



Speech by

KAREN STRUTHERS

MEMBER FOR ARCHERFIELD

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ROAD TRANSPORT REFORM BILL

Ms STRUTHERS (Archerfield—ALP) (4.09 p.m.): Road transport operators provide an essential service in delivering goods along the many highways and lonely roads across the State. Although we curse the truckies from time to time, particularly if we are stuck behind them in traffic, we know that we cannot do without them. In the main, road transport operators, many of whom are based in my electorate of Archerfield, run responsible and viable operations. I commend the road transport industry members who have worked cooperatively with the Minister and departmental officers in developing the Bill.

There is a high concentration of industrial and commercial activity in my electorate. In fact, the suburb of Acacia Ridge alone generates 10% of the economic activity of Brisbane. As honourable members can imagine, there are a lot of trucks coming and going in the area. It is essential that truck operators maintain high standards of safety. I am pleased to support this Bill, as it gives more tools to operators and to the Government to improve safety on our roads.

I have worked actively to ease traffic congestion on major roads in my electorate and to put an end to heavy vehicles being parked in residential areas. In the time available today, I wish to focus on the issue of heavy vehicle parking. Many residents in my area are fed up with big semitrailers and prime movers—

Honourable members interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Reeves): Order! There is far too much audible conversation.

Ms STRUTHERS:—being parked outside their homes. These people are worried about their safety, as the trucks block their streets and limit their visibility when they are driving. The Road Transport Reform Bill provides a remedy to this problem. Embedded in the Bill are the Australian Road Rules. These rules will prohibit heavy vehicles greater than 7.5 metres long and/or heavier than 4.5 tonnes from parking in designated urban areas for more than an hour. Further, the Bill provides the impetus for local governments to introduce their own more stringent local laws if they so desire.

Honourable members interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I remind honourable members that, if they want to hold a conversation, there are other places in which to do so.

Ms STRUTHERS: Mr Deputy Speaker, I have lots of interesting things to say. I would appreciate the attention of honourable members.

To their credit, the Logan and Ipswich City Councils have already implemented local laws to prohibit heavy vehicle parking in urban areas. The Brisbane City Council has recently developed a heavy vehicle parking local law that is likely to be introduced later this year. I accept that truck operators and owners may not be rapt about the proposed changes; they may incur additional costs and inconvenience. However, in my view, public safety outweighs the inconvenience to owners and operators because of the changes that they will need to make.

I commend the residents who have made submissions to me to fix the heavy vehicle parking problem. Many have taken photos, delivered them to my office and asked for urgent action. The Minister has been very responsive in dealing with these submissions, and I commend him for that. The

residents have been determined to maintain the amenity and safety of their suburban streets. I have alerted the Minister to the problems and I have been working in cooperation with my local government colleague Councillor Kevin Bianchi to make our suburban streets safer.

I wish also to take this opportunity to promote the dedicated way in which Minister Judy Spence, the member for Mansfield and I are working to alleviate traffic congestion in our region—congestion that is compounded by the large volume of heavy vehicles needing to access the area and the lack of Federal funding to improve the national road network in our area. We have been seeking to work cooperatively with the Federal member for Moreton, Mr Gary Hardgrave, as the main problem arterial road in our region is a Federal Government responsibility. Rather than acknowledging that his own Government cut national highway funding by \$620m over four years from 1996-97, thereby limiting the capacity to fix these problems, Mr Hardgrave simply continues to bag us and bag the State Government. The public are sick and tired of buck passing on road issues. They want workable solutions, and that is what they are getting from the State Government. As elected members we do not always have wins on issues, but I am encouraged that the State Minister, Mr Bredhauer, has introduced a Bill that goes a long way towards fixing the heavy vehicle parking problem. The next step is to get our Federal colleagues on side and then we will be better placed to fix the other congestion problems. I know that the trucking industry is on side with this Bill and I welcome its cooperation in successfully implementing its provisions.
