

ROAD TRAFFIC CODE — INCREASED PENALTIES

**762. Mr I.M. BRITZA to the Acting Minister for Police:**

Can the minister please outline to the house the new traffic enforcement measures that will be put in place for the Queen's Birthday long weekend?

**Mr J.H.D. DAY replied:**

I am happy to do so. Of course, I make the observation that it is essential that we do everything we can to try to reduce the number of fatalities and serious injuries occurring on the roads in Western Australia. There are still far too many of both categories occurring in our state, albeit our record is certainly a lot better than it was 20 or 30 years ago, but we are far from the best-performing state in that respect. Part of the road safety system involves ensuring that an appropriate deterrent system is in place. There has been a review of the penalties under the Road Traffic Code, which the Minister for Police announced a couple of months ago. In most cases, the increased penalties will come into effect at midnight tonight, and they will be in place on a permanent basis. Of course, it is the most significant change in penalties since a review was conducted in 1997. There are significant increases for offences which are considered to be a major risk to road users but for which the penalties were not high enough. From midnight tonight, the penalty for motorcyclists who fail to wear a helmet will increase to \$550, which is the same as the penalty for people who do not wear a seatbelt; the penalty for the illegal use of a mobile phone will increase to \$400; and the penalty for failing to obey a red light will increase to \$300. There is also a range of other increases. It is worth noting that since there was a very significant increase in the seatbelt penalty in 2007, there has been a 35 per cent reduction in the percentage of people killed because they were not wearing a seatbelt.

It is also important to note that from midnight tonight until midnight on Monday, double demerit points will be in place for a number of offences, particularly speeding, drink-driving and drug-driving, failing to wear a seatbelt, red-light offences and mobile phone use. The penalty over the weekend for the use of a mobile phone while driving will be six demerit points and a fine of \$400, so people need to take note of that. People also need to be aware that the police have some new equipment, including long-range cameras, which I saw in operation at Powis Street at lunchtime. The police certainly were being kept pretty busy, with quite a number of offenders. Quite a significant number of people were not wearing seatbelts and also were using mobile phones. The long-range cameras are being used to target those offences in particular, but they will also be used for excessive speed detection. The cameras will be used around the metropolitan area and also outside the metropolitan area.

The government is making a reasonable effort to try to ensure that people do the right thing on the roads. We do not want to collect the revenue. We want people to drive safely and responsibly on the roads, and then they will not have to pay a fine.