

Ms Margaret Quirk; Mr Chris Hatton; Dr Tony Buti; Ms Libby Mettam; Mrs Michelle Roberts; Acting Speaker;
Mr Nathan Morton; Mr Matt Taylor

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND JUSTICE STANDING COMMITTEE

*Eighth Report — “Are we there yet? How WA Police determines whether traffic law enforcement is effective” —
Tabling*

MS M.M. QUIRK (Girrawheen) [10.07 am]: I present for tabling the eighth report of the Community Development and Justice Standing Committee entitled “Are we there yet? How WA Police determines whether traffic law enforcement is effective”. I also present the submissions.

[See papers 3044 and 3045.]

Ms M.M. QUIRK: This report is part of a larger inquiry into police performance indicators with the advent of the Frontline 2020 reforms. The committee notes that Western Australia Police consumes a large proportion of the state budget and it is in the public interest that deployment of personnel and resources is undertaken in a most efficient way, geared towards achieving optimal outcomes. The committee decided to first look at road safety: because there is considerable public interest in the area; because the downward trend of the road toll is slower in Western Australia than in all other mainland Australian states; because last year, on road safety, WA Police changed its performance measure to a single key performance indicator; and because WA Police’s annual report is progressively containing less information on how road traffic laws are enforced and how outputs are measured.

The committee also noted that the “Road Policing Strategy 2011–2014” has expired and there is no evidence of a new road policing strategy. However, that former strategy notes —

... through WA Police efforts, road-users will be made accountable for any unlawful road-user behaviour, anywhere and at anytime.

Once we started the inquiry we were surprised to find that although there was a body of research on measuring police performance in the area of crime, there was very little in the area of road safety. We were therefore, to some extent, in unknown territory. This challenge was professionally and diligently met by principal research officer Dr Sarah Palmer and research officer Niamh Corbett, who is leaving the committee and we wish her well. Thank you. I also appreciate the conscientious deliberation of committee members—deputy chair, Dr Tony Buti, member for Armadale; Member for Balcatta, Mr Chris Hatton; member for Collie–Preston, Mr Mick Murray; and member for Vasse, Ms Libby Mettam.

In some states the road statistics for deaths and serious injuries are considered a measure of the effectiveness of police in enforcing road safety laws. However, the committee from the outset accepted the proposition advanced by WA Police that as there were a number of participating agencies in the area of road safety—namely, the Departments of Main Roads and Planning, and the Office of Road Safety—and vehicle design and education also have an influence on road safety, it was unfair that WA Police shoulder sole responsibility for the road toll. If the police fail to formulate meaningful alternative measures, however, the road toll statistics may become a default measure of performance. Moreover, the Towards Zero road safety strategy identifies two causal factors for the road toll—speed and alcohol and drugs. The enforcement of these laws is the primary responsibility of police.

Both because of the lack of research I have mentioned and the opaqueness of some of the information that police gave the committee, this report took longer than we would have liked. As I have mentioned, in 2015, WA Police replaced two lawful road-use behaviour KPIs with a single KPI, which is the percentage of traffic law enforcement contacts made by police officers that target category A offences—namely, drink-driving; exceeding the lawful speed limit; careless, dangerous or reckless driving; no authority to drive or an unlicensed vehicle; the use of mobile phones while driving; and the non-wearing of seatbelts, restraints and helmets. What emerges is that this performance measurement is quantitative and in any event these statistics are subject to an unacceptable level of ambiguity. For example, conducting more random breath tests at locations at times that are not likely to mean high volumes of positives might be interpreted as a sign that more drivers are heeding road safety messages. But equally, intelligence and commonsense would suggest there is only a remote possibility in that particular situation that there would be drunk-drivers on the road. The committee was told this kind of tasking was to give the general deterrence message of “anytime, anywhere”. It could, however, be counterproductive by exasperating law-abiding motorists whose personal experiences reflect not having seen a booze bus for some time at high-risk locations at peak times.

