

SOUTH WESTERN HIGHWAY — PICTON EAST

Grievance

MR M.P. MURRAY (Collie–Preston) [9.34 am]: My grievance is to the Minister for Transport. Although there has been correspondence between the minister's office and my office on this issue, I think it has been dismissed as a frivolous complaint by the minister's department. Anyway, I thank the minister very much for taking the grievance. As we know, the number of deaths on country roads is double that in the city. We need to have eyes and ears on the ground so that we know where the problems are. This grievance is a classic case in which the community has asked that a speed limit be lowered, and there are many reasons for that. One is the number of near misses and accidents in that area. Another major issue is that a bottle shop-cum-service station and a caravan park both have very close entry points on this highway, which are on a blind bend for people travelling north on the highway. People turn off the highway for that area and on the other side is a new subdivision with major industry being put in there. Although a slip-road has been put in for the subdivision development, there is nothing on the other side for people to turn into when coming from the south. The other part of the problem is that when people travelling north from Bunbury want to turn off into the caravan park, they have to park in the middle of the road on the blind bend. It is a very dangerous situation, yet the residents in that area are not asking for much. All they want is a small reduction in the speed limit, which will create very little disruption to the area but make it a lot safer, from 100 kilometres an hour to 80 kilometres an hour in that region.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order, members! Can you take your conversation outside, please?

Mr M.P. MURRAY: We must remember that the mix and match of vehicles in this area in recent times has changed dramatically due to the mid-sized industrial area that has been created and a lot of trucks at various speeds are coming in and out of that area onto the highway. One resident was recently involved in an accident. She told me that as she was trying to turn into the caravan park, she looked in the rear-view mirror and said a quick prayer before she was rammed from behind by a truck. That caravan park contains a lot of permanent residents and I do not want to see that happen again. I can recall a major accident that happened there. I was the second car to come across it but I did not stop for very long. It was obvious that there was nothing that I could do because the person in that car was dead. I do not want to see that happen again.

I do not think that due consideration has been given to the increase in the number of people and traffic movements in this area, especially with the heavy and medium-sized haulage and the mix and match of vehicles. This small request for a reduction in the speed limit should be accommodated. We could go further and say that we need a turn-off coming from the north going south—a slip lane—so that people can get into the service station and the caravan park safely. Main Roads Western Australia declined that request because it is a driveway and it must be done by the private owners. However, we must remember that this road has been there for quite some time—well before my time! It has been there for 100-odd years and the defined area has changed so much that we should be looking at it. I have written to the minister and had answers back saying that this request has been declined. I have those letters here. I just ask that we look at this matter again because the demographics have changed a lot in such a short time and I do not think that Main Roads has kept up with the requests or has an understanding of what has happened in that area.

About 25 to 30 people attended a public meeting down there. I said that I would bring this grievance to the minister and that the minister, being a reasonable person, would possibly agree to this small change. Then I said that if he does not agree, we know when the election will be held, so we can work from there. However, I am very serious about this matter. I travel in the area on a regular basis and often see near misses there. People coming home from work at Worsley will drop in to get a couple of stabbies or petrol from that area and they tend to brake late, resulting in drivers impacting or nearly running up the backside of other cars. We do not want to see further deaths in this area. It is a simple fix. It is one the community has identified. Let us face it: our job is to listen to the community and to work to address their problems. That has not happened in this case; it has just been a matter of it staying where it is. The speed limit was reduced a few years ago from 110 to 100 kilometres an hour. Now is the time for the speed limit in that area to come down to 80 kilometres an hour, for straight-out safety reasons—no other reason. To get that response from that number of people at a midweek meeting shows how seriously people who live in that area feel about this matter. I am sure that if the people who travel through to Bunbury had been notified of the meeting, they would have turned up in their hundreds in this area. It is a major concern of mine and of the people in that area. I hope the minister is able to accommodate their request.

MR D.C. NALDER (Alfred Cove — Minister for Transport) [9.41 am]: I thank the member for Collie–Preston for his grievance. As the member pointed out, he raised with me earlier this year in May his concern about the safety of this location. Main Roads Western Australia has provided me with information on the section of South Western Highway in Picton East adjacent to Condello's Liquor and the Waterloo Village Caravan Park. This section of South Western Highway is a 100-kilometres-an-hour speed zone. As the member pointed out, the speed limit was reduced in 2008 from 110 kilometres an hour. The traffic volume on this section of

South Western Highway is around 6 100 vehicles a day, of which roughly 15 per cent are heavy vehicles. South Western Highway is moderately curved at this location. The liquor–fuel store and caravan park are located on the inside of the curve. The sight distance to and from both driveways is adequate for the current speed limit of 100 kilometres an hour. There are no slip lanes or additional line markings on the highway to identify the driveways to the liquor–fuel store and caravan park. However, there is a widened sealed shoulder along the highway to assist motorists to pass right-turning vehicles safely.

For the five-year period from January 2011 to the end of December 2015 there were two crashes recorded at the driveways in question, and both occurred in 2015. One was a rear-end crash of “hospital” severity and the other a “property damage only” severity right-angle crash. Even including the recent crash this year, such crash frequency would not normally highlight this location as being of particular concern. However, I am very aware of the concerns that residents of the caravan park and patrons of the store have for their safety when driving on this section of South Western Highway. Safety on our roads is a priority for this government. Therefore, I have requested Main Roads to undertake a road safety review of this section of South Western Highway, including access to the liquor–fuel store and caravan park. Main Roads will report back to me by November this year on the outcomes of that road safety review. I will provide the member with a copy of that report once I receive it.