



Speech by

**CHRIS CUMMINS**

**MEMBER FOR KAWANA**

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Hansard 7 March 2002

**TRANSPORT OPERATIONS [ROAD USE MANAGEMENT] AMENDMENT BILL**

**Mr CUMMINS** (Kawana—ALP) (12.22 p.m.): I rise in support of the Transport Operations (Road Use Management) Amendment Bill. It maintains Queensland Transport's commitment to road safety and the community expectation that drivers must demonstrate an appropriate standard of personal responsibility. At the same time, the bill meets community expectations regarding the fair treatment of individuals, particularly where the ordinary citizen has made an inadvertent error.

This bill also takes the opportunity to streamline the administration of justice. The government is committed to ensuring the fairness and effectiveness of state legislation for all Queenslanders. On 3 December last year, the act was changed to rectify an important inequity with absolute disqualification. The act was amended such that there is now a clear difference in the handling of a person who continues driving after their licence is suspended for accumulating excess demerit points, as compared with a person who keeps driving after being the subject of a court-ordered disqualification. Under the new provisions, if a person is detected driving with a licence that has expired for less than 12 months and they have not had a previous unlicensed driving conviction within the past five years, a roadside penalty infringement notice will be issued. I believe that this infringement notice is an appropriate penalty in the circumstances.

The provisions are intended to ensure that the treatment of drivers who have temporarily failed to renew their licence is not excessively onerous. The new provisions strike an appropriate balance between the need to provide equitable treatment to individuals while maintaining efforts in relation to road safety. Road safety is of paramount importance to us and, in fact, I believe to the majority of Queenslanders. These provisions meet community expectations that drivers should demonstrate an appropriate standard of personal responsibility.

Queensland licence holders should be aware that drivers are sent renewal notices approximately six weeks before their licence is due to expire. It is then the driver's responsibility to renew the licence before it expires. It is also a driver's responsibility to notify Queensland Transport of any change in address. A new drivers licence can be obtained at any time up to five years after it has expired without the requirement for the person to undertake a driving test to assess their knowledge and driving skills and without incurring any penalty.

Given the relatively unique circumstances of the introduction of this legislation and its potential to be repealed within a short period of time, it would seem reasonable to introduce retrospective arrangements to manage this issue. Retrospective provisions for expired licence drivers provide no allowance for compensation, but lift the six months disqualification period which has been automatically applied.

I will touch on another issue of importance to Sunshine Coast residents. I thank those involved with the *Sunshine Coast Daily*, our local newspaper, for providing good coverage of road issues. Mark Furler is one of the chief reporters there and Peter Owen is the editor. Recently, the Department of Main Roads made an announcement regarding the installation of electronic message signs near Sunshine Coast roads. That is part of an overall upgrading of intelligent transport systems. The signs will benefit all motorists, allowing the department to advise them of road conditions up ahead, including accidents, delays, roadworks, diversions and hazards. The messages will keep motorists informed, reducing the possibility of secondary accidents and alleviating traffic congestion. One is proposed for my electorate of Kawana. With these signs, people driving along the road can be notified if there is

congestion on the motorways or problems with access to the Bruce Highway. My electorate is a tourist area, but this goes for all of Queensland. These signs can notify the motoring public of possible delays with traffic, possible dangers up ahead and so forth. Consideration is being given to siting them northbound on the Nicklin Way at Minyama, eastbound on the motorway between the Bruce Highway on-ramp and the Buderim off-ramp and further north on the motorway.

In closing, I mention that the media, including Channel 7's Richard Bruinsma, have provided the department and the Queensland government with good coverage of the construction that is about to commence on the Kawana arterial. Once completed, that will significantly reduce congestion in and around the electorate of Kawana and, in fact, in all of the Sunshine Coast. The media should be praised for their efforts in spreading the message to the public. They help not only to drop the road toll but to assist in correcting situations, as we are today, where a matter has been overlooked or a loophole exists. The media should never be overlooked as a means of providing help with road traffic and safety, the construction of new roads and public consultation, because I believe all Queenslanders want to see a drop in the road toll. I commend the minister and his department, and I commend the bill to the House.