



Speech by

Hon. Margaret Keech

MEMBER FOR ALBERT

Hansard Tuesday, 10 November 2009

TRANSPORT AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

Hon. MM KEECH (Albert—ALP) (4.41 pm): With 2,000 people coming to Queensland each week and most of those settling in South-East Queensland, particularly in the electorate of Albert, I support very strongly the bill and the provisions which focus on easing road congestion on our freeways. It is estimated that almost nine million trips are made by South-East Queensland residents on a typical weekday. This places significant pressure on our transport system, on our roads as well as on our environment. It is for this reason that we need to use our road transport system as efficiently as possible, and that is exactly what the Bligh government is doing.

The system of high-occupancy vehicle lanes is a very important aspect in improving the network to ensure congestion is managed well. Unfortunately, as a regular driver on the South East Freeway, I know only too well that not all road users drive responsibly where the network provides for high-occupancy vehicle lanes. In particular, I have noticed that the T2 lane is often used by single-driver vehicles which then prohibits the free flow of buses and those people who are car-pooling on their way to or from work. I welcome the amendment in the bill, which provides a trial for transport inspectors to undertake enforcement of high-occupancy vehicle lanes. Trialling enhanced enforcement of these lanes will send a very strong message that the government is serious about the issue of congestion management and reducing transport emissions.

I have confidence in the ability of transport inspectors to do the job of enforcement. Just like the police, transport inspectors do a very good job, often under difficult circumstances, and wear a uniform when they are on duty. They are highly experienced and are already out and about on the roads making them safer. Currently, transport inspectors exercise powers to stop private vehicles for a range of vehicle related matters such as unregistered, uninsured and unroadworthy vehicles and for tailpipe air quality testing. In fact, it was not too long ago that I saw them in Beenleigh undertaking exactly these types of inspections. Transport inspectors also readily exercise significant powers in relation to heavy vehicles, including vehicle related offences as well as fatigue management and licensing requirements, providing them with significant experience in conducting on-road operations.

These amendments allow for a trial by transport inspectors to help in our fight against congestion and pollution by extending their powers to enforce compliance of high-occupancy vehicle lanes. Very importantly, by giving transport inspectors the power to undertake enforcement of these lanes, the amendments will also free up police to focus on other key priorities. I congratulate the minister on her first bill. I commend the bill to the House.