

**FESTIVE SAFETY**

# 59 ROAD DEATHS SINCE START OF DECEMBER

## MEC Robin Carlisle says accident rate on W Cape roads highest in three years

**Yolisa Tswana and Sapa**

FIFTY-nine people have died on Western Cape roads since the start of the month, Transport MEC Robin Carlisle has revealed.

Speaking at the launch of the Retail Motor Industry Organisation's annual free testing period yesterday, Carlisle said: "In the first nine days of December, 59 people were killed on Western Cape roads. This is far in excess of last year, and the worst [fatality rate] we have had in three years."

Carlisle added that the carnage happened in spite of the intensive and extensive measures put in place on roads over the festive season.

He said that sleepy motorists in the Western Cape would have their car keys confiscated for four hours in a move to lower accidents caused by fatigue.

Based on the opinion of traffic officers, drivers who were tired would be asked to park in a safe area and their keys kept from them. Once the four hours had elapsed, their keys would be returned so they could resume their journey.

This measure would be implemented only if there was not another licensed and capable person in the vehicle to take over the driving.

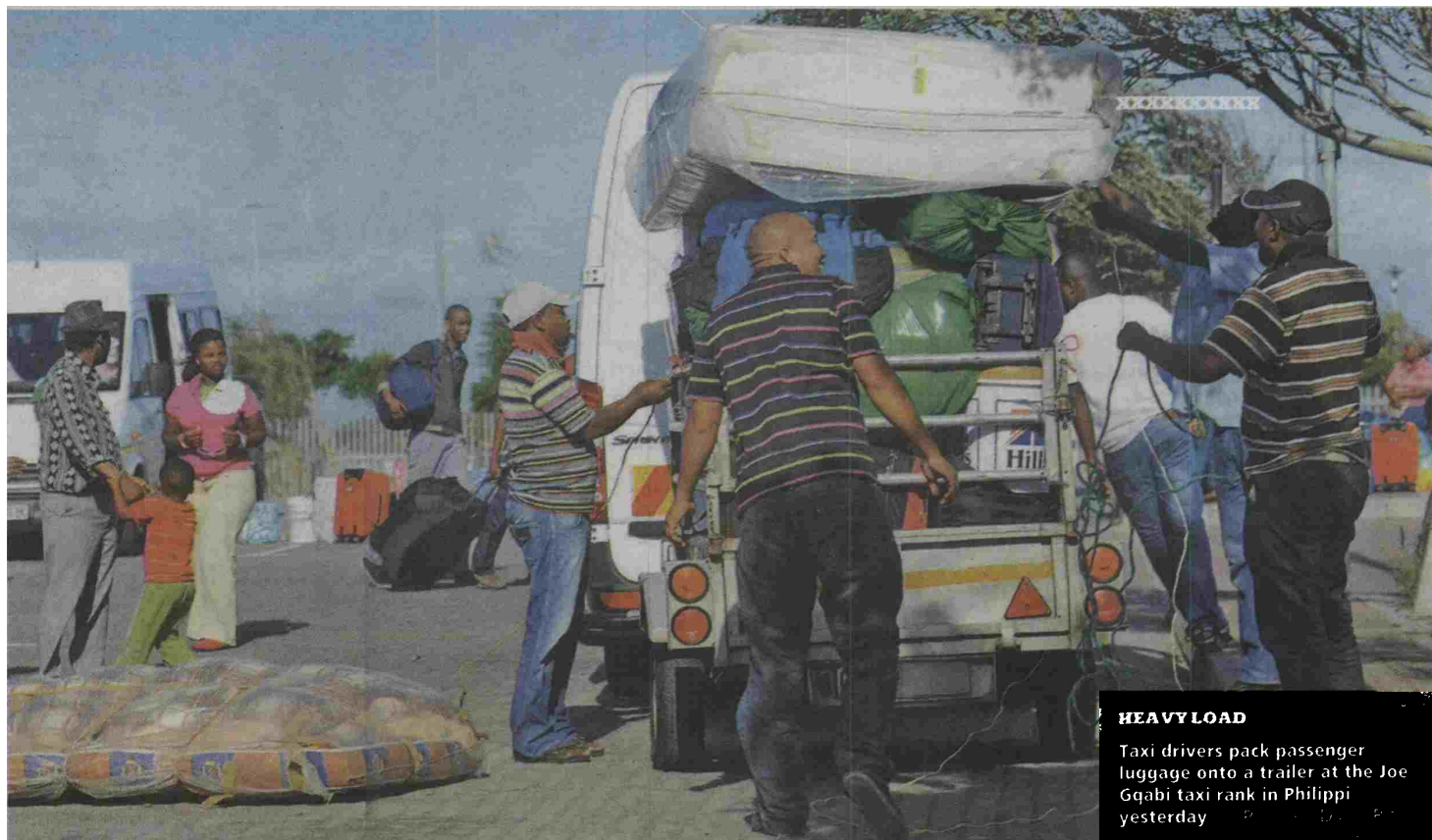
Carlisle said the National Road Traffic Act empowered officers to stop people from driving if they were incapable at the time, either physically or mentally.