It is clear that this philosophy has also not been adequately communicated to frontline officers either. The WA Police Union surveyed its members involved in traffic enforcement and found more than 90 per cent of the survey respondents feel that WA Police is more concerned about the number of drivers tested for drugs and alcohol than the number of drivers tested who return a positive sample. However, when members test drivers for

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alcohol and drugs, more than 86 per cent are more concerned with the number of drivers who return a positive sample than the number of drivers actually tested. Approximately 72 per cent of survey respondents believe that targeted alcohol and drug testing is more effective than random testing. The survey results went on to say that more than 56 per cent of respondents did not believe that major drug and alcohol testing activities were being conducted in the right place at the right time. The survey results also said the following: tests were done during daytime to increase the statistics of numbers of drivers tested; there was an emphasis in the agency of quantity over quality; local intelligence is not being appropriately used at known hot spots; social media deters the effectiveness of alcohol and drug testing operations; and booze buses for alcohol and drug testing were not just seen in regional WA. Senior police would counter this by saying that it is not about the positives but the number of contacts with drivers. But if this is the case, the committee has seen a disturbing decline in the number of on-the-spot infringements—namely, those where a traffic officer personally stops a driver. These figures have been declining in recent years. In 2011 there were over 193 000, in 2012 there were over 210 000, in 2013 there were over 182 000; and in 2014 there were over 159 000. In the first quarter of this year there were 27 500, which if extrapolated across the whole year is 110 000. Despite seeking an explanation for this other than fewer traffic officer hours, this decline is a concern as it translates into less police visibility. An increase in roadside speed cameras is not an equivalent alternative. We heard evidence from the RAC, a member of the Road Safety Council, that in the past the number of police traffic hours formerly was published in the annual report, and once no longer published, they would at least be supplied upon request. Now, police will not make them available even on request. However imprecise this measure is of police visibility on the roads, it is a matter of concern to the 700 000 or so RAC members, and it is a useful measure to compare movements year to year.

This is a convenient segue into a fundamental tension in the area of traffic enforcement—that between general deterrence and specific deterrence. General deterrence uses fear of detection and its consequences to try to influence drivers not to offend, while specific deterrence relies on the experience of apprehension and its consequences to encourage other drivers not to reoffend. The difficulty we grappled with is how effective deterrence measures, specific and general, can be gauged. The much-publicised Operation Nimrod was highly successful as an exercise in specific deterrence by targeting traffic recidivists, but some might argue this is low-hanging fruit. Moreover, the cohort of young males aged 18 to 25 years who are disproportionately represented in the road toll statistics may not have previously come to police attention. In the course of briefings, for example, we heard that a report of hooning behaviour, where the hoon has left the scene, is a priority 4. So unless police are fortuitously on the spot, this conduct will not be addressed. The focus of specific deterrence is clearly producing results, but research suggests not putting all of one's eggs in the same basket. Measurement of effectiveness should contain some way to determine whether behaviour change has taken place. However, community attitude surveys that measure driver perceptions have not been conducted since 2011. I understand these may be reinstated and I would certainly welcome this. In their absence we need to rely on the annual "Report on Government Services" produced by the Productivity Commission. This compares data on road safety measures obtained from the national survey of community satisfaction with policing. The latest statistics the report notes are from the 2013–14 and are as follows. Regarding the use of seatbelts, the national average of the proportion of people who had indicated driving in the previous six months without a seatbelt is 5.2 per cent and happily Western Australia is below that at 4.9 per cent. Less happily, the national average of the proportion of people who indicated they had driven in the previous six months possibly over the blood alcohol limit was 7.7 per cent, but in WA it was 8.1 per cent. Likewise, the national average of the proportion of people who indicated driving in the previous six months at 10 kilometres per hour or more over the speed limit was 54.5 per cent and in Western Australia it was 59.9 per cent. We also heard that since the inquiry, police have commissioned research from the Curtin–Monash Accident Research Centre to validate what they are doing and determine whether their current practices are the right way to go. This suggests that there has been a lack of objective evaluation currently up to date, and a lack of clarity as to whether what Western Australia Police does marries up with research findings. I would be concerned if this inquiry alone was the catalyst for this work being commissioned.

As we all know, WA Police receives funds from the road trauma trust fund for various projects; the nature of these projects is set out in appendix 7 of the report. It was not clear that ex post facto detailed evaluations of their effectiveness as deterrents are undertaken, above and beyond a narrative that funds were acquitted. Disturbingly, we found a level of elasticity in the figures produced as to whether operational targets were met. What is evident is that in Western Australia we are not performing drug and alcohol tests at the level that research regards as optimal. A study by researcher Professor Max Cameron has found that —

General deterrence through the perceived risk of detection is maximised by operations that appear to cover broad areas and both minor and major roads ... are highly visible and test a substantial proportion of passing motorists.

