



Speech by

CHRIS CUMMINS

MEMBER FOR KAWANA

Hansard 22 August 2002

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

Mr CUMMINS (Kawana—ALP) (6.32 p.m.): I rise to speak about the amendments contained in this bill to the Transport Operations (Road Use Management) Act 1995 in relation to blood alcohol testing. The object of this bill is to provide for an amendment to the Transport Operations (Road Use Management) Act 1995 for blood to be taken and tested for alcohol content from drivers who are unconscious or unable to communicate when they attend hospital as a result of a road crash. Despite continuing road safety improvements, motor vehicle crashes involving alcohol are a major social, economic and health issue. Drink-driving accounts for approximately 30 per cent of fatal crashes and approximately 20 per cent of hospitalisation crashes in Queensland each year.

A range of measures are currently used in Queensland to combat drink-driving, the most effective of which is RBT—random breath testing. RBT is most effective when enforcement efforts are supported by public education that emphasises the risk of detection by police. Queensland Transport undertakes extensive public education as part of the Fatal 4 driving behaviours directed at consequences of being caught drink-driving, crashing and walking intoxicated. These countermeasures have been found to be highly effective in deterring people from drink-driving. However, despite knowing the risks of crashing or being caught, the number of people sustaining injuries and being hospitalised due to drink-driving is unfortunately increasing.

I must applaud the minister and the Transport Department for being of valuable assistance with regard to the issue of hooning, especially on the Sunshine Coast. It is a sad fact that all too often alcohol, drugs and speed are major contributing factors towards our tragic road toll, and these fatalities include people who modify or hot up their cars. While contributing to this debate tonight, I must point out that in relation to introducing proactive initiatives to attempt to curb the road carnage I know both the minister's commitment and indeed the entire Beattie Labor government's commitment to see both injuries and deaths on Queensland roads reduced. These changes will dovetail into other legislative amendments in a positive way and will be well embraced by our community. The hooning legislation is another measure that recently passed through this House.

Today in question time the minister mentioned the confusion faced by the federal member for Fisher, Peter Slipper, when he wrote to the state minister complaining about the Bruce Highway between Brisbane and the Sunshine Coast. Well, Minister, not only is Mr Slipper often confused about who does what at the various levels of government but he will undoubtedly misrepresent your reply. I will point out to the House his most recent lies to the Sunshine Coast residents whom I represent. I seek leave to table the relevant documents from which I will quote.

Leave granted.

Mr CUMMINS: Go Mooloolaba is a well respected business group in the same mould as a chamber of commerce. In Mr Slipper's column in Go Mooloolaba's August newsletter he said—

Over 200 people held a public meeting I convened recently in an attempt to address the issue of hoons on the Sunshine Coast.

...

The meeting, held at Alexandra Headland Surf Lifesaving Club on 8 July, was also attended by State Members Fiona Simpson and Chris Cummins, as well as Maroochy Councillors Steve Dickson, Joe Natoli, Barbara Cansdell and Caloundra Councillors Tim Dwyer and Gordon Wallace.

...

I must say the performance of the Labor Member for Kawana, Chris Cummins, at this meeting left all present both angry and stunned. Mr Cummins turned up to the meeting very late, read from a prepared statement which included an attack on me, and then walked out of the room, refusing to answer questions from the audience.

Mr Cummins total lack of interest in the views of those constituents present comes on top of his lack of action with the HMAS Brisbane project. The Labor Member for Kawana has shown the arrogance of which the Beattie Government is now becoming known.

I will also quote from the most recent Slipper report under the heading 'Peter Slipper works with community to solve coast's hooning problem'. The article states—

Mr Slipper said regrettably the State Labor Member for Kawana, Chris Cummins, had adopted an arrogant and negative approach to these efforts to resolve this problem.

'Mr Cummins has shown a complete unwillingness to work with other elected representatives on this issue and did not even have the courtesy to stay at the meeting and listen to the views of our local councillors, or Miss Simpson,' Mr Slipper said.

'Mr Cummins has even told State Parliament that we are "...too stupid to realise that it is a state government issue being addressed before the state House.'" (Hansard: 7 August 2002).

Mr Slipper said unfortunately, Mr Cummins did not seem to understand that this problem would not go away if the community did not work together.

His inference that I left the meeting without him knowing is a blatant lie, and here is the proof of the deliberate lie that Mr Slipper put to the Sunshine Coast community. On 1 July 2002 he wrote—

This meeting is scheduled to take place at 7:30pm on Monday 8 July 2002 at the Alexandra Headland Surf Lifesaving Club, and your attendance would be most appreciated.

If you are able to attend, would you please notify my office of your availability by close of business on Friday 5 July 2002.

I faxed Mr Slipper on 3 July, saying—

Dear Mr Slipper,

I wish to accept the invitation to your 'Hoon Forum'.

As I have another community meeting on the same night, is it possible to address the meeting as early as possible?

He did not respond to that, so on 8 July I sent another urgent fax—

I refer to my fax ...

As stated in that fax, I have another meeting to attend and urgently need to know when I am listed to speak this evening.

So this is the day of the meeting. The fax continues—

Would you be kind enough to forward through to me as a matter of priority the agenda for tonight's meeting and/or advice as to when I am scheduled to speak.

He faxed back, saying—

As yet we have not finalised the agenda for this evening, but we anticipate you should be able to speak by just before 8pm.

So I was on the agenda to speak at 8 p.m. I had advised him that I had other things to attend to. In fact, I handed out questionnaires across the community to allow people to have input. So I advise the minister that he will obviously be misrepresented again. The minister is acting in a very proactive way in reducing the road toll. We know the difference between state government issues and federal government issues. It is a pity that many on the conservative side do not. I commend the minister and commend the department for bringing this legislation before the House.