



COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

ADJOURNMENT

Road Safety

SPEECH

Thursday, 11 March 2010

BY AUTHORITY OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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Questioner
Speaker Rishworth, Amanda, MP

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Ms RISHWORTH (Kingston) (4.35 pm)—I rise today to speak about an issue that I think all members of the House are concerned about, which is the number of fatalities and injuries that occur on our roads right around Australia. Of particular concern to me are the fatalities and serious injuries that occur in South Australia and in my electorate of Kingston.

Last calendar year in South Australia there were 119 fatalities and over a thousand serious injuries. This year alone—and we are only two months into the year—there have been close to 20 fatalities on South Australia's roads. We are seeing people involved in crashes that result in death, cutting short their lives. We are seeing deaths and injuries that could be avoided.

There are a lot of things that contribute to fatalities and serious injuries on our roads. These include vehicle speed, drink-driving, inattention, complacency and fatigue. Improving safety on our roads is not just the role of road users—although their role is significant—and not just the role of governments. There needs to be a whole-of-community approach to reducing fatalities and injuries.

I have spoken to a number of people in my electorate who have survived a road crash but have had significant injury. It can be debilitating for a person's entire life. Their stories have moved me significantly, and I believe this is a serious issue that we need to give some attention to.

That is why I was very pleased that the Prime Minister visited my electorate a couple of weekends ago to announce a joint federal and state government commitment of \$18 million to construct a bypass at the intersection of McLaren Vale and Victor Harbor Road. This is a dangerous intersection that has seen close to 35 crashes in the last few years and we have seen a fatality at that intersection. McLaren Vale is growing in popularity for tourists and approximately 18,000 cars use that intersection corridor to the city on a daily basis.

This is a very important commitment. It is an example of the state and federal government working together to look at where the problems are—this was previously a T-junction—and how we might go about addressing them. The contribution from the federal government is \$14.4 million and the contribution from the South Australian government is \$3.6 million. Also, improving this intersection will support 120 local jobs.

This has been one of the very important initiatives in my electorate and hopefully the federal government can contribute in improving the safety of our roads.

As I started off saying, road accidents are a concern of mine, and I think everyone in this House should be concerned that close to 181 young people between the ages of 16 and 24 were seriously injured on our roads last year. Young drivers only make up 11 per cent of the total population but they account for 34 per cent of all road fatalities and 25 per cent of serious injuries. They are overrepresented in this area and we all need to take this issue very seriously. We need to work with young people to continue to improve our roads and to make sure that we do something to drive down the number of fatalities and serious injuries on our roads around the country, specifically in my electorate of Kingston in South Australia.