




Speech By
Dr Christian Rowan

MEMBER FOR MOGGILL

Record of Proceedings, 14 July 2020

TRANSPORT AND OTHER LEGISLATION (ROAD SAFETY, TECHNOLOGY AND OTHER MATTERS) AMENDMENT BILL

TRANSPORT LEGISLATION (DISABILITY PARKING AND OTHER MATTERS) AMENDMENT BILL

 **Dr ROWAN** (Moggill—LNP) (12.50 pm): As the Liberal National Party's shadow minister for communities and shadow minister for disability services and seniors, I rise to make a contribution to the debate on the Transport Legislation (Disability Parking and Other Matters) Amendment Bill 2019 and the Transport and Other Legislation (Road Safety, Technology and Other Matters) Amendment Bill 2020.

In July 2018, I joined my colleague the Liberal National Party state member for Bundaberg, Mr David Batt MP, in his electorate as we launched a petition calling for legislative change to enable visually-impaired people to obtain a disability parking scheme permit in Queensland. It was a terrific visit during which I met some wonderful Queenslanders and advocates who were championing this important change. I take this opportunity to thank the Liberal National Party member for Bundaberg for his hospitality during that visit and for his passion and strong advocacy from day one on this important reform.

Whilst it is pleasing to finally have this bill before the Queensland parliament, it must be said that unfortunately it has taken a considerable length of time to get here, thanks to the inaction of the Palaszczuk Labor government well before the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. As reported in the Bundaberg *NewsMail* at the time of the member for Bundaberg's petition launch, the member for Bundaberg was referenced as saying—

I wrote to the Minister for Transport Mark Bailey to see if the current government has plans to come into line with the ACT and NSW, where people who are legally blind are able to apply for and obtain the permits, but he advised me there are no plans in place to make any changes, which is very disappointing.

The Liberal National Party member for Bundaberg continued—

I'm calling on Labor's Minister for Disabilities and Minister for Transport to work with Queenslanders with vision impairments and grant them disability parking permits.

I table a copy of that article for the benefit of the House.

Tabled paper: Article from *NewsMail*, dated 17 July 2018, titled 'Blind Justice: Bundy MP's petition for disability parking' [1142](#).

By the conclusion of the petition—a petition which garnered thousands of signatures from across the state—the Labor Minister for Transport and Main Roads finally began the process leading to the legislative changes we are seeing today.

Before turning to the specifics of this bill, it is worth noting the current and soon-to-be former arrangements in place under the disability parking permit scheme here in Queensland. Under the current scheme, eligibility for a disability parking permit is based on an applicant's functional ability to

walk. As such, people with a vision impairment are not eligible unless they have an impairment that impacts on their ability to walk. Accordingly, the intent of the bill is to expand the criteria of this scheme to include visually-impaired persons who are legally blind.

At this point I would like to emphasise the words of those who have already contributed to this debate. Whilst it is estimated that there will be upwards of 14,000 new applications for a permit, representing only a 7.5 per cent increase on the current scheme membership, the expansion of this scheme is not expected to have a substantial impact on the availability of disability parking spaces. Importantly, the amendments in this legislation will ensure Queensland has consistency with schemes in New South Wales, the Australian Capital Territory, South Australia and Tasmania—just as was petitioned for when this process commenced approximately two years ago.

It is a great privilege to be the Liberal National Party shadow minister for disability services and to regularly meet so many of our great state's disability advocates, stakeholders, organisations and service providers. I take this opportunity to pay tribute to Queensland's disability services organisations, advocates and service providers for the outstanding work they have done in supporting Queenslanders throughout the COVID-19 novel coronavirus pandemic. In particular, I thank the Queenslanders with Disability Network for its initiative in developing and distributing a suite of resources and tools for people with a disability, including a range of tailored COVID-19 information sheets, essential items, checklists and individual planning tools. They also made an important contribution in submissions to the committee in relation to this legislation. It has unquestionably been an incredibly challenging time for all as we have had to adjust to various measures and restrictions. We must ensure that all supports continue to be provided to Queenslanders with a disability.

