdom uses what is called a Ministry of Transport test. That test is not carried out by the police. Particular garages are authorised by law to carry out those tests and to check whether there is any rust on the vehicle that may be considered a danger, and to ensure that the brakes, lights, steering and tyres are roadworthy. We are putting lives at risk, because we do not have a compulsory roadworthiness test for old vehicles. This morning I heard on Radio 6PR that in Melbourne, where such a test is compulsory, it is rare for people to drive old bangers, because if their vehicles are not up to scratch, they are not given a roadworthiness certificate.

The number of road deaths in this state is horrendous. We all focus on the deaths on our roads as a result of vehicle accidents. However, we do not always know the circumstances of those deaths and whether it is the fault of the driver or someone else. Is it correct that if a person dies of a heart attack while driving, that is included in the road death statistics?

**Mr J.C. Kobelke:** No, it is not. It is included in the initial figures. However, if the coroner's report shows that the death was due to other causes, it is taken out of the road death figures. That is why the figures are adjusted regularly. The police figures for 2006 indicate that there were 203 deaths. The official number is now 202, because although one of those deaths was initially counted as a road fatality, the cause of death has now been attributed to another event, so that has been taken out of the figures.

**Mr R.F. JOHNSON:** So the final figures are purely for people who were killed either when they were driving or when they were being driven?

**Mr J.C. Kobelke:** They are for people whose cause of death has been clearly established to be due to an incident on the roads.

**Mr R.F. JOHNSON:** Would that include pedestrians?

**Mr J.C. Kobelke:** Yes.

**Mr R.F. JOHNSON:** Exactly. That is what I am saying. It is a tragedy when a person is killed in a road accident, no matter whether it is the person who was driving the vehicle, or an innocent passenger or pedestrian. However, we should not focus just on deaths on the roads, because that is only half the story. We need to focus also on the people who are permanently disabled as a result of an incident on the roads. People may be able to get over a road death in a relatively short time. However, if a person is seriously injured and is brain damaged or becomes a paraplegic, in some instances that may be worse than death, because that person, and his or her family, will need to live with that every day. Many of these people have little, if any, quality of life. The cost to society for the care of these people may run into hundreds of millions of dollars a year. The cost to society if someone is killed on the roads is much less than if someone is seriously injured, because those people need lifelong care. If those people are very young, there may be an ongoing cost for 50, 60 and sometimes 70 years.

I urge the minister, when he moves his amendment, to move it in good faith, and to include not only members from this side of the house, but also people outside the bureaucracy. The minister should do what they did in the United Kingdom and call in experts in the manufacture of cars, in road safety issues and in the causes of accidents, because although speed may not be the cause of an accident, it may be a contributing factor to an accident.

Recently my electorate lost a very good police officer. He was killed by a driver who is alleged to have taken drugs and whose licence was under suspension, as I understand it. We need to get these people off the roads. The number of unlicensed drivers on our roads in Western Australia is horrendous. I believe that if people have been driving so recklessly that they have lost their licences, yet are allowed to drive vehicles again, that is tantamount to an intention to commit manslaughter. Members will not find anyone who takes a harder stance on this matter than me. I feel very strongly about the needless loss of lives, particularly young lives. To allow lives to be lost through the stupidity, recklessness and dangerous driving of another person is criminal. The penalties handed down to people who drive recklessly and dangerously do not fit the crime. I have yet to come across a person who thinks that a \$1 500 fine and a two-year licence suspension are suitable for someone who is found guilty of dangerous driving causing grievous bodily harm. It is not sufficient that a person who drives dangerously and causes grievous bodily harm should receive a \$1 500 fine and a two-year licence suspension if the victim of that dangerous driving receives brain damage and has no quality of life for the rest of his or her life.

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We must reassess the penalties for people who intentionally drive horrifically and dangerously and who know that they are breaking the law. We should not be targeting the people who exceed the speed limit by five or 10 kilometres an hour when they take their eyes off the speedometer briefly to look at other things that are going on around them as a safety measure. Indeed, a person must take his or her eyes off the speedometer to look around the vehicle or at the roadway ahead to determine the traffic situation. The government and the police should not be coming down so heavily on those people. I have seen police officers with handheld guns in a 50-kilometre-an-hour zone - it was a 60-kilometre-an-hour zone for 20 years - that has never been the scene of an accident, let alone a fatality, pinging people for doing 56 or 57 kilometres an hour. That is pathetic. It is not the proper way to use our police officers. They should be positioned on streets where it is known that people speed intentionally and put other people's lives at risk. They should ping them and ping them severely. If those drivers continue to behave in a reckless manner by driving in that way, they should lose their licences. If they continue to drive after they have lost their licences - and if they drive and drink alcohol, which is a horrendous thing to do - their vehicles should be confiscated for good. Those sorts of drivers should be kept off the roads, because when they get behind the wheels of cars they are handling dangerous weapons. The government would confiscate a gun from a person because it is a dangerous weapon. I suggest that it confiscate vehicles from reoffending reckless and dangerous drivers.

**MR J.C. KOBELKE (Balcatta - Minister for Community Safety)** [5.14 pm]: I congratulate and thank the member for South Perth for the motion and for the way in which he has addressed the subject. I take it from his contribution that he is extremely genuine about this issue and that he is trying to address the issue of road safety and the unacceptable number of deaths and serious accidents on our roads in a positive way. I sincerely thank him for his contribution and for the way he has raised this issue. The member for South Perth spoke about this concern being shared by many. I think that is absolutely correct. As the member for South Perth and other members stated, the subject of road safety must be addressed by members of this house, the Road Safety Council, the Office of Road Safety, the police, the Fire and Emergency Services Authority, ambulance officers and the general community.

Although clearly demonstrated factors continue to contribute to accidents and fatalities, I have formed the view that the most serious factor of road accidents and deaths is the attitude of drivers. I am not sure how to change that attitude. In his contribution to this motion a week ago, the member for South Perth touched on that when he said that his experience of Perth drivers compared with drivers in other places had led him to believe that we have a poor standard of driving. Regrettably, I agree with that statement. We must change the attitude of drivers if we are going to see a marked reduction in the number of fatalities and serious accidents.

I will describe a road incident that I saw recently. Like some members opposite, I sometimes work on a Sunday if there is an opportunity to do some media work. One Sunday at 10 o'clock in the morning, I was seeking to get onto the freeway in the northern suburbs near where I live to get to Parliament House to do some media. The freeway was not busy. When I entered the onramp onto the Mitchell Freeway, there were two vehicles in front of me. There may have been another vehicle behind me, but certainly the freeway was not crowded. The two vehicles in front of me had to merge from two lanes into one as they came onto the main thoroughfare of the Mitchell Freeway. It did not appear that those drivers were racing each other; nor did it appear that they knew each other. It was clear that neither driver was going to let the other vehicle get in front. The drivers accelerated at the point at which the lanes merged and for several metres one vehicle was driving along the stopping bay. That happened on Sunday morning when people are generally not in a rush. Neither driver was going to let the other driver move in front. The member for South Perth commented on merging traffic in his contribution last week. I think that incident is symptomatic of the attitude of too many Western Australian drivers.

The factors that have been highlighted over many years are still very important. I refer to speed, alcohol, fatigue - sometimes it is inattention - and seatbelts. We must keep tackling all the issues. Speed is a major contributor to accidents and the greater the speed at which a vehicle is travelling, the greater the chance of death or severe injuries. We are well aware that alcohol is an issue. Drugs have become an issue because they, too, affect the ability of drivers to drive safely and responsibly. Fatigue is a major issue. The number of one-vehicle accidents on our country roads leads one to assume that drivers simply nod off to sleep, leaving their vehicles to veer in front of oncoming traffic or into a tree on the side of the road.

In terms of wearing seatbelts, we have a very high compliance rate in Western Australia. Something like 96 per cent of drivers - depending on which survey one looks at - wear seatbelts. However, when one considers the fatalities and serious accidents on our roads, the figures reveal that 20 to 30 per cent of people who are killed were not wearing seatbelts. That should send a clear message that we must buckle up.

I will outline where we have come from, refer to the latest road fatalities - which have caused great concern to all members - and respond to the member's motion by describing how we can work in a comprehensive way to ensure that we do even better as we move forward into the next road safety strategy.

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Arriving Safely, the current five-year road safety strategy, concludes this year. I believe that it is a good strategy. I will reveal some of the figures that prove that the strategy has resulted in an improvement on our roads. The figures are evidence based. We have based our decisions on scientific data, on evidence from other parts of the world and on Western Australian data in an attempt to achieve a satisfactory outcome. I refer to the measures that have been implemented in the past five or six years, most of which fit under the Arriving Safely strategy, but some of which may have started under the previous program. We introduced the 50-kilometre-an-hour speed limit in residential streets. A moment ago a member suggested that there was no value in that. The before and after evidence has revealed that that measure has resulted in a 20 per cent reduction in accidents. Reducing the speed limit from 60 to 50 kilometres an hour in our residential streets has produced a 20 per cent reduction in accidents. That was not something that came out of the blue; indeed, that outcome was predicted before the measure was implemented. We were aware of the result that was achieved in jurisdictions that had lowered the speed limit from 60 to 50 kilometres an hour. It is a very real improvement in road safety. The issue is to get the message through to people that they need to travel at 50 kilometres an hour. Monitoring that measure has shown that although certain speeds have come down, many people continue to exceed the 50-kilometre-an-hour speed limit.