"A fatigued driver is just as dangerous as a drunken driver," he said.

In an attempt to reduce road carnage over the festive season, long-distance taxis and other vehicles will be given free safety tests as part of the Retail Motor Industry Organisation's annual free testing period.

The testing period allows for long-distance travellers to go to the participating AVTS testing stations for a safety check, which includes checking the vehicle's brakes, suspension and headlights.

AVTS managing director Ferose



**HEAVY LOAD**  
Taxi drivers pack passenger luggage onto a trailer at the Joe Gqabi taxi rank in Philippi yesterday

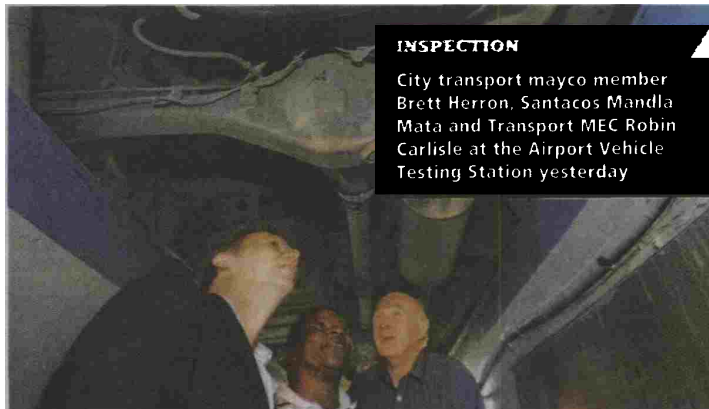
Oaten said it was a privilege for the company to be a part of the free safety inspections.

She said the free vehicle checks would run until Friday. These were not roadworthy tests but safety checks that served as an early warning to operators and drivers.

Brett Herron, mayoral committee for transport, was confident that the checks could reduce road crashes.

"If we can combine the law and safer vehicles we will make a greater impact on carnage over the festive season as we will have safer vehicles on the roads," Herron said.

Meanwhile at the Joe Gqabi inter-



**INSPECTION**  
City transport mayco member Brett Herron, Santacos Mandla Mata and Transport MEC Robin Carlisle at the Airport Vehicle Testing Station yesterday

change, in Philippi, long-distance taxi driver Thabo Toana said he had not heard about the free vehicle testing and that his vehicle had last been tested six months ago.

He said he was preparing to leave today and had 20 passengers booked in his Iveco van.

Toana was one of many taxi drivers and travellers preparing to hit the road and visit other parts of South Africa. He added that it got very busy around December 15.

"This weekend will be really busy, but I have a second driver with me so when I get tired he starts to drive," Toana said.