

**ROAD SAFETY COUNCIL BILL 2001**

*Second Reading*

Resumed from 13 December 2001.

**HON ALAN CADBY** (North Metropolitan) [2.27 pm]: This is a surprise for me because I did not think we would debate this Bill during this sitting period.

Hon Peter Foss: How many times have you carted it up?

Hon ALAN CADBY: I have carted the Bill up and down to Parliament House every day since the beginning of February, and I can finally leave it here.

This is an important Bill for all Western Australians. I would be surprised if any member of the House had not had a friend or relative involved in a car accident in the past 12 months. When I was researching material for this Bill I read a publication for the WA Road Safety Council titled "Reported Road Crashes in Western Australia 2000". I was horrified to find that 38 137 accidents were reported to the police in 2000. Of those 38 137, 12 212 involved casualties; 2 891 people were admitted to hospital; and 185 fatal crashes resulted in 213 deaths. Behind those statistics, of course, is the human factor. I am sure that no-one was pleased to read in *The West Australian* on Monday, 8 April of the 51 deaths on our roads since the beginning of the year; that is 10 more than for the same period last year.

I was interested in a front page article in *Motoring Agenda*, a publication of the Royal Automobile Club WA, titled "Road Safety: What Price a Life?" by Dick Stott, manager of the public policy division and a member of the Road Safety Council. I remind members that the article is dated October 2001. It may well be that Mr Stott had a different view in February 2002. The article states -

In the wash up of the Gallop Government's first budget, the question that motorists could be forgiven for asking is: What price a life?

Instead of clearly spelling out its strategy and spending priorities on road safety, WA motorists have been left with a "trust us" attitude by the State Government on this area of community concern.

After nearly eight months in power, the Government's continuing lack of decisive action is particularly worrying given WA's poor road safety record, and the concern expressed by the State's motoring public over this issue.

According to its own budget estimates, the Government anticipates no improvement in the coming year in the rate of deaths and serious injuries on WA roads. The target for road fatalities will remain at an unacceptable 11 per 100,000 people and serious casualties will remain at about 160 per 100,000.

With the State's population expected to rise by about 1.4 per cent a year, there is a very real expectation that the number of people being killed or seriously injured on our roads will continue to increase.

In light of these predictions there is very little hope that WA will achieve the State Road Safety Strategy's vision of reaching six deaths per 100,000 people by the year 2005.

That article was published in October, and the situation may have improved.

Accidents happen for many reasons; primarily, irresponsible driving, driving under the influence of alcohol and drugs, driving tired or lack of concentration. A recent report from the United Kingdom on levels of concentration while using a mobile phone is disturbing and interesting. It suggests that reaction time when using a mobile phone - even a hands-free mobile phone - is similar to that displayed by a person with a blood-alcohol content just over the legal limit.

The report contains a Venn diagram indicating that 95 per cent of accidents involve human factors, 28 per cent are environment related and eight per cent are vehicle related. A few years ago I did some research on vehicle braking distances, because speed is a major contributor to accidents. I will not quote my research, because it is not authoritative. However, I will refer to a report produced by the road accident research unit at the University of Adelaide.

Speed is the cause of most accidents because vehicles travel some distance after the brakes are applied. The total braking distance of a vehicle has four components: human perception time; human reaction time; vehicle reaction time and the vehicle's braking capacity. Human perception and reaction time can be between half a second and three-quarters of a second. That is not very long, but it can translate to a vehicle travelling 110 metres before coming to a halt. If a vehicle is travelling at 50 kilometres an hour, the braking distance is about 26 metres. At 60 kilometres an hour, the braking distance is 35 metres; at 80 kilometres an hour, it is 50 metres;

at 100 kilometres an hour, it is 80 metres; and, at 110 kilometres an hour, it is 95 metres. The difference of nine metres between 50 kilometres an hour and 60 kilometres an hour might not sound like much, but it could be the difference between life and death to a child in the path of a moving vehicle. I am pleased to support the lowering of the metropolitan speed limit to 50 kilometres an hour in some areas.

The numbers I have quoted are theoretical. However, research has been done on the braking capacity of particular cars. I will provide the figures for cars with which members might relate. The braking distance of a Toyota Corolla travelling at 90 kilometres an hour is 55.8 metres and for a Toyota Camry V6 it is 43.5 metres. Of course, we must add another 18 metres to arrive at the total braking distance. My wife drives a Mazda Protege. It would travel 47.4 metres after she applied the brakes before coming to a halt. When Hon Norman Moore retires in 25 years, he is likely to buy a Mercedes C36 - he will be able to afford the best. That vehicle's braking distance is 36 metres. Hon Nick Griffiths is a snappy dresser - I like the tie he wore yesterday. When he retires he will do so with style. He is likely to buy a Porsche 911 Carrera 4. I am not sure how much it will cost. When he drives it at 90 kilometres an hour, the braking distance will be 37.8 metres plus the 18 metres I referred to earlier. He is more likely to be driving at 120 kilometres an hour - a little over the speed limit, but he will get away with it in the Northern Territory. At that speed, the car will travel 66.9 metres plus 22 metres after he applies the brakes. That is nearly 90 metres. We all know that Hon Tom Stephens is focused on travelling quickly and often. A Ferrari 550 is more his style. At 90 kilometres an hour, his Ferrari will travel 33.6 metres after he applies the brakes, and at 120 kilometres an hour it will travel 59.7 metres. I should give the figures for 180 kilometres an hour or 200 kilometres an hour, but I do not have them. I had some difficulty obtaining the figures for a vehicle that would suit Hon Kim Chance, because I could not find a header that travels at 90 kilometres an hour. When I do, I will let him know.