The government has banned the use of handheld mobiles when driving, introduced hoon laws and guaranteed a minimum of \$50 million for the road trauma trust fund. That money comes from fines, but as members know, sometimes the money available from fines fluctuates. We made a commitment and we will top up that figure if it falls below \$50 million. I suspect that we may have to do that this year to make sure that at least \$15 million goes into the road trauma trust fund.

From 1 January this year we increased fines for a whole range of offences on the recommendation of the Road Safety Council. For example, the fine for speeding at 45 kilometres an hour or more above the speed limit went from \$350 to \$1 000. Since then we also quite substantially increased the fine for not wearing a seatbelt to \$500. We have purchased and deployed extra speed cameras, particularly around schools, where we have a 40-kilometres-an-hour zone. The police have put extra marked cars on the road. They have set up a traffic enforcement group and expanded that. Quite a number of vehicles are now dedicated to patrolling. We have the drug-driving legislation in the Parliament and we are currently drafting and hope to introduce fairly soon the repeat drink-driving and novice drink-driving legislation. Some of these things can be done through regulations, and we are progressing those as well.

A whole range of things have been done under the Arriving Safely strategy. What are the results of all these things that have been done or are in train to put in place? I have some familiarity with statistics - I know how we can use them - but the same picture comes out if we take slightly different year averages. In 2001, when we came to government, compared with the previous year, 2000, there was a drop to 212 deaths on our roads. From 2001 until 2004, the figure came down even further. For most years from 2004 there were around 180 deaths a year. The figure went from 212 down to around 180. In 2005 it went down to 162. That was certainly recognised around Australia as one of the best improvements. We were not the best in Australia because we were coming from a pretty low base, but that improvement came through the road safety strategy Arriving Safely. Last year the figure jumped up to 202, still below the 2000 figure, but it was a marked increase, a very worrying increase and, quite rightly, a matter of concern to all members of this house. Over the period 2001 to 2006, the average number of deaths each year was 178. If we stayed at the 2000 level of 212, we would have had 34 more deaths each year. I do not think we can see that in any other way than the result of a successful road safety strategy. There is a real concern about this year, but we have been through a range of concerted actions involving advertising, changes to the law and extra resources. We saw that change. It did not just happen over one year; we are talking about changes over six years.

**Mr R.F. Johnson:** You've got those figures for road deaths. Have you also got figures for serious accidents in which people have been permanently disabled? That is the other important factor. There may have been fewer deaths in some years, but have more people suffered very serious road trauma accidents?

**Mr J.C. KOBELKE:** I will try to answer the member's question. The figures that are available are for serious accidents. The definition of serious accidents is not the same as what I think the member is alluding to. A serious accident basically means hospitalisation; a broken leg, where one is out of hospital the next day, can be a serious accident. I think the member is talking about accidents that affect a person's life for years to come, if not for the rest of his life. We could probably get figures on that, but they are not readily available and used for comparison. Coming to the point of the member's question, it is a real concern - I am told this is happening in other jurisdictions internationally - that we are not seeing a marked inroad into serious accidents. The number has tended to stay about the same.

When it comes to this analysis, we are just dealing with the raw numbers. If we are going to compare - this is what is done between jurisdictions in Australia and internationally - we need to compare on a like-for-like basis.

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We cannot compare the number of deaths here in Western Australia with the number of deaths in New South Wales, which has a bigger population. We compare the number of deaths per head of population or per 100 000 kilometres driven or per number of vehicles on the road. There are accepted standards for doing that comparison. The difficulty we have with analysing these figures is that it tends to take 12 or 18 months for the Australian Bureau of Statistics to work out how many cars are on the road and how far people have driven before we get those reports. Just taking a simple example, because our economy is booming, in June 2000 there were 1 689 242 vehicles registered for WA roads, whereas in June 2006 there were 1 940 092 vehicles. In the six-year period from June 2000 to June 2006, there were another quarter of a million cars on the roads in Western Australia, a 15 per cent increase in six years. There is ample evidence that there is a very high correlation between certain factors and deaths or serious accidents. If we doubled the number of cars on the roads, we would tend to see a commensurate large increase in serious accidents. It is not a simple linear relationship because a whole lot of other factors intervene, but we would expect some increase. I will use a linear relationship as a very rough approximation, realising it is not the best way or the only way we can do it. If we added 15 per cent to the 212 deaths in 2000, we should have had 244 deaths in 2006 instead of having 202. Again, that is just a very rough measure. It indicates that we are doing okay, but no-one here accepts that. No-one accepts that we should have an increase in the number of deaths. It does not matter how many more cars are on the road or how many million more kilometres are being driven.

**Mr P.D. Omodei:** You said we're doing okay. You can't have it both ways. You're not doing okay because you just said nobody accepts it.

**Mr J.C. KOBELKE:** The Leader of the Opposition came in after I went through all the figures. I will not go through them again. He can look at the *Hansard* to see the figures I have outlined.

If we look to last year alone, there were an additional 40 000 new cars registered in Western Australia and an additional 10 000 motorcyclists. Last year alone there were an additional 50 000 vehicles on the roads in Western Australia. We can then look to the figures. This year is very worrying, as the member pointed out, but so far this year, up to Tuesday, 27 March, there have been 73 deaths on Western Australian roads. That compares with the figures for the four preceding years, which were in the 40s. There were 41 to 48 deaths across those preceding four years. We are up to 73. That is a great concern. What is happening? What can we do to try to counter that and see the figures go down and not up? It would be intuitive to say that if we had more people on the roads and more cars drove further, we would have more accidents. However, we are about lowering those figures, even against that trend of increased activity on our roads.

I would like to take some numbers from the Western Australia Police report on fatal traffic crashes and fatalities for 2006. When it was issued it was based on 203 deaths. I have indicated that the number of deaths in 2006 is now officially 202. The numbers I give will add up to 203, not 202. The pattern is still there. I put these forward seeking to make sense of the numbers. I am not saying that my interpretation is the best way we can look at them. I am not saying that it is an accurate interpretation. When we have 170 to 200 fatalities a year, there is a big chance factor involved. Comparing one year with the next, we are not sure whether there is some driving factor or whether a chance factor came over the top. I put that very clear caveat on the numbers and changes that I am putting forward. If we look to those 179 or 180 deaths that we had for a number of years, I want to compare 2004 - we had a run of years when we were around that 179 mark - with 2006 rather than 2005, when we did extremely well. We did so well that year - there may have been special circumstances - that it is better to look at 2004 and see if we can pick where these increases are coming from. That is what I have attempted to do as a way of trying to make sense of the figures. I readily accept that other people will look at these numbers and try to draw different lessons from them and do that quite validly. From 2004 to 2006, we went from 189 to 203 on these slightly updated figures. That is an increase of 24. In the metropolitan area there were 81 road deaths in 2004 and 86 in 2006, an increase of five. Only five of the additional deaths were in the metropolitan area and 19 were in the country. The number of country road deaths increased from 98 in 2004 to 117 in 2006. If members go through the figures for previous years, they will find that increasing country road deaths are an issue.

I refer now to the police regions: again, comparing 2004 with 2006, the number of road deaths in the great southern increased from 14 to 19, an increase of five; in Peel, 9 to 18, an increase of 9; and the south west, 15 to 26; an increase of 11. Again, chance has to be factored in those figures. For example, there might have been more drivers from outside the region driving through Peel. Clearly, the pattern indicates that we have a more serious issue on country roads than city roads. Speed is a factor in that; not speeding, but the fact that people travel long distances and at higher speeds. If people have a serious accident travelling at 40 or 50 kilometres an hour, they will probably end up with a big bill for panel beating. If they have a serious accident travelling at 80 or 90 kilometres an hour, they will end up dead. That is a fact of life. In Western Australia we need to travel great distances and, therefore, people travel at speed even though they travel within the speed limit.

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**Mr M.J. Cowper:** Would it be possible for the purposes of the forum to establish the statistics on how many of those vehicles were front-wheel drive and how many were visitors to the country regions from, for example, the metropolitan region?

**Mr J.C. KOBELKE:** I cannot give those statistics now but that is exactly what is meant by evidence-based decision making. I have been told that the argument that the reason we have more country deaths is because it is city people who are killed in the country does not stack up. Country people are killed in the city and city people are killed in the country, but overwhelmingly it is country people who die or are seriously injured on country roads.

