



Speech by

**Mr M. VEIVERS**

**MEMBER FOR SOUTHPORT**

Hansard 25 August 1999

### ROAD TRANSPORT REFORM BILL

**Mr VEIVERS** (Southport—NPA) (4.14 p.m.): The Road Transport Reform Bill will enable a uniform set of road rules to be introduced across our nation. As the member for Southport, I am very familiar with the number of tourists who cross the border in motor vehicles every day. Quite a number of drivers on the Gold Coast are from overseas and have rented motor vehicles to travel throughout Australia.

It is hard enough for Australian drivers moving around this nation to know how the road rules differ from State to State. However, the implementation of uniform Australian Road Rules will allow Governments to undertake more targeted education programs for tourists and commercial drivers, who regularly drive in different jurisdictions. I congratulate the former Minister for Transport, Mr Johnson. I think he did a marvellous job under difficult circumstances in many areas of transport. Members opposite must always remember that—and we are seeing a bit of this now—when the House was stacked equally it was a bit more difficult to get legislation through; it was very tight. And I am not blaming the Independent member for Gladstone.

**Mr Welford:** You had a dream run.

**Mr VEIVERS:** Is that what the honourable member calls a dream run?

**Mr Welford:** Yes.

**Mr VEIVERS:** I take that interjection from the Minister for Environment, who is not sitting in his correct seat. If he thinks that was a dream run, imagine what we could have achieved under more favourable circumstances. I congratulate the former Minister. It is good to see that the current Minister for Transport, who is not in the Chamber, is carrying on the work in some of these areas. However, I wish to pick him up in relation to a few points.

I am aware that the issue of road safety and overseas tourists is being examined by the Travelsafe Committee. I am sure that that committee also welcomes this initiative and looks forward to the education program that the Minister referred to in his second-reading speech. I would like the Minister to consider tourists in the development of the educational material that will be needed to inform people of the changes to the road rules. The shadow Minister and I believe that this will be an ideal opportunity to remind all drivers of the road rules generally and not just the changes.

Although I am probably putting in one of my relatives, I cite as an example an 87-year-old relative of mine—and I will not give her up—who just received her driver licence—

**Mr Lucas** interjected.

**Mr VEIVERS:** I have given it away now. She is very proud that she has just received her driver licence for another five years. This lovely, Christian, straight up and down person phoned me and said, "I've got my licence for another five years." I immediately went out and put a bullbar on the front of my Mercedes. I feel that these people should have to undergo some tests.

**Mr Lucas:** Did you put a Saint Christopher medal on it as well?

**Mr VEIVERS:** I do not want to say too much; she might leave me out of her will! Obviously, the way she is going, I could be gone before her. Seriously, this is one issue that came to mind.

**Mr Bredhauer:** Only the good die young.

**Mr VEIVERS:** I could be gone tomorrow.

I heard the comment of the honourable member for Mansfield that the 100 km/h speed limiters on trucks are being tampered with. I do not know about that. The member might have forgotten that on some sections of road north of Brisbane the speed limit is 110 km/h. They have to ramp them up a bit to get up to 110 km/h.

**Mr Bredhauer:** But if they are speed limited, they are not meant to go 110.

**Mr VEIVERS:** I understand that. But they are being restricted to 100 km/h. I urge the Minister to raise the limit to 110 km/h in most areas when the Pacific Motorway is opened.

**Mr Littleproud:** You haven't got a pecuniary interest in this, have you?

**Mr VEIVERS:** I am not going into the trucking business. This morning I heard the Minister saying that he is going to run transport business with his rail, so I will not be going into the road business. I just thought I would mention that—a 110 or even 120 zone—because it is a tourist road and the buses can get up and down. It will move the traffic brilliantly when it is completed.

One cannot live at the Gold Coast and travel to Brisbane without mentioning that magnificent Pacific Motorway project which was made possible by the coalition Government. I have to remind the Minister about the motorway that he now publicly acknowledges and has tried to grab the credit for, particularly in relation to stating on the sign how many jobs were created—jobs, jobs, jobs. We had hardly heard the Premier talking about jobs, jobs, jobs when the sign went up. We in the coalition Government were the people who put it in place and created those 1,600 to 1,800 jobs there. I thought I would remind the Minister about that.

**Mr Purcell:** To the winner go the spoils, brother.

**Mr VEIVERS:** You are not wrong, baby.

I have to remind the Minister. He is getting the credit. Of course, that was one of the most important public works programs undertaken in this State and I think it was a magnificent achievement of the former coalition Government. I need to remind the Minister also that this motorway was the road that Labor said could never be built. The now stood aside Treasurer in one of his many disasters was going to build the koala tunnel connection through the bayside because the Pacific Motorway could never be built to eight lanes plus the service roads. I have to tell him that it is almost there and it is looking good. It is nearly completed and will stand as a testament to Labor's inability to handle infrastructure projects in this State.