What does speed have to do with accidents? I refer members to a paper entitled "Fatal impact - the physics of speeding cars" published by the Australian Academy of Science. The paper states -

Using data from actual road crashes, scientists at the University of Adelaide estimated the relative risk of a car becoming involved in a casualty crash - a car crash in which people are killed or hospitalised - for cars travelling at or above 60 kilometres/hour. They found that the risk doubled for every 5 kilometres/hour above 60 kilometres/hour. Thus, a car travelling at 65 kilometres/hour was twice as likely to be involved in a casualty crash as one travelling at 60. For a car travelling at 70 kilometres/hour, the risk is increased fourfold.

I took delivery of a new vehicle yesterday. I obviously do not know much about it, because when I left home I did not shut the boot properly. On the way to this place I noticed the boot rising, so I stopped on the freeway to close it. I do not know how many members have stopped their vehicles on the freeway, but, if they did, they would realise how frightening it is to experience cars travelling past at 100 kilometres an hour. That is the only way to get a real feeling for the speed. When we are cocooned in a car, especially in the country, 100 kilometres an hour seems very slow. I can assure members that it is very fast.

"Motoring Agenda 2002: an initiative of the RAC's public policy division" contains an article headed "Road Safety: What price a life?", which states -

... so far there has been little to indicate that much is happening by way of constructive policy or program initiatives.

It is unclear whether the current Government supports the State Road Safety Strategy 2000-2005, which was developed by the Office of Road Safety with the strong endorsement of the Road Safety Council.

The report continues -

The combination of a lack of a clear vision and strategic thinking is also contributing to the continuing and unacceptable diversion of speed and red light camera revenues away from road safety and into Consolidated Revenue.

I was pleased when I took delivery of the 2002 *Motoring Agenda* because of an article titled "Complacency: A fatal mistake" written by Dick Stott, in which he states -

WA's best road safety record in 40 years is a welcome result, but we now face a danger that complacency will become the killer. Our road safety policy makers must not use an improved road toll as an excuse for settling for second best.

It continues -

A danger in the Government's message is that it suggests that the hard work has been done, and that the problem is now under control.

After the results were released one senior Government official privately quipped: "With the best road safety record in 40 years, why do we need to be spending the additional money from speed and red light cameras on road safety?"

While not said with any serious intent, this is a dangerous, if not a fatal, attitude for the Government and the community to adopt . . .

Although the Government says it is committed to setting new records for road safety every year and in promising new road safety programs for this year, there is still no mention of when it is going to commitment to the extra funding for road safety.

The final part of the article states -

While some MPs maybe concerned at the 'politics' behind the creation of the Bill, as a result of the poor driving record of Planning and Infrastructure Minister Alannah MacTiernan, the RAC hopes they will not use this to block or frustrate the legislation's passage through the Parliament.

I assure him that we will not.

I turn to the Road Safety Council Bill 2001. Clause 9(1) states -

A Council member who is not a public officer, or the deputy of such a member -

- (a) is appointed for a term, not exceeding 3 years, determined by the Minister and specified in the instrument appointing the member or deputy;

I do not know whether that suggests that the duration of appointment will be for one, two or three years. Given the lack of continuity that a one or two-year term would provide, and a subsequent lack of ownership in the ideas of the Road Safety Council, I suggest a minimum of three years rather than a maximum of three years. A one-year term is insufficient, two years is getting better, but three years gives the council the opportunity to formulate ideas and follow them through.

Clause 12 refers to red light revenue and states that the road trauma trust fund must be credited with -

- (a) one-third of each prescribed penalty paid pursuant to a photograph-based vehicle infringement notice for an offence to which the regulations specify that this paragraph applies;

Have members noticed the paradox in this Bill? In the other place it was stated that new cameras will not be purchased. If that is the case, more people have to speed so that more revenue can be raised to put into the fund. This does not make sense. If the Government will not buy new cameras, how can it increase funding for road safety when that is dependent on more people breaking the law?

Again, I refer to the article "Road Safety: What Price A Life?" by Dick Stott in which he states -

This raises serious doubts about the Gallop Government's pre election promise to motorists that it would spend all \$33 million in revenue it received each year from red-light and speed cameras on road safety initiatives.

