



ROAD SAFETY AWARENESS

Mr PICCOLO (Light) (15:35): Today I would like to speak briefly about an issue which is of great importance not only to my own electorate but also to the region, that is, the loss of life on our roads. This has caught the sentiment of the community over the last few months, because there have been some tragic accidents in the region—

Ms Bedford: Too many.

Mr PICCOLO: Yes, the member for Florey is quite right, too many. The devastation of the families affected by this is enormous. I must confess that, as a parent, one of my worst fears is the loss of a child, and to lose a child in a way which can be avoided is a greater tragedy and, as a community, we need to do whatever we can to minimise that. We will never get it down to zero, but we need to ensure that we reduce the incidence of young people dying in car accidents. Unfortunately, two things which are common in the statistics for our locality are young people and young males. We need to ensure that we have a greater understanding of their behaviour and what we can do to change it.

Today, I report to this house two things which my community is doing—in addition to the operation by the local police—to make young people and people generally aware of the implications of speeding and, if something goes wrong, the consequences of speeding. First, I advise the house of a public meeting which was held about 10 days ago. The meeting was organised by two people from Lyndoch, Kim Michelmore and Malinda Melbourne. They organised a public meeting to discuss ways that the community could come together to help minimise the tragic waste of life as a result of accidents. The meeting was held in the Barossa and it discussed the possibility of establishing some sort of centre to improve driver education and how to be a better driver but to raise awareness about the consequences of speeding or driving under the influence, etc.

These two people said that a whole range of organisations offer driver education, and they would like to offer one structured program that coordinates and brings all those things together on an ongoing, sustainable basis. This program is trying to bring together all the other ad hoc programs in our community and our resources to achieve a better outcome for our young people. At this point, I mention what the minister said today in answer to a question I put to him about road safety, particularly in rural areas. There are three things which improve road safety: first, good behaviour by drivers; secondly, ensuring that we have the appropriate infrastructure, etc.; and, thirdly, ensuring that drivers have the appropriate skills.

In his answer today, the minister addressed how we can improve the infrastructure to lessen the impact of road accidents. Improving infrastructure may not always prevent an accident, but certainly improved infrastructure can help lessen the consequences of an accident. The minister announced some additional funding in my region and the region represented by the member for Schubert, that is, shouldering of roads and construction of barriers. This will certainly improve road safety in those localities, and I welcome those announcements. I commend Kim and Malinda for this project, which will bring people together to work as a community.

The other thing I bring to the house's attention is another community project by the Barossa, Light and Gawler Football Association and also the Barossa, Light and Gawler Netball Association. They have started an annual event, which is a road safety weekend. They dedicate one weekend of sport to road safety awareness to make young people—and footballers and netballers players are mainly young people—more aware of road safety. One of the things they do is hold a road safety night. This forum is going to be held at the Gawler Central clubrooms with a number of speakers: Dr Griggs, who is a trauma specialist;

the Minister for Mental Health and Substance Abuse, Dr Jane Lomax-Smith, who is representing the Premier; and a number of others. This night is about making young people aware of the hazards of speeding, etc.