

ROAD TRAFFIC ACT, ANTIHOON PROVISIONS

536. Mr J.B. D'ORAZIO to the Minister for Police and Emergency Services:

Will the minister advise the House of the effectiveness of the new antihoon provisions in the Road Traffic Act?

Mrs M.H. ROBERTS replied:

I thank the member for the question and his strong support of the Government's antihoon legislation. The new legislation has been operational for just 10 days. It was introduced on 4 September. I have been advised that nine vehicles have been impounded since that date. That means that the drivers of the nine vehicles have been stopped from putting their own lives at risk. The vehicles have been impounded and, as such, the lives of other road users have not been put at risk. Each of the vehicles has been impounded for 48 hours.

I have been advised that all the offenders are young men aged between 17 and 29 years. That age group is well and truly over-represented in road crashes and fatalities. The legislation is clearly working by targeting people in that age group.

Many of the incidents have been quite frightening. For example, members may have heard of a motorcyclist in Bassendean who was allegedly observed by police travelling at speeds between 140 and 150 kilometres an hour in a 50 kilometre-an-hour zone. It is incredible that someone would do that in a 50 kilometre-an-hour residential zone. There has been a series of other very high speeds, including 144 kilometres an hour in a 70 kilometre-an-hour zone, 142 kilometres an hour in a 70 kilometre-an-hour zone, 130 kilometres an hour in a 70 kilometre-an-hour zone and 128 kilometres an hour in a 60 kilometre-an-hour zone. With the aid of these new laws, drivers are being made accountable for their driving behaviour and have lost the use of their vehicles. If a person commits another offence he will lose the use of his vehicle for three months. In addition to the vehicle impoundments and the reckless driving charges that have been laid, several of the drivers have been charged with a variety of offences for exceeding the legal blood alcohol concentration. In one instance a 16-year-old driver, who did not even hold a driver's licence, was not only charged with reckless driving and had his father's car impounded but also was charged for having a blood alcohol concentration in excess of 0.02 per cent. These tough new laws are having an impact, and they are improving safety on our roads by taking these road users, who are clearly involved in life-threatening and dangerous activities, off the roads. It is part of the Government's strong commitment to reduce deaths and serious injuries on our roads.

I take this opportunity to commend the police who have been very vigilant in using these new laws throughout Western Australia. The offences have occurred as far apart as Newman and Albany, and there have been quite a number around the metropolitan area. The Police Service, on behalf of the community and on behalf of these young people, wants to take these cars off the road. The police want to immediately give these young people that short, sharp message by taking their cars for 48 hours; and, if they offend again - nine already have - they will lose their vehicles for three months.