

Extract from Legislative Council Hansard

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SPECIAL INTEREST MATTER

TASMANIAN ROAD SAFETY COUNCIL

[11.15 a.m.]

Mr PARKINSON (Wellington - Deputy Leader of the Government in the Council) - Mr President, the Tasmanian Road Safety Council is the peak advisory body to government on issues of road safety. The Road Safety Council consists of representatives from the RACT, the Local Government Association, the Office of the Police Commissioner, the Coroners Office, the Monash University Road Accident Research Centre, the Road Safety Consultative Committee and the Department of Infrastructure, Energy and Resources.

For the past two years approximately, Mr President, I have had the privilege of holding the position of chair of the Tasmanian Road Safety Council. My purpose today is to express my concern at statements, particularly by a member in another place, critical of police procedures, critical of government policy on road safety -

Ms Thorp - It wouldn't be Brett Whiteley, would it?

Mr PARKINSON - citing speed detection cameras, suggestions of quotas on offences - to name just two of the criticisms coming from another place. It has even been suggested that the stats are corrupted by the inclusion of all-terrain vehicles. Mr President, this is not true. None of the criticisms in fact are valid.

Members need to know that already this calendar year we are way ahead on deaths on our roads compared with this time last year - 27 or 28, I do not have the precise up-to-date figure. There was another death on the weekend which I think takes it to 28 for the year compared with 17 this time last year.

It is difficult to be precise, Mr President, because coroners reports take time and therefore precise causes are not known in every case. Police on the ground tell us that speed in the conditions is invariably the cause. Members of parliament who represent the community need, therefore, to be responsible about what they say in Parliament on this issue. One opposition member in another place has been, in my view, irresponsible - continually, often - on this issue. Members of parliament need to stop using the issue to score political points. It is not a responsible position to take.

Road safety policy is about saving lives, Mr President. From its point of view the Road Safety Council will promote any measure to make our roads safer and, in fact, commends the

Government for the measures that it has adopted stringently to promote road safety. Members must use their best endeavours in the community to promote messages of road safety.

The message to any member of the community unhappy with speed detection devices, unhappy with fines, unhappy with police activity, is slow down, be more attentive, behave responsibly. Mr President, safety on our roads is a community responsibility - we must all work to achieve it.