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The cost–benefit study found that breath test rates could increase to 1.5 per licensed driver per year and remain cost effective. WA Police has a target of one million random breath tests annually, which translates to approximately 0.7 per individual; in Victoria it is one test per driver annually. Senior traffic police told the committee that what police are currently doing is more than sufficient.

The situation is even more unsatisfactory in the area of drug-driving testing. The Australian Crime Commission sees methylamphetamines as posing the greatest threat to the Australian public of all illicit drug types. WA’s methamphetamine usage rate is close to double the national average. A recent report by Curtin–Monash Accident Research Centre found that nearly two-thirds of WA road fatalities during the period 2008 to 2012 tested positive to illicit drugs, with cannabis the most prevalent followed by methylamphetamines. Professor Cameron spoke of an “escalation in drug-driving” in Australian states, and Office of Road Safety executive director Iain Cameron has acknowledged that there is increasing evidence that it is a problem in WA. He suggested that a “change in tactics” may be warranted, since the emphasis thus far had been on drink-driving. Assistant Commissioner Anticich said WA Police has a “realistic aspirational target” of “10 000 I think in metro, and about 9 000 I think in regional WA.” But an extensive review of drug-driving enforcement in WA by Professor Cameron in 2012 concluded that roadside drug tests should be increased to between 90 000 and 160 000 tests annually.

The exact reason for so many fewer tests being performed in WA is not readily apparent. WA Police applied to the road trauma trust fund for almost \$12 million to fund the project to increase breath and drug testing in 2015; the Road Safety Council recommended that the amount be granted; however, only \$4.6 million was approved, as was a similar amount in the 2015–16 period. During the four-year period between 2008 and 2012, WA Police conducted a mere 43 176 drug tests. There have been suggestions that this is linked to a much higher cost of conducting a drug test, but also to the fact that the penalty for alcohol driving is higher than for the drug offence; it was also seen as a contributing factor. Also, we remain aware that the inability to lawfully collect blood samples from a road trauma patient limits the ability of researchers to accurately assess the impact of alcohol and drugs on driving impairment and road trauma. The committee recommends amending legislation to enable these samples to be collected.

Clearly, there is a direct correlation between the volume of police on the roads and driver behaviour. The WA Police Union submission noted frustration from officers that there had been a decline in the dedicated number of traffic staff at all stations, and traffic staff expressed the desire to spend more time on the road. They further noted that they would like more consultation on a daily basis to better formulate enforcement strategies. The assertion by the respondents to the union survey that fewer enforcement hours are being undertaken is substantiated by evidence before the committee that traffic police were not deployed 100 per cent on traffic duties, that RBT teams had been stood down for periods of days to assist on general matters, and that the number of infringements issued personally by officers on the road had inexplicably dropped. One reason for this may be a philosophical argument between Police and Treasury. It is argued that if traffic enforcement is core police business, it should not have to go cap in hand to get a top-up for those activities through the road trauma trust fund. The strategic traffic enforcement program enables additional traffic enforcement for speed and drug and alcohol driving to be deployed in peak periods; it is funded through the RTTF. The union’s submission makes reference to the issue when it noted that fewer or no STEP patrols had been undertaken, and that funding had been returned by the commissioner. That accords with evidence given by the executive director, Anthony Kannis. From this perspective, targets for RBTs or drug testing should not be subject to the vagaries of budget negotiations while dipping into the RTTF for core police business. It is important that the target be routinely met.

Recommendation 42 of the Browne review is that consideration be given to securing chief executive officer commitment to road safety, requiring relevant CEOs to collaborate and to present to the Minister for Road Safety six-monthly reports on progress towards reducing road fatalities. In WA the relevant CEOs were identified as the Commissioner of Police, the director general of Transport, the director general of Planning, and the executive director of the Office of Road Safety—or the newly appointed Commissioner of Road Safety, I presume—and potentially could include the heads of Education and Health. The RAC also outlined in its submission the need for key performance indicators to be held by the Minister for Road Safety and senior WA police. However, when asked whether road safety was part of the police commissioner’s personal KPIs, the committee was told that the commissioner does not have a performance agreement. The current reported measures and a single KPI do not, in the committee’s view, give Parliament, road safety stakeholders and the public an adequate indication of whether traffic enforcement is fully effective.

