

More help needed

ROAD SAFETY

BY ASHLEY BOLT

PEOPLE living in regional communities that have been affected by road trauma are lacking the same support of those in metropolitan areas.

Statistics from the Road Safety Commission show regional communities are more likely to be affected by road trauma, however there is limited counselling and support services available in regional communities.

Road Trauma Support WA community outreach coordinator Georgie Sweeting said that while the situation is not ideal, those affected in regional communities can access free counselling over the phone or via videochat.

She said Road Trauma Support WA is the only service providing dedicated support from those affected by road trauma and is supported by the Road Safety

Commission and WA Police. She said the service has two full-time counsellors, limiting their ability to conduct face-to-face meetings in regional communities.

"We're aware that there is a demand for support in regional areas," she said.

Road Trauma Support WA was founded in November 2013 and provides counselling to not just the victims of road trauma and their families, but anyone who may be affected, such as those who caused the trauma and emergency respondents.

Ms Sweeting said tight-knit regional communities are especially affected road trauma and she hopes Road Trauma Support WA is able to expand to provide more face-to-face support.

She also said the funding received from the Road Trauma Trust was important in keeping the service free.

It's a free service and it has

to be that way to make it accessible for people," she said.

"People tend to put their physical health before mental health, so we need to make support as accessible as possible."

Road Safety Minister Michelle Roberts said supporting those affected by road trauma was an important issue.

"The work Road Trauma Support WA does to support Western Australians impacted by road trauma is invaluable," she said.

"As it stands, counselling for both individuals and groups in the South West can be provided remotely, either by telephone or through video conferencing.

"I am in discussion with the Road Safety Commissioner about how we could expand the service in the future, and provide better access to people in regional WA."