



Speech by

# GORDON NUTTALL

MEMBER FOR SANDGATE

Hansard 18 November 1998

## TRANSPORT LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL (No. 2)

**Mr NUTTALL** (Sandgate—ALP) (3.26 p.m.): I want to comment on two issues: in particular the road toll and, secondly, the use of speed cameras and where I believe there is a major problem. Firstly, in relation to the road toll, I say that my reading of the latest statistics shows that as at last count there had been some 235 deaths on our roads in Queensland. While each and every one of those is a tragedy, it is a vast improvement. I think it is the lowest road toll that we have had in six or seven years. Police officers, people within the Transport Department—

**Mr Johnson:** Thirty-five years.

**Mr NUTTALL:** In 35 years. I thank the former Minister for that.

There are occasions when people need to be complimented on some outstanding work. People within the Departments of Transport and Main Roads, police officers and drivers within Queensland themselves are certainly more aware. It is one of those outstanding efforts that we have achieved as a society. Even though there is increased traffic and increased population, we have managed to reduce the road toll. It has taken a lot of hard work and I want to compliment those people as well as the former Minister and the current Minister, of course, on the work that they have done in relation to our road tolls. We are coming into the Christmas season which again is a very dangerous time. I think that has been one of the most outstanding efforts in terms of our society in recent years.

I also want to raise the issue of speed cameras. I believe—and I have mentioned this in the House before—that the Police Department in particular is in breach of legislation in terms of their use. I have raised this in the House before. It has not been picked up by the media and I hope that on this occasion it will be. When the previous Minister introduced the legislation governing speed cameras into the House back in November of 1996—and the former Minister is in the Chamber today—he said during his second-reading speech—

"The introduction of speed cameras will be accompanied by strict operational policies and controls to ensure they are used to help reduce speed-related crashes."

He advised the House that operational controls would include cameras being limited to use on roads which have undergone speed limit reviews. There is no way in the world that full speed reviews have been undertaken on Sandgate Road in my electorate, yet those cameras are constantly there and they are constantly used simply to entrap drivers. They are not being used to reduce speed; they are being used to entrap drivers and to raise revenue. This problem is not restricted to Sandgate Road. I believe that a number of members in this Chamber would verify my claim that speed cameras are not being used in the way they should be.

The former Minister also said that police enforcement operations would be highly visible and managed on a deterrence-based approach. There is the white van, but do honourable members know where the sign stating that a speed camera is in use is placed? It is not put before the van; it is put after the van. So people driving along see the sign "speed camera in use" after they have gone through the camera. That is simply an entrapment. That has nothing to do with deterring drivers from speeding.

**Mr Nelson:** You shouldn't be speeding anyway.

**Mr NUTTALL:** I acknowledge that people should not be speeding, but the whole philosophy behind speed cameras is to deter drivers from speeding. This is not deterring drivers from speeding. The Police Service is just complying so that it can say, "We are letting drivers know that speed cameras

are in use." In New Zealand, when drivers enter a speed camera area they see signs which state "This is a speed camera area". I think that should be done in Queensland. The former Minister also advised the House that the cameras would be operated by a single police officer in a van which would be visible to all motorists. I drove past a speed camera the other night. I was not speeding, but it was dark. Give us a break!

The then shadow Minister, the honourable member for Capalaba, introduced some amendments which were supported by the honourable member for Gladstone. Amendments to the Bill were passed to the effect that all revenue raised would be used in three areas: road safety education and awareness programs; road accident injury rehabilitation programs; and road funding to improve the safety of the section of State-controlled roads where accidents most frequently happen.

**Mr Johnson:** Is the honourable member for Sandgate aware that the amount of revenue that we expected to receive from speed cameras and other speeding offences was considerably reduced by speed cameras? The Minister may correct me, but I think it is about \$11m.

**Mr NUTTALL:** I am aware of that, but the money still is not going——

**Mr Johnson:** I know what you are saying. On the point about cameras being visible, that is right. I said that. Again, we have had that problem and they should not be concealed.