It is more likely to be \$40 million, and not \$33 million. What about the other two-thirds of the money? If the Road Safety Council is a group of experts on road safety, should it not have some say in how the other two-thirds will be spent? Why is it limited to the one-third that goes into the road trust fund? Will it have an opportunity to recommend to the minister where the remaining \$28 million should be spent?

Clause 12(6) states -

Money standing to the credit of the account is to be applied for the purpose determined by the Minister on the recommendation of the Council.

I understand that there will be only two independent members on the Road Safety Council. The other members will be appointed by particular ministers. The clause does not state that the one-third must be spent on road safety. Is there anything stopping the minister from diverting some of the money from the road safety fund into schools, health or education? I would be grateful if the minister could assure me that that will not be the case.

Hon N.D. Griffiths: Clause 12(6) answers your question.

Hon ALAN CADBY: No, it does not. It states that money standing to the credit of the account is to be applied for the purposes determined by the minister -

Hon N.D. Griffiths: On the recommendation of the council.

Hon ALAN CADBY: That does not mean that the money must be spent on road safety. I will not go into semantics, because there is an urgency to this debate. However, in the past, the Government has not been very open to ideas from this side of the House, so I will not hold my breath.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT (Hon George Cash): This is the second reading debate, and we move to consider clauses in detail only during the committee stage.

Hon ALAN CADBY: I am also concerned about the membership of the council. If ever a reason existed to disqualify a person from the membership of the Road Safety Council, surely a bad driving record would be one of them. I understand that the Road Safety Council will take a macro view, but remedies must be applied at the micro level. For example, what role can the Road Safety Council take with local councils so that the latter do not work against its efforts? There is a fairly wide, undivided road close to where I live near Dampier Ave, and the local council has now planted trees in the middle of the road.

Hon N.D. Griffiths: Which local council did that?

Hon ALAN CADBY: Joondalup. I asked the minister if he had a policy on this matter, but he replied that he did not.

Hon N.D. Griffiths: I am sorry that I could not accommodate you.

Hon ALAN CADBY: According to the report on road crashes, 22 per cent of crashes in the metropolitan area are caused by vehicles hitting objects such as poles and trees. I therefore cannot understand why local councils plant trees in the middle of roads that have no median strip, depriving drivers of at least some distance for recovery of error. When the trees grow, they create a strobe effect on drivers. In addition, their location in the middle of the road will cause a parking hazard. I appreciate that it is a local government issue, but the local government is represented on the Road Safety Council. Surely they work hand in hand.

Recently, I went on a trip to the United Kingdom that the Premier recommended, so it was not a junket; it was a very serious commitment to study road safety.

Hon N.D. Griffiths: We just wanted to get you out of the country.

Hon ALAN CADBY: That was so that I could be fined for having my reticulation on. I do not know whether the minister recalls that conversation.

Are the red light cameras an indication of how seriously we take road safety? We all know that red light cameras catch culprits. However, they do not encourage drivers to slow down. I was interested in an article I read in the United Kingdom, which indicated that under new regulations, cameras in boxes that are similar to our red light cameras must be painted bright orange or bright yellow so that people can see them from a distance. That idea is based on the fact that people will see the cameras in time to slow down. That will enable them to negotiate the dangerous stretches of road where the cameras are usually located. Members might say that motorists will increase their speed as soon as they have passed the cameras. That is probably true. However, at least for the particular stretch of road the cameras will encourage motorists to slow down.

If this Labor Government followed that policy, one of its revenue sources that it diverts to other areas of government would decrease. We all know how desperate the Government is for money because we heard today that, although the Chamber of Commerce and Industry has predicted economic growth in this State of almost six per cent, the Treasurer is planning to increase taxes in the next budget. It is a very greedy Government. I wonder whether the notion of highlighting red light cameras has been suggested and could be incorporated in the Labor Government's policy.

The Opposition supports this Bill, but also supports the RAC's claim that the Gallop Government has broken an election promise to increase road funding and until now has shown very little leadership on road safety. Much of the bureaucratic nonsense contained in the Bill is a direct result of a minister's inability to set a good example to Western Australian drivers by not driving in a safe and acceptable manner.

**HON FRANK HOUGH** (Agricultural) [2.53 pm]: In general, I support the Bill. However, some issues need to be addressed. I refer first to the policy to reduce suburban road speed limits to 50 kilometres an hour. Fines imposed on drivers who broke that limit in New South Wales increased that State's income by \$9 million, but at the same time the number of road deaths increased. A reduction in that State's speed limit to 50 kilometres an hour did nothing to decrease the number of road deaths. Victoria collected an incremental \$7.25 million while the number of road deaths increased substantially. The Western Australian Government decreased the suburban speed limit to 50 kilometres an hour based, not on any data, but on a gut feeling. Our focus should be on preventing road deaths rather than catching people in the hope of raising incremental income. Road safety is about stopping deaths, not working out how much more revenue Governments can earn.

