



Speech by

John-Paul Langbroek

MEMBER FOR SURFERS PARADISE

Hansard Wednesday, 17 October 2007

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

Mr LANGBROEK (Surfers Paradise—Lib) (8.40 pm): It is my pleasure to rise to speak—in a slightly more calm way—to the Transport Operations (Road Use Management—Green Vehicles Concession) Amendment Bill 2007. In doing so I congratulate my colleague the member for Burdekin, the shadow minister for sustainability, climate change and innovation, for bringing the bill before the House. I note that many speakers before me have made this point, but I reiterate that it seeks to provide financial incentives for motorists to invest in green vehicles by granting concessional registration for hybrid and electric vehicles. This initiative underpins the Queensland coalition's commitment to a cleaner and greener environment.

Climate change is one of the most talked about topics of the last year or two. Clearly it represents one of the biggest challenges of the 21st century. Australia and the rest of the world are experiencing rapid climate change, which we feel every summer with new 'record temperatures'. This year we have already seen high temperatures. Since the surf-lifesaving season kicked off last month, volunteer lifesavers have seen massive crowds on Gold Coast beaches on the weekends. I take this opportunity to thank our lifesavers for the great job they do in keeping our seas safe.

There is no denying Australia's contribution to greenhouse gas emissions. We are experiencing more heatwaves than ever before. Our dams are drying up and we have witnessed drastic changes in rainfall patterns. From this global crisis it is clear that we cannot continue down the path of climate destruction. If we are to delay the devastating effects of climate change, we need to act now.

I note that in the latest Commonwealth budget Australia committed more than \$3.5 billion towards the federal coalition's climate change program, which includes \$741 million to support the adoption of climate change initiatives such as offering rebates for the installation of solar panels in households. I note the move last summer to turn down the air conditioners in parliament to conserve energy and water. This illustrates the small changes that we can make to our behaviour and attitudes which will collectively make a difference.

Emissions from cars make up a significant portion of Australia's greenhouse gas emissions. We need to start looking at ways to reduce our overall carbon emissions. I submit that reducing the number of cars on our roads and promoting green vehicles is one way to achieve this.

At present Queensland does not offer any real incentives to promote and increase the adoption of hybrid cars. I was surprised to realise that in Queensland only 217 vehicles out of 2,780,000 registered cars are green vehicles. Technology in cars has developed to the point where green vehicles save up to 50 per cent on fuel consumption. As the member for Burdekin said, one hybrid car driven 20,000 kilometres per year can reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 2.5 tonnes. Imagine the difference we could make if more motorists invested in greener vehicles.

I have no doubt that people would embrace hybrid car technology if they were offered an incentive to do so. In Queensland businesses have already indicated their readiness to exchange their business fleets for greener transport options if given the right enticement. The Bligh government has stopped short of

encouraging other motorists to go green. This bill offers some two million motorists the motivation to switch to hybrid vehicles.

Providing free registration for hybrid petrol and electric cars is one way that the state government can encourage the use of more environmentally friendly cars with a minimal effect on the budget. The shadow minister for sustainability, climate change and innovation has presented us with a carefully considered and costed option that will improve the uptake of green vehicles in Queensland. Once again I congratulate her on her initiative. I hope that the members opposite support this move by the coalition to boost Queensland's green credentials. I commend the bill to the House.