



Speech by

Michael Crandon

MEMBER FOR COOMERA

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TRANSPORT AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

Mr CRANDON (Coomera—LNP) (3.24 pm): I rise to add to the debate on the Transport and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2009. This bill amends 13 pieces of legislation, and I would like to address just one area of this bill—the Transport Operations (Road Use Management) Act 1995, the TO(RUM) Act.

I note that transport inspectors currently have power under the TO(RUM) Act to stop heavy vehicles and to ask drivers to produce drivers' licences and name and address information. I am told we have around 170 transport inspectors and there is no intention to expand this number. The Minister for Police, Corrective Services and Emergency Services mentioned this morning that our road toll was 298 at midnight last night—a terrible figure, I am sure we would all agree. The point I am coming to is that I am sure heavy vehicles would have been involved in some of these deaths.

It seems to me that with a limited number of transport inspectors—namely, 170—perhaps we would be better served if they focus on heavy vehicles, and in doing so help to reduce or hold back the loss of life. For every loss of life on our roads, there are many who are also injured and hospitalised. There are only 170 transport inspectors out there, and we are now asking them to stretch themselves that much further to police T2 and T3 lanes. I recognise that some relief would be given to police if transport inspectors were doing this type of work, but at the end of the day whether you have one, two or three people in a T2 or T3 lane is not really a life-and-death or life-and-limb issue. It is more about policing something that has been designed to encourage people to have more than one person in their motor vehicle when travelling to and from work during busy times of the day. It is not about safety; it is all about policing that particular aspect.

These 170 transport inspectors, it would seem to me, would be specialists of a sort, given that their role is heavy vehicle interceptions, or getting involved in accident scenarios where heavy vehicles have been involved. I am concerned that taking them away from that role would have a fairly major effect on our road toll, or will have the potential to do so. I would assume breaches and accidents involving heavy vehicles are of more concern, in other words.

These transport inspectors are, as I said earlier, specialists in heavy transport areas. To take them away from those areas is of concern. Having said that, I recognise that this is a trial; I recognise that it goes to a certain date. The extension of that date would only be if it were intended to bring the legislation in on a permanent basis. If it were the case that we decided these transport inspectors were worthy of doing this work and we took them away from the other very important work that they were doing, I would hope that we would give serious consideration to increasing the numbers from 170 transport inspectors to whatever would be required. I would hope that the effect on other areas of their work—in other words, the heavy vehicles area—will be taken into consideration when this provision of the bill is put in place.