



Speech by

**Shane Knuth**

**MEMBER FOR DALRYMPLE**

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## **TRANSPORT AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL**

**Mr KNUTH** (Dalrymple—LNP) (4.57 pm): The Transport and Other Legislation Amendment Bill has been designed to amend a couple of bills to provide natural justice provisions for drivers of public passenger vehicles, protect transport infrastructure from inappropriate development, give extended powers to Queensland Transport to suspend or cancel taxi licences, extend powers for transport inspectors over high-occupancy vehicle lanes, and allow the better management of ships and port infrastructure.

While the provisions designed to prevent people convicted of particular crimes from receiving an authorisation to drive a public passenger vehicle have been amended over the years, these amendments seek to align the transport provisions for public transport drivers with the blue card child protection legislation. If the offence which has prohibited the driver from receiving an authorisation to drive occurred when they were under the age of 17, they have the opportunity to appeal on the grounds of exceptional circumstances. In doing this, the chief executive must take the child commissioner's advice into consideration. If the child commissioner advises against the granting of a licence, there should be no licence granted. It should not be up to the chief executive officer to determine the result when the advice from the commissioner is negative. I can only hope that, as it is not specific in the amendments, common sense will prevail in this regard.

These amendments also extend the powers of Queensland Transport to suspend or cancel a taxi licence. This has been included to force compliance with payment of a security levy—an extraordinary amendment considering that less than one per cent of licensed taxis were noncompliant. This amendment only affects secure taxi ranks implemented in city areas. However, there is little to no public transport in rural areas. Usually there are only a few taxis available in the area, if any at all.

Unfortunately, in 2007 the only wheelchair-accessible maxi taxi in Charters Towers was taken out of service. The driver did not renew his licence because a different taxi licence was required for wheelchair-accessible vehicles, considerably reducing the value of that taxi licence. Additionally, the modification results in those vehicles becoming less financially viable for the owner and the driver. Unloading and loading passengers in a wheelchair takes extra time and drivers cannot charge for that extra time.

There is a need for more incentives to encourage rural taxidriviers to provide wheelchair access to elderly and disabled passengers to ensure that the independence of the disabled and the elderly is not comprised. The service should be much more heavily subsidised to ensure that it remains in areas where there are no other options for public transport available. It would be appropriate to extend subsidies and extra incentives to rural taxi licensees to ensure that adequate and suitable services are provided.

A member previously spoke about non-English speaking taxidriviers. I just cannot see the logic in employing non-English speaking taxidriviers to take people from A to B. I have been caught in circumstances where I could not understand what the taxidriver was saying. Half the time they do not even know where they are going. It was previously mentioned to me that a bloke who wanted to get from A to B had to ring up another taxi bloke who he knew personally to guide the taxidriver to where he wanted to go. I just cannot see the logic in employing non-English speaking taxidriviers. It does not matter where they

come from; they just need to speak English. I think that is very important. That issue needs to be brought to the attention of the parliament.

This bill contains amendments to give transport inspectors powers in high-occupancy vehicle lanes. Although I acknowledge that this change will be implemented on a trial basis, there have been too many incidents where transport inspectors have been over the top with regard to policing regulations. The most contentious issues relate to logbook regulations to combat fatigue in truck drivers. There were complaints from drivers about the nitpicking, pedantic and condescending attitude that was adopted by transport inspectors and which was enforced by the state government. For example, I can recall a truck driver was to pick up a load of cattle from a station in Einasleigh and he was to be there at 10 o'clock. By the time he left Charters Towers it was four o'clock in the morning. He was picked up for scalies at the cemetery at Charters Towers. He was there for two hours. Then he was picked up at Greenvale. He was there for two hours and then he was picked up at The Lynd junction for an hour and a half. By the time he got to load the cattle it was two o'clock in the afternoon, which took him over his fatigue management timetable. So he could not participate in that trip. All of those factors should be taken into account. I wanted to bring that to the attention of the House.