**Mr M.J. Cowper:** Having been a country policeman for many years, I hold the view that the number of vehicles that have left the road, over corrected and hit trees, particularly in the south west, is an issue that needs to be looked at. It would be a great opportunity for the forum to look at the way in which vehicles have progressed with technology, particularly the steering and breaking systems which are an integral part of the modern vehicle.

**Mr J.C. KOBELKE:** They are important issues, but I want to get through my contribution. I am not trying to deal with the statistics. I reiterate that I am not trying to delve into what we know are long established issues and are still there; that is, speed, alcohol, fatigue and seatbelts. I am questioning whether there is a reason that in 2003, 2004 and 2005, when we had 180 deaths, the figures went down and up again. I do not have an answer. I am searching to ascertain whether in these figures there is a vague answer.

The figures for accidents that occur in the day as opposed to night indicate that, again drawing a comparison between 2004 and 2006, the number of day fatalities went from 86 to 106 and the number of night fatalities went from 93 to 97. The vast majority of those deaths occurred during the day.

The next issue is the road users who are involved in those fatalities. The number of deaths involving motor vehicle drivers increased from 85 to 94, an increase of nine. Motor vehicle passenger figures went from 42 to 52. Therefore, more passengers were killed proportionately in that increase than drivers. Motorcycle rider figures went from 20 to 29. The figure for motorcycle passengers did not change. The figure pertaining to pedestrians actually decreased a fraction. The figures for motorcyclists and others stayed about the same. The changes are reflected in the figures; for example, motor vehicle passengers, from 42 to 52; motorcycle riders, from 20 to 29; and pedestrians, from 25 to 22.

I am told that out of the extra 10 000 motorcycles registered last year there seems to be, anecdotally, a proportion of males about my age, perhaps going through a midlife crisis. They are buying high-powered bikes and do not know how to handle them. I do not have the statistics, but the police say that is one of the factors in a number of motorcycle deaths. A number of people have said that the road death statistics reflect the way some people drive. Perhaps drugs are involved and that causes people to drive in an insane way.

If we compare the number of male and female deaths, the figures indicate that in most instances males are involved. Again looking at 2004 to 2006, 130 males were killed in 2004 and 155 - that is, 25 more - were killed in 2006. The number of females killed in that period dropped by one. That does not mean anything in these statistics, which jump up and down. Overwhelmingly, the majority of people killed in 2004 and 2005 were males.

I turn now to the age groups for males. The number of road deaths in the 17 to 24 age group went from 52 to 67, an increase of 15. It is interesting that the 40 to 59 year age group, my age group, went from 34 to 45, an increase of 11. I am searching for possible patterns. This does not answer the question. All members are searching for the answer. How can we define the upward trend and how can we define the appropriate measures to combat that trend?

I will now look at 2005 and 2006. The number of road deaths in the great southern went up by 125 per cent, more than double; south west, 24 per cent; and Pilbara, 43 per cent. In 2006, the number of male deaths increased by over 30 per cent and male deaths made up almost 80 per cent of total road fatalities. Fifty per cent of the population are males and almost 80 per cent of fatalities were males. Clearly we have to target this area.

In 2006, compared with 2005, the 17 to 24 age group representation increased by 30 per cent. This age group makes up over 30 per cent of all fatalities but represents only 14 per cent of all drivers' licence holders. I compared 2004 with 2006. If we compare 2005 with 2005, it is the figures for the 40 to 59 age group in which there was an increase. These are clear patterns and we have to do something about them.

What other factors are involved? International comparisons show that when there is a booming economy there are more accidents. Regardless of whether people have more money to spend, party more, work longer hours or spend more time driving, clearly the high level of economic activity would be, predicted on what has been

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experienced elsewhere, a contributor to increased numbers of accidents and fatalities. We need to dig down to ascertain whether there is an element that we can study and take measures to counter. That is a difficult task.

I will amend the motion in a moment, but not to get away from the clear intent of this motion; that is, to have an independent review. I accept that. A press release issued by the Office of Road Safety a few days ago indicated that it will use Monash University's accident research centre as an independent organisation to review what has happened and to come up with proposals on what should be done to tackle the problems of accidents and fatalities and improve road safety. It has also engaged Estill and Associates to look at how we can engage people to obtain their views on this issue.

In addition, we are rolling out a range of community forums. The member for Wagin, of his own volition, got people together last year to discuss this issue. The government, when it undertook further forums, was able to draw on that example, and I thank the member for Wagin for that. This month a forum was held in Geraldton and another in Collie. One will be held soon in Albany. The member for Avon has asked for one in Northam and we are looking for a date for that. We will be seeking to hold some forums in the metropolitan area. If members want to hold similar forums, either individually or as a group, I extend an invitation to them to use the consultants or Office of Road Safety representatives to assist with the presentation or to be facilitators. If members wish, they can play a key role in the facilitation process. We will be seeking to engage at that community level in the first stage of developing the next road safety strategy. The issue then becomes, in brief, independence. We can talk more about how that independent overview will work. The member for South Perth's motion refers to a comprehensive review. If it is to be comprehensive, we must talk about how various sectors of the community can be involved and how we can bring people together.

The first offer from government is of some resources to run a forum. I do not know whether the Liberal Party or individual members want to run it with whoever they see as a target group to get their views as part of a two-way flow of information and add that to the process. The next issue on which we need more discussion is how to make the process bipartisan. The member for South Perth has urged that both sides of Parliament be involved, whether it be through holding a forum in this place, preparing discussion papers or establishing a committee, or whether formally through the Parliament or informally. Those are the things I will talk to the member for South Perth and members on this side and opposite so that we can work together to ensure whatever proposal comes forward will have bipartisan support. However, more importantly, the proposal should undergo good consultation and be based on objective, evidence-based data so that it has a much better chance of success.

We must bear in mind that reports from the Road Safety Council are presented to government and the government accepts or rejects them. Over the past few years, the government has accepted 80 or 90 per cent of its recommendations. Sometimes we have indicated that we are not happy with a request for more resources or that we believe one small aspect of a report might not receive community acceptance. At the end of the day, the government makes the call. Something is more likely to be successful if it is based on a very good program that has undergone strong consultation, been well researched and has strong support. That is what I am looking for. The motion states -

That this house acknowledges the loss of 64 lives . . .

Unfortunately, that has increased to 73 in just over a week. The motion also refers to the weekend just past. It was absolutely correct at the time it was written. However, as a result of the passage of time, through no fault of the member for South Perth, we should amend that. In a moment I will amend the motion to say that the house acknowledges the unacceptable loss of lives on Western Australian roads in 2006 and this year. I will not refer to the figures, although they have some impact, but given that I am not sure whether the motion will be passed today or next week, the reference should be general rather than specific. In moving the amendment, I am in no way seeking to move away from what the member is seeking to do with his motion. He calls on the government to undertake a comprehensive and independent review of the road safety system. That is a very good and worthwhile suggestion and I am saying, yes, let us work on that together so that we can improve road safety in Western Australia.

*Amendment to Motion*

**Mr J.C. KOBELKE:** With that intention, I move -

To delete all the words after "house" with a view to inserting the following words -

acknowledges the unacceptable loss of lives on Western Australian roads in 2006 and this year, supports the government in completing its current road safety initiatives and calls on the government to undertake, on a bipartisan basis, a comprehensive and independent review of road safety in its process of formulating the next road safety strategy to start from 2008.

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We need to keep in mind that, as part of the current road safety strategy, a whole lot of legislation is in Parliament or waiting to be introduced, and that must be dealt with so that it can be implemented. That legislation addresses peak drink-driving; the level of alcohol in novice drivers, which legislation is already in the upper house; and roadside drug testing. I am trying to encapsulate that legislation as part of our strategy and am therefore asking the opposition to pass it. In addition, I would like a comprehensive and independent review undertaken. If it starts next year, it will have a chance of really working and improving on the road safety record of this state, so that we can ensure that more people are not caught up in serious accidents and there are not more families suffering from the death or very serious injury of a family member or friend. I am sure that all members are committed to that and I am confident that, if we work in a bipartisan way, and people are objective in seeking to improve road safety, we can make a genuine and real contribution to improving road safety in Western Australia.

I thank again the member for South Perth and those who have contributed so far to the debate.

**MR M.W. TRENORDEN (Avon)** [5.44 pm]: I am pleased with the amendment moved by the Minister for Community Safety in the context of the original motion. I intend to say a few words on this issue. Four people work in my electorate office in Northam and all four of us have lost someone close through a road accident. It is no surprise that we are seeking to hold a road forum, as has been pointed out. We will do that with a fair amount of enthusiasm to try to make a small amount of difference. I will make a few points in this debate, and it will take only a short time, but they are important to me.