I leave members with a thought to dwell on for the day: the best car safety device is a rear-view mirror with a cop in it.

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MR C.D. HATTON (Balcatta) [10.27 am]: I rise to contribute to the debate on this inquiry and its report. Firstly, I would like to thank the Chair, Margaret Quirk, MLA, principal research officer Dr Sarah Palmer, and research officer Ms Niamh Corbett for their diligent support and guidance in drawing together a quite demanding report. I would like to also acknowledge my fellow committee members: Deputy Chair, Dr Tony Buti, MLA, Ms Libby Mettam, MLA, and Mr Mick Murray, MLA.

The committee, in line with its inquiry into the methods employed by Western Australia Police on how it evaluates its performance, established in 2014, decided to examine the upward trend in trauma and fatalities on WA roads. The committee set out to establish how WA Police evaluate its performance in relation to road safety as a side inquiry. That inquiry was guided by three questions: How does the agency know if it is making progress? How does it use performance information to guide its practice? Do the reported measures give Parliament, road safety stakeholders and the public an adequate indication of whether traffic enforcement is effective? The committee was able to examine and explore WA Police performance measures and the practices applied to enforce the law and change road-use behaviour. In doing so, the committee established 16 findings and 12 recommendations.

I draw attention to the statement I made in my opening comment, being “this report was quite demanding”. It was demanding because governance and management of road safety in WA is complex, as outlined in chapter 2 of the report. Historically, road safety has not really had a separate identity to which responsibility and accountability could be attached. Various factors and agencies have been in play, including signatories to national and global strategies. A ministerial council with responsibility for road safety was established in 1995; however, road safety became a portfolio only in 2008. Currently, following the Browne review of road safety governance, there is transition within agencies that are associated with road safety, including being associated with WA Police. Clearly, this report focuses on the evaluation of WA Police performance, because it plays a key role in keeping our roads safe. However, while focusing on WA Police, it is important to understand that it would be incorrect to hold the police accountable for all that happens on our roads. As identified, governance and road safety is complex and involves other agencies alongside police, such as the Office of Road Safety and the Road Safety Council. The Office of Road Safety and the Road Safety Council have their own functions and make contributions to improve road safety and guide the police in particular areas. WA Police, in pursuing its own goals towards road safety, measures its traffic law enforcement performance with internal measures and annual key performance indicators.

Prior to 2014–15, WA Police had two lawful road-use KPIs, and these were replaced with a single KPI for 2014–15, being the percentage of traffic law enforcement contacts made by police officers that target category A offences. These offences include drink-driving, exceeding the lawful speed limit, careless, dangerous or reckless driving, no authority to drive an unlicensed vehicle, the use of a mobile phone while driving and not wearing a seatbelt, restraint or helmet. This single KPI is audited and encompasses a range of offences being based on “contacts”. There has been some debate within this committee as to whether the recorded contacts are a true indicator of effective police performance or whether contacts contribute to changing behaviour and reducing the road toll. The committee members were able to form opinions on police strategies employed to target the KPI category A offences.

Essentially, deterrence plays a key strategic role in WA policing, especially general deterrence and targeted deterrence. Deterrence is inherent in the “Anytime, Anywhere, Anyone” campaign, which signals to the public that there is a high likelihood of being caught when offending on the road. The success of the Anytime, Anywhere, Anyone strategy is essentially measured by contacts, but it is probably true to say that greater or less contacts can be the result of other factors outside police enforcement, such as an increase in the population or a change in driving culture due to advertising campaigns. Measuring police performance can therefore be problematic, and certainly KPIs need to be measuring not just inputs but also outputs or outcomes.

It could be said, and I say in this place today, that it is very important in committee work to adhere to and focus on the terms of reference. In consideration of the terms of reference, it was evident to some committee members that WA Police is dependent on analysis and it exercises an analysis of road usage data daily, weekly and ongoing, as evidenced at police operations in Midland. Through widespread closed-circuit television and other data collection such as contacts, police analysts are able minute by minute, day by day and week by week to plot hotspots that indicate where targets need to be set and resources deployed. This brings to attention finding 2 of the report, which states —

Intelligence-led policing is well understood and tactical intelligence is used to guide traffic policing on a daily basis. However, opportunities to translate intelligence and evidence into strategic and policy changes could be further developed.

