



Speech by

Mr T. SULLIVAN

MEMBER FOR CHERMSIDE

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TRANSPORT LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

Mr SULLIVAN (ChermSIDE—ALP) (11.48 a.m.): I rise to support the Transport Legislation Amendment Bill, currently before the House. This is one of the great majority of Bills that has bipartisan support. It is unfortunate that there is a perception in the community that those on opposite sides of the House disagree most of the time. That perception has arisen because frequently it is only the disagreements and the clashes of policy which are reported in the papers. Here is an example of both sides of the Chamber agreeing on legislation.

We all know that because certain Acts have lapsed we have to pass retrospective legislation. Five critical Acts and nearly a dozen important regulations and by-laws preserved under the previous Act ceased to exist at midnight on 30 June 1998. We know that we have to pass this legislation. As a result of the lapse of the previous legislation, we have lost laws which regulate the carriage of dangerous goods, and the registration and control of motor vehicles, boat harbours, the Gold Coast waterways and houseboats on waterways. It is important that this legislation pass through the House. Amongst other things, the Transport Legislation Amendment Bill contains amendments which clarify the existing processes for the development of new rail corridors. This will improve the existing process and assist in facilitating desirable rail developments in the State. Again, this measure is supported by both sides of the House.

The existing Transport Infrastructure Act 1994 provides for the leasing of land to railway managers. This enables the State to retain a strategic overview of the network while allowing the railway managers and operators to have the day-to-day management and control of the railway. The existing legislation also prescribes a regime for the accreditation of railway managers and railway operators to provide that the safety of the rail network is assured.

This Bill will ensure that the leasing and rail safety accreditation processes will be better integrated to ensure that a workable process is in place for the development of rail projects. The passage of the Bill will also clarify issues of timing with respect to the accreditation process, the leasing process and the construction process and it will remove any uncertainty associated with the existing legislation.

I know that one of my colleagues to follow will speak on the Brisbane Airport rail link. This is a project that is very close to his heart. We know that the improved process will benefit a range of projects throughout the State. Possibly the first and largest will be the Brisbane Airport rail link. This proposed rail link integrates with the existing Queensland Rail network south of the Eagle Junction Railway Station and will service both the international and domestic air terminals.

I know of the proposed route. I also know that there has been some concern expressed in the local area. I live close to the area and I know that people who use Kalinga Park and that section of Sandgate Road along Schulz Canal near Toombul Shoppingtown have expressed concerns in regard to this project. I believe that those concerns are being addressed. I will listen with interest to what the member for Clayfield has to say on this matter. While there are concerns that need to be addressed, I believe that the rail link will be beneficial, provided that patronage can be retained at a viable level. The aim of the project is to enhance the public transport options to the airport and bestow considerable benefits on airport users.

Although the plan has not been finalised, the project for the expansion of Brisbane Airport is under way. We know that over the next 25 years there will be many more thousands of jobs involved in the redevelopment of the airport. There are major problems with noise associated with the airport. Environmental factors have to be balanced against the economic gains that the redevelopment of the airport will bring. The rail link to the airport is not only concerned with passengers using the airport; it is also vital to the thousands of people who will be working at the airport site and in the surrounding economic development area.

The project is a private sector BOOT project. The proponents will build, own and operate the rail link and transfer it back to the State Government after the 35-year lease agreement expires. The Airtrain project will be one of the first projects to benefit from the amendments to the Transport Infrastructure Act. The amendments contained in this Bill will further enhance the State's ability to facilitate the provision of new rail infrastructure in the State.

I have been pleased to have received briefings from the current Minister and the previous Minister, and I thank them for that. This project will affect the northern suburbs close to my electorate and close to where I live. This Bill brings about other changes.

I wish to express my thanks to many of the officials from the Department of Transport and Main Roads who have been extremely helpful over a number of years. I have received briefings and been provided with information by these officers. I notice that Mr Paul Blake is in the Chamber today advising the Minister. As Deputy Chairman of the Select Committee on Travelsafe I have had considerable contact with Paul and officers from his section of the department. Obviously, Travelsafe has very close links with the Department of Transport and Main Roads and with Queensland Rail. I thank Paul and the officers of his section for their assistance.

It is very easy for the Courier-Mail and the rest of the media to splash across the front pages of the newspaper and television screens the broken bodies and crashed vehicles which are the result of road accidents and point to where things are going wrong. But it is very hard to go to a suburban or regional household, knock on the door and say to the mums and dads who answer, "Do you know that your 22-year-old son is alive because road safety has improved?" or, "Do you know that your 27-year-old daughter is alive today because of steps that have been introduced in a bipartisan way by members of this Parliament and through the work of the Land Safety Division of the department?" Because those things cannot be said, people do not see the beneficial effect of the improvements in road safety. Today, we have 75 fewer deaths on Queensland roads compared with the same time last year.

Some people say, "What sort of work do parliamentary committees do? They are fairly impotent." Well, are they? I would like to take the example of the introduction of speed cameras. This issue was looked at by the Travelsafe Committee under former Chairman Len Ardill who was passionate about road safety. The inquiry was continued under the chairmanship of John Goss. The committee produced a report which had the total support of all members and said that we believed that the introduction of speed cameras would reduce the road toll. That decision took a lot of the politics out of the matter.

One understands that former Minister Johnson and former shadow Minister Elder and other people must play the political game, but when there is bipartisan support from the Committee a lot of the heat is taken out of the issue. When former Minister Johnson introduced speed cameras there was very little flak from around the State. The reason for that was that all members knew that there was support for this measure on both sides of the House. As a result, Queenslanders are alive today who would otherwise have been killed in car accidents.

Mr Johnson: Or maimed.

Mr SULLIVAN: Or maimed, thank you. Often, the cost to the community is more substantial when a person survives a serious car accident. A person who is rendered paraplegic as a result of a serious car accident can over their lifetime cost compulsory third party insurance a couple of million dollars. If the accident had not occurred that money could have been put into other services throughout the State.

We have heard mention of the City/Valley bypass. Those of us who travel through the northern suburbs of Brisbane know that something is drastically needed to be done around the area of Gilchrist Avenue, Bowen Bridge Road and the Royal Brisbane Hospital. We know that the increase in the population in the south-east corner of the State cannot continue without major changes occurring to our public and private transport infrastructure. The Busways project is a significant step.

I am disappointed that the Federal coalition withdrew funds from that project. The former coalition State Government directed all its Busways money into busways to the south of Brisbane linking up with the Pacific Motorway. We might end up with an eight-lane super highway to the Gold Coast which allows the former Premier, and now Leader of the Opposition, to get to Parliament House from Surfers Paradise more quickly, but I want to see that the north side of Brisbane receives its fair share of that money. In the next few years we need a bus route along Highway 1 through Chermside,

terminating at the Carseldine campus of QUT. Unfortunately, because of Federal Government and former State Government cutbacks that project has now been put on the long finger.

It is important that public transport issues be addressed in a bipartisan way. The existing road infrastructure in the inner city will not be able to support the increased population and the increased use of private vehicles. We must attack this problem in a better way so that public transport is a more viable option. I support the Bill.
