



Speech by

Karen Struthers

MEMBER FOR ALGESTER

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TRANSPORT OPERATIONS LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

Ms STRUTHERS (Algester—ALP) (12.26 pm): The taxi industry in Queensland is to be commended for the way in which it has embraced the changes needed to improve safety for drivers and the public. Change is never straightforward. There is always some compromise, there is usually some cost, but the benefits, particularly in this case, certainly outweigh any of those costs.

This bill, among other things, will provide for a fund derived from a levy on holders of taxi licences in prescribed areas to improve security for the public and drivers around taxi ranks. The fund will contribute, along with sizeable state government funds, to a pool from which ongoing security improvements can be made.

Given the success of drink-driving laws more people are being responsible when it comes to drinking and driving. They are leaving their cars at home and seeking out public transport or taxis. These changes are very important. We have been putting a lot of money into drink-driving campaigns, but we then have to have the services for people to follow through on those actions. Some people are very irresponsible. They get a belly full of beer or wine and end up, as other members have said, abusive and violent, particularly while waiting for a cab at night and experiencing the frustrations of waiting through long delays. This puts a lot of people at risk around that particular venue or taxi rank. Many of us would have experienced feelings of frustration while waiting for a taxi but also growing tension at some of the abuse and violence erupting around us. We need to minimise these risks.

The initiatives that have been put in place so far around the Brisbane CBD and other areas have been very successful, such as the use of marshals and security guards at ranks. What a great job those people are doing. They are coping the violence and abuse and handle it very well.

I commend the minister, his staff and taxi industry members for the cooperative way in which security has improved. No-one likes more levies but good on the industry for cooperating with us on this one. The other area that is deserving of commendation but is not specifically related to this bill is the area of security cameras in taxis. I understand that the commitments to that rollout have been fulfilled. That is a very important area of security. I am not shrinking violet, but I do not like getting into a taxi on my own, particularly if I have left a function at night. I feel reassured if there are rank marshals who identify the cab and know that I have got in it. I certainly feel reassured knowing that there are security cameras in taxis now. That is a very important assurance for many people who are travelling in taxis. I commend the NightLink services. There has been much done to improve security and improve people's perception of their own security and I commend this bill to the House.