I have some experience in road trauma. On 13 December 1988, a young fellow who was almost drunk went through a red light on the corner of North Lake Road and Marmion Street and hit a motor vehicle driven by my daughter, whose passenger was my son. I was fortunate to arrive at the scene of the accident within minutes, just as the fire brigade's "jaws of life" was prising my teenagers out of the car, which was a mangled wreck. As I raced up to the car my daughter was screaming and someone said, "The girl's all right, but I think the young fellow is dead." The person was talking about my son. Fortunately, he was pulled out of the car alive, but then spent two and a half weeks on a life-support machine with seven broken ribs, a punctured lung, a broken collar bone and a broken hip and he lost his spleen. My daughter got off somewhat more lightly with only a broken collarbone and a broken hip. They were both in wheelchairs for a year. That accident brought home to me the issue of road safety. Regardless of what anyone says or anyone did, that chap went through a red light; albeit into the sun - if I am looking for excuses. He had been drinking, nonetheless, and showed no remorse. Nothing can bring home the issue of road safety more than sitting in a hospital room night and day for two weeks with one's son on a life support machine. Fortunately it is difficult to believe that either of them were in an accident. They have both recovered 100 per cent.

When the 50 kilometres per hour speed limit was introduced, I wondered how that would have helped my children to avoid that accident. Policemen to whom I have spoken said that it has not been of much benefit. They said that it frustrates people and causes them to act like lunatics and pull out and pass people who are travelling at 40 or 50 kilometres an hour. If people did not stick to the slower limit of 50 kilometres an hour, it would not encourage people to pass them and break the law.

In an effort to reduce road deaths, the Government could keep reducing the speed limit and take people's vehicles away from them. However, in the sophisticated, comfortable vehicles that people drive today, the speed can increase quickly without warning. Much of the road safety strategy should be targeted at youth training. Perhaps it is too easy to get a licence. Someone training to become a carpenter must spend four years in an apprenticeship. To become a surgeon a person must spend five or six years studying at university and a few more years training in a hospital. To gain full control of a lethal weapon, namely a motor vehicle, people need driving lessons for only about two months. I am not on a gender bender, but young women are the worst drivers! It is a frightening experience to sit in a car driven by my daughter.

Hon Peter Foss: She will be very thankful for that public statement.

Hon N.D. Griffiths: You will have to drive yourself from now on.

Hon FRANK HOUGH: I was hoping she would run me home tonight. Young people's experience and skill level may be non-existent but perhaps their reaction time is far quicker than the reaction time of everyone in this Chamber. They just do not understand. They are not able to adjust to different road conditions. Young people drive for six months with P plates. Western Australia is suffering a bit of a drought, but if it poured rain tomorrow, those young people would not understand that in the early stages, the rain causes oil slicks on the roads, which subsequently make them death traps. Kids do not understand that; they do not have a clue. If we asked young drivers what happens when it rains, they would say that the roads get wet. Of course the roads get wet! However, not only are the roads wet, but also they are in the worst state they could possibly be in. Young kids do not understand these issues. Nothing is more intimidating than a young driver sitting on my back bumper. Not only do I have to look in my rear vision mirror wondering when he is going to come through the boot of my car, but also I have to look ahead of me and concentrate on the car in front. I am not blaming kids for everything, but young people create these problems on the roads.

Hon Peter Foss: Has she given you her opinion of your driving?

Hon FRANK HOUGH: I had a very clean slate on my driving record. I had lost absolutely no points until the day I was elected to Parliament. On election night, I was caught for speeding and lost my first point in 15 years. Since then, I have lost another six points. I have gone from a squeaky-clean car dealer to a parliamentarian who has lost eight points. I do not know whether there is a message in that.

Hon Peter Foss: Did you deserve them beforehand but never got caught?

Hon FRANK HOUGH: I was a very observant driver, but I did not plan on the sneaky little Multanovas that are hidden in bushes. I do not know why they are not on the roads. They are there to take photographs. It reminds me of perverts: they always take photographs from hidden positions. Multanovas should be positioned where they can take a clear photograph, so that if people are speeding, at least they can smile. General Motors- Holden's Ltd is not a small company, and its vehicles have a tolerance level of 10 per cent for calibration. Holden will not guarantee that its vehicles will travel any less than 88 kilometres an hour in an 80 kilometre an hour zone. At what speed are our Multanovas set? They are set to catch people travelling at 82, 83 or 84 kilometres an hour. There is a problem.

Last night I was talking to a senior sergeant outside the Chamber and he reminded me that there is provision in the Road Traffic Act for a 10 per cent tolerance. Members might recall that I asked a question about that in Parliament, and I was told that the police cannot tell us at what speed Multanovas are set because it is a matter of security and strategy. However, some sneaky little people drop the level below the manufacturers' recommendation. If a person had the time to take his case to court, he would win. General Motors has said that if people have their cars calibrated monthly, there is a chance that their speedometers will be close to exact. These vehicles could have flat, big, fat or thin tyres, and the conditions also make a difference. Perhaps Multanovas should be out in the open. I recall one of the greatest deterrents I have ever seen. When I had my BMW dealership in Melville, someone nailed a cardboard cut-out of Constable Care onto a lamppost opposite the Melville shopping centre. It was the funniest thing I had ever seen. I used to stand out the front of my business and watch as people driving past hit their brakes and slowed down because of the cardboard cut-out. That was a most fantastic deterrent.