**Mr NUTTALL:** I am not being critical of you.

**Mr Johnson:** I am just saying that I did say that.

**Mr NUTTALL:** Yes. I am trying to draw it to the attention of the media, because they will not pick it up, but the police are not playing the game.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** (Mr Reeves): Order! I remind the member for Sandgate to address his remarks through the Chair.

**Mr NUTTALL:** The annual report of the Main Roads Department of 1997-98 states——

"We enhanced the safety of the road network by:

returning an estimated \$30 million in safety benefits to the Queensland community by upgrading 65 'black spots' costing approximately \$7 million during the year."

That is to be applauded and the Department of Main Roads is to be commended. I hope that money has come from fines as a result of the use of speed cameras. The report goes on to state——

"... implementing the \$10 million per year Safer Roads initiative, partly funded by camera-detected offences."

**Mr Johnson:** There certainly has been increased education on road safety.

**Mr NUTTALL:** I am aware of that, but the point I am making is that when we had this debate in this House the honourable member for Gladstone and a number of other honourable members raised the point that these cameras should be used in areas where there have been known fatalities, and they are not. They should be used in areas where there are roadworks going on and where drivers are not slowing down when they are supposed to be and endangering the lives of the workers——

**Mr Pearce:** School areas.

**Mr NUTTALL:** And in school areas where people's lives are endangered. That is not being done. Cameras are being put on roads and are just entrapping people. That has to be addressed by the police. It is not good enough for us as parliamentarians to be passing laws which the law enforcers of this State ignore. That is effectively what they are doing. In May 1997, Police Inspector Greg Wessling of the traffic camera office declined to reveal locations for the speed camera traps. He said——

"We have a preliminary list of 400 potential sites throughout the State."

He went on to say that the police were not going to tell anyone.

**Mr Johnson:** Why would you tell the public where they were?

**Mr NUTTALL:** I am not saying——

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! I remind the member for Sandgate to speak through the Chair. I also remind the member for Sandgate of the Bill to be debated.

**Mr NUTTALL:** Mr Deputy Speaker, everyone else got a fair bit of leniency, and I seek the same amount. The RACQ has called for all the sites of speed cameras to be revealed. The whole idea is to deter people from speeding. If drivers are warned by a sign that says "This is a speed camera area" and they go through and get fined, that is well and good.

**Mr Pearce:** They do it in New South Wales.

**Mr NUTTALL:** The honourable member for Fitzroy is right. If it is good enough for New South Wales, why can we not do it here for our motorists?

**Mr Johnson:** Look at our good record. As Inspector Wessling said, if you are going to tell everybody where they are, you will not get any revenue.

**Mr NUTTALL:** I do not accept that, because I believe that the more motorists are warned, the more they will slow down. We are down to 235 road deaths. I have said that is a great reduction, but I think we can do better and I think we should be doing better. I would be interested to see where the money is going. The former Minister said that not as much revenue was raised as was anticipated. A press release of the then Minister stated that in about three months about \$1.5m was raised.

**Mr Johnson:** You work that out over 12 months. It's not going to be \$30m, is it?

**Mr NUTTALL:** No, it is not, but it is still a significant amount of money.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! I remind the member about relevance.

**Mr NUTTALL:** I think the lives of Queenslanders are very relevant. I think the police need to address the issue and we need to ensure that the money that is collected is earmarked for those areas set out in section 44T of the Transport Legislation Amendment Act 1996. The Act states that the money raised must be used in the three areas I mentioned. I do not believe that all that money is being used in accordance with this legislation. I believe that matter should be addressed as a matter of course and as a matter of necessity. I also call on the Police Department to clearly indicate the presence of speed cameras—not after the van but before the van—to warn motorists that they are in a speed camera area. I think that will go further to deterring people from speeding.

The concern of the community and the RACQ in general when we brought that legislation forward was that speed cameras would be used to raise revenue. That is exactly what is happening. The speed limits have not been reviewed by either the State Transport Department or the Brisbane City Council as promised. They need to be reviewed.

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