



Speech by

Hon. Paul Lucas

MEMBER FOR LYTTON

Hansard Tuesday, 18 May 2004

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Road Toll

Hon. P.T. LUCAS (Lytton—ALP) (Minister for Transport and Main Roads) (10.18 a.m.): I wish to inform the House of Queensland's current road toll and use this as an opportunity to remind motorists of the need to be ever vigilant about safety. Between Friday and Sunday, six motorists were killed on Queensland roads. Speed, fatigue and not wearing seatbelts contributed in many of these accidents. Queensland's road toll stands at 113—eight more than at the same time last year. This is after recording the lowest Easter road toll in four years just last month, with one death on our roads.

What we all need to remember is that it is not just the long weekends when we have to be careful; it is every time we sit behind the wheel. Two days before the Easter weekend three people lost their lives on our roads. On the Thursday after Easter, five people were killed. One of these accidents was a triple fatality. At 4 a.m. west of Warwick a car carrying three women and five children left the road, crashed into a tree and caught on fire. Fatigue was a factor. The driver told police that she had been driving since 2 p.m. the day before when they set off from southern New South Wales. In this accident, a 12-month-old, a nine-month-old and a 25-year-old female passenger were killed. Neither child was restrained.

The fact is that many accidents are avoidable. We can have the best designed roads and cars, but ultimately the driver shares a responsibility. Road trauma costs Queenslanders more than \$1 billion a year. That is before we even consider the huge social costs, which no-one can put a price on. People need to understand that a road accident is more than just a car accident or a bent fender; in many instances it is a ruined life, a broken family, a lost work opportunity. I am sure all of us in the House know someone whose life has been irreversibly affected by a car accident.

The Beattie government is committed to curbing the road toll, and we are spending a record \$1.3 billion on roads this year. That will go towards better designed new roads, new bridges, traffic improvements and upgrades of roads. During the Easter, Anzac and Labor Day weekends through to the end of June we are spending \$1.5 million on television, radio and billboard road safety campaigns. This is part of a \$5.6 million spend this year.

We have made some big advances in road safety in recent years. Our road fatality rate has dropped from 12.7 people in every 100,000 in 1993 to 8.2 people in every 100,000 in 2003. Of course, this is still too high. One road death is one too many. Road safety is a complex problem that needs to take into account not just the vehicle but the road and human behaviour. The Beattie government will continue to make road safety a priority and I am encouraging all motorists to do the same.