



Speech by

Jack Dempsey

MEMBER FOR BUNDABERG

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TRANSPORT LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

Mr DEMPSEY (Bundaberg—NPA) (8.26 pm): I rise to support the Transport Legislation Amendment Bill. This amendment bill directly supports two very important industries that drive Queensland—that is, the trucking industry and the taxi industry, which is linked with the limousine business as well. We have heard a number of comments in the House tonight about the trucking industry, mainly on the negative side. Bundaberg has a proud trucking industry history of delivering goods on time and in a safe condition—not just for the driver but for the goods. It is time to not only support the drivers but support the industry and the families of those drivers and recognise the hard work that they do to make sure that Queensland and Bundaberg keeps going and is provided with supplies to those industries within our community.

It is interesting to note that, whilst tonight we talk about the number of truck accidents in comparison to other accidents that happen on our roads, truck drivers, under exceptional circumstances and in different weather and road conditions, are driving far in excess of the amount of driving that the average driver on the road would do. That has to be remembered and they have to be commended for that as well. They are a hardworking group. From my previous experience as a police officer, when speaking to them at any given time one always knew that they were honest and hardworking. They were supporting not just themselves but their families, and they drove those trucks with great passion. They were not just driving a bunch of goods; they knew that they were bringing those goods to market or to towns and making sure that they got there on time. The industry that employs these drivers looks for people with certain intestinal fortitude to ensure that those goods are delivered on time.

I congratulate the government for bringing forth these amendments in relation to the trucking industry. It is very important that any measures that are brought forth are measures that also affect the general safety of all road users. Anything that we can do along that avenue is good for us all. However, with the amendments that will be moved tonight, one thing that rings true is the lack of consultation. That lack of consultation is again firmly entrenched when we look at the time frames involved and the need for which these amendments are being brought forward. They are good amendments, but how are we going to enforce them? Do we have the resources to enforce them? Are there more practical measures that could be put forward to make our roads safer, and in particular our trucks safer on these roads?

The member for Hinchinbrook spoke tonight about increased rest areas and road infrastructure. We know how important the trucking industry is to Queensland, so if we are going to keep putting restrictions and imposing legislation on truck drivers for safety reasons we have to make sure that we support them. It is a huge commitment that they make to the rest of Queensland, and they bring a lot to the table.

In relation to the amendments for taxidivers, Bundaberg has approximately 30 taxidivers. They are the eyes and ears of the community. They are hardworking, passionate people. They go above and beyond what they have to do as taxidivers. When someone is sick and injured, you can see them taking the time to take the elderly out of the cabs, to bring the elderly and their groceries into their houses. Again, you see them taking the time to assist people with disabilities. These people do not do that simply because of money. They do it because they have a passionate interest in the industry and a sense of believing that they are actually contributing to the community.

The changes to the taxi industry, and particularly to the limousine industry, seem to be applying to south-east Queensland and not the whole of Queensland. This legislation will go through the whole of Queensland. In small local areas like Bundaberg we see people in the limousine industry and the taxi industry working together. I can see the rationale in making changes to limousine owners to ensure they work in with the taxi industry, but for the rest of Queensland we can see a lot of cooperation and hand-in-glove partnership which will now be affected due to a number of changes.

The work of the taxidrivers in Bundaberg gives me an opportunity to speak to the minister. We are greatly in need of a temporary marshalling area in Bundaberg. Saturday and Sunday nights are atrocious. It is a real safety issue. I hope to be taking this issue up with the minister's office later in relation to local councils as well as the local industry. It is an area which has been identified, and we hope to get some minor funding to put a temporary taxi marshalling area in place for a trial period to be able to facilitate those safety issues as well as protect taxidrivers. In closing, I would like to thank the minister and support the Transport Legislation Amendment Bill.