One of the things that people in the metropolitan area learn, which I did not know - it is a very important lesson - is that the green traffic light means go, red means stop and amber means accelerate sharply! Just the other day, when I was braking before an amber light, the person behind me was accelerating because he expected me to take the opportunity to drive through the amber light. There is little we can do about that behaviour, I suggest, other than to educate people. I suggest that any member who sat near an intersection with traffic lights anywhere in the metropolitan area would observe that, when the light turns amber, vehicles do not just drive through, they accelerate through.

I oppose one thing that the minister and earlier speakers said. I refer to one of the very irritating practices on country roads, Mr Acting Speaker (Mr G. Woodhams), and you are one of those people who drive on them. On Friday nights road gangs leave the section of road they have been working on and come back on Monday. No-one is left working on the site but the reduced speed sign remains in place for the weekend. People who regularly drive in and out of country towns know that nobody is working there. The first time they drive through the signs on the weekend, they can see - they have eyes - that no-one is working there. They might go in and out of town for sport, shopping and other reasons a number of times on the weekend, knowing conclusively that no-one is working there, so they ignore the speed limits and drive through at 40 or 50 kilometres an hour over the speed limit. They then run the risk of being pinged, and put in the category of other people caught speeding at 40 or 50 kilometres an hour over the limit; namely, of being seen as highly irresponsible. We can argue that it might be slightly irresponsible to disobey those road signs, but it is also just as irresponsible for Main Roads - and the minister if we want to point the finger in that direction - to have approved the guidelines requiring contractors to leave the signs on the side of the road. It is ridiculous. I have no sympathy for people who are caught driving 40 kilometres an hour over the speed limit in all the contexts that we have mentioned. In Clackline there are signs directing traffic to drive at 40 kilometres an hour. In a couple of days they will still be in place -

**Mr S.R. Hill:** No-one is working on the site.

**Mr M.W. TRENORDEN:** That is right. Some people will drive through at 80 kilometres an hour, which is the speed limit through the town, but that is 40 kilometres an hour over the speed limit, and they will be pinged. I would like to think that some sort of judgement can be made in those cases. I am not saying that those people should be exonerated, but their transgression is not as bad as it would be if they were driving 40 or 50 kilometres an hour on the open road or where there is a fixed speed.

**Mr J.C. Kobelke:** It particularly irks me when a roadwork sign indicates 40 kilometres an hour, and that is the limiter, but there is no delimitter. In fact, technically, it is not an area of road with a reduced speed, because there must be both an entry and an exit point to make it effective. It is carelessness for those signs to be left standing when they are not needed and people can be caught out in the way you are suggesting.

**Mr M.W. TRENORDEN:** We must deal with that because it is another irritation. Those signs must be paid attention to and people must be sensible about the process. However, it does not make them as guilty as other people who flout the laws.



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I congratulate the RACWA on the work it is currently doing. Two-thirds of the people who have been killed on country roads are country people. RACWA claims that in 43 per cent of those cases, it is due to the condition of the roads. I do not like to do this - I am uncomfortable doing it, but I will do it anyway - when Brenda Adams was killed on the Great Eastern Highway, the road turned left and the camber went right. When the steel came off the back of the truck, it was because the truck was following the road left but the camber was turning right. Brenda's brother does not believe that argument but truck drivers from Northam have demonstrated it to me. The vehicle flicked and the consequences were as they were. The condition of the roads is important. Between the Lakes Road turn-off and York is a dreadful section of road that has claimed several fatalities recently. That road is nowhere in sight in the forward projections of roadworks. I accept the intent of this debate. However, it is exceedingly frustrating for people who are aware of the consequences of not repairing the poor condition of many sections of road that are like that. The system must have a mechanism to alert people that a section of road is particularly bad. I accept that we cannot deal with all such roads. The point of the debate is that governments give priority to what gets done. It is important for communities to know that Main Roads and the minister of the day recognise that a section of road is not good.

**Mr J.C. Kobelke:** One section that has been done is Lakes Road back to Mundaring. It was overdue, but it got done.

**Mr M.W. TRENORDEN:** Brenda got killed. A number of people have said to me that the road was upgraded because my partner was killed. The minister and I know that that is a heap of nonsense. Nevertheless, I find it particularly irritating.

**Mr J.C. Kobelke:** I thought the section where Brenda was killed was a bit further out.

**Mr M.W. TRENORDEN:** It is closer towards Sawyers Valley. All that aside, it is a nice piece of road. All the users of the Great Eastern Highway put up with that section of road. We grizzled and complained about it, but we all knew that the day would come when that section of road would be upgraded, which is excellent. The condition of the roads must be given a higher priority. I believe that the Road Safety Council does not make the condition of a road a priority. I think that it believes it would be seen to be antigovernment if it were to comment on certain sections of road. As I said, Main Roads and the minister of the day should clearly say that a certain road is particularly dangerous. That might not mean that the road is put on the building program within a decade, but the condition of the road should at least be recognised so that people are made aware of the condition of the road.

Another matter that irritates me is the Tony Delroy syndrome. Members who drive at night and who listen to Tony Delroy know that their lives are at risk. Quite a few members do that. Driving when tired is a serious issue, particularly for those of us who live in the country. We all push ourselves. I push myself as hard as any member, but in recent years I have stopped on the side of the road to have a rest. I have even been embarrassed when friends of mine have pulled up beside me and asked me whether I was all right because I had been having a 10-minute zed on the side of the road. That does not worry me anymore, but I still push myself. If I am driving in the Avon Valley on a freezing cold night and I am just 40 minutes from home, I want to keep going and get to bed. I know it is a risk but I am not going to get a cup of coffee from anywhere else at 2.00 am. A number of people who drive when they are tired want to get home to their houses and to their families or they want to meet certain commitments. Encouraging people to stop for a cup of coffee is a good message.

The drugs issue worries me. I have listened to the debate about the West Coast Eagles and heard it said that their problems are only representative of the community. If the West Coast Eagles' problems are representative of the community, half the team would be taking drugs. Statistically, about a third of the community use marijuana on either a casual or a regular basis. Someone can tell me whether I am wrong.

**Mr R.F. Johnson:** That would be a third of this chamber. Put their hands up those who are smoking pot.

**Mr P.B. Watson:** Sometimes I think you are by some of the comments you make.

**Mr M.W. TRENORDEN:** It might be a matter of members never having inhaled. Drug use in my own community is increasing sharply. Prescribed drugs are also very important. It is a serious issue. I wonder how many people take notice of the warning on the packet of their prescription pills to not drive. Maybe people who are only 40 kilometres away from their home in Geraldton will drive anyway.

My last concern is the contest between Main Roads and police, particularly in the metropolitan area. Regardless of whether it is stated, the reality is that Main Roads wants the traffic to flow and the police do not want people to speed. That is why it is often difficult for the member for Murray to see a road sign. That is particularly the case when driving on roads that one does not know well. I regularly do not see road signs for some time. That is not because Main Roads does not want to put up a sign; it is because Main Roads does not want to tell people too

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often what the speed limit is. Main Roads wants the traffic to flow because that is in the interests of Main Roads, which is not in the interests of the police. That matter must also be considered.

We could go on forever. I am regularly told that although young people are banned from driving a V8 car, they can buy a supercharged four-cylinder car that drives twice as fast as a V8. Those simplistic types of solutions are not the answer. The answer lies in education. The reality is that young males are killing themselves at a great rate. There are opportunities to counter that situation. The youth programs in my community at which young people drive their utes to the showground are very strongly supported. Hundreds of vehicles arrive, and the owners are very proud of them. That gives the Road Safety Council an opportunity to -

**Mr A.J. Simpson:** Put a sticker on them!

**Mr M.W. TRENORDEN:** I would hope not. It is an opportunity for the Road Safety Council to teach the young people about road safety. The drivers at some of those shows are allowed to do figure 8s and so forth. However, a prominent person from the motor racing industry could come along and talk to those students about driving skills, as well as attitude. There are places where we can make an impact in the country areas and get the message through. It is good that on another occasion we have agreement across the chamber. I am hopeful that matters can progress, but I would like to think that this forum or review, when it happens, involves some professional people who do not talk only about the V8s and all those sorts of things. Even though there is an argument about the V8s, there is just as much of an argument about supercharged four-cylinder cars. There must be some argument about the processes.

I will say one more thing. In the past one of the things that has worried the National Party, and me in particular, about new conditions on drivers' licences is that sometimes young people in country areas do not have that access. If a 17-year-old living in Mukinbudin is told to do a particular course, there is an extra penalty for that young person. However, I have moderated my view. We still need to make that 17-year-old go through the process but we need to make sure when the processes are put in place that those sorts of people, living in Leonora or wherever, can get some consideration and it is not just a cut and dried process in which it is assumed that people have access to those courses and training.

**Mr J.C. Kobelke:** You are absolutely right, and that is why, when the recommendation of the Road Safety Council was that 125 hours of supervised driving be the requirement for a licence, the decision of the government was that that should be encouraged, but it would not be mandated until we have established ways of fixing the problem. We need to be creative, and perhaps you can help with good ideas. How do we actually give that training and create opportunities for people who do not live in big towns?

