

CORONAVIRUS — INTRASTATE TRAVEL RESTRICTIONS

222. Ms M.J. DAVIES to the Minister for Police:

I refer to the regional travel restrictions brought into place on Tuesday night, and put on record my thanks and appreciation to the WA police and others charged with managing this enormous task under difficult circumstances.

- (1) Can the minister advise the house when further information regarding these restrictions will be published, including but not limited to forms for exemptions, online licensing systems and frequently asked questions?
- (2) Could the minister clarify the rationale for locating some roadblocks within regional borders as opposed to on regional borders?
- (3) Will there be a review of the system to address emerging issues identified as it is implemented; and, if so, when?

Mrs M.H. ROBERTS replied:

- (1)–(3) I thank the Leader of the National Party for that question about the regional travel restrictions. Information about those restrictions and the various exemptions is on the WA government website. If members look there, they will see that it is under section 67 of the Emergency Management Act, “Prohibition on Regional Travel Directions”. There are about five or six pages listing the various exemptions and the like. By and large, police are attempting to take a commonsense approach to this. I think the figures that I gave in the brief ministerial statement indicate that. Of the 17 760 people who attended a checkpoint yesterday, 17 674 people were recognised as being in the exempt category. That shows me that most people are doing the right thing. The vast majority of people were able to proceed because they met one of those exempt categories. They were going to work, or they were delivering goods, or any of the various things that we have already outlined that are listed in the information that is on the WA government website.

Clarifying the location of some of the roadblocks has been very difficult. We have never had to attempt to close off our regions before. Police have identified the sites that they think fit best. I commend the work of Deputy Commissioner Gary Dreibergs, Commander Darryl Gaunt, Superintendent Andy Greatwood and others. They have been very closely involved in this matter. People have been referring to them as roadblocks. They are not fixed roadblocks. They are movable checkpoints. We have had some feedback about some of those checkpoints. The police have attempted to put them in the most sensible position possible. They have, for example, liaised with industry about that. I know that there has been a lot of liaison, partly instigated by the members for Bunbury and Mandurah, about workers at Wagerup, for example, and where the checkpoint is most appropriately located. When I have received feedback from people, I have provided it to Deputy Commissioner Dreibergs, and he says that he will act on that. He reminded me, of course, that these are not fixed roadblocks. They are checkpoints and when a suggestion is made and it makes sense, they will act on it. The police are liaising with local government. The feedback that the member for Mandurah gave me yesterday was feedback that he had received from the Peel Development Commission. I provided that to Deputy Commissioner Dreibergs. I understand that that checkpoint will likely be shifted today. It was pointed out that that checkpoint had been put there for a reason, but people travelling within that district were getting caught out by it—they were just going to shop in Pinjarra or something of that nature and being caught out—so our officers are dealing with that.

The system is being constantly reviewed. They have been looking at alternatives and I understand some of those checkpoints that we had negative feedback on yesterday have already been moved today, and it is likely that others will be moved tomorrow. Members in the other house have asked me to produce a list of where the roadblocks are. I have said, “Look, they’re not roadblocks; they’re checkpoints.” I am loath to provide a daily list of where they are, because I think that would be counterproductive. From a road safety point of view—but also to have effective borders for these districts—I do not want to see people perhaps taking rat runs or back roads or lesser standard roads because there is a checkpoint on another road. Police are very mindful of this. As well as having the checkpoints, they also will be mobile in those districts and be checking. I put people on notice: if you know where a checkpoint is and you think you can take a back road, police will be checking alternative roads as well.

I thank members of the public for their forbearance. Again, if members here are aware of issues in their district that need to be addressed, I am more than happy to do that. Just since the other night, the member for Moore, for example, raised for me that partners of fly in, fly out workers were wanting to pick them up from the airport and so we addressed that. A range of members have raised those issues and police have dealt with them in a very commonsense way.