In the lead-up to the disability parking scheme's changes, the feedback I received from stakeholders and individuals certainly mirrored the sentiments and support expressed by submitters to the Queensland parliament's Transport and Public Works Committee, including Guide Dogs Queensland, the Queensland Blind Association, Spinal Life Australia and Physical Disabilities Australia.

The Liberal National Party will always stand up for stronger communities and will support individuals and representative organisations to ensure better opportunities are available for all Queenslanders. That is why we support this bill before the parliament today. As the Liberal National Party shadow minister for disability services, I recently visited Carmel Crouch, the managing director and chief executive officer of STEPS Group Australia, along with Stuart Coward, the LNP's candidate for Caloundra. While visiting STEPS Group Australia, I took the opportunity to talk to them about this legislation and what it would mean when it comes to the clients of this service. Certainly, they were very appreciative of those discussions and the opportunity to meet with them.

I had the opportunity to join Janet Wishart for a visit to Wesley Mission Queensland's Opportunities, Readiness, Community and Abilities project. This ORCA project is a fantastic post-school option for young adults, providing an integrated training, work experience and employment program for older teenagers with a disability. At the very heart of this program, it is enabling young people to gain the skills and opportunities for greater inclusion and participation in the broader community. On the visit with the local LNP candidate for Mansfield, Janet Wishart, we spoke about this legislation as well. I also note in the committee's report on this bill that submissions were received that specifically identified the provision of and access to disability parking as not just a parking issue but also an access and inclusion issue.

I also recently joined Henry Pike, the LNP's candidate for Redlands, and had the opportunity to tour the terrific care and respite facilities of service provider Joy2Care. As the LNP shadow minister for communities, disability services and seniors, it was a privilege for me to meet some of the clients of Joy2Care, including one gentleman with significant vision impairment, and to see firsthand the important work being done to assist not only him but also many others so that they can live their lives as independently as possible. As chance would have it, during this visit I also spoke with a representative from Guide Dogs Queensland. I take this opportunity to note in particular its support for this legislation and the intent to expand the eligibility criteria for the disability parking scheme to include legal blindness.

Turning to the Transport and Other Legislation (Road Safety, Technology and Other Matters) Amendment Bill 2020, there are a number of objectives of this bill: to support the introduction and ongoing operation of a digital licence app; to facilitate camera enforcement of seatbelt and mobile phone offences; and to make minor and technical improvements to clarify the operation of certain drug- and drink-driving provisions, preserve certain existing secondary legal interests in Transport and Main Roads land, allow access to land for environmental activities, and clarify evidentiary provisions for smart ticketing.

Specifically in relation to the introduction of camera detection for mobile phone and seatbelt offences, I note that, as per the Transport and Public Works Committee's report No. 39, the aim of this introduction is to save lives and to reduce road trauma and the impact these events have on families

and communities. Sadly, through the western suburbs of Brisbane, including my electorate of Moggill, our communities have witnessed some truly tragic road incidents in recent years. Anything that can be done to minimise or eliminate such accidents certainly deserves to be considered. Apart from the human and emotional toll, such incidents, particularly in the western suburbs, have significant flow-on effects through the broader road network, especially the state controlled network, resulting in significant delays, increased congestion and potential safety hazards.

Still on the western suburbs, one of the major issues is the resolution of the Moggill Road corridor planning study to improve local cyclists' safety. I take this opportunity again, given that there has been a three-year delay in that study being finalised and funding solutions being announced by the government, to ask the government to look at that to ensure not only that local cyclists have safety but also that future fatalities are prevented.

Ensuring better and safer roads for our communities is a key priority for the Liberal National Party and one that I have been consistently advocating for since first being elected in 2015. Unlike the Labor Party, the Liberal National Party has the plans to bust traffic congestion, to enhance our public transport and to improve safety for all road users in the western suburbs. We will continue to announce policies which will be in the best interests of not only motorists and cyclists but also those who use public transport in the western suburbs of Brisbane and right across Queensland.

In conclusion, I thank all submitters for their contribution to the consideration of these bills by the Transport and Public Works Committee. I know that members from both sides of the House who sit on committees make a vital contribution to our parliamentary democracy and to ensuring the scrutiny of legislation. Finally, I acknowledge again the member for Bundaberg.

(Time expired)