

MEMBER FOR COLLIE-WELLINGTON

Drink-driving Offence - Personal Explanation

MR M.P. MURRAY (Collie-Wellington - Parliamentary Secretary) [12.26 pm] - by leave: Members in this place know that I am a passionate advocate for road safety. I have witnessed the loss of too many young lives in my electorate to be anything but passionate on this issue. It is therefore with a great deal of embarrassment that I feel compelled to advise the house of a traffic incident that occurred some weeks ago. After lunching with a group of parliamentary colleagues on a Friday afternoon, I foolishly elected to drive back home to my electorate. Before doing so, I had a meal and slept for several hours at my unit in the city, believing that this would ensure that I would be okay to drive. I was wrong. At the end of the freeway, I was stopped by a booze bus and returned a blood alcohol level of .06. The police officer suggested that I wait for at least 45 minutes before driving again, but I chose to wait in my car for several hours before proceeding home to Collie without incident.

As embarrassing as this is for me, I believe it is important that I make this statement, for two reasons. Firstly, I want others to learn from my mistake. People should not drive after they have been drinking. They should just not do it. I thought that sleep would see me right, but I was wrong. If people have had a drink, they should not drive under any circumstances. Secondly, I want to use this opportunity to urge the government to reconsider the penalty for .05 offences. My penalty was a \$100 fine and the loss of three demerit points. In my view, that is not nearly as harsh as it should be.

Last night I stood before my local council, told it what had happened and made a personal donation of \$1 000 to Collie RoadWise, Collie's local volunteer road safety group. Mr Speaker, I hope that two things result from this. I hope that my experience will prompt others to think twice about driving after a few drinks, and I mean a few drinks. People should just not do it. Secondly, I hope that the fines imposed for .05 offences will be reviewed and increased so that they more accurately reflect what I believe to be a serious matter.