Certainly, some committee members observed WA Police operations using intelligence and evidence in guiding traffic policing on a daily basis and beyond. I support the notion that analyst roles are very important.

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In reference to a range of other recommendations, the committee has put forward recommendations 2 and 3, which are associated with more thorough reporting and the inclusion of contextual road policing indicators to the key performance indicator in the police annual report. There was some indication that although this has merit, it could create an administrative burden and impact on frontline policing; that is, getting out and doing the job that the public expects.

Recommendation 4 is about establishing the enhanced road safety system. Recommendation 5 is associated with an amendment to the Road Traffic Act to enable the lawful collection of blood samples. Recommendations 6, 7 and 8 are about drug testing more drivers who test positive for alcohol, and amending the act to deal with driving under the influence of drugs. Recommendations 9, 10, 11 and 12 are about advertising, education, media campaigns and surveys, and how the road trauma trust account funds may be used including safeguards to its use.

In conclusion, members of Parliament and others know the history of this committee, but I believe that some integrity has been re-established. I believe that this report has presented some worthwhile recommendations that may improve road safety, but I am uncertain about whether a number of findings and recommendations are directly related to the intent of the terms of reference, which are to do with evaluating police performance. The WA Police traffic enforcement command has been guided by the 2011–2014 road policing strategy, which sets out three objectives: first, the enforcement of traffic laws; secondly, targeting unsafe road-user behaviour; and thirdly, building road policing capabilities.

Mr P. Papalia interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Ms J.M. Freeman): Members!

Mr C.D. HATTON: It must be acknowledged that road policing is a combination of general and targeted deterrence, and that the new frontline policing is about being proactive and not just reactive.

Several members interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Members! I am on my feet.

Mr R.F. Johnson interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Member for Hillarys, I am on my feet and you are called for the first time. Member for Forrestfield, I was on my feet and you were yelling and I call you for the first time. Members, we have two minutes left. The member for Balcatta has been heard in silence and he will continue to be heard in silence or I will stand again and I will call people.

Mr C.D. HATTON: Thank you, Madam Acting Speaker. It must be acknowledged that road policing is a combination of general and targeted deterrence, and that the new frontline policing is about being proactive and not just reactive.

Several members interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Member for Hillarys! I am on my feet. Members, I have just said that the member for Balcatta will be heard in silence. Member for Warnbro, you are called for the first time. Member for Hillarys and member for Forrestfield, you will stop or I will call you a second time. Member for Balcatta, you have the floor.

Mr C.D. HATTON: Policing is about getting out there and doing the job. Is advertising and excessive reporting the priority role of policing, or how much importance should be placed on these areas? The report has brought forward some issues certainly worth considering. Thank you.

DR A.D. BUTI (Armadale) [10.37 am]: I also rise to make some comment on the report of the Community Development and Justice Standing Committee of which I am a member. I would just like to say that I am a little surprised at some of the comments made by the member for Balcatta because this is actually a majority report. I do not think this is the place to be querying the outcome of the report if he has signed off on the report. I must say that I am incredibly disappointed that the member for Balcatta sought to take this opportunity to do that. He knows the rules: if he is not happy with the report, he should put in a minority report. It is quite disgraceful and not something I would expect from him. He also cast aspersions on the integrity of the committee. As far as I am concerned, this committee has always had integrity. If the member for Balcatta did not think that, why did he come back on it? It is really a shame that he has made those comments today.

I would like to commence by acknowledging the outstanding efforts of the Chair, the member for Girrawheen. I would also like to express gratitude for the efforts made by the member for Balcatta—until today, I must say—and by the member for Vasse, who is a new member of the committee. Of course, I express gratitude for the outstanding work done by the staff, Dr Sarah Palmer and Ms Niamh Corbett. Unfortunately, Niamh Corbett left

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our committee to go to another inquiry and Dr Sarah Palmer had to do a lot of the work on a solo basis at the end of the report. However, we wish Niamh Corbett the best of luck in her new position and we are very fortunate to have the continuing services of Dr Sarah Palmer.

