

## **Question on Notice**

**No. 1845**

**Asked on Tuesday 24 November 2009**

**MR FOLEY ASKED THE MINISTER FOR MAIN ROADS (MR WALLACE)—**

**QUESTION:**

With reference to the speed limit reduction to 90 km/h on the Bruce Highway (Cooroy to Curra) - Has the reduced speed limit reduced road accidents/fatalities and if not, will the Minister consider returning the speed limit to 100 km/h?

**ANSWER:**

I thank the Member for Maryborough for the question.

At this moment in time, there are no proposals to return the speed limit from 90 km/h to 100 km/h along the Cooroy to Curra section of the Bruce Highway.

The Honourable Member will recall that the speed limit reduction to 90 km/h was approved by Cabinet just over 1 year ago, to help reduce the number and severity of crashes and injuries along this road.

Tragically, the Bruce Highway from Cooroy to Curra has seen far too many crashes and deaths over the years.

The reduced speed limit has been in place since 15 December 2008.

The decision to reduce the speed limit was not taken lightly and was based upon extensive research which indicates that reducing the average speed of vehicles has significant potential to reduce crashes.

Safe Speeds is a key component of the Safe System approach, which underpins the National and Queensland Road Safety Strategies and Action Plans.

Lower speed limits provide more reaction time for motorists to avoid a crash and can reduce the severity of injuries sustained.

The application of reduced speed limits in high crash zones in Queensland is not new. Safety benefits have been demonstrated on a number of roads, including the Ipswich Motorway, where the 10 km/h speed reduction in 2004 resulted in a 25% crash reduction.

The Department of Transport and Main Roads has undertaken vehicle speed surveys before and after the speed limit was reduced on the Bruce Highway and a comparison of the data has indicated that average vehicle speeds have reduced by almost 10 km/h.

Provided this reduction in average vehicle speed continues, the research mentioned suggests that crashes and injuries will reduce considerably over time.

In the 11.5 months since the 90 km/h speed limit was posted, there have been 5 fatalities though little information is yet available as to their causal factors. The 10 year average for the same section of road is 5 fatalities per year.

Due to the short period of time that has elapsed since the speed limit was reduced, it is not possible to determine whether the lower speed limit has resulted in an overall reduction in crashes and injuries, as fully validated crash data is not yet available for analysis.

An objective evaluation of the success of the speed limit reduction, as with other crash reduction projects, requires a minimum of 3 years 'after' data to compare with the data before the measures were introduced.

An added benefit to speed reduction initiatives as a result of fewer crashes can be fewer delays due to those incidents, more reliable journey times and reduced vehicle exhaust emissions due to 'smoother' traffic flow. However, these benefits/outcomes were not a driver for this initiative and have not been evaluated.

The road safety outcomes of the speed limit reduction initiative on the Bruce Highway will be reported when a sufficient amount of validated crash data is available to determine the initiative's success.