

Warrego Highway, Q-Link Truck Maintenance

Mr HORAN (Toowoomba South—LNP) (11.55 am): One of the most dangerous roads in Australia is the Warrego Highway, which extends from Toowoomba to Roma and which carries many trucks, B-doubles, road trains and passenger vehicles. I find it alarming to hear that Q-Link—the government transport company—is putting this road at risk. Recently, a truck was red-tagged from the Q-Link depot at Toowoomba because it had gearbox problems, a leaking airbag, a faulty fuel gauge and a seat in disrepair. Despite those defects, a driver was ordered to drive that truck from Toowoomba to Roma and return. The driver had to dip the tank, because the fuel gauge did not work at Roma. He found out that he had enough fuel to get back but, on the way back, the fuel filter leaked. So in the early hours of the morning, between Oakey and Dalby, the truck ran out of fuel. That driver was not picked up until 9 am the next day because the three communication systems that are usually available on these trucks were not available on this particular truck. To make matters worse, the driver, who worked 17½ hours, has not been paid any overtime. Another driver has just had his overtime paid after waiting for it for many weeks. Another truck at this depot jumped out of gear 30 times on the trip from Toowoomba to Dalby. It has a broken bullbar and the driver is concerned that it could fall under a wheel and cause a crash. The truck also has a cracked windscreen.

This situation is absolutely intolerable. I call on the Minister for Transport to immediately put an end to this dangerous situation. We have to consider the safety of the drivers, the safety of the families and the other drivers and users of that road. To have trucks that jump out of gear, that have problems with fuel gauges, bullbars, windscreens, airbags and seats is deplorable. It is a disgrace to this government. I call on the minister to immediately investigate and fix up these problems straightaway.

(Time expired)

Autism

Mr FINN (Yeerongpilly—ALP) (11.58 am): Recently I attended the official opening of Queensland's Autism Specific Early Learning and Care Centre at the Nathan campus of the Griffith University. This centre, known as the AEIOU Foundation's Nathan Centre of Excellence, was funded by the Rudd government and I was pleased to attend, along with federal ministers and the member for Moreton, Graham Perrett, who is a strong advocate for support for people with disabilities in my local area.

The new centre of excellence is a joint collaboration between the Rudd government, Griffith University and the AEIOU Foundation. It provides specialised early intervention programs for children with autism as well as child care and early childhood education. The centre will also be a hub for autism research and has already attracted international academic interests.

The Bligh government is also active in funding autism services in Queensland, with a specific focus on the Autism Early Intervention Initiative. This initiative has provided \$4.4 million over the past two years, with a further \$2.4 million committed to the initiative in 2009–10. This funding provides support for 12 places at the Nathan centre and is one part of the initiative that supports the great work of the AEIOU Foundation, including the services that are currently provided at the centre at Moorooka. I have been able to visit the centre at Moorooka with both the current and former ministers for disability services. I have seen the great work that the staff at the centre do and I have heard from parents about the important improvements that their children exhibit following their enrolment in AEIOU programs.

In addition to the Moorooka and Nathan services, the Bligh government's initiative will support the creation or expansion of early intervention centres across Queensland. This government is committed to not only providing essential day-to-day support for people with disability, but also targeting funds at early intervention and supporting research capacity to ensure Queensland's autism services are providing the best opportunities for people growing up with autism.

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DAYLIGHT SAVING FOR SOUTH EAST QUEENSLAND REFERENDUM BILL

First Reading

Mr WELLINGTON (Nicklin—Ind) (12.00 pm): I present a bill for an act to provide for a referendum on the question of having daylight saving in the South-East Queensland daylight saving time region on a permanent basis and to amend the Standard Time Act 1894 if the majority of electors indicates approval of having daylight saving in that region at the referendum. I present the explanatory notes, and I move—

That the bill be now read a first time.

Question put—That the bill be now read a first time.

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a first time.

Tabled paper: Daylight Saving for South East Queensland Referendum Bill.

Tabled paper: Daylight Saving for South East Queensland Referendum Bill, explanatory notes.

Second Reading

Mr WELLINGTON (Nicklin—Ind) (12.00 pm): I move—

That the bill be now read a second time.

Daylight saving continues to be a contentious matter and needs to be settled by the people via a referendum and not by politicians. It is time Queenslanders decided this contentious matter. It is time for a referendum, with that referendum to be held at the same time as the next state election. Daylight saving is a topic that divides Queenslanders, as shown by the referendum in 1992 and by opinion polls since then. But it is not a random division; it is largely a geographical division. In 1992 there were large majorities in its favour in the coastal strip from Coolangatta to Noosa on the Sunshine Coast and even larger majorities were against it in the north and to the west.