**Mr M.W. TRENORDEN:** I think the minister told me at some stage that I had never had a good idea in my life.

**Mr J.C. Kobelke:** I will have to change my view!

**Mr M.W. TRENORDEN:** This is the sort of debate that could go on forever, but those are the key points I wanted to make, and I appreciate the opportunity.

**MR S.R. HILL (Geraldton)** [6.03 pm]: As you are aware, Mr Acting Speaker (Mr Woodhams), last Friday we held a road safety forum in Geraldton. It was attended by roughly 100 people. At that forum a number of young people mentioned that many of the vehicles of today should have advanced technology installed in them. As many people in this house know, I drive a high-powered Commodore V8 utility.

**Mr A.J. Simpson:** You are a hoon!

**Mr S.R. HILL:** I have been called a hoon and many other things by the community! I took a conscious step to put some additional technology into the vehicle I own. It cost me roughly \$5 000, and includes a computer tracking system, by which the vehicle is tracked by a Holden call centre in Melbourne, and some other features. I think most vehicles now have an alarm that sounds when the speed limit is exceeded, or when the driver is not wearing a seatbelt. At Friday's forum I raised that issue with many people in Geraldton. I asked how they would feel if the cost of a vehicle was increased by \$200 or \$500 with this extra technology. Ninety-five per cent of the people in the forum said they were willing to pay the extra money. They resolved during the forum to write to the Australian manufacturers of vehicles, such as Holden and Ford. In my area and other regions, most of us have utes. We wanted to see if the manufacturers would come to the party. BMWs and other vehicles already have that technology built into them, but we were asking, as consumers, why it was not provided by the Australian companies.

We talked today about the extra penalties. I congratulate the member for South Perth for moving this motion. I am 41 years of age, and I earn a reasonable income. If I incurred a \$400 fine I would just say that that was one Saturday night on which I could not be able to go to the local nightclub. The people of about my age in

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Geraldton say, "So what, I'll lose a couple of demerit points, but I still want to get from Mullewa to Geraldton in 38 minutes." They mark it out in the mid west. I think the best record from Dongara to Geraldton is about 21 minutes. The distance is about 65 or 70 kilometres, and if someone can drive it in 21 minutes, he is motoring. He is motoring on the Brand Highway, which is experiencing a lot of truck movements at the moment. There is no way to stop them. I drove down on Monday afternoon and, as the member for Avon said, there are a lot of roadworks happening near Eneabba. No-one was working on the site at the time, so people just went through. All of us were doing about 110 kilometres an hour going through those roadworks. No-one slowed down, because there was no activity happening on the road at all.

**Mr P.B. Watson:** Member, can you explain the tracking system you were talking about?

**Mr S.R. HILL:** First of all, if the vehicle is stolen, the insurance company or Holden can cut the power to the motor. They can also track where the vehicle is, anywhere in Australia. The other thing they can do is send messages through if there is a problem with, say, the air pressure or the battery, or when the vehicle is due for a service.

We talk about penalties and demerit points, but a lot of people will just say that it was a bad day, and they got caught. Out of the 20 trips I will do this month, I got caught once on the Brand Highway. People travelling many of the country roads, as I do, have a rough idea when the police are changing shifts. We know when the police from Jurien, for example, are back home and when the police at Dongara have gone home for tea. They know whether it is possible to drive through those places at 80 kilometres an hour, or reduce their speed.

**Mr A.J. Simpson:** Don't tell us too much!

**Mr S.R. HILL:** I do not do that any more. I did that when I was a lot younger, but not any more. Since I was elected member for Geraldton in 2001, I have sat on the local RoadWise committee. We just bash our heads sometimes. In Geraldton and the mid west we have lost 100 people in the past 12 years, and 700 people have been injured. The message is just not getting through. Part of the discussion in the RoadWise committee was whether we should place a coffin at the main entry into Geraldton. We are coming up to Easter, and there will be thousands of people coming into the town because there is a lot of sport activity happening. However, no-one is listening. I tell my friends there was another tragic accident and ask whether anyone knew the person who was killed. I might put a death notice in the *Geraldton Guardian*. However, after one day, it is just not registering any more. We must look at other mechanisms. We have talked penalties, and I agree that they should be increased. However, as consumers, we should be saying to the vehicle manufacturers, particularly Holden and Ford, that we want this technology installed in vehicles. That way it is possible to control the speed limits and monitor who is doing what. If some fool aged 18 or 20 owns a brand new ute - these vehicles are their pride and joy and cost \$50 000 - this technology is installed and if the Holden call centre discovers that the driver has been driving the car at 180 kilometres an hour, the message is sent to the police or some sort of mechanism is activated to record it.

I support the member for South Perth. It is a great initiative that we all get together to try to stop this carnage. As the minister pointed out, as of this morning, 51 people have died on country roads. It must stop; it is just stupidity. Many of the people dying are around my age group; they are my friends, in their 40s. We keep talking about P-plate drivers doing 110. However, a lot of these drivers are people who should know a bit better. As I said, they are in their 40s and 50s. They think they know the road. They are confident because they have been driving on that section of road for many years. All that is needed is some livestock or a kangaroo to jump out in front of their car. The old saying was that the roo bar will save me. That just does not happen.

**Mr P.B. Watson** interjected.

**Mr S.R. HILL:** Yes. It just does not happen any more. I support the amendment moved by the minister. I congratulate members on their contributions to the debate. We must come up with some sort of solution. I have a final comment: if we had the passion about road safety that we have about daylight saving, I think we would get something moving.

**MR M.J. COWPER (Murray)** [6.10 pm]: I will not take up a lot of time. I have attempted to speak to versions of this motion going back to 16 August last year. However, I am very pleased that the minister has agreed to draw attention to what should be a matter of serious importance to all Western Australians, and that is the number of tragic deaths on our roads. From time to time, a member will accuse members on the other side of the house of politicising this dreadful situation. I believe this is an issue that should be above politics. It is a matter of grave concern to all Western Australians.

The responsibility for road safety in Western Australia is not the sole domain of the Western Australia Police or the WA Road Safety Council. Put simply, it is the responsibility of Western Australians of all ages, whether they live in regional Western Australia or the metropolitan area. It is their responsibility to make sure that our

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roads are a lot safer. I have a particular aversion to the use of statistics that show there has been a percentage reduction in the number of road deaths. It does not matter what the topic may be, some statistics use percentages to show an increase or a decrease, and I have an aversion in particular to statistics that use percentages. The simple fact remains that one death on our roads is not acceptable. Although that may be proffered by some as being an unrealistic situation, I do not believe that we should be striving for anything less. A whole range of issues touch upon strategies to deal with road safety, and I am glad that they will be given an airing in this forum. I commend my colleague the member for South Perth for bringing this issue to the fore, and I commend the minister for his genuine concern, which has been the catalyst for this motion.

I will give to this forum the benefit of what I believe is my considerable knowledge of and practical experience in road safety. The other day the minister, by way of interjection, made a comment, and I am not quite sure what he meant by it. However, he said that the member for Murray would not know what he is talking about. I doubt whether anyone in this place has personally attended car crashes in Western Australia in which more than 113 people have been killed. If someone can top that, that person is a very unfortunate being. Of my 27 years in the police force, I spent 23 years in regional Western Australia. I spent 13 years as an officer in charge of police stations ranging from the Kimberley to the great southern. There are many causes of accidents. The fact remains that it all comes back to one very key element; that is, human behaviour. From time to time strategies are put forward to try to influence that behaviour. We can introduce double demerit points and we can put booze buses on the roads. We can do all manner of things. However, at the end of the day, until we start addressing the issue of behaviour, I believe we will struggle to find a solution to the problem.

I was the officer in charge of the Australind Police Station, and a member of the Dardanup RoadWise committee. I empathise with the member for Geraldton and those other members who have held forums and been in places where they have felt somewhat helpless. I have also experienced that on many occasions. These forums are very important in the healing process, particularly in small towns. I know that the member for Collie-Wellington has suffered severely because of the situation on our roads. I had a relative who was killed at Allanson many years ago. Those members would know that the impact that road tragedies have on small towns, in particular, is profound. However, these forums help to provide a healing mechanism. I suppose people never get over such things, but these forums provide a mechanism to help people come to terms, to some degree, with the tragic loss of a relative, a loved one or a friend.

