



Speech by

ANDREW McNAMARA

MEMBER FOR HERVEY BAY

Hansard 22 August 2002

TRANSPORT OPERATIONS [ROAD USE MANAGEMENT] AMENDMENT BILL [No. 2]

Mr McNAMARA (Hervey Bay—ALP) (6.05 p.m.): I rise to support the Transport Operations (Road Use Management) Amendment Bill. The bill provides for blood to be taken and tested for alcohol content from unconscious drivers or from people who are unable to communicate when they are taken to hospital after an accident.

Since being elected to this place, I have had communications with the Attorney-General, the Minister for Health and the Minister for Transport seeking the changes which this bill will bring about. I have long considered to be an unacceptable loophole in our anti drink-driving laws, in what are often the most serious accidents where people are maimed and killed, that drivers can escape resolution of the critical issue of whether they were illegally affected by alcohol by virtue of being unconscious. I congratulate the Minister for Transport for confronting this issue and particularly for the thought which has been given to the problem of protecting medical practitioners and nurses in circumstances where proper medical considerations prevent them taking blood.

Every member of this place wants to see a reduction in the number of road deaths in this state. Families are torn apart when someone is killed on the road. Justice demands that questions be answered as to whether one or more of the drivers involved might have been affected by alcohol. Quite simply, the minor invasiveness of having a couple of millilitres of blood taken in circumstances where medical procedures are likely to be necessary anyway is justified in order to prevent more deaths and to see that justice is done. This legislation is balanced and measured and it will be welcomed by the public. I congratulate the minister and I commend the bill to the House.