Hon Peter Foss: We should have thousands of cardboard cut-outs.

Hon FRANK HOUGH: We should. That would be the cheapest way to increase the numbers in the Police Force.

Hon John Fischer interjected.

Hon FRANK HOUGH: That is a good point. We could make savings because there would be no superannuation or holiday pay and they would be on duty all the time. They would always have the same smile and would never complain. The new labour relations reform legislation would not affect the cardboard cut-outs on the side of the road.

It is not a matter of trying to catch people after they have broken the law; the philosophy should be to educate them before they break the law. Everything we do is about catching people after they have committed a crime. The same can be said about many things. For example, people who buy a sheep dog put it through training. The dog ultimately goes in with the other dogs and then he becomes a performer. Our little sheep dogs can get drivers licences and then jump in cars. However, within three months, they are like screaming lunatics and away they go. Young kids today can afford cars that are probably better than the ones we drive, and they can burn off most cars on the road. They do not understand the rules and regulations and the ramifications of their actions. During their training, perhaps the Department of Transport should put them through more stringent tests and make them view long video sessions of what happens at a road accident when a vehicle has slammed into a brick wall or four cars have collided and people have to be cut out of the vehicles. They should be shown people who have been mangled in car accidents. That would bring it home for young people. It would make them aware of what is happening on the roads. The easiest way out - it appeases the public - is to lower the speed limit and increase the number of Multanovas. That will stop people speeding! To combat Multanovas, all people need to do is buy a radar detector, like I have. That would overcome the problem. We hear radio reports giving the location of Multanovas and booze buses. If people want to drive fast or have a beer while driving, they need only listen to the radio and go another way.

The point I am making is that we must cure the problem before it starts. There is no use trying to find a cure after a life has been lost. Without being rude to the current and previous Governments, everything that has been done on road safety is reactionary. When soldiers in the Army get killed, we do not send in more soldiers; we train them better. Driver training is necessary. If people get caught doing something wrong, they should go through a retraining program instead of just getting a fine. People who exceed the speed limit by less than 10 kilometres an hour do not lose a point; they just get fined \$50. This was brought to light at a large wholesale motor company the other day. It gets several of these fines, which it pays, because its executives are on the road all day and no-one knows who is driving the cars. I do not know what sort of deterrent that is. Someone might drive past a Multanova and earn a \$50 fine. He would not know that he had done that, because the fine would be sent to the company at which he works, and the girl in the office would write a cheque and send it to the department. I do not call that a deterrent, because whoever was driving the car would not have a clue about it. The bill would be paid without his knowledge. The managing directors, general managers, general sales managers and senior treasurers of most large multinational companies in this city would not have a clue if they received a speeding fine. The girl in the office would receive it, know that it related to the managing director's car, and send a cheque. She would do the same for the general manager. I do not know how much of a deterrent that would be. The general manager might get caught for speeding every day while driving his Mercedes Benz from Nedlands to West Perth. He could pick up five speeding tickets in a week and not know. It is a great income earner. That has been proved by the situation in New South Wales and Victoria, which receive \$9 million and \$7.25 million respectively from traffic infringement tickets but have not experienced a reduction in deaths.

I would give the Government my 100 per cent support if it looked at retraining. Road safety is a matter of preventing speeding, not catching people after the event. That is one of the most important issues we must look

at. That is brought home by the trauma of road accidents, which I have experienced. I do not say that I am an irresponsible driver. I think I am a very responsible driver. I do not know what happens as we get older, but I now putter along at the speed limit. I might sneak over the limit occasionally. I got caught three or four times a couple of weeks ago, which I complained about bitterly because I think that doing 63 or 64 kilometres an hour in a 60-kilometre-an-hour zone is acceptable. I wear glasses, and I cannot see my speedometer properly. I do not look at it. I am long-sighted, so I can see the cars in front of me. From my position in the car, the speedometer markings for 62 and 63 are a bit of a blur. They look like 60, so in my heart and mind I do not think I am breaking the law. If I did, I would slow down.

There is a need to readdress road safety. It is fine to bring in a Bill covering the airy-fairy-type items, but we must get down to the blood and guts of the issue, which is retraining. To do that we must take a long, hard look at the situation.

**HON J.A. SCOTT** (South Metropolitan) [3.12 pm]: I have looked closely at this Bill. Although I do not believe it will harm road safety in this State, I cannot see how it will result in a great deal of increased safety. There seems to be one area in which something other than a bureaucratic shift will occur. The bureaucratic change will put the Road Safety Council within the responsibility of the Department of the Premier and Cabinet where, according to the information we have been given, it can be given a cross-government focus. That will somehow achieve the two main aims of the Bill, which are to address road safety on a whole-of-government, cross-portfolio basis, which could not be achieved if the council remained attached to the Department for Planning and Infrastructure, and to increase the independence of the council by ensuring that it is no longer linked with one of the portfolios vying for road safety funding. It is claimed that this Bill will achieve two things to improve road safety: first, it will reduce the reliance on one portfolio for funding; and, second, it will give road safety a better whole-of-government approach.

