



Get there safely

SCHOOL holidays are upon us and many families time their annual vacations around this time of the year. Seasonal workers also leave the province to be with relatives over the festive season. The vast majority of them will be taking to our roads to reach their holiday destinations.

While it is meant to be a time for celebration and festivities, this time of the year is the most dangerous for road users.

This weekend alone, according to the Sunday edition of the Weekend Argus, the road death toll was a staggering 17. And 15 people died on our roads last weekend.

That is 32 lives too many.

Yesterday, the national Transport Minister Ben Martins launched the 2012 festive season road safety plan. The focus this year will be on preventing drinking and driving, speeding and moving violations.

In the Western Cape, Transport and Public Works MEC Robin Carlisle has implemented a number of measures in a bid to make our roads safer.

These include installing average-speed-over-distance cameras to trap motorists breaking the speed limit, especially over the notorious so-called N1 "death stretch" from Laingsburg to Beaufort West. Under the Safely Home campaign, Carlisle's department partnered with LeadSA to run an aggressive name and shame campaign in the Cape Argus, which publishes the names of motorists convicted of drunk driving and driving under the influence of alcohol.

In the city, mayoral committee member for safety and security JP Smith introduced the Ghost Squad traffic unit and "The Hulk" – a mobile road safety centre to process motorists who break traffic laws.

As committed as Carlisle and Smith are, they cannot police driver behaviour.

THE responsibility of making our roads safer this festive season rests on all of us. Make sure your vehicle is roadworthy, buckle up, keep a safe following distance, adhere to the speed limits, don't drink and drive, and rest when you're tired.

May your holiday memories be made at your destination and not for what happened on the way there.