

STATUTES AMENDMENT (TRANSPORT PORTFOLIO—ALCOHOL AND DRUGS) BILL

4 March 2009

Adjourned debate on second reading (resumed on motion).

(Continued from page 1815.)

Mr PEDERICK (Hammond) (16:05): I also rise to support the Statutes Amendment (Transport Portfolio—Alcohol and Drugs) Bill. I commend the member for Schubert on his untiring efforts to have drivers tested for drugs. Much carnage is caused on the roads today and, if we can limit that by taking the drug drivers and the drink drivers off the road, the world, and also the state, will be a better place.

This bill combines two initiatives. It implements the government's response to the review of the first year of the operation of the Road Traffic (Drug Driving) Amendment Act 2005 and, as has been mentioned, introduces a mandatory alcohol interlock scheme. The Road Traffic (Drug Driving) Amendment Act 2005 came into operation on 1 July 2006 and empowered South Australian police to conduct roadside saliva testing for the prescribed drugs of THC, methylamphetamine and MDMA. The government only progressed that legislation and subsequently added MDMA on the insistence of the Liberal opposition. The amendment act required the legislation to be reviewed after the first year of operation and a report to be laid before both houses of parliament.

The report indicated the operation of the act had been effective but suggested a number of improvements in the drug driving provisions, some of which included amendments to the drink driving provisions. The government has implemented several elements not requiring amendments to the principal legislation, and that includes increasing expiation fees and demerit points for drink and drug driving offences, which came into operation on 1 July 2008, as well as the testing of blood samples of all drivers and riders for prescribed drugs, which commenced on 1 July 2008. I note that the disqualification periods for second, third and subsequent category 1 offences have been increased to six, nine and 12 months to provide for appropriately escalating penalties. Other changes include:

- counting prior alcohol-related driving offences;
- lowering the age of all people attending or admitted to a hospital as a result of a vessel or motor vehicle accident from whom a blood sample must be taken from over 14 to over 10 years of age; and
- requiring a drug dependency assessment in cases where a person has a second drug offence within a five year period, and if found to be dependent have the licence cancelled until further assessment indicates the person is no longer dependent.

A raft of other changes are included.

I will make some comment about the mandatory alcohol interlock scheme. This voluntary scheme under the Liberal government came into effect in October 2001. I note that the Road Safety Advisory Council has recommended that the interlock scheme be made mandatory for serious and repeat drink driving offenders.

This bill provides that drivers convicted by a court of a serious drink driving offence will, first, be eligible to apply for a driver's licence with alcohol interlock scheme conditions after having served the full period of the court imposed licence disqualification, provided there is no other barrier to the issue of a licence; and, secondly, they will be eligible to apply for a driver's licence without alcohol interlock scheme conditions after having had an alcohol interlock device installed for the same length of time as the disqualification period up to a maximum of three years.

I note that the Liberal Party is supporting the bill. As I said earlier, I certainly support legislation such as this. My property is dissected by the Dukes Highway with thousands of vehicles going past every day. I can go over periods in my life, and not all the accidents I have witnessed or have come across soon after they have happened have been caused by drugs or alcohol. However, you only have to see a semi-trailer that has sideswiped a B-

double and everything has gone up in flames to see what happens when people are either not rested or they are under the influence of drugs and alcohol.

Nearly every time there are fatal consequences, and sometimes multiple fatalities occur. I certainly commend the local CFS and all CFS, ambulance and SES personnel who come out to these accidents and witness some horrific scenes. As I said, when vehicles come together—it could be at a combined speed of up to 230 km/h and sometimes more—it is one heck of a mess. I commend the bill and I hope it has a good passage through parliament.