My experience is that cross-government responsibility becomes cross-government buck-passing. I recall a few occasions when urgent funding was needed for a project and everyone claimed that it was somebody else's responsibility. It becomes a buck-passing exercise.

Hon N.D. Griffiths: You sound like a well-known racing tipster who says, "Lots of care, no responsibility".

Hon J.A. SCOTT: That is a very good description. That has happened on many occasions. I digress slightly to provide an example of the sort of thing about which I am talking. A service in Kwinana called the Men's Meeting Place has no more funding for this year and, as a result, many people have been left high and dry. That organisation was funded by a number of agencies, and each found reasons to stop providing money. It reached a point at which the only agency continuing to fund the organisation could not provide enough funding to keep it going. We now have a defunct organisation and people have been left high and dry. It is not necessarily a great thing for a body to receive different sources of funding, because people must race around to ensure that that funding eventuates.

Hon N.D. Griffiths: Would you like a briefing on the truth of that matter?

Hon J.A. SCOTT: I have had a look -

Hon N.D. Griffiths: Why do you not write to Hon Sheila McHale? I am sure she will give you a briefing.

Hon J.A. SCOTT: I have had a number of briefings on the truth of that matter and they went into more detail than did the Government's explanation. It is true that certain departments withdrew their funding for the Men's Meeting Place.

A committee in this place looked at the role of government agencies in monitoring safety and environmental issues at Alcoa. That committee found that three departments - the Department of Health, the Department of Mineral and Petroleum Resources and the Department of Environmental Protection - had all passed the buck to one another. That happens. Government agencies are very good at passing the buck. I hope that at the end of the day, responsibility for the agency being placed within the Department of the Premier and Cabinet is sheeted home to the Premier. I hope that at the end of the day, he or she - if there is a new one at some stage - is recognised as being responsible for any shortfall in sufficient funding for road safety in this State.

A number of interesting issues have been raised, but many of them are not really new. Hon Alan Cadby mentioned that one-third of the council's funding would come from red-light camera fines. I would appreciate an indication from the minister about how much that funding might be and whether it will be used for road safety projects, council administration or both purposes. Although we do not know what the level of funding will be, we do not have a great deal of confidence that what will be provided will be appropriate. I realise that the minister cannot spell out precisely to which projects the funding will be directed; however, he can spell out whether it will go into administration, road safety projects or a combination of both.

I wonder about other aspects of the Bill. It appears that the council will have 12 members. Its make-up is completely bureaucratic. I am not sure whether this is a good idea; perhaps we should bring people in from outside. There could be representatives from the trucking industry. The council needs people with expertise. It also needs a road users' representative, who could be a truck driver. When I last looked at road safety figures they indicated that the category which had shown the greatest increase in the incidence of death and injury was that for pedestrians. The council may need a representative with experience in that area; someone who does not come from a government bureaucracy.

Hon Frank Hough seems to think that only young people cause trouble on the roads. It is recognised that a very high level of road trauma is associated with young people, and that is due to a range of reasons. One is inexperience. The points that Hon Frank Hough raised about driver training are very important. The factors that cause accidents in Western Australia, such as speed and alcohol, are emulated in other countries like Germany. However, Germany has no speed limits on its autobahns. My understanding is that Germany's incidence of road trauma is far below that in Australia. Germany must train its drivers very differently from the way they are trained in Australia, especially drivers' sense of responsibility.

We have to be careful to maintain the balance between imposing lots of rules and regulations and making people understand they are responsible for their actions. I have often driven in weather conditions in which it would have been dangerous to drive at the speed limit. Conversely, there have been times when the speed limit seemed ridiculously low, especially at three o'clock in the morning when there was no other traffic on the road. Through regulation we are taking away people's ability to think for themselves. We have to be careful that we allow people to think for themselves. I am not saying that there should be no regulations. There will always be people who do not act responsibly or do not have appropriate training. Notwithstanding that, there will always be accidents. Four or five conditions will coincide and an accident can occur. It does not matter whether people have been doing all the right things. It can be due to inexperience or to the weather - for example, some rain after a long dry period. When those factors are combined with oil on the road, accidents will occur. People cannot be blamed for their lack of experience; that is not their problem. However, training can be provided that will help to reduce the risks. We can never take away all probabilities and possibilities; there will always be accidents.

We have not considered the time people spend driving motor vehicles compared with earlier times. A lot of travel is unnecessary. When we compare public transport use with private car use, it is clear that the number of people harmed while using public transport is minimal. The more that we spend on building lovely roads the more accidents we will have - not the reverse. That is the paradox in building beautiful roads. Every member of this House is familiar with the number of accidents that occurred when the lovely road between Kalgoorlie and Kambalda was first built. It contains great stretches of straight road, but there were numerous accidents and numerous people were killed.

