



Speech by

Mark McArdle

MEMBER FOR CALOUNDRA

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TRANSPORT LEGISLATION AND ANOTHER ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Mr McARDLE (Caloundra—Lib) (3.45 pm): I start by thanking the minister for the Caloundra Road upgrade. It is going to be a great piece of work when it is done. That connection with the Pierce Avenue commercial precinct will add a lot to Caloundra, so I thank the minister and the government for that.

In January and February 2006 the RACQ published the results of an online survey covering a number of matters including licensing, fines and penalties, enforcement, engineering, education, and other road users. When one reads the statistics it is quite clear that there was a strong feeling that young drivers needed a much better education and understanding not only of their responsibilities as a driver but an understanding of how to drive and handle a motor vehicle. The survey indicated that in excess of 90 per cent believed that learner drivers needed to obtain a mandatory number of supervised driving hours recorded in a logbook; 81.4 per cent believed that there should be more restrictions on provisional drivers, including passenger limits and curfews; 95.8 per cent believed that there should be a permanent reintroduction of L-plates and P-plates; and 95.2 per cent believed firmly that there needed to be more comprehensive testing and training for learner and provisional drivers.

The survey clearly identified the necessity for younger drivers to face a range of tasks before they obtain an open licence. That is in essence one of the prime responsibilities of the bill before the House. If one considers the RACQ submission to Queensland Transport of February 2006, it is quite clear that a lot of the online survey results have been taken up by that body and incorporated into its discussion paper. I note that at page 4 of the paper it states—

One area that offers significant scope for road safety interventions for all young drivers however is the graduated licensing system (GLS). Components of the GLS fall into two broad categories:

- Pre-licence measures (those which primarily encourage more supervised driving experience);
- Post-licence measures (those which place restrictions on driving to allow experience to be gained under low risk conditions).

In 2003, 17- to 20-year-olds comprised 15 per cent of the total road toll in Queensland but only six per cent of the population. It is against this background that the bill is mainly targeted—in essence, to try to keep young people alive whilst we continue to produce more and more powerful cars within a price range that allows access by a greater proportion of younger people. The list of reforms is significant, and I note that the RACQ discussion paper clearly raises the necessity for a uniform and coordinated whole-of-government approach to the development and delivery of road safety in the school curriculum involving parents and carers, school communities, government agencies and other relevant stakeholders together with increased awareness and promoting the use of road resources amongst teachers and schools in a consistent manner.

The RACQ has adopted a proactive approach as it believes that it is important that young people, prior to obtaining the right to drive a motor vehicle, be taught that they have an obligation to understand the road rules and, more particularly, the dangers associated with driving on our roads. In addition, parents hold a very responsible position. Often parents give their children a motor vehicle when they turn 18, or perhaps 21. Simply handing over a motor vehicle is not the end of a parent's responsibility. In fact,

responsibility begins way before then. It is important that parents comprehend that they are an integral part of educating their children.

This is recognised at page 8 of the RACQ's report, where it supports initiatives to enhance parents' involvement in teaching young drivers and supports the preparation of an education kit so that learner drivers and their parents better understand their responsibilities. I also note that the RACQ believes that consideration be given to the extension of the zero tolerance level for all young drivers, even those with open licences, until at least 24 years of age.

The RACQ plays a vital role in providing road safety education in schools. It supplies to schools and TAFE campuses 30,000 car-buying information guides. It also holds information sessions on car buying at high schools in Brisbane and regional centres across Queensland, covering issues such as contractual rights, buying and owning a vehicle, drivers licences, car insurance and technical and related issues. The RACQ delivers a program in primary schools called Street Scene, which was developed in Victoria. It is an interactive road safety program for primary school students emphasising pedestrian, passenger and bicycle safety. The RACQ also finances what are called docudramas that are aimed at secondary school students. Those docudramas depict realistic recreations of crash scenes with a commentary provided by relevant professionals. Finally, the RACQ has developed a movie titled *Tightrope* for year 12 students, which provides the details of the 20 major factors that contribute to crashes involving young people. The RACQ has been extremely proactive in regard to the protection of our young people. A lot of its recommendations are contained in the bill before the House.

The predominant provisions that deal with regulating young drivers are contained within clause 52 of the bill. They are part of what will become section 150AA. Pursuant to that new section, a regulation will be able to provide for a number of matters, which I do not intend to go into. That section also provides that regulations so made are not unlawful due to discrimination on the basis of age. The shadow transport minister has ably dealt with those provisions. Therefore, there is no need for me to canvass them again, except to give accolades to the RACQ and the government for producing this bill and introducing it into the House.

The second portion of the bill that I wish to touch on briefly relates to driving whilst under the influence of a drug. Certainly, there is more than enough evidence to establish that many people drive after using illegal drugs, which causes as great, if not greater, impairment than drinking alcohol. Clearly, it is time that those people who believe that they can get away with using illegal drugs and then driving a motor vehicle suffered the same consequences as those who believe that consuming alcohol and driving a motor vehicle is acceptable behaviour. Too many people die on Queensland roads on a daily basis for us not to ensure that proper safeguards are in place for those who comply with the law and that those who believe that they have a God-given right to risk the lives of others understand that they will no longer be tolerated.

I note that clause 58 of the bill prohibits any specimen of saliva being used for DNA analysis and that specimens must be destroyed as soon as possible after a qualifying event—the event being either that the analysis does not indicate the presence of a drug or, if it does, after the results are no longer required for legal proceedings. I commend the bill to the House.