Electors should also remember that, during the year that Labor has had in office, it has not been able to announce a public works project similar to that. It has had over 12 months. Someone else, I believe, who drives on the motorway every day is the member for Currumbin. I note that in the House yesterday morning she made a statement about how well her Government does in disaster management. She might like to see the Premier; he might get her to adopt the stood aside Treasurer as a bit of a project.

Whilst this Pacific Motorway project is drawing to a close, I must say that I am also concerned that there is some evidence that the Beattie Government is doing some Budget cutting obviously to try to scrape the funds together in a vain attempt to balance that forthcoming Budget while pretending to meet its election promises. I note, for example, that the sound barriers along the residential precincts of Smith Street have now apparently been put on the backburner. I am particularly concerned for the residents opposite the Gold Coast bakery site who have to put up with the significant highway noise, which is increasing every day, without the benefit of sound barriers. Those sound barriers were promised in 1998. Part of them has been constructed.

**Mr Bredhauer:** About three weeks before the election.

**Mr VEIVERS:** No, part has been constructed down near the Musgrave Hill Special School. But they were there. It was ready to go. That was in June 1998.

**Mr Bredhauer:** Yes, two weeks before the election.

**Mr VEIVERS:** No, three—get it right.

**Mr Bredhauer:** What's the date?

**Mr VEIVERS:** It does not matter. The then Minister said—

"I am confident that construction of the sound barriers will be completed early in 1999 at a total cost of approximately \$1.5 million."

He also says at the bottom of the letter—and I appreciate this—

"Thank you for your persistence ... on behalf of your community to resolve this problem."

**Mr Bredhauer:** What's the date?

**Mr VEIVERS:** I told the Minister: 10 June 1998. I asked a question of the Minister in the House and the answer was—

"Noise barrier fencing works between Uplands Drive and Olsen Avenue are now programmed for construction in 2001."

I could have the pension and be gone by then. It continues—

"There are higher priority works elsewhere in the Gold Coast area before noise amelioration works are undertaken in Smith Street."

They were really promised this some time ago. If the Minister could look at that, I would appreciate it because the people living in that area are having sleepless nights and that is not good.

I would also like to draw to the attention of the Minister the protracted Nerang bypass project. This is not in my area, but it is on the Gold Coast. It seemed to be progressing well, but it seems to have hit a wall. I am just wondering whether that is an engineering problem. I know we blame the pouring rain. I used to say that the ambulances had trouble getting through the rain—and the Minister for Emergency Services agreed with me about two or three months ago. She said, "Yes, the ambulances have been held up in the rain." They did not believe me when I said it, but it was all right when she said that.

The Minister for Transport or his department are saying that the hold-up down there was due to the rain. I would like the Minister to inform the people down there that there was an engineering problem that held things up at the crossover at Nerang. I think it is on track now, but I wonder whether he could answer that.

**Mr Purcell:** You wouldn't expect workers to work in the rain and get injured, would you?

**Mr VEIVERS:** No, but that particular project has caused a lot of heartbreak for local traders and residents. About four of those businesses have gone broke because people cannot get across to them. In all fairness, the engineers have tried to get the traffic to cross, but it just has not worked. The works have also been prolonged. I just hope it is not because of any political shenanigans.

Whilst the Minister in this legislation is addressing a number of important transport issues, including the management of heavy vehicles, I would draw his attention to the traffic problems in Brisbane which have been caused by the inaction of the current Lord Mayor. I think the shadow Minister called him "Traffic Jam" Jim. I remind the Minister that he came to office on the back of criticisms of the Hale Street project, which now forms the backbone of the City/Valley bypass that the Premier and the Minister for Transport and Minister for Main Roads pretend is not happening.

With the forthcoming Olympic soccer matches scheduled for the Gabba next year, we should also be applying for skydiving as a demonstration sport. That is about the only way that people are going to be able to get to the Gabba because the Lord Mayor and this Government will have dug up the rest of the roads for busways, light rail and bypasses. As the shadow Minister says, "Traffic Jam" Jim is trying to make up for years of inaction.

**Mr Bredhauer:** The busway to the Gabba will be finished by then.

**Mr VEIVERS:** I hope the mayor gets his act together because that could be a bottleneck.

**Mr Littleproud** interjected.

**Mr VEIVERS:** It is not that long away.

This legislation has been in the planning stages for quite some time. I think everyone said that today. Everyone has worked quite well together to get the legislation up to this point and it has the support of the coalition, provided the Minister is able to give assurances about a number of matters I have raised here.

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