

TRAFFIC — MONITORING DEVICES

376. Mr R.S. LOVE to the Minister for Transport:

I refer to the Auditor General's twenty-fifth report tabled today entitled *Information systems application audit: Traffic management system*, which outlines that Main Roads WA has been illegally using traffic monitoring devices on local roads since 2016. This information could potentially be used to track individuals.

- (1) When did the minister first become aware of this breach of the law?
- (2) Will the minister direct Main Roads to immediately comply with the Surveillance Devices Regulations 1999 around the use of illegal monitoring devices on local roads?

Ms R. SAFFIOTI replied:

- (1)–(2) First of all, the Auditor General found no evidence to show that people were being tracked across our roads. I want to explain the situation. We have a number of bluetooth sensors. There are always calls to improve the network here or parts of the road system there. One of the key things we have is the bluetooth sensors, which help to monitor congestion and travel times. They have been successfully rolled out across the highway and main road network. The relevant regulation refers to allowing the monitoring of traffic on a highway or a main road. It has now been discovered that “a highway or a main road” does not apply to local roads. Main Roads is working with the relevant agency—that would be the Western Australia Police Force—to change the definition to include “road”. In relation to the devices along local roads, Main Roads had entered into agreements and local governments were aware of what was being rolled out. In relation to when I first became aware, I received a briefing yesterday, and, of course, we will work to make sure that we clear up any outstanding issues.

Let us get to the point: there was no illegal monitoring of people. The sensors are to assess traffic counts and movements and there are regulations on how that information is used. It is essential information for how we improve our roads across the state. Without this information, we cannot say what levels of congestion we have or where we should spend on infrastructure. As I said, we are working with relevant agencies to amend those definitions. All sensors were placed with the approval and support of the local government. There is no evidence and no proof and no claim from the Auditor General that the sensors have been used to monitor people.