This inquiry is part of a larger inquiry into performance indicators or KPIs with regard to WA Police. We looked at how WA Police measures its own performance. That is important in any agency or business because if an agency or business seeks to ensure that it is operating in an efficient manner—of course, that is very important with the police force because we utilise taxpayers' dollars—it should try to get the most out of every dollar spent. This KPI is for road safety and we will also engage in other parts of the police force and the different issues that it deals with.

The committee report, “Are we there yet? How WA Police determines whether traffic law enforcement is effective”, basically looks at how the police determine their role in trying to reduce dangers on the road or improve road safety. Of course, if the police do not have the right measures, it is hard for them to ascertain—and for governments and the public to make a judgement—whether they are performing at the performance level at which they should with regard to their responsibility for road safety. As stated in the executive summary, this report is about whether the performance measurements serve as a guide as to what strategies are working and what strategies require modification. As mentioned by the member for Balcatta and the committee Chair, Margaret Quirk, the police have only one KPI for road safety which is, I think, problematic and needs to be reconsidered. When looking at KPIs, we must determine whether they are valid and reliable; valid in the sense that they measure what they should measure and reliable in the sense that they obtain statistics on which we can rely. That is very important. There have to be questions about the single KPI that is being utilised by Western Australia Police. I will not go over territory that has been articulated by the two members who have spoken before me—I am sure that one more committee member will speak—so I will speak to other issues in the report.

One issue in the report for which we received different submissions was the road trauma trust account. I believe the previous Minister for Police established the road trauma trust account —

Ms M.M. Quirk: No, the 100 per cent qualification.

Dr A.D. BUTI: That is right. That was an important outcome to try to ensure that all the money collected is used for the purpose of road safety. It would appear that that has not been the case. As is stated on page 9 of the report —

Of the \$111 million allocated in 2015–16, \$18 million was allocated to WA Police projects.

Further, the Royal Automobile Club lamented —

The current \$80 million in unspent funds is not contributing to better road safety outcomes; despite WA having the worst fatality rate of any mainland state.

I hope that that will be addressed. There was debate about whether funds from the road trauma trust account should be used for the administration of fines by Western Australia Police. I do not believe that should be the case; that should come under the general budget of the police force, and if it is being utilised for those purposes, I am sure that is not the purpose for which it was meant to be utilised under the road trauma trust account.

I return to performance measurements. There is a good chapter on this, which commences on page 21 of the report. It outlines some of the reasons that there are public sector performance measurements, which go to accountability and transparency, to assist agencies to monitor their performance and to look at whether there has been an appropriate service delivery and effectiveness.

I do not have much time left. One of the areas we looked at was the lack of mandatory blood testing. One of the best oral submissions that we received in the inquiry—actually, it is probably the best oral presentation I have heard since becoming a member of the committee—was given by Dr Rao, who is the director of state trauma at Royal Perth Hospital. He lamented that in WA—I think proposed legislative amendments are being drafted to change this, but we have not seen them yet—there is no mandatory blood testing of a person involved in a car accident. I refer members to an interesting and important quote from Dr Rao on page 60 of the report that they should think about and reflect on. It reads —

Without that data

That is, the data with regard to the issues of the prevalence of drugs and alcohol in road trauma in WA —

we are just using the same old programs over and over and we are not seeing any changes and I can write the next 10 years' reports today.

That is from a man of immense experience and great professional competency. We must reflect on that, and if the government has legislation in the pipeline, the onus is on the minister to bring it to Parliament as soon as

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possible. Other states have mandatory blood testing; it is very important that the government moves on that and allows Western Australia Police, or doctors obviously, to take blood samples from road trauma patients in Western Australian hospitals. There are complications with the line of custody and so forth, but that can be addressed.

In the last minute, I return to my initial comments about my disappointment in the comments made by the member for Balcatta. Members must understand that committees should hold investigations and arrive at a report that, hopefully, makes for better government. It is not the job of committee members to whitewash what they hear. I cannot see how this report is of great political damage to the government in any case. It makes incredibly sensible recommendations about which we should all be concerned.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Time, member!

