



Speech by

## Peta-Kaye Croft

MEMBER FOR BROADWATER

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### TRANSPORT LEGISLATION AND ANOTHER ACT AMENDMENT BILL

**Ms CROFT** (Broadwater—ALP) (12.42 pm): I rise to speak in support of the Transport Legislation and Another Act Amendment Bill 2006. This bill provides for the introduction of a comprehensive package of road safety reforms directed squarely at young drivers. Specifically there is an amendment to the Transport Operations (Road Use Management) Act 1995 to allow for regulations to be made prescribing rules about young driver education, behaviour and licensing.

In Queensland, a graduated licensing system is already in operation. The graduated licensing system allows new drivers to gain experience under safer driving conditions before progressing to an open licence. This system is used in all Australian states and territories and similar systems have been successfully used around the world. Both national and international research indicates that such graduated licensing systems have been successful in reducing young driver crashes. A provisional licence will still exist under the reforms with such a licence having to be held for a minimum of three years in most cases. However, there will now be a two-stage provisional licence with the first stage being subject to greater restrictions and conditions than the second stage. The first-stage provisional licence will be required to be held for a minimum of 12 months. It is this first 12 months solo driving which research shows is the time when the crash risk is highest for new drivers.

I wish today to speak in relation to two proposed reforms impacting on provisional licence holders, that being peer passenger restrictions and high-powered vehicle restrictions. Peer passenger restrictions will apply to persons holding a first-stage provisional licence. This will mean that first-stage provisional licence holders under 25 years of age will not be able to carry more than one passenger under 21 years of age between the hours of 11 pm and 5 am. The restriction will not apply to immediate family members of the first-stage provisional licence holder.

International research reveals that accident risk is higher where a provisional driver has more than one passenger, with the risk climbing as more young passengers are added. Research also suggests that young passengers may encourage the driver to engage in risk-taking activities such as speeding or tailgating. The effect of passengers on crash rates is also higher for young drivers. During 2005 in Queensland the serious crash rate of provisional drivers aged between 17 and 20 years with three or more occupants in the car was five times that of open licence drivers aged 25 to 59 years.

Having peer passenger restrictions applying specifically to late night driving also contributes greatly to crash fatality and injury reduction amongst provisional drivers. This is because provisional drivers are more likely to be driving recreationally at night and are more likely to be carrying passengers of the same age. Relevant research indicates that for young drivers aged under 26 years the highest fatality risk is driving at night. Restricting late night driving targets this high crash risk situation for young drivers and restricts driving experience to mainly daylight hours, which carries a lower risk.

Queensland will also be introducing high-powered vehicle restrictions for young drivers on provisional licences. This restriction will apply to both the first- and second-stage provisional licence. As I mentioned earlier, in most cases a provisional licence comprising both the first and second stages will have to be held for at least three years. Research suggests that drivers take more risks, such as deliberate speeding and reckless driving, when in charge of high-powered or performance cars. The fatality rate in

crashes involving young drivers driving an eight-cylinder vehicle is twice that of young drivers driving a car of less than eight cylinders. The high-powered vehicle restrictions, along with other provisional licence holder initiatives envisaged by this bill, are designed to limit a young driver's access to riskier environments until the driver has gained sufficient driver experience.

I recently had an opportunity to visit Coombabah State High School and speak with the school leaders about these proposed changes. I have spoken to the minister, Paul Lucas, about a number of significant queries that they raised. One of the queries was in relation to the late night driver restrictions. The question was what would be the situation under these new laws if they were required to make a decision about carrying more than one passenger under the age of 21 for reasons such as they were out at night and there was an accident or someone was sick. I understand that the minister will respond to those queries in his reply speech.

I have arranged for an officer from the Department of Transport to speak about the changes with all year 10, 11 and 12 students from Coombabah State High School next week so that they are kept informed. Many students have questions in relation to their birthday, their experience in driving a car and what arrangements there are if they do not have someone at home to ensure that those 100 hours are performed. I am looking forward to providing them with the answers next week.

These reforms protect one of Queensland's key assets, namely, our youth. The reforms are based upon a sound basis of international research and experience. I have discussed the changes with my community groups, including my Neighbourhood Watch groups, and the feedback has been very positive. The minister needs to be congratulated for bringing these changes to the House today. I fully support the intended outcome of the road safety reforms envisaged by the bill, and I commend the bill to the House.