Hon Barry House: Should people walk everywhere?

Hon J.A. SCOTT: I do not want people to walk between Kalgoorlie and Kambalda. I am not saying that at all. Most of the population live in urban areas. I have no doubt that fewer people are killed while travelling on trains than are killed while travelling in cars. The more people travel on trains, the less congested our roads will become. No doubt, if fewer people drive motor vehicles, there will be fewer accidents. That can be easily shown. We should look at that in a serious way. We should encourage people to drive less. Instead of building drive-in bottle shops in suburbs and encouraging people to use their cars we should be discouraging them from using them.

Hon John Fischer: People need their cars to buy takeaway food. Some people also drink too much.

Hon J.A. SCOTT: If a person walks to the pub to get his beer, the only way he will get hurt is if a drink-driver mounts the pavement.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT (Hon George Cash): Order! Hon Jim Scott should address the Chair so that others and I can hear what is being said. I know an interesting private discussion is going on but Hansard is trying to record what is being said.

Hon J.A. SCOTT: We need to look seriously at taking away the great love affair between young men and their cars in this country. It is a bit over the top. We have only to watch television advertisements to see that. The State Government is sponsoring car races everywhere. We do it because other States have done it. The idea of speed is fixated in the minds of most males when they get behind the wheel of a car. Progressively, more females are going that way as well. I notice that these days the modern young woman around town tends to have a heavy foot. The problem is particularly with young men. It even sits within the minds of a lot of politicians who are quite happy to promote car races. That only encourages people to kill themselves on the roads and chew up lots of fuel.



Some people believe that the psychology of speed does not affect male members of Parliament, but I think it does. A certain machismo is involved in speeding. It is something quite natural, but it needs to be tempered by Governments and not encouraged.

Hon Frank Hough: Members should not stand in the car park when the member is parking!

Hon J.A. SCOTT: I was not saying that at all. I hope that this Bill results in better road safety in this State, although it will require more than making bureaucratic changes to do that. Hopefully, the body that will be formed will come up with some good ideas to reduce the road toll. However, at the end of the day, it comes back to individuals' training, their attitudes, and the amount of time they have spent travelling.

The Bill links with the machinery of government legislation because it enables road safety to be moved from the responsibility of one minister quite easily to another by a ministerial or cabinet decision. That may or may not be a good thing. Hon Alan Cadby has unkindly suggested that that might be because of the driving record of certain ministers. Whether or not that is the case, it fits in with the machinery of government legislation by enabling responsibility for the Road Safety Council to be moved to another minister at a later date. Although the Premier of the day might be safe, in terms of his driving record, if things get too bad, I am not sure whether that will do any good for road safety.

The Greens (WA) want fewer people to suffer trauma on the roads. We also hope that the Government listens to what we say about people driving less frequently, because that would not only reduce road trauma but also improve the quality of air in the city. However, given its membership, I am not sure whether anybody on the future Road Safety Council will keep that in mind - although some of its members are from the Department for Planning and Infrastructure, and quite a few people in that department understand those type of issues. The Government has gone overboard in the number of agencies involved with the council. I can understand members from the transport, planning and coordination departments being involved, but members from the urban and regional planning departments are also involved. One of those departments would have been enough and some outside expertise could have been brought in.

Other members have recognised the role of young people in road accidents. Somebody with experience and knowledge of the psychology of youth should be on the council; for example, a youth counsellor. People who work in youth counselling have told me many times that one of the problems young people face is the inability for them to get around the city, which causes frustration and trouble. That also leads to a number of cars being stolen and all that entails for road safety. I would like the Road Safety Council to have a member on it who understands the concerns of the youth. I support the Bill.

**HON MURRAY CRIDDLE** (Agricultural) [3.34 pm]: This Bill is of enormous interest to me because I had carriage of the Road Safety Council in the past and chaired the ministerial Road Safety Council for over two and a half years. It is a very important function of the Government. To say that shifting the Office of Road Safety to the Premier's office will elevate its status above the level it had is stretching the point too far. If ever an office had a public profile, it is the Office of Road Safety. When an incident occurs on the roads, it is obvious how much coverage road safety gets; the minister responsible for the Road Safety Council is immediately at the forefront. From that point of view, there is no doubt that the issue of road safety is in everybody's mind.

From what I understand of the Act, it does not say that the Office of Road Safety will move to the Premier's office. The Machinery of Government Taskforce must have decided that it would end up there. Although I have read the details of the Machinery of Government Taskforce documents, I did not see it expressed in that manner either. The second reading speech may not be accurate in that regard.

Hon N.D. Griffiths: It is accurate. That is the intention, but it need not be prescribed in the Act.

