

ROAD SAFETY, SOUTH WEST REGION

**107. Hon N.D. GRIFFITHS to the Minister for Transport:**

I refer to the recent observation from the Royal Automobile Club of WA to its members that 10 years ago Western Australia led the nation in road safety; today its record is the poorest of any State in Australia.

- (1) Is the minister aware that there are significantly more road deaths and injuries in the south west region of the State compared with other regions?
- (2) If yes, will the minister explain why no RoadWise road safety officer has been located in the south west of the State?
- (3) Will the minister take action to remedy this situation; and, if yes, what action?
- (4) Will the current absence of a RoadWise road safety officer jeopardise any funding available to the south west under the black spots program?

**Hon M.J. CRIDDLE replied:**

- (1)-(4) I have taken a great deal of interest in and responsibility for the issue of road safety. Recently we announced funding of \$13m for the black spots program and \$3.5m for the local government black spots program. Another \$42m is directly related to road safety issues in this year's budget. I am well aware that there were 218 deaths last year, and that is far too many. There were also about 3 500 serious injuries, but we do not focus on the serious injuries. Because of our standard of living and the fact that more vehicles are travelling on the roads - everyone tells me that these issues are linked - the number of road fatalities has remained steady over the past few years. This year the level is well below last year's level. That is good because people are obviously taking heed of the message that they need to be responsible behind the wheel of a vehicle. They must be responsible not only to themselves, but also to those in the vehicle with them and to other road users. Speed, alcohol, fatigue and seatbelts are other issues. People must ensure that they wear seatbelts, because far too many accidents involve people who are not wearing seatbelts, and that adds to the trauma of the accident.

About 20 per cent of the road fatalities and 17 per cent of the serious injuries occur in the south west region. I was in that area the other day to launch a \$40 000 commitment for driver training for younger people, and that program has been embraced in the area. I was very impressed with the year 11 students who are involved in that program. The community, the police, the schools and their staff and the companies in the area have taken on board the initiative of road safety. Those companies have put in place three vehicles to help with the training.

The member said that there is no RoadWise officer in the area. I was of the understanding that there was, but I will check that information and get back to the member. We have allocated more RoadWise officers throughout the State, and I will check on the location of every one of those officers.