



Speech by

GORDON NUTTALL

MEMBER FOR SANDGATE

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TRANSPORT LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

Mr NUTTALL (Sandgate—ALP) (4.03 p.m.): My contribution in terms of this Bill will be reasonably brief. I would like to touch on a couple of areas that have not yet been covered in the debate so far. Before doing that, I publicly congratulate both the member for Bundamba and the member for Woodridge on their maiden speeches last night which I thought were both excellent. I am sure that their families would feel very, very proud of them both, given their contribution last night. If those people in their electorates who voted for them on the day of the by-election had heard their maiden speeches, they certainly would have felt vindicated and very proud of having people of that calibre representing them in this Parliament.

One of the areas that I would like to touch on today is clause 31 of this Bill. It inserts Schedule 1A into the Act, which details the subject matter for a Waterway Transport Management Plan. In relation to Section 7 of that Schedule in particular, the Explanatory Notes state—

"... that a levy can be placed on marina owners, as a contribution towards the dredging of, and the maintenance of, public marine transport infrastructure."

I notice that the Explanatory Notes include the word "can". It is not a compulsory levy by the looks of things. I would like to make a contribution in this area particularly because of the fact that the area where Cabbage Tree Creek, which runs through my electorate, enters Moreton Bay and downstream, the creek tends to silt up fairly badly from time to time. I know that there are plans on a regular basis to dredge Cabbage Tree Creek—and it was done not all that long ago at a not unsubstantial cost. I think it was in the vicinity of \$400,000 or \$500,000.

I would like to put forward a suggestion to the Minister and the department today in relation to this issue of dredging of the creek. Some time ago, not long after I was elected, the creek needed dredging. Two companies who were in the business of dredging approached me to put forward a proposal that—and I am not sure whether it goes out to tender; I presume it does, but I am not quite sure how it works—rather than the department pay for someone to dredge the creek, the companies wanted to basically dredge the creek and retain the silt and on sell it. In that way, from a Government perspective we would be able to have the creeks dredged at no cost to the taxpayer and we would not have to worry about dumping the silt, and those companies could go and sell the silt. I believe there is some merit in that. I would ask that the department and the Minister revisit that issue. Perhaps there are reasons why that cannot be done.

When I put that proposal to the then Minister back in 1993, the advice from the department was that it would certainly be happy to look at it, but it wanted those who dredged the creek to pay a levy on the silt up front. So they would have had to pay a royalty up front. I think that is a bit of a hard ask. I do not think there is merit in that proposal. I think it would be a great saving to the taxpayer. If we could seriously look at the issue—the Government could put it out on a tender basis—of allowing companies to dredge those creeks, they would then be dredged on a regular basis and there would be no cost to the taxpayer. That is something that I think is worth while and needs to be looked at. As I said, Cabbage Tree Creek is indeed a very, very busy waterway in my electorate.

I want to move on in terms of that to Part 4 of the Bill, which amends the Transport Operations (Marine Pollution) Act of 1995. The Explanatory Notes state—

"Clause 35 inserts a new S 55A which details if a ship requires a Shipboard waste management plan, and the maximum penalties inflicted on the ship's owner and master if a ship which requires a Shipboard waste management plan does not"—

I would think that is the wrong word—

"put in place such a plan, or is not fitted with the equipment necessary to implement such a plan."

I think that that is a very, very good provision to be included in this Bill simply because Cabbage Tree Creek does suffer from a degree of pollution, one of the reasons obviously being that the creek itself is loved to death. Certainly where it enters Moreton Bay, it is the home of a number of organisations: it is the home of both a commercial fishing fleet and a recreational fishing fleet; the Sandgate fishing co-op is based there, which is the oldest fishing co-op in the State; there is the Queensland Cruising Yacht Club, the sailing club, the sea rescue boys, a canoe club, and on it goes.

Mr Sullivan: The sea cadets of Tangalooma.

Mr NUTTALL: I thank the member for Chermside for the interjection. I give that information to the House to emphasise how busy that creek is. The inclusion of this clause into the Transport Legislation Amendment Bill gives some responsibility or ownership to shipowners to get their act together in minimising pollution. This issue has been an ongoing concern for some time, but a number of people whose houses are near the creek and the organisations I have mentioned use the creek on a fairly regular basis. For those members not doing too much on Good Friday, I invite them to come to the Shorncliffe/Sandgate area to enjoy the commencement of the famous Brisbane to Gladstone Yacht Race. As I said, the home of the Queensland Cruising Yacht Club, which runs that blue water race, is on Cabbage Tree Creek. In relation to the issue of pollution, this clause is a great plus. I want to congratulate both the Minister and the department on this initiative.

The final area I want to cover is clause 58, which relates to taxis. The clause relates to prohibiting taxis from providing any public passenger service in a taxi service area for which they are not licensed. This has been a contentious issue in my area, which has the Redcliffe boys and the Brisbane boys. Sometimes there is conflict. This clause, which will insert a new section in the Act, clears this issue up. I am very pleased about that. I say to the Minister and the department that I have been approached on a number of occasions by taxi owners and drivers within my electorate regarding this issue. The Sandgate Railway Station is a major bus/rail interchange for both my electorate and the electorate of Redcliffe by people commuting to Sandgate. It is a fairly busy area for taxis and a number of people travel across the Hornibrook Bridge to catch the train into the city.

While on the subject of trains, in my view Sandgate has an excellent transport system with both trains and buses. It is a system that is greatly utilised by my constituents. I have been told of instances where some taxi drivers have got to the stage where they have nearly come to blows. That is very unfortunate for a person wanting to use a taxi to go from point A to point B. This clause clears up that situation. It prevents taxis picking up passengers or commencing charter or journeys or tours in taxi service areas for which they do not hold a taxi service licence. However, it does not extend so far as to prevent passenger journeys from being completed. This provision is long overdue and I am particularly pleased to see it in the Bill before the House today.

In closing, I am pleased to see the work that has been done and the amendments put forward in the Transport Legislation Amendment Bill. This certainly affects my area. I seriously ask both the Minister and the department to look at the issue of dredging. There is an opportunity for some money to be saved and for more regular dredging, particularly in the Cabbage Tree Creek area.