In my bill I have proposed a split time zone for Queensland. I hope as a result of the presentation of this bill to parliament the government will agree to form an all-party committee. This committee would be charged with investigating the proposed split time zone boundary by consulting with Queenslanders and reporting back to parliament before the bill proceeded to debate.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Nicklin, your time has expired.

Mr WELLINGTON: I seek leave to have the balance of my speech be incorporated in *Hansard*. It has been sighted by the Speaker and he has approved its inclusion.

Leave granted.

With almost two years to the next State election there is plenty of time for the proposed all-party committee to report to Parliament with its recommendations. As to the supposed problem with having two zones in the State, there seems to be a feeling that people in the west and north of the State will suffer inconvenience by having their clocks an hour behind the State capital. I wonder if this is true. I think those who worry about the "inconvenience" of two time zones over-rate the importance of the capital in the lives of rural and provincial Queenslanders! But rather than relying on my gut-feelings I propose a democratic alternative—let us ask Queenslanders what they think. Let us propose a 2-zone system and ask all Queenslanders—those within the south-east and those in the rest of the State—whether they approve of the scheme.

To this end I am introducing a somewhat unusual Bill—one that will not commence until the majority of the electors have voted to approve it in a referendum, even though a referendum is not constitutionally necessary for the passage of this kind of Bill. As members are no doubt aware, some amendments of the Constitution Act 1867 or the Constitution Act Amendment Act 1934 must be approved by a majority at a referendum before the Governor can properly assent to the Bill.

However, the Referendums Act 1997 provides for referendums to be held not only when they are constitutionally mandated but on a more general range of occasions—a referendum can be held when 'a Bill is to be submitted to the electors' or when the Parliament has resolved that a 'question' is to be submitted to the electors. Since the words 'is to be submitted' might refer only to those times when it is constitutionally-necessary for it to be submitted, this Bill is drafted as if a 'question' is to be submitted to the electors, but it will have the same effect as in the Constitutional case; if the electors vote "yes", the Bill can go into force as an Act and if they vote "no" it will not receive the royal assent—it will simply be forgotten about.

When this House recently added a preamble to the Constitution of Queensland, it did not simply enact the law as representatives of the people of Queensland but pretended to speak as 'the people of Queensland'—an act that Dr Nicholas Aroney of the University of Queensland Law School describes as 'an act of ventriloquism'. This time let us be more humble—let us enact the clauses of a Bill but provide that it will not commence until the majority of the people has endorsed it.

If we are to divide the State into two time zones, and there are divided opinions as to whether the people will accept that, let us ask them—let the people decide! I recall that the Opposition was even more dogmatically opposed than I was to the idea that we could enact a preamble without holding a referendum—I hope that they will be consistent and support the idea of a referendum on this matter that apparently divides the people. In order not to waste money, I propose that the referendum should be held with the next general election.

Now as to the second supposed problem—the "time boundary"—I note that many Queenslanders have to cope with a time boundary in summer even if we do nothing. The current time boundary follows the State boundary, which runs in zigzag fashion through ordinary streets, including the aptly-named Boundary Street, in the twin town of Coolangatta-Tweed Heads. This means that people who live one side of the border and work or shop on the other have to make adjustments all day long for six months of the year. If we extend "New South Wales time" into south-east Queensland we should be able to draw a boundary that provides less local inconvenience than this.

In this Bill I am providing a first draft of a proposed south east Queensland daylight saving time region as consisting of: The cities of Brisbane, Ipswich, Logan, Gold Coast and Redlands; and the regions of Moreton Bay, Scenic Rim and the Sunshine Coast. The proposed daylight saving region includes all of the areas that voted for daylight saving in 1992, and on the fringes it also includes some that voted 'no' in 1992, in order to draw a neat boundary that doesn't cut too many communities off from their neighbours. I suspect that most of the people in most of these areas are close enough to Brisbane and the coast so that they would feel that if Brisbane and the Gold and Sunshine Coasts are to have daylight saving they would want to have it too, even if, given their first choice, they would prefer no daylight saving at all in Queensland.

I represent one of those areas myself. Last year in my newsletter I asked my constituents for their opinions on daylight saving and they were almost evenly divided. Members may notice that the proposed area includes all of the areas served by CityRail trains, and not much beyond, as these are the areas from which significant numbers of people commute to Brisbane.