MS L. METTAM (Vasse) [10.47 am]: I am pleased to add my comments about the report titled, “Are we there yet? How WA Police determines whether traffic law enforcement is effective” handed down by the Community Development and Justice Standing Committee. I acknowledge and show appreciation for the significant work of parliamentary research officers Dr Sarah Palmer and Niamh Corbett and of my colleagues Hon Margaret Quirk, the committee chair; Tony Buti, the deputy chair; Chris Hatton, MLA; and Mick Murray, MLA. Although the report has gone in directions that are in part beyond the scope of the terms of reference—and, I feel, lacked objectivity—I will keep my comments to the focus of the inquiry. Put simply, the terms of reference were to inquire into the performance measures used by WA Police to determine the effectiveness of —

Several members interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Order, members! Members have had a yell. The member for Vasse now knows. The member for Vasse has the floor; let us listen to her in silence as we did when the member for Armadale had the floor.

Ms L. METTAM: Western Australia Police is one stakeholder and it has a valuable role to play in road safety. I object to the suggestion that police are likely to be held solely responsible for road safety in the absence of unambiguous performance measures. It was not until 2008 that road safety became a portfolio in its own right. Prior to that, road safety was largely shared by the Minister for Transport and the Minister for Planning and Infrastructure, which was reflective of the fact that this area of concern affects a range of portfolio areas. WA Police specifically has a role in ensuring lawful road user behaviour. The Road Safety Council represents the best mix of these areas. I understand that from 1 July, the Office of Road Safety will be replaced by a new and revised structure, which was one of the recommendations of the Browne review to deliver better road safety outcomes.

This report is about what is the best information available for the public and stakeholders, including police, to make value judgements about police performance. Although challenging, it is understood that it is essential that police are able to provide this information to other road safety stakeholders as well as government, like every other public sector agency, for the reasons of accountability and transparency. It is in everyone’s interest that we know what is working.

Prior to 2014–15, WA Police used two road safety key performance indicators related to speed and drink-driving charges. These measures were deemed problematic because it was arguable how high figures could be interpreted. These measures were replaced with a single KPI, which relates to contacts made by police officers that target category A offences—that is, those offences that have the biggest impact on road trauma and deaths, such as speeding, drink-driving and anti-social behaviour. According to the police commissioner, 90 per cent of the work undertaken by police is dedicated to these areas of risky behaviour. Contacts represent the direct contact between police and an individual driver, and they represent effort. That feeds into another police objective—contributions to community safety and security. I think everyone recognises the value of a police presence to improve driving behaviour, and that is what this KPI is all about.

WA Police currently has targets that underpin this, such as to conduct one million random breath tests every year to detect the consumption of alcohol and illicit drugs used by drivers. This figure has been met over the last two years. WA Police also provides internal KPIs that are used to measure and direct its performance, such as the number of operational speed cameras in use per month. The “Report on Government Services”—a report produced by the Productivity Commission—reports on police service performance in four key areas, including road safety, and provides comparative data on such measures, which is published on its website annually. WA Police also provides a raft of specific information relating to enforcement to the Road Safety Council to assist it with its reporting.

Point of Order

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Mrs M.H. ROBERTS: On a point of order, which means the member sits down, Madam Acting Speaker, I realise that the member on her feet is a new member of this place, but she has been reading her speech word for word, and that is not permitted under the standing orders.

Mr J. Norberger interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Ms J.M. Freeman): Excuse me, can we just hear one point of order at a time, in silence. The member can speak on the point of order in a moment. I get to make a decision. If you do not agree with my decision, you get to question my decision.

Mrs M.H. ROBERTS: I would ask that the member's attention be drawn to the standing orders.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Could you tell me what standing order you are referring to, member for Midland?

Mrs M.H. ROBERTS: I will have to check the number.

Mr N.W. MORTON: I want to say that I am sitting next to the member for Vasse and I can see what she is referring to, and they are just her personal notes.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Member for Vasse, if you are referring to personal notes, please continue.

Debate Resumed

Ms L. METTAM: WA Police is required to submit performance summaries to the Road Safety Council on a quarterly basis, relating to projects that are funded through the road trauma trust account, to indicate performance and progress on KPIs for those funded projects. WA Police also provides information in its annual report, which is accessible to the public; however, there is some concern that all of the reportable information is not provided in this publication to enable Parliament, stakeholders and members of the community to make informed assessments of police performance on traffic law enforcement and road safety.

