

MOTOR VEHICLE (CATASTROPHIC INJURIES) BILL 2016

159. Mr P. ABETZ to the Treasurer:

Can the Treasurer please update the house on the implementation of expanded motor vehicle injury insurance to provide lifetime care and support for people catastrophically injured in motor vehicle accidents?

Dr M.D. NAHAN replied:

I thank the member for the question and his commitment to the issue. I am pleased to announce that the government is making good progress in implementing its commitment to helping people who are injured in motor vehicle accidents and who have suffered catastrophic injury and do not have access to the existing compulsory third party system that is based on fault. The Motor Vehicle (Catastrophic Injuries) Bill 2016 passed through the house last night and it is on track for implementation on 1 July. I reiterate my sincere thanks to everyone on both sides of the house for their support and constructive contributions to the debate on this important legislation. I reiterate that I hope the Legislative Council makes an equally timely and positive contribution to the debate so that we can get the bill through on 1 July, and that means passing it by 1 May.

As people who participated in the debate know, the community and health disability sectors are overwhelmingly supportive of this bill and the issue. It is, in my view and also in the view of most of the people commenting on the bill, long overdue. The cost of care for a catastrophically injured person overwhelms a family. More importantly, upon receiving a catastrophic injury, the injured person and their family need to concentrate on care and rehabilitation, rather than cost and earning the money to afford it.

We have not lost track of the fact that the \$99 fee for no-fault insurance is high. Although it is lower than the fee in all other states, it is still an impost on motorists in Western Australia. Therefore, we are committed to keeping the cost low but at the same time, as we participate in the debate, making sure that payments to those injured are done so in a timely and appropriate manner. It is a delicate task, but we are absolutely committed to keeping down the costs of premiums and running the scheme as world's best practice.

I will also ensure that the community and motorists are kept informed—that was one of the issues in the debate—of the changes and have the nature of the change, the cost of the change and the reasons we need the change communicated to them.