When I was at Australind, we went to the Australind Senior High School, and we looked at bringing in a road safety program. As part of that program, we also made available the services of a private company - I will not mention its name - that went to the school and put in place an education program, which we helped pilot, to see whether we could influence the attitudes and behaviour of students in that school environment to reduce the road toll. After a four-year period, one of my officers went through the results of the program. In fact, I saw that officer - at that time she was Senior Constable Michelle Lewis - just the other night. Unfortunately, she has now left the service; she was a very good officer. She is now working in the tourism area. However, she was running this program at the Australind Senior High School as the school-based officer. I said to her, "Look, I really need to get some feedback on how well this program is going, and I would be curious to know how many of the people we have put through the program have performed." One of the things we did was that we examined how many traffic infringement notices those people had received during that period. The figures are not clear to me now, minister, but something like 400 students went through that program. They ranged from those who had just finished doing the course at age 17 to those who had done it four years hence. Therefore, we are looking at an age range of 17 years to 19 years and 10 months. This program had been running for three and a half years, or nearly four years. I was sad to learn that in the vicinity of 70 per cent of the people who had participated in that program had a traffic conviction for whatever reason, whether it be for not wearing a seatbelt, for speeding or whatever. More alarming was that something like 30 per cent of the people we put through the program had more than one conviction. That was very disheartening, I must say. A lot of good people had put a lot of effort into helping those young people.

However, it demonstrated to me the frustration that is experienced in the various forums that we see from time to time. I thought to myself, "What on earth can we possibly do?" We can take people out, give them a driving lesson and teach them how to reverse park. We can teach them how to do a three-point turn and advise them, in a practical way, how to learn to drive. That is just to get them to a level at which they can pass the test, I might add. However, they do not become competent drivers for many years after they have passed their test. They must do a considerable amount of driving, and they must be able to drive in conditions that vary from time to time. In essence, herein lies another problem. People become programmed to what is presented before them; that is, there may be a speed limit on a certain road of 100 kilometres an hour, and they drive according to that, irrespective of whether rain is belting down, whether there is a strong breeze, whether there is traffic congestion or even whether there has been a bushfire. I have seen people drive through sections of road that are covered in smoke, or, for that matter, fog, at the speed limit. They are not committing an offence as such, but their driving

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behaviour can lead to perilous outcomes. The fact remains that people do not adapt their driving behaviour to suit the road conditions. How can we get people to do that? That is an interesting question, and something that the forum needs to work through.

**Mr J.C. Kobelke:** That gets back to the point you made earlier about driver attitude, which I totally agree with.

**Mr M.J. COWPER:** Yes.

I will tell the minister where I believe we should be heading on this issue. We need to cast a fresh pair of eyes across this issue. This problem is older than me. Many people have proffered solutions. We need to take a holistic approach. We all need to take responsibility for this problem. I am very conscious of that point. The Premier said the other day that when he was driving from Bunbury to Mandurah recently, a car went past him at 140 kilometres an hour. From time to time we all have similar experiences. I am glad the Premier has come into the chamber, because this is an important point. People often drive in a manner that is potentially very dangerous.

I will give members an example. Recently, as I was driving along Pinjarra Road towards Mandurah, I saw a car come out of Wanjeep Road on my left-hand side and lay a big fishtail on the road. It was a brand new, white SS Holden Commodore, bearing P-plates. The back wheels of the car were spinning, and it was moving from side to side across the dual lane, in heavy traffic. As I came up behind the vehicle, it moved to the right-hand side of the road and turned down Mississippi Drive and into the streets of Greenfields. That happened to be the particular route that I was following. The car disappeared out of sight for a moment. As I came up to another intersection, I saw the car stuck in traffic. I noticed that only one person was on board. It was a young male Caucasian. I picked up, out of habit, I suppose, a small tape recorder that I keep in the console of my vehicle, and I started to record some notes of the time, the direction of travel, the speed, the manner of driving, and a description of the driver. As I approached the corner, the driver turned right and headed down a particular road whose name escapes me at this time. The vehicle then headed to the T-junction at the front of Peel Health Campus, turned left into Lakes Road, and disappeared out of sight. As it happened, I was heading the same way. When I got to the end of Lakes Road, I saw the vehicle again, near the intersection of Gordon Road, stuck behind traffic. I was indicating to go left, and the driver of the vehicle was indicating to go right, so I pulled up alongside the vehicle so that I could get a description of the driver. I then phoned Sergeant White, a fantastic officer at Mandurah Police Station - on my hands-free kit, I might add - and said that the chap was wearing a baseball cap. I said also that I could tell that he was wearing a white gold metal ring on his index finger. I was totally incensed by the driving behaviour of this person. If I had done nothing and that car had gone around the corner and taken out some poor kid, I would have carried the burden of my inaction for the rest of my life.

**Mr J.C. Kobelke:** Did you get any feedback from the police? Were you able to follow it up?

**Mr M.J. COWPER:** I will get to that. It was a great outcome. I then said to Sergeant White that I would go back to the scene at the intersection of Wanjeep Road and Pinjarra Road and do some evidence gathering. That is what I am used to doing in my former career. I had a digital camera with me, as all good pollies should carry with them, and I took a photograph of the tyre marks, took some measurements, and did a bit of a drawing in my notebook, which all good members should also carry with them -

**Mr D.A. Templeman:** Did you ask for permission to come into my electorate?

**Mr M.J. COWPER:** The point is, member, that I need to go through the member's electorate to get from one end of my electorate to the other!

**Mr D.A. Templeman:** That is okay! I will give you a free pass to go through my electorate!

**Mr M.J. COWPER:** I appreciate the member's acceptance! The point is that I did certain things. I waited for the police officers to arrive, but obviously they were very busy, and they did not turn up within the time frame that I had given them, because I had a Rotary Club meeting to attend that evening. When I got home later that evening, I sat down at my computer and knocked out a statement. It took me a while to remember the correct way to set out the statement, because I was a bit rusty on that, but each paragraph had double spacing, and a number, and at the end of it I made a declaration. I printed a copy of the statement. I have a fantastic colour printer, so I also printed the photographs. I signed the statement, and I put the statement and the photos in an envelope and handed it to the senior constable in the traffic office at Mandurah Police Station, who was handling that particular case. I said, "There you go. I am prepared to go to court and give evidence about the manner of driving of this particular chap."

**Ms M.M. Quirk:** Now that you are a politician, you have no credibility!

**Mr M.J. COWPER:** That is a major concern for me, minister! However, notwithstanding that, the senior constable went to visit this chap. I cannot mention this chap's name, because I do not know it. This chap has a

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history of bad driving on the roads. He is 21 years of age, and he is a P-plater. The reason he is a P-plater is that he has lost his licence on previous occasions. The senior constable phoned me after his visit and said that the person had confirmed that he was the registered owner of the vehicle. He said also that the person had tried to indicate that someone else may have been driving the vehicle at the time. He then said to the person that he had a very good description of the driver, and he asked him to hold up his right hand. When the chap presented his right hand, there on his right index finger was a white gold metal ring, just as I had described! That virtually sank any hope that he might get away with this particular offence. The person admitted that he had been driving the vehicle, but he said he could not recall the incident, because he did not realise that he had been driving in such a fashion. That is a load of nonsense, but no doubt it will all be played out in court. The fact remains that this person has been charged with two counts of hoon behaviour. With any luck, that person will not be on the roads for a long time. I am prepared to go to court, because I am used to doing that sort of thing. I have a distinct advantage over many other people, because I was paid to go to court and give evidence. It is second nature to me.

**Mr D.A. Templeman:** You are very big, too, which is a bit scary!

**Mr R.F. Johnson:** You would not want to pick a fight with him!

**Mr M.J. COWPER:** I am a very placid chap, as members probably realise.

We all need to take responsibility for this matter. That may be by chatting to our loved ones about the type of vehicle they should be driving. As the member for Avon said, we should try to prevent people from driving high horsepower vehicles. I subscribe to the view that we should restrict the horsepower-to-weight ratio of vehicles. A guy who is 21 years of age and has a bad driving history should not be allowed to drive an SS Commodore of whatever horsepower that may be. That is not what we should expect of drivers today. However, the responsibility for catching these people should not be solely the domain of the police. I encourage members, when they witness such behaviour, to pick up the phone - hopefully on a hands-free kit - and ring Crime Stoppers on 1800 to report it. Members may not be able to gather the evidence that I was able to gather. However, they should do something, because if that person drives around the corner and kills someone, it will weigh heavily on their minds.

**Mr J.C. Kobelke:** I commend the member for saying that. The member has gained the expertise to do that from his former career. I have often thought that we need to encourage responsible drivers to do the right thing and make these types of reports and do in hooners and irresponsible drivers.

**Mr M.J. COWPER:** The point is that they may not have the success that I have had. However, if the police receive a sequence of calls stating that Joe Bloggs at the end of Smith Street is a major concern, they will turn their attention towards that person. We should bring back the traffic branches that used to operate in country police stations throughout Western Australia. When I was in charge of the Denmark Police Station they were removed and we lost our traffic vehicle. The traffic branch officers in a country town knew who the problem children were. By way of the fish and chip act, which is the ways and means act, we would keep an eye on these people. We knew how to target them if it looked as though they were getting out of line. These guys could make concessions from time to time and target the drivers' vehicles. That would keep them in line. At the moment the system is too removed. There must be more interaction. I strongly believe that driver behaviour should be taught in an ongoing way in our high schools. Further, I have a strong belief that parents should have a greater say in the types of vehicles that their children drive, because they are the ones who have the most influence on our young people.