Mr Speaker, I am not being at all dogmatic about the proposed "time boundary". As I have just said, it is a first draft. I will be quite happy if the House defers consideration of the Bill while a committee does some research as to the best location of the boundary and when debate resumes I will be happy to accept any amendments to the definition of the daylight saving region that such a committee might propose.

Even then, a requirement for approval at a referendum is built into the Bill. My gut feeling tells me that if the boundary is drawn right the people inside it will vote 'yes' because they want daylight saving, or at least because they want to observe the same time

as Brisbane and the Coasts, and people outside it will be happy enough to let the south-east have daylight saving as long as it is not going to be foisted on them as well. But if not, so be it. In the end, let the people decide!

I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate, on motion of Ms Bligh, adjourned.

~~LAND TAX BILL~~

~~Second Reading~~

~~Resumed from 13 April (see p. 1314), on motion of Mr Fraser~~

~~That the bill be now read a second time.~~

~~**Mr POWELL** (Glass House LNP) (12.03 pm): I rise today to speak on the Land Tax Bill 2010. It is common knowledge that only two things are certain in life: death and taxes. I am confident that part of this certainty is due to an historical and ongoing need for governments of all ilks to fund the necessary and vital services the population requires. But I am increasingly convinced that taxes and death are constants because throughout humankind's history they have been just that—constant.~~

~~The earliest known tax records, dating from approximately 6,000 years BC, are in the form of clay tablets found in the ancient state of Lagash in modern day Iraq. Property taxes such as this land tax were part of the economic fabric of ancient Egypt, Babylon, Persia and China. Ancient Egypt appears to have perfected such taxes. Taxes were levied against the value of grain, cattle, oil, beer and land. Some of Egypt's many scribes became tax assessors. They kept records about who owned title to lands along with the size of their fields. At various times they collected annual or biannual data by counting cattle and checking the crop yields. The most common taxpayers were the farmers from whom assessors coerced collection. If a taxpayer did not or was not able to pay he was brought before courts that immediately dispensed justice. A typical tax rate was 10 per cent of all production.~~

~~Tax assessors were highly valued people because of their skills with hieroglyphics and their ability to collect revenue. Often when a king died, the assessor was the only staff person not killed and buried along with the king so valued was his service. It makes one wonder if the same still applies. Should the Premier fall, will the Treasurer fall with her or will his skill with hieroglyphics and, more importantly, his increasing ability to find new and sneaky ways to collect revenue make him too valued? I imagine it will not be long before we find out.~~

~~Moving forward to medieval times, after 1066 William the Conqueror created an early form of land taxation. Town officials kept cadastral records of everyone who owned property. Each parcel was measured, its value estimated. Each town kept a book of the assessment of each property and the total amount of property tax due for each person. This book was called the *Domesday Book* and the name lasted for hundreds of years. Some in England still use the name. Again, perhaps it is no surprise that we link taxes with death.~~

~~Australia followed suit in the early 20th century. The ATO tells us that in 1910 a land tax was introduced by the Commonwealth government to provide for the defence of the nation and to prepare for a major increase in migration. The land tax was also introduced to encourage large landholders to subdivide their land and sell it to settlers. Many large landholders were wealthy Englishmen who would rarely visit or use their land. Introducing a land tax encouraged them to sell to settlers who would use the land productively. Queensland introduced its own version in 1915. I wonder what our forebears would say were they to know that it now contributes nearly 10 per cent of the \$8.877 billion collected in state taxes—some \$838 million.~~

~~As the shadow Treasurer outlined, the LNP will be supporting this bill for there is much to be commended in it. Any legislation introduced nearly a century ago and subsequently amended on numerous occasions would now present as incoherent and challenging for any taxpayer. As the explanatory notes highlight, the bill rewrites the Land Tax Act 1915 to overcome these deficiencies. It simplifies the existing legislation by use of restructuring and plain English. The changes made will benefit taxpayers by promoting clarity and transparency in the legislation and its administration. As there are no changes to tax rates, exemptions or concessions or significant policy changes proposed in the rewrite, the rewrite retains Queensland's current land tax revenue base.~~

~~I would also like to touch briefly on three other elements of this new bill. This bill will enact extended payment arrangements. The rewrite proposed by the bill incorporates the extended payment arrangement enabling taxpayers to choose to pay in three instalments, 45, 90 and 150 days after an assessment issue. Next to a complete abolition of land tax, this addresses the most consistent complaint made by constituents. It allows taxpayers to distribute their payments over nearly five months, staggering payment and allowing it to be offset by regular property based income payments.~~

~~The bill will also introduce a single registration system for charitable institutions. In essence, the change will mean that an institution with exempt status will not need to separately register under each of~~