Point of Order

Mrs M.H. ROBERTS: The standing order I was referring to is on page 17, under chapter 1, headed "Reading of Speeches", and states —

Reading of speeches is not allowed, except when Minister is introducing a Bill ...

That is towards the bottom of page 17, as a note. The further point of order from the member for Forrestfield was that the member for Vasse was referring to her personal notes. He is mistaken about the point of order I had taken. My point of order was to do with the reading of speeches. I was not calling upon the member for Vasse to table what she was reading. I was not questioning whether or not they were her personal notes; I simply make the point that she is reading the speech word for word, and it is obvious. They may be her personal notes and she may have written the speech herself, but she is reading it and I ask you to enforce the standing orders in accordance with chapter 1 on page 17.

Mr J. Norberger interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Member for Joondalup, you know that points of order will be heard in silence and you know that I have no problem calling people when they are not doing so. The point of order will be heard in silence.

Mr M.H. TAYLOR: I regularly see the member for Midland read out her speeches —

The ACTING SPEAKER: Member for Bateman, that is not a point of order.

Several members interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Points of order are not for general debate—let us get that clear. Points of order are about the standing orders and are not for general debate. I have taken advice from the Clerk on this and the Clerk tells me that although it definitely is a point of order, it is the practice that members refer to copious notes. Please continue, member for Vasse.

Mr J. Norberger interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Member for Joondalup, you are called.

Debate Resumed

Ms L. METTAM: The main concern regarding the provision of performance measurement information comes from the RAC. It believes that it is no longer delivering the information that would allow a reader to gain a comprehensive understanding of traffic law enforcement in WA. More detailed information, which was presented monthly to the RAC, is now provided quarterly to the Office of Road Safety, which the RAC can access, and further details relating to road policing is also released on a case-by-case basis.

Ms Margaret Quirk; Mr Chris Hatton; Dr Tony Buti; Ms Libby Mettam; Mrs Michelle Roberts; Acting Speaker;
Mr Nathan Morton; Mr Matt Taylor

I understand that funding was dedicated by the road trauma trust account to a study led by the Curtin–Monash Accident Research Centre in 2011, which determined and proposed a structure for an enhanced road safety information system that may have merit for consideration. There is also merit in introducing the community attitude surveys—a program that expired in 2011—that provided qualitative information on the attitudes of motorists that informed road safety campaigns.

Other issues raised in the report that I do not believe are specific to the intended scope includes the discussion on the Prevent Alcohol and Risk-related Trauma in Youth—PARTY—program, an award-winning injury prevention program that highlights the issues of road trauma. I believe this program was not only outside the scope of the report, but also continues despite the suggestion that its future is threatened. In fact, funding for this program was part of the government’s recent commitment of \$15 million to a communications agenda as part of the commitment to the road trauma trust account. Other projects that were funded in this communications space include a mass media campaign, the community road safety grant, and the RoadWise and School Drug Education and Road Aware programs.

There has been much discussion about the lack of mandatory blood testing and the lawful collection of blood samples from trauma patients. This is not a performance measure—it is a process measure—and I believe that proposed legislation is currently being progressed in this space. I also support the progression of this proposed legislative reform, which has been highlighted by the committee.

There is also much discussion around the expenditure of the road trauma trust account, or lack of the utilisation of those funds. The Minister for Police has committed \$111 million for road safety initiatives from the road trauma trust account, which includes some proven road safety performance measures. It includes \$4.73 million to increase drug and breath testing, which accounts for an additional 20 officers. Operating costs include officer and IT equipment, expanding the drug testing capabilities to the tune of over \$860 000, and other projects such as an investment in run-off-road crashes and a \$46 million investment in proven road engineering treatments to reduce the likelihood of vehicles going off the road, rolling and resulting in serious or traumatic accidents. There is also \$12 million for proven intersection treatments. All those measures have a valuable impact on road safety outcomes.

I am aware that there has been much discussion about the announcement of an additional 550 police officers, and a target total of 6 204 police officers by 2017.

Other concerns that I have in the report relate to the suggestion that the minister amend the Road Traffic Act to establish an offence for the combined use of alcohol and drugs. An amendment to section 63 of the Road Traffic Act would provide for that offence.