



Speech by

**Dr Bruce Flegg**

**MEMBER FOR MOGGILL**

Hansard Wednesday, 17 October 2007

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## **TRANSPORT OPERATIONS (ROAD USE MANAGEMENT—GREEN VEHICLES CONCESSION) AMENDMENT BILL**

**Dr FLEGG** (Moggill—Lib) (8.30 pm): This is a very appropriate day to be debating this bill. It is National Ride to Work Day. It is the day on which we attempt to make people aware of the impact that their personal transport activity has on emissions, pollution and climate change. On this National Ride to Work Day I congratulate the member for Burdekin on putting forward strong, innovative, positive ideas that can be enacted at the individual level.

The pros and cons of hybrid vehicles have been touched on tonight. Clearly, they can lead to up to an 80 per cent reduction in emissions. I know that there has been some discussion that some of the benefit of these cars might be dissipated in the manufacturing process and the like, but there is no question that these cars reduce the impact that transport has on emissions. These cars also reduce our dependency on the earth's resources and the rate at which we deplete them. I do not think any member in this chamber is going to get up and say that there is not an environmental benefit from using these sorts of vehicles.

Certainly, the silence that we get from the members opposite cannot be based on the budgetary expense of having such cars. I know they are struggling budget wise, but in January there were only 217 hybrid cars in Queensland. If the problem is their cost, then the government is in deeper trouble than I think it is. Of those 217 hybrid vehicles in Queensland, arising out of Campbell Newman's initiatives the Brisbane City Council has about 60 of them on the road.

There are some problems here. One of the reasons these vehicles are in such small numbers in Queensland and we have not encouraged people to buy them to the extent that we can is that they are expensive. It is new technology. Everyone knows that if they buy a new sort of computer, or a new sort of plasma TV, as the production runs are small those things are very expensive. But if we can encourage the use of these sorts of vehicles, two things will happen. One is that the cost of them will come down and it will become easier to get them on the road. The other thing is that, if demand for these sorts of vehicles increases, there will be additional investment in research and development that will make them even more efficient and will improve the benefits that can flow to the environment.

Earlier this week I said—and I repeat it here and I will continue to repeat it—that one of the principal roles that we should play as a parliament and that the members opposite should play as a government is to urge people to take local action and local responsibility for their own personal impact on the environment. It is all very well to talk about China's new power stations, or emissions targets and everything else. They are all legitimate issues. But they are not things that individuals in Queensland can influence. Our role should be to urge and to facilitate people to take responsibility locally for their own emissions and their own carbon footprint. We have done it brilliantly with water. We have people taking very serious responsibility at a personal level for their use of water. I want to see that responsibility extended to people's personal use of energy resources. People should be encouraged to understand the emissions that they put out and how to reduce them.

What better way to do that than to vote in favour of this bill, which will significantly slash the cost to Queenslanders if they do the right thing and take personal responsibility for their impact on the environment. The government and the parliament in Queensland would be giving something back to people by way of encouragement and making it more affordable for Queenslanders who want to do that. That is what it should be about. There is a word for that and the word is vision. The members opposite can vote against this measure. They have the numbers.

**An opposition member:** They will.

**Dr FLEGG:** I take that interjection. You can see it on their faces. They are intending to vote against it. They are not game to get on their feet and tell us why.

**Mrs Menkens:** No, they can't find any reason against it, can they?

**Dr FLEGG:** No, they are not going to tell us why but—

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Hoolihan):** Order! Perhaps we could have your speech delivered through the chair instead of having a discussion with the other members sitting beside you.

**Dr FLEGG:** I am sorry. I will do that, Mr Deputy Speaker. This bill is about vision. This bill is about having the guts to get out and say, 'We've done some good work in Queensland. The Brisbane City Council has done some great work. We want to take it a step further and say to people, "Take responsibility for your own impact on our environment."' "

There is no justifiable reason that those opposite can give for why we should not be voting for this measure. The members opposite have not disputed any of it. In actual fact, the members have not disputed anything because they are not game to get up on their feet and give us a reason they should vote against this bill.

Come the next election I can see the members opposite running around trying to say that they want the green vote and everything else. This is the test. Are they serious? Do they really want to do something for their constituents to help them reduce their impact on the climate? Tonight the members opposite have failed the test. They do not care about the environment. They do not want to help people reduce their emissions.

**Ms Jones** interjected.

**Dr FLEGG:** I hear the member for Ashgrove. What she is saying is not making a lot of sense. The member for Ashgrove could have got on her feet tonight and said what she thinks about personal emission controls, what her constituents—

**Ms Jones:** I drive a Prius.

**Dr FLEGG:** The member for Ashgrove should not say that as an interjection. She has an opportunity to get on her feet if she has the guts to do that, but she does not have the guts to do that. The members opposite have no reason, they have no justification, for voting against this bill. They are yelling out from the bleachers, but they do not have the courage of their convictions to get on their feet and give a reason.

We on this side of the House will continue. We are very serious about urging people to act locally, to act individually and to take individual responsibility. At the end of the day it is house by house, person by person that we will change the behaviour of people in terms of their impact on our climate, not by some esoteric debate.

**Ms Jones** interjected.

**Dr FLEGG:** I take the interjection from the member for Ashgrove because we did it with water. We made people individually responsible for water, but the government does not have enough vision to see that that sort of action has to be extended into the area of emissions and impact on climate.

It is a sad reflection on this government that it has so little vision and that its members do not have the guts to get to their feet and explain why they will vote this bill down. In the absence of courage from members opposite who will not explain their refusal to support the bill, I am left to conclude that they are in such a perilous budget position that they think this will send them broke. They think this is going to send them broke because there are 217 hybrids. I wish it were 2,700 or more, because of the benefits that they bring to the environment. Tonight Queenslanders who are serious about reducing their impact on the environment should realise that they will get no support or encouragement from the gutless people opposite who did not get even to their feet to speak to the bill.