**MR M.P. MURRAY (Collie-Wellington) [6.33 pm]:** In rising to talk to this motion, I will probably repeat what has been said by other members. I will refer to the road safety forum that was held in Collie recently. I probably drive as many kilometres as anyone else who drives a car because, unfortunately, unlike the members for Albany and Geraldton, I am not allowed to fly to Perth to attend Parliament. I drive about 60 000 kilometres a year. I have visited the Clerk's office to determine what insurance is available if I get smashed up in an accident. The last two times I have travelled to Perth I have missed being smashed up by a whisker. During my trip to Parliament on Tuesday morning, a car veered across the road and just missed me before swerving back to the other side of the road. The driver was looking at his phone. On another occasion an escorted truck was travelling on the road. The car in front of me was all over the road. The tilt panels on the truck that was coming down the road took up three quarters of the road. In front of me was a truck and another car. As we neared the tilt panels, we passed the private escort vehicle and the police escort. The guy in the car behind the truck who was travelling towards the tilt panels decided to pull out. We were only doing about 40 kilometres an hour, but he must have thought that he would sneak pass and beat the truck. His vehicle went under the tilt panels. Had he not been in a small car, his head would have been severed. Driver attitude is a problem, because people are impatient.

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I am passionate about road safety because in the year between my daughter's seventeenth and eighteenth birthdays - she is now 21 - she lost seven friends in road accidents. Many people have spoken about that period in Collie. When a phone call late at night is met with howls, one knows what it is about. It is terrible. As the member for Murray said, in a small community everyone knows everyone else, whether they are friends or relations. Road accident fatalities affect football clubs and every part of a small community. However, people do not seem to learn from them. Research has shown that young people tend to forget the lessons of a road accident fatality 12 weeks after it happens. They carry the burden for a short time and then they move on with life. We have all been guilty of moving on soon after a tragedy. People do not forget totally, but they think that it will not happen to them.

Having been a driver who sped frequently, I now use the cruise control feature in my car, which has surprised my wife. She used to hang on fairly tight when I drove. Having seen road accidents time and time again, I have realised that I must take responsibility for my own actions.

I turn to the excellent road safety forum that was held in Collie the other day. A couple of small things were missing from the forum, such as better input from young people. For the first time that I am aware of, the coal companies, and Worsley Alumina and Wagerup Alcoa, released their apprentices for the day so that they could attend the forum. There were about 85 young people at the forum with a mix and match of other community members. It was really good that the apprentices attended the forum. Although they would probably say that they did not gain much from the forum, they were invited because we need to change the attitude of young drivers. Before the forum commenced, attendees were asked what they thought they could do to alleviate the road problem. Just under 60 per cent said that they might be able to do something. After the forum the same question was asked, and 69 per cent of attendees said that something could be done. That is nearly a 10 per cent improvement in people's attitude, which is a positive outcome.

I was impressed that Assistant Commissioner of Police, John McRoberts, who is in charge of traffic road safety, attended the forum and that he stayed the whole day. I am aware that his schedule is very full. I think he got a feel for the position from which young people are coming, which is important.

**The ACTING SPEAKER (Dr S.C. Thomas):** I ask members to keep their voices down because the chatter is making it difficult for Hansard to hear.

**Mr M.P. MURRAY:** A disappointing aspect of the forum was the attitude of some of the police. I was told - I guess some of this could be gossip - that police attendance at the forum was a political stance and that they were there to gain community brownie points. I wish those police officers were in the chamber tonight to experience members' passion about the issue of road safety. We cannot ignore the road safety problem. If the police have that attitude, we have a problem. I will be writing to Mr McRoberts to express my concern about that issue. If people do not want to attend a road safety forum for a day, I am sure that they could be doing other things to address this issue. That was one disappointing aspect of the forum.

The morning session was attended by 85 people. The afternoon session was attended by 35 industry leaders and shire councillors who came away quite excited about what they perceived as a change in the presentation of road safety. My views about Multanovas are different from the views of many other people. If I had my way, the government would buy another thousand Multanovas, because I believe that they work. If a person is fined for driving over the speed limit - bad luck! It does not matter if people exceed the limit from inattention; the responsibility comes back to the person who is driving a car. If the system to counter speeding that is in place today had been used in my younger days, the number of fines I would have received would have cost me a few months' wages. However, after paying money to the government for a few months and not having much money to party with on the weekend, a person might learn his lesson.

There was debate at the forum about Multanovas and whether they should be in fixed positions or hidden. A comment was made about the flashing roadside signs that alert drivers to the speed that they are doing. They certainly encourage people to take their foot off the accelerator - but for how long? What happens further down the road? The majority of prangs in my area occur on the Old Coast Road. As a result, it is absolutely inundated with handheld radar guns or Multanovas, but there are still problems on that stretch of road. Many people who speed on that road are tourists and people from Perth. Every couple of weeks there is an accident on that stretch of road. Recently, two ladies lost their lives on the same weekend on the same stretch of road. People call it the "old ghost road". That is an absolute furphy. The road itself is not causing the accidents. One accident happened after a woman who was driving with her kids in the car fell asleep and ran straight off the road. The other accident occurred because of a mistake in the woman's driving. We must work very hard on education, because that comes back to driver attitude.

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There was a light moment in the wrap-up at the road safety forum. When the apprentices at one table were asked what they would do to help reduce the road toll, they said that they would wear their seatbelts more often. I thought that was a classic comment. They said “more often” -

**Mr J.C. Kobelke:** Not all the time.

**Mr M.P. MURRAY:** Yes, they conceded a bit! I do not understand the logic of not wearing a seatbelt. I am old enough to remember when wearing a seatbelt was changed from being non-compulsory to being compulsory. It took some time for people to adjust to that change. However, cars today have beepers or flashers that alert drivers that they are not wearing a seatbelt. This attitude is worrying.

Another issue that was discussed at the forum was whether cars should have an electronic system that does not allow the car to start if people in the car are not wearing their seatbelts. That issue was quite well received.

Another point that was raised was that Volvo now provides an extra car key with its vehicles that limits the vehicle to 110 kilometres an hour. That would be good for people who have kids who want to use the car at the weekend. I have four daughters and I would like a similar key for my car. Young people need to slow down and drive at reasonable speeds. It is also a matter of having a bit of control over young people when they first start to drive.

Recently, when I went to Donnybrook to do a bit of spruiking to keep the Libs on the back foot, I took one of my daughters so that she could get her driving hours up. We came up behind a truck and she asked me what she should do. I asked her what she meant and she said, “Dad, it’s the first truck I’ve had to pass.” That was a real lesson for me. Kids do the practice test online, they drive on the road and they get their licences, yet many of them have never had to pass a truck. My daughter had to pass the truck while driving a small car, which took some time to pass the truck. She could have experienced problems; she could have swerved off the road or another car could have come the other way. In those situations driver training is a must. People often run off the road, oversteer sharply and have a prang. It is incumbent on all people, including young people, to be responsible for themselves. It is an issue that we must deal with.

A jumbo jet recently crashed in Indonesia. Five Australians were killed. There were reports on the front page of the newspapers for nearly a week and a half. However, eight people were killed in car crashes during the previous weekend, yet the media reports lasted for half a day. That is how blasé we have become about deaths on our roads. We have a long way to go to change that attitude.

Another interesting point was made at the forum by a lady from Albany, and the member for Albany has referred to her previously. She said that when young people get their licences, they should not get the total number of demerit points. People might drive past a Multanova while driving a couple of kilometres over the limit. People should start with four points and then earn points each year until they end up with 12 points. The incentive would be for people to drive at slower speeds and think about what they are doing while driving. That is a good idea and hopefully it will be picked up. People might be able to afford a couple of speeding fines, whether from driving in suburbia or on country roads. If they are willing to risk some of their points and they can afford to pay the fine, they can drive at 120 or 130 kilometres an hour.

As soon as the issue of road safety is raised, the emails start coming in. People are concerned and they want to get involved. We have to bring them with us. We cannot just put a line in the sand and make laws that require them to comply. We need members of the public to agree that it is good law so that they will comply with that law. I support the amendment.

**MR P.B. WATSON (Albany - Parliamentary Secretary)** [6.44 pm]: I will reinforce the comments of the member for Collie-Wellington. The name of the lady who raised the suggestions about the demerit points is Julie Brodala. Unfortunately, Julie lost her son. I used to coach him at basketball. It was a very sad loss when he and his friend died in an accident. Julie will attend the road safety forum in Albany on Monday. If she is up to it, she will talk about her experience as a parent who has lost a son in an accident on a country road. We can talk about how to stop these accidents, but we must also look at the end result. The member for Wagin said today that his wife tells him to come home to his loved ones. That is a very important point.

