



Speech by

Jarrod Bleijie

MEMBER FOR KAWANA

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**TRANSPORT AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL;
TRANSPORT OPERATIONS (ROAD USE MANAGEMENT-
INTERLOCKS) AMENDMENT BILL**

Mr BLEIJIE (Kawana—LNP) (11.31 am): At the outset, may I say that I am pleased to be able to continue my contribution today to this worthwhile debate. Last night before the debate was adjourned I was discussing the historical facts of this legislation and, of course, the government members really did not want to hear it—in fact, so much so that the best interjection that they could come up with was, ‘We’ve heard this all before.’ That is right; they did hear it. They heard it from the member for Mudgeeraba earlier in the day. They heard it from me and no doubt they will hear it from many members of the opposition throughout the day as we debate this legislation.

As this debate was adjourned last night mid-speech, I thought it prudent to update the thousands of Queenslanders who are watching this live on the parliament website right now where I left off and that was stating the undisputed historical facts of this legislation. For fear of being accused of rambling and repeating my words and those of other opposition members, so that those opposite in government may understand and comprehend, let me put it another way. In the year 2001, the Labor government introduced a small trial of interlocks. I ask my colleagues on this side of the House: what happened after the trial?

Opposition members: Nothing!

Mr BLEIJIE: That is right: zero, zilch, nil, nothing. In the year 2002, the Labor government in this House promised that interlocks were on their way. I ask my colleagues on this side of the House: what happened then?

Opposition members: Nothing!

Mr BLEIJIE: Nothing. That is right: zero, nil, zilch, zip, nothing. Then, in the year 2004, again the Labor government told Queenslanders—the mums and dads and the working families of Queensland—that it was now considering introducing alcohol interlocks. Again, I ask my colleagues on this side of the House: what happened?

Opposition members: Nothing!

Mr BLEIJIE: That is right. Again: zero, nil, zilch, zip, nothing. The members of the Labor government say that they are reformists. They are progressive as well, because in 2006 the Labor government announced that interlocks were now in the planning stages. After that progressive thought, I ask my colleagues: what happened then?

Opposition members: Nothing!

Mr BLEIJIE: Again: zero, nil, zilch, nothing. Still progressing—

Government members interjected.

Mr BLEIJIE: They do not want to hear it. Still progressing, but slower than Slowpoke Rodriguez, in 2007 the Labor government announced that it was now working on the legislation. Again, nothing happened. Slowpoke Rodriguez continued on his merry way and in 2007 announced that the Labor government was now working towards the laws. I ask my colleagues: what happened once they started to work on the laws?

Opposition members: Nothing!

Mr BLEIJIE: That is true; absolutely nothing. But Slowpoke Rodriguez had a cousin, Speedy Gonzales—our very own shadow minister for transport. In 2009, the shadow minister introduced a private member's bill that included in it the introduction of the alcohol interlocks. Now, in 2010, following the leadership of the shadow minister and the LNP, the Labor government finally introduced its own legislation—which, I might add, largely copies those provisions that are contained in the LNP bill. Speedy Gonzales was always going to be faster than cousin Slowpoke.

At what cost has this delay been? Twelve thousand of the 29,000 Queenslanders convicted of drink driving are repeat or high-level offenders. It is staggering to believe that it has taken nine years for a government to go from a trial stage to an actual introduction of legislation in this House. I ask the minister: why has there been such a delay? Is it incompetence or is it indecision? Either way, the situation is appalling and the fact that action is finally being initiated only after being prompted by the opposition having to introduce its own legislation enacting the interlocks should be noted on the public record.

I fully support the introduction of alcohol interlocks. To use words to describe those in our communities who drink and drive would be unparliamentary. Once again, Queensland is one of the last states to implement alcohol interlocks as they have already been legislated in Victoria, South Australia, New South Wales and Western Australia. The introduction of interlocks could have been legislated some eight or nine years ago. The government should bear full responsibility for dragging the chain on this issue and not embracing the technology that is available to deter drink drivers from offending and reoffending.

It is a tragic situation when drink driving is the instigator of death or serious injury in any motor vehicle accident. The bill introduced by the opposition serves two purposes: it acts as a deterrent for offenders and repeat offenders and also enforces mandatory rehabilitation and education for all drivers who have an alcohol interlock fitted to their motor vehicle. This process serves to rehabilitate the offenders.

As is often the case, the government's legislation does not have a clear path of consequence and does not serve as a strong enough deterrent. Although it puts the alcohol interlocks in place, the path of consequence needs to be strong and outlined clearly so that those who break the law are aware that, if their behaviour continues, the consequences will be more severe on each occurrence. The LNP's private member's bill has a clearly defined path of consequences for repeat offenders coupled with a mandatory education and rehabilitation program that is an important part of this process. The government's bill does not. Although it finally introduces the alcohol interlocks into Queensland, as is often the case with this government the consequences for repeat offenders are weak and threadbare. As is typical of the Bligh government, it wants to appear to be seen as being tough on crime—and we heard that from the Attorney-General today. But this bill is another example of how it is all spin and no substance.

In summary, I put to the minister that when she adopted the LNP's bill she should have adopted the whole bill, as it is comprehensive and practical. The government's approach is weak in comparison. When it comes to protecting the lives of innocent Queenslanders and reducing the road toll, the punishment should match the severity of the crime, particularly for repeat offenders. In closing, last night I stated before the debate was adjourned that the member for Whitsunday congratulated the minister on this legislation. I submit that the member for Whitsunday should be congratulating the shadow minister and the LNP on forcing this incompetent government to get its act together and finally, after nine years in slow drive, introducing its own bill on this important issue that the LNP and the community have been raising for many years.