



Speech by

Hon. STEVE BREDHAUER

MEMBER FOR COOK

Hansard 9 August 2001

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Road Transport; Chain of Responsibility Prosecutions

Hon. S. D. BREDHAUER (Cook—ALP) (Minister for Transport and Minister for Main Roads) (10.03 a.m.), by leave: The state government and Queensland Transport have again proven their determination to take action against transport operators who continue to flout the law by overloading heavy vehicles and breaching driving hours regulations with two recent prosecutions. Indeed, Queensland is leading the national fight against rogue elements of the transport chain by recording the country's first chain of responsibility prosecutions for breaches of vehicle dimension and driving hours regulations. Put simply, this means that the buck no longer stops with the driver. These results will send a signal to everyone who plays a part in transporting goods that they must be accountable for their actions.

In one of these landmark convictions a contractor was fined \$1,500 and a driver was fined \$500 for vehicle dimension offences. The case involved a prime mover-semitrailer combination which was carrying rigging equipment on the Warrego Highway at Roma. The combination should have been no more than 19 metres in length. When it was intercepted it measured 26.8 metres. This posed an extreme safety risk to other road users. The same vehicle combination also recorded an overload of more than 25 per cent of the legal limit on one axle group.

In the second case a contractor was convicted and fined \$5,000 for driving hours offences. The conviction against the contractor was secured with the assistance of the driver, who was not prosecuted. This clearly demonstrates that the days of making drivers the scapegoats are over. Everyone, from consigner to operator, will be held accountable for their actions.

Queensland Transport has been very active in processing chain of responsibility prosecutions. We are leading the country in this important area of road safety. Queensland Transport has achieved a number of national firsts with its chain of responsibility prosecutions. We recorded the first prosecution last year against a company that had committed more than 100 mass offences for overweight vehicles. Earlier this year we gained another first with a chain of responsibility prosecution on a transportation of dangerous goods offence. Most recently we have recorded two more firsts, with chain of responsibility prosecutions on driving hours-fatigue management regulations and vehicle dimension regulations.

At a national meeting in Melbourne of the National Road Transport Commission's compliance reference group, Queensland Transport showcased its success as the clear national leader in chain of responsibility, much to the satisfaction of the many responsible operators in the road transport industry. Our nine recent convictions cover breaches of driving hours regulations, breaches of the dangerous goods code, breaches of vehicle and trailer axle overloads and breaches of vehicle dimension regulations. Queensland Transport will continue to be vigilant in pursuing road transport operators who engage in illegal activities.