Hon MURRAY CRIDDLE: This is just becoming another agency that can be placed under any minister at any time the Premier chooses. That is an important issue. As I said, the Road Safety Council can be well and truly dealt with under the transport portfolio, as it was in the days when I was the transport minister. The Road Safety Council, which was then and still is chaired by Grant Dorrington, did a very good job. That is recognised by the Royal Automobile Club, the Insurance Commission of Western Australia, the Police Service, Main Roads, the Department of Health and the Western Australian Local Government Association. All of those groups were represented on the Road Safety Council. The recommendations of the Road Safety Council flowed to the ministerial council, which included the then transport minister, who chaired it, and the ministers for education, local government, health and police. They were involved in the decision-making process and passed on recommendations on which Cabinet would make its decisions. Many decisions were made in that area.

This Bill clarifies what moneys the road trauma trust fund can receive, and allows further funds to be sourced through donations, which is an interesting discussion. The Government said that all proceeds from red light and speed camera offences would be used for road safety through the road trauma trust fund and other initiatives.

However, the Bill commits only a third of the red light and speed camera funds to that fund. The specific use of the remaining two-thirds of the revenue raised by red light and speed cameras is not included in the legislation, but will be tabled in Parliament annually. The previous coalition Government spent about \$40 million of road funds on black spot programs, which was a good initiative. Anyone who says that building roads does not add to road safety does not understand the issue of road safety.

This legislation will make two legislative changes. First, some provisions of the Road Traffic Act will be repealed and the Road Safety Council Bill will be enacted. Secondly, amendments will be made to the Transport Co-ordination Act 1966 and the Road Traffic Act 1974. The Road Safety Council membership will change and agencies with responsibility for road safety Acts will be represented. The new representatives on the council will include the Office of Road Safety and a representative of the planning Act. Changes will be made to the planning and infrastructure portfolio proposed through that Machinery of Government (Planning and Infrastructure) Amendment Bill. Three representatives from transport coordination, planning and driver vehicle licensing will be represented; however, the Government has decided that they could all come from the same department, which is an interesting point.

Everybody knows that the real issues for road safety are speed, alcohol and, if people are involved in accidents, seatbelts, which are vitally important for ensuring that people emerge from accidents in a better state than they would otherwise. Added to those issues should be fatigue and concentration. People should plan their journeys. They should not leave late in the day and travel through the night but should leave in the morning and travel during the day. Problems arise when people leave on journeys and adjust radios or their seatbelts, which distracts their attention from the challenge of road safety. I travel regularly from this place to my home, which is a distance of 550 kilometres, and I know that people tend to relax when they get closer to their home.

Hon Bruce Donaldson: A person will put his foot down.

Hon MURRAY CRIDDLE: Hon Bruce Donaldson might put his foot down. I am sure that I would not break the speed limit and that Hon Bruce Donaldson would not either. However, concentration is a very serious issue.

When I was Minister for Transport I had the opportunity to involve people such as seniors and other pedestrians, who could become ambassadors to carry the message to the people about road safety. I also had the opportunity to attend many functions and meet young heroes like Garth Tander, who drives racing cars. He spoke to young children. Regardless of what we might think about high speed racing and the like, that young fellow conducted himself very well when dealing with young people. Those young people were very attentive when he was making points, not about speed but about how putting on seatbelts was so important to a racing driver. He also told those young people that racing drivers must have very good judgment and be aware of their surroundings when they drive. He said that those issues were crucial when driving at any speed.

Truck and car driver training has been to the forefront over the years. I do not have to remind members of the discussions we have had on young driver training and the legislation that was put through this place when I was minister. It was certainly a step in the right direction to allow young people to start training at 16 years of age and go through a program with experienced drivers alongside them to help them during the initial stages of learning to drive. Some very good outcomes have occurred as a result of those initiatives.

I have had the opportunity of visiting some driver-training centres. One at Collie that we worked on has been very good. We had some corporate assistance in the form of having cars provided. It was a very good initiative for young children coming out of schools and being involved. Other driver-training schools have been established at Midland and Wanneroo. The school at Wanneroo uses hydraulic mechanisms to simulate road traffic conditions. If people who think they are very smart are put behind the driver's wheel of one of these vehicles and its road grip is adjusted, they will soon find themselves in a spin. It is a very sobering experience. I have been in one of these vehicles, and it certainly alerted me to the fact that one must pay attention to driving. The vehicle can simulate all the different conditions, from wet weather to gravel roads and other serious conditions, that people might encounter when they drive.

The legislation provides for 12 council members. The composition of the council is similar to that of the previous body. Twelve people are a lot of members. Hon Jim Scott was talking about people from the general community being involved. People could come from two areas - local government and road users. I note that bodies like the Royal Automobile Club and the State Government Insurance Commission are not involved. It may well be that they should be involved. Perhaps the minister will clarify whether the chairman will be independent and outside of the public service, which would be of real benefit because there would be an independent vision of what is happening in road safety.

Debate interrupted, pursuant to standing orders.

[Continued on page 9427.]

*Sitting suspended from 3.45 to 4.00 pm*