

WIRE ROPE BARRIERS — RISK TO MOTORCYCLISTS

5720. Hon Nigel Hallett to the Parliamentary Secretary representing the Minister for Planning and Infrastructure

- (1) Do wire rope barriers pose a serious risk to motorcycle riders?
- (2) Have other jurisdictions overseas banned wire rope barriers because they pose a serious risk to motorcyclists?
- (3) Will the Minister confirm that the use of wire rope barriers is under review?
- (4) If yes to (3), on what date was that review initiated?
- (5) Who is carrying out that review and what are their respective positions in which agencies?
- (6) When will the review be finished?
- (7) Will the review be released publicly in its entirety?
- (8) Will the Government ensure that wire rope barriers are not installed while that review is under way?

Hon ADELE FARINA replied:

- (1) Any barrier is a potential risk to a motorcyclist or vehicle which has left the road carriageway. Barriers are only installed when the overall risk of not installing them is higher than the consequences of collision with the hazards they are installed to protect such as a roadside objects or oncoming traffic.
- (2) Some European countries such as Norway and The Netherlands have stopped installing them, while others such as Sweden, are using them extensively.
- (3)-(7) A review of the Australian Standard for Road Safety Barriers AS 3845 is currently being undertaken by a national committee which includes representatives from Main Roads WA and the Australasian Motorcycle Council. However, wire rope barriers are not being specifically considered as part of this review.

In late 2007, Main Roads commenced a review of best practice for the use of wire rope barriers around Australia and overseas. Research for the review is being undertaken by the Australian Road Research Board (ARRB). It is planned that a Focus Group will be established in the first quarter of 2008 to discuss the outcomes of the review. The Focus Group will include stakeholder representatives from user groups such as the Motorcyclist Riders Association and the RAC. The output from this process will be fed into a national review to work towards a national approach to best practice use.

- (8) Wire rope barriers are considered to be an effective traffic management tool and will continue to be installed while the review is underway. Research indicates that the severity of crash impacts is significantly reduced by up to 90 percent where barriers are in place. This type of barrier generally has superior performance or containment characteristics to other barrier types in most situations and are considered to be a useful safety device when employed in appropriate situations.