



Speech by

**ANITA PHILLIPS**

**MEMBER FOR THURINGOWA**

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Hansard 18 September 2002

**TRANSPORT LEGISLATION AMENDMENT REGULATION [No. 3] 2002**

**Ms PHILLIPS** (Thuringowa—ALP) (2.56 p.m.): I would like to specifically address the House on the issue of vehicle inspection fees that are included in the Transport Legislation Amendment Regulation. There are significant costs currently carried by the wider community in the delivery of this service. The Treasurer outlined in his budget speech for 2001-02 that, in order to support value-for-money principles for taxpayers, agencies would implement a strategic planning process to ensure that priorities align with policies. As part of that review process, Queensland Transport sought to review its current fees and charges for a number of services in order to align them better with appropriate benchmarks and to act as an incentive for good policy outcomes. This is not in any way a contradiction in government policy.

I will discuss the particular aspect of vehicle inspections. The behaviour of certain elements of the transport industry in relation to vehicle inspectors has created additional costs for the taxpayer that are both wasteful and unnecessary. This initiative provides for the introduction of a non-refundable vehicle inspection booking fee of \$20 and the application of fees for vehicle inspections in instances where the vehicle has failed the original inspection.

An investigation of current arrangements has identified that certain operators engage in behaviour that results in unnecessary additional costs for taxpayers. Instances have been identified of operators making multiple bookings at various sites for the same vehicle on the same day. While this provides the operator with flexibility of site and time for the inspection, it results in significant waste of taxpayers' dollars. This practice has led to 3,247 bookings not being kept in the 12-month period from April 2000. These no-shows resulted in more than 1,600 hours of lost time for Transport inspectors. These inspectors could have been engaged in other road safety or enforcement activities. In addition, it reduces the department's flexibility to offer inspection times when required and therefore results in unnecessary inspection delays for other operators who act appropriately.

One example of the impact of failing to keep a booking is where a vehicle operator books an inspection slot at a remote site with an inspector who travels some distance to inspect a limited number of vehicles within that area. The vehicle operator then fails to present the vehicle, with no advance warning to the inspector. There is no penalty for the operator, and therefore no incentive to keep the appointment. This is having a serious impact on some of our regional operators who do the right thing.

At present there is no charge for reinspections required where defects have been identified at an initial inspection. By offering reinspections to allow for clearance of defects at no cost there is little incentive for operators to ensure the safety of their vehicle before it is presented for inspection. This results in an increased road safety risk and inefficient use of scarce transport inspection resources. In 2000-01, reinspections formed 14 per cent of programmed inspections. This produced cost burdens to the community, in that this cost is currently borne entirely by the taxpayer, and also to industry through reduced availability and flexibility of inspection slots.

The charging of an inspection fee for vehicles that have failed the initial inspection will ensure that the cost of these additional inspections is at least partially met by the operator. This will also act as an incentive for operators to ensure that their vehicles are adequately maintained rather than relying on Queensland Transport inspections to alert them to defects, as in some instances appears to be the case.

Charging for vehicle reinspections is consistent with other states where such services are still provided by government. Operators who ensure that the vehicles are in appropriate condition prior to the initial inspection will notice no impact from this new fee. To facilitate these changes, Queensland Transport is introducing a streamlined telephone and Internet options bookings and payments system. This new system will provide a more efficient process for those using the inspection service. Both of these charges are aimed at ensuring that Queensland Transport's transport inspectors are actively engaged in road safety outcomes for all Queenslanders and they are to be commended.