

SOUTH WESTERN HIGHWAY - SURVEILLANCE OF HEAVY HAULAGE OPERATIONS

**652. Mr M.P. MURRAY to the Minister for Planning and Infrastructure:**

Can the minister tell us how the promised increased surveillance of the heavy haulage operations on the South Western Highway has improved safety?

**Ms A.J.G. MacTIERNAN replied:**

I thank the member for his question and the work that he has done over many years to make sure that we are very conscious of those issues on the South Western Highway. Members will recall that halfway through last year there was a series of heavy haulage accidents on the South Western Highway around the Donnybrook region. The government was very concerned about those accidents, and promised to do a range of things. First of all, it is committed to upgrading the railway so that logs and woodchips can be carried by rail between Greenbushes and Bunbury. The government has also committed to about \$14 million worth of road upgrades between 2005 and 2007. The government also made it clear that it intended to launch a blitz on heavy vehicles in the south west.

**Mr P.D. Omodei** interjected.

**Ms A.J.G. MacTIERNAN:** We have been hearing a lot from the Leader of the Opposition about this one. Main Roads transport inspectors were instructed to conduct a blitz on heavy vehicles in the south west. That blitz has now gone on for about a year and the results have been very alarming.

**Mr P.D. Omodei:** Fix the road up; open the railway.

**Ms A.J.G. MacTIERNAN:** The Leader of the Opposition is obviously of the view that we should not be looking at the heavy haulage operators. We would like to know who has been supporting his election campaigns. This is a serious issue. Inspectors have stopped 2 208 vehicles over the past 12 months. An extraordinary 35 per cent of those vehicles were found to be in breach of the law, in particular due to overloading and vehicle defects. The government is determined that these inspections will continue until there is a marked drop in the level of failure.

**Mr P.D. Omodei** interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** I call the Leader of the Opposition to order for the third time.

**Ms A.J.G. MacTIERNAN:** I am pleased to say that, although inspections still reveal a high level of default, some impact is obviously occurring because there has been a marked reduction in the number of heavy haulage accidents on this highway. The past financial year has been by far the best of the past five. I table a paper giving the figures showing a very dramatic drop in the number of accidents.

[See paper 1871.]

**Ms A.J.G. MacTIERNAN:** I think it is reprehensible that the Leader of the Opposition has been putting pressure on the government to stop those inspections, or reduce their frequency. He has been complaining that inspectors have been too active on the South Western Highway, and we should be giving truckies a break, even though 35 per cent of the trucks being stopped are shown to have defects. We will not stop; we will not be supporting the donors of the Leader of the Opposition's campaigns. We will make sure that the South Western Highway is safe.

*Point of Order*

**Mr C.J. BARNETT:** The Minister for Planning and Infrastructure has claimed that the Leader of the Opposition complained about the road program. It is an issue of road safety for people in his electorate in the south west. The minister has impugned the reputation of the Leader of the Opposition. I ask, Mr Speaker, that you ask the minister to either produce evidence or apologise.

**Ms A.J.G. MacTiernan:** I am happy to respond.

**The SPEAKER:** You may well be.

**Dr K.D. Hames:** She spoke while you were on your feet, Mr Speaker.

**The SPEAKER:** So did you, member for Dawesville.

Points of order do not provide opportunities to further a debate. This may well be a debate that can be conducted at some other stage, but the minister has not infringed any rule.