The member for Collie-Wellington said that the member for Albany flies a lot. The current Skywest services mean that I have driven my car a fair bit lately. I drove to Perth on Monday night. I had a bottle of water in the back seat of the car but I could not reach it. As I lent across to get it, I hit the gravel on the side of the road and skidded for about 40 metres. I had to stop the car because I was shaking so much. If I had kept my hand there for a second or two longer, I would have hit a tree. It does not matter how good a driver a person is, there is always the issue of inattentiveness. People must take responsibility for themselves. It would have taken me a minute to stop the car and get my drink, but I put at risk my life and my family’s future. People must take responsibility for their actions.



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I received a letter from Geoff Hastie, one of my constituents. He knows that a road safety forum will be held in Albany, and he has some ideas. His letter states -

You've worked with young people, your own kids, sports people, employees, Peter and one thing we all know is that nagging and punishment will never produce a long term positive result.

Encouragement and a sense of pride and self worth achieves much more, with punishment the FINAL resort.

Why then, is it, that our traffic laws rely on punishment, often of those least offensive (eg. Double demerits can punish driver of good history because for one trip, he omits to wear a seat belt - and put him offside when he was onside)

Can we not try another way:

At present, we all pay the same for our license - no matter how good or bad a driver we are. Let's look at setting a standard, base fee of say, \$300. But let's offer the opportunity, by having a clean license, to get that fee reduced. Eg. If I have two years with no demerit loss, my license is now \$250..and perhaps for each further year of clean driving, I get \$50 reduction, until I'm paying the minimum of \$100.

On the other hand, if I amass more than two points, my fee starts to go up. Say, 2 points, my license is now \$350, 4 points, \$500 etc, until at 10 points plus, I'm paying maybe \$1500 for the privilege of driving.

Peer pressure and public odium is also a powerful force - witness the anti smoking campaign. Let's say, when I'm on the \$100 - \$200 license level because I'm a safe driver, a "Gold" driver, I get a prominent Gold sticker for my vehicle license, so everyone knows it's safe to let me ferry your kids to school - and If I have 9 points up or more, I have a Black sticker, so people know it's risky to travel with me...and so on.

Revenue doesn't have to suffer in fact it might go up, if the costs of being a bad driver are high enough.

**My concept is:**

Encourage - by providing monetary incentive and community recognition

Punish - by providing monetary disincentive and community censure

Of course, under such a structure, you can't have a demerit system where a driver goes from very good to very bad because it happens to be a long weekend and his passenger isn't wearing a seatbelt. That would be unfair (actually, did anyone ever kill anybody else by not having a belt on?)

Regular bad driving is a question of attitude. Good drivers MAKE mistakes sometimes - that will always happen. But chronic bad attitudes kill and maim others. It's not all about traces of alcohol and Grant Dorrington telling us we're all naughty. We're not - it's about some peoples inability to grasp that the community will not tolerate them enjoying the same privileges on the road as others, and it would rather change their attitude than pick up after them.

I appreciate there are system costs and issues, Peter. The bureaucracy will tell is why it Can't be done, why it won't work, but I ask them to consider how they would treat their Family, their colleagues, their sportsmen, their employees if they wanted them to modify their behaviour.

I reckon they'd reward and congratulate and then only punish when they failed to respond.

That was written by Geoff Hastie, one of Albany's prominent businessmen. He made some very good points.

We were talking about losing a licence. I think it came up in debate today but it surprised me that when one loses a licence, one does not have to sit for it again. I ask the minister whether that is right.

**Mr J.C. Kobelke:** Yes.

**Mr P.B. WATSON:** I always thought that when one lost one's licence, especially for offences such as drink-driving, one had to sit for one's licence again. I was very surprised to hear that. If someone wants to drink-drive or be a dangerous driver, I feel that they should have to sit for their licence again.

The member for Collie-Wellington said that a lot of young people got killed in Collie when his daughter was a bit younger. I will never forget the day when I received a phone call from someone who said that my daughter had had an accident on a country road near Borden. She was driving on a gravel road. She had not been taught to drive on a gravel road by me. I considered that to be my fault when I taught her to drive. I taught her on the open roads. In this instance she rolled her car three times and walked away. She was very, very lucky. When I saw the car, there was a spot where her body was and the rest of the car was smashed. If someone else had been in the car, they would have been killed instantly. My daughter was very, very lucky. I did not want to see the

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car because I did not want to see how close I came to losing my daughter. When I saw it, I broke down and realised not just how lucky she was, but also that I never taught her to drive on gravel roads in the country. We have to look at these sorts of things at these forums. It is great that we have had one in Collie and one in Geraldton and we will have one in Albany because every area in Western Australia is different. I made sure that when my other two children went for their licences, I took them on country roads, I took them on open roads, I took them on gravel roads and I had them passing cars and trucks. I just put them out there. We do everything for our children but when we put them on the roads, it is so dangerous for them. Our children are our most precious asset. I still do not think we teach them enough about what can happen in a short space of time. We teach them how to drive and these sorts of things. We are trying to set aside an area in Albany where the schools can train the children. We have applied for funding for that project and I hope we get that.

When I drove to Parliament today, a person pulled out in front of me. I was driving at the proper speed. Someone just looked up, saw me and pulled out in front of me from a side street. Beeping one's horn is considered a form of road rage and is not allowed but I admit I did flick my lights at this person. If I had not moved into the other lane, I would have slammed into this person's car. There are not only speed factors on the roads but we also have to be aware of what is happening on the road. This person just drove off with no concern at all. They probably did not realise until they looked in the rear-vision mirror that when I put my foot on the brake and swerved out, I was probably only seven or eight feet behind them. Driving within the laws of the road, I have to look out for cars in front of me but when drivers pull out from my left, I have no chance. These are some of the things that we have to look at.

I applaud the member for South Perth for bringing on this motion today. I like his idea of having a forum. We need statewide forums. We can look at what happened in Collie. We can even have some in Perth. We need to collate all these details and bring them here and have a forum. We should not just bring the experts together; we also need some young people there because they are our future. The main dangers on the roads in Albany are 17 to 24-year-old males. They just think they are bulletproof. We lose young people all the time. I think I have mentioned in Parliament before that I went to a young boy's funeral the week before the last election. I spoke to the children there on behalf of the parents. I said, "Just remember, it can happen to you." Driving to Perth a week later, four of them came past in a car, calling out, "G'day, Watto." They were doing about 140 kilometres per hour. I saw them at Williams and I asked the driver why he did it. He said, "Straight road and I'm a good driver." This guy was aged 19 years. He said he had been driving on the farm for years. I said that he only needed a roo to come out on the side of the road or something like that and he would be in real strife. I do not know how we educate them. Young people think they are bulletproof. They lost their mate a couple of weeks before but they do not think it can happen to them. That is a real concern to me.

There is one thing that I have noticed in Perth; I was going to see the minister about getting one installed in Albany: I noticed while driving in Dianella that when I came up near a school there were flashing solar-driven 40 kilometres per hour signs.

**Mr J.E. McGrath:** In the school zones?

**Mr P.B. WATSON:** Yes, it was in a school zone.

**Mr R.C. Kucera:** Wordsworth Avenue in Yokine.

**Mr P.B. WATSON:** That is right. Being solar, they would not cost that much to run. These flashing lights really stand out. That is something we can install not only in front of schools but also in other areas so people cannot say they did not know what the speed was.

That is nearly all I have to say. I spoke about losing a licence. As I said, I think people should sit for their licences again when they lose them. We should look at the survey. I am really looking forward to our forum in Albany on Monday. We have 70 to 80 young people coming. Community leaders will attend in the afternoon. The one good thing about this forum is that the young people can sit there and make decisions without anyone knowing. They will have a hand-held device. Questions come up on a board, they press the device and no-one else knows the answers they give. When certain topics are discussed, they have an opportunity to contribute.

I fully support the amendment moved by the minister. I congratulate the member for South Perth. Anything we can do to cut down the road toll is a great thing.

**MR J.E. McGRATH (South Perth) [6.57 pm]:** I thank the Minister for Police and Emergency Services for the spirit of cooperation that he has demonstrated on this issue. I thank all members who have participated in the debate. They have demonstrated that we can come up with a wide range of ideas. A lot of them are fed to us by our constituents. It shows a great interest in road safety. I look forward to working with the minister and coming up with a format for the bipartisan comprehensive and independent review of road safety that will

**Extract from *Hansard***

[ASSEMBLY - Wednesday, 28 March 2007]

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Mr John McGrath; Mr Terry Waldron; Mr Rob Johnson; Mr John Kobelke; Mr Max Trenorden; Mr Shane Hill;  
Mr Murray Cowper; Mr Mick Murray; Mr Peter Watson

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happen as part of the government process of formulating the next road safety strategy to start from 2008. I am sure that we will come to an agreement on the terms of reference.

Amendment put and passed.

*Motion, as Amended*

Question put and passed.