

ROAD SAFETY — MOBILE PHONES

959. Hon WILSON TUCKER to the minister representing the Minister for Police:

I refer to recent Western Australia Police Force figures that reveal in this year alone, 4 945 Western Australian drivers have been caught using their mobile phones while driving. Can the minister please inform the house of the government's efforts to educate drivers of the risks associated with using a phone while driving?

The PRESIDENT: Again, that is seeking a fair amount of information.

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON replied:

I thank the honourable member for some notice of the question. Yes, it seeks lots of information but I would hate to fall foul of standing orders or be accused of not giving an answer, so I provide the following answer on behalf of the Minister for Police; Road Safety.

The Western Australia Police Force advises that the Road Safety Commission undertakes a number of activities to educate drivers on the danger of using mobile phones while driving. These include the "Distance of distraction" mass media campaign that highlights that if a person glances away from the road when driving at 60 kilometres an hour for just two seconds to look at their phone, they are effectively driving blind for 33 metres. Even worse, at 100 kilometres an hour a person will miss 55 metres of road. The campaign has been in market since 2019 and was most recently shown during the AFL finals television coverage in August and September 2022.

The government has effectively leveraged earned media surrounding its safety camera trial to educate drivers of the risks associated with using a phone while driving. The trial launch in July 2022 generated significant media interest and focused on the high-risk nature of the behaviours the cameras can detect, including using a mobile phone while driving. Distraction—namely, by mobile phones—is regularly referenced as one of the fatal five on WA roads and emphasised during peak periods such as long weekends and school holidays. The government's road safety community grants program continues to provide funding to local communities to positively influence driver behaviour at the grassroots level. Surfing WA recently received grant funding for its No Txt No Wrecks project that aims to reduce mobile phone distraction while driving. The commission also has information on the rules on mobile phone use while driving, penalties and a quiz on its website.