



Speech by

**Mr J. HEGARTY**

**MEMBER FOR REDLANDS**

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Hansard 25 August 1999

### **ROAD TRANSPORT REFORM BILL**

**Mr HEGARTY** (Redlands—NPA) (5.37 p.m.): It is with pleasure that I take part in the debate on the Road Transport Reform Bill 1999. I place on record at the outset that I endorse all the positive aspects that have been mentioned by previous speakers in relation to moving towards a more uniform regulatory code for driving and licensing in the Commonwealth.

There are a couple of aspects that I would like to address in this debate. One is an issue that has been raised recently and concerns the aged community in my electorate. There have been reports in the newspapers recently of a proposal to move towards the testing and licensing of people aged 65 years and over on a more regular basis than the current five yearly period. The report implied that most people who were retired were bad drivers and, therefore, contributed to accidents and, presumably, the road toll. I do not know if this is based on statistics or if it is just based on the presumption that people in their later years drive more slowly, perhaps through caution. Perhaps their driving habits have changed as they aged. However, I believe that the number of accidents involving elderly drivers is proportionately lower than that of younger drivers.

**Mr Bredhauer:** There are no changes to the plan. If you are over 75, you get a five-year licence, but you have to carry an annual medical certificate with you. There are no changes planned to that licensing arrangement.

**Mr HEGARTY:** I thank the Minister for making that commitment and clearing up the point raised in the Sunday Mail a week or so ago.

I raise the issue of road funding. The Redland area, which I represent, has a growing population. The shire's population is now around 105,000 and it is increasing. The strategic plan brought down at the beginning of last year allowed for some farmland to be rezoned for urban development, and that is now progressively taking shape. This new development will mean greater pressure on the State owned arterial roads. I refer to roads in my electorate, in the southern part of the shire: Cleveland-Redland Bay Road, Boundary Road and Redland Bay Road leading to Capalaba.

A section of Boundary Road is currently being upgraded to dual lane at a cost of around \$4m, budgeted for a year ago. The 1996-97 indicative roads program indicated that it was possible that funding could be made available in this year's Budget for work to be carried out on the remainder of that road, which is the eastern portion from the Panorama Drive intersection to the roundabout at Cleveland-Redland Bay Road. I will be pleasantly surprised if funding is made available, but I have been advised that that is highly unlikely because of requirements in other parts of the State.

That leads me to ask: is road funding being cut back? As I indicated, the Redland area is a very important part of the State in terms of population growth. The population will increase and the number of vehicle trips will increase. Currently, a journey to the city by either private transport or bus usually takes around 45 minutes. As a result, people are inclined to drive to Cleveland and take the train, which of course is what we want.

**Mr Bredhauer:** Excellent.

**Mr HEGARTY:** An excellent idea. But an extra time delay in getting to that station is experienced by people in the southern part of the shire because they are using a circuitous route. Admirably, people are using public transport, but the point I am coming to is that if we can provide a

faster route by making those roads dual lane, then those intending to use public transport will not be caught in traffic jams as they are now. Before the roadworks were undertaken around the Panorama Drive intersection, delays for cars going into the city of a morning and returning from the city of an afternoon were enormously long.

I believe that the work proposed for Windemere Road to Vienna Road is on track to be commenced, but the next section of Redland Bay Road—from Vienna Road to the intersection with Taylor Road at Thornlands—also needs to be made dual lane. That work would fill in the gaps between existing sections of dual lanes, providing dual lanes from the southern part of the shire, where all the development and population increase is occurring, right through to Capalaba.

Moreton Bay Road provides a good route around the shopping area of Capalaba on to Old Cleveland Road and on to the city. That leads me to the issue of the bus lane speculated for Old Cleveland Road. We have heard nothing about that in recent times. That was proposed to be run on a similar basis as the South East Transit Project, which is currently under construction. A bus lane on Old Cleveland Road would alleviate traffic problems and encourage more people into vehicular public transport as opposed to just the Cleveland rail network.

I also wish to raise the matter of the number of properties acquired under the ill-fated Eastern Tollway project and which are still held by the Department of Main Roads. Members will remember that the Eastern Tollway project was the proposal of the Goss Labor Government to solve the traffic problem between Brisbane and the Gold Coast. The figure for that project was never really finally determined. When we take into account the nominal \$600m that the project was going to cost—I think that included the koala tunnel of around \$130m, which was probably going to cost more like \$150m or \$200m when it was all engineered and costed properly—it would have been a fairly costly project which would not provide the vehicular capacity of the upgraded Pacific Motorway.

The concern of some of the residents in the western part of my electorate is that not all of the properties acquired have been disposed of. Not all of the properties on the proposed route were acquired in the first place. About 50 properties were acquired for millions of dollars in areas such as Eight Mile Plains, Rochedale, Burbank, Priestdale, Cornubia and Carbrook, on the northern part of the Logan River. To my knowledge, only one or two of those properties have been sold. That has caused an enormous glut on the market. People whose properties were not acquired under the proposed acquisition cannot sell their properties because the market is flooded. At the same time, I realise that the Government cannot put all of the properties on the market and have a fire sale, because obviously that is not going to help real estate prices either.

The point is that, because the Government is retaining those properties, there is speculation that the eastern tollway is still on the agenda. Maybe it is not on the Minister's mind at present—I know that he was not the Minister at the time; the former Treasurer was Minister when all of this was happening—but there is a perception. Those people do not trust Labor Governments when they have retained these properties. It is about four years since the previous Goss Government declared that the tollway was null and void, that it was off the agenda and that the Government would come up with some other alternative. The Goss Government never announced that alternative because it lost office shortly thereafter.

I ask the Minister to make some comment in his speech in reply to the second-reading debate about just what he proposes to do to accelerate the movement of those properties. One property adjacent to the golf course in the Carbrook area was offered for sale by tender. I believe that the Logan City Council has expressed some interest in that property. If these properties cannot be sold on the market, I encourage the Minister to look at some interdepartmental or intergovernmental arrangement—with the local authority in this particular instance—to see if some public use can be made of those properties. I realise that that cannot happen with all of the properties.

Some of the properties have some fairly nice homes on them. Some of them were acquired at a cost of up to \$2m. They have a certain value which naturally the Government wants to recoup. But the slowness of any sort of disposal is becoming alarming. I think the Minister now has a responsibility to make some statement as to what the progress has been to date and what he proposes to do in the future to finalise dealings in relation to those properties.

I will leave the other matters for another time because I realise that time is moving on, but I ask the Minister in his reply to the second-reading debate to address the issues that I raised.

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