



Speech by

**Jarrod Bleijie**

**MEMBER FOR KAWANA**

Hansard Tuesday, 18 May 2010

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## **TRANSPORT AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL (NO. 2)**

**Mr BLEIJIE** (Kawana—LNP) (7.39 pm): I rise to contribute to the Transport and Other Legislation Amendment Bill (No. 2) 2010 on behalf of the Kawana electorate. From the outset I convey my support for some aspects of this bill but I do have some reservations that I will outline in further detail. The bill before the House amends 25 various acts and 12 regulations. Obviously common sense prevails and I am not going to list the 25 bills and the 12 regulations. I would like to initially address the provisions of the bill that deal with maritime safety and pollution.

On 11 March 2009 we saw an oil spill occur off the South-East Queensland coast that devastated the beaches of the Sunshine Coast through Moreton Bay and down to the Gold Coast, including the pristine beaches and probably some of the best beaches in Queensland—in the Kawana electorate. As part of the disaster management response to that situation, the state government was slow to react and in the end panicked and threw money at the problem, hoping it would go away in a hurry. It should also be noted that this disaster occurred in the midst of a state election campaign. The feedback that I received indicates that the clean-up efforts were costing up to \$100,000 per day. Money was thrown at the project in an effort to do whatever was necessary without a well thought out plan in place to respond to the disaster appropriately. I know that my local surf club lost a week of trade as a result of the oil spill clean-up because it was commandeered for the clean-up operations headquarters. I have to say that I am disappointed that it has taken over a year for the government to introduce steps that strengthen the protection of Queensland waters, our maritime environment and one of the key components of what makes Queensland so special—that is, our coastline.

I support the measures in this bill that increase the current penalties that can be levied for the discharge of oil, noxious liquids and harmful substances such as the containerised cargo. This penalty will bring Queensland into line with New South Wales in having one of the toughest penalties in Australia.

The government's delay in responding to the oil spill of March 2009 clearly indicates that it has scant regard for protecting Queensland's environment and it failed to learn the lessons from the state election in March last year. The provisions in this bill strengthen the government's capabilities to respond to further disasters should they occur and also strengthen regulatory provisions in preventing any disasters from occurring in the first instance through the change in classification of maritime pilots.

While the introduction of this provision of the bill is welcome, the government's continuing attitude to marine safety and pollution is under question. In the last month we have seen the *Shen Neng 1* towed from its anchoring on the Barrier Reef to another environmentally sensitive area of the Queensland coastline—Hervey Bay—in an effort to perform the delicate task of unloading tonnes of coal from the bulk carrier's hull. This morning we heard the transport minister say that it was the federal government that told the state government to tow the ship to Hervey Bay. Would you not think that the state government would stand up to the federal government bullies and say, 'No, you are not dragging it from one environmentally sensitive area of Queensland to another'?

**Ms Nolan:** What's your position? Where would the LNP have put it?

**Mr BLEIJIE:** I take the interjection from the transport minister. Is the honourable minister implying that the opposition has the power to direct Maritime Safety Queensland to tow large vessels? Is that what the honourable minister is suggesting? If she is, that is completely off the subject of what we are discussing. We are discussing the fact that today in question time the transport minister stood in this place and said, 'Don't blame me. Blame the federal government because the federal government told us to tow it to Hervey Bay.' Again we see the state government say, 'Yes, Uncle Kev. We'll do whatever you want.' However, it should not be when it is to the detriment of the environmentally sensitive areas of Hervey Bay, as was clearly outlined by the honourable member for Hervey Bay earlier this evening.

Quite often it is the case that those opposite say one thing and do another. This is just another example of the double standards that this government has as its mantra. The provision of this bill that deals with tollways and extends the categories of lands that the minister is able to determine as a toll road should concern all Queensland motorists. Under this provision, and coupled with the sale of Queensland Motorways, the Minister for Transport can recategorise a road to be included as a toll road for the purposes of an asset that will no longer be owned and controlled by the Queensland government. Obviously this provision has been initiated to sweeten the deal with Queensland Motorways and up the price for this money-making asset as it goes to market.

Under this government and its financial incompetence and mismanagement of the state's coffers on the back of a mining boom, the cost of living expenses for Queenslanders are continuing to skyrocket out of control. We have seen—and other members have indicated tonight—that electricity prices continue to soar, registration costs have risen, licensing costs are set to rise by 109 per cent, rates continue to skyrocket out of control following the forced amalgamations of councils and water costs continue to blow out. The list goes on and on.

The socialist mistruth that higher taxes leads to better services has been exposed. If we were to view the Queensland government on the popular show *MythBusters*, we would certainly see some myths disproved. I reckon the *MythBusters* series would have probably 12 months of myths to portray on a week-by-week basis. We only have to look at a few. Government members say that they are better placed to support working families. I thought they would have agreed to that. No, I will take their silence as if they said they do not support working families. Of course, when we hear them say, 'We support working families,' on the *MythBusters* show, that would have a 'myth' stamp right across it.

They also talk about jobs. Where are the jobs, I ask members opposite? Jobs are supposed to be in their DNA. Are they not in their DNA? The government says that jobs are in their DNA. Based on their performance, on the *MythBusters* program that claim would have another stamp across it and it would not be 'truth'; it would be 'myth'. It is a myth that jobs are in Labor's DNA. Then, of course, how could we forget the statement, 'Queensland, you can count on me.'

**Mr Schwarten:** Absolutely!

**Mr BLEIJIE:** I take the interjection from the honourable minister that Queensland can count on this government. I take that interjection to mean that the minister agrees that Queenslanders can count on it for higher licensing costs, higher registration costs, higher water costs, higher taxes and higher fuel prices. Yes, Queensland can count on this government for higher taxes, lower living standards and more taxes than they have ever paid before. Again, if we saw it on *MythBusters* the great statement 'Queensland, you can count on me' would have 'myth' stamped right across it—not 'truth' but 'myth' because we know that under this government fuel has gone up, rego has gone up, water has gone up and electricity has gone up. The list goes on and on. Who does this impact more? It impacts working families, the very people for whom this government stand up every day and attack the opposition for not looking after. These are the very people who government members claim are their support base and the people to whom they say, 'We're looking after you.' I am sorry, but all these things—higher fuel, registration and licensing costs—impact more on working families in Queensland.

Under this provision in the bill, motorists will see new toll roads in Queensland at the whim of a minister who said that Queensland Rail was not for sale a fortnight before the coal and freight haulage asset was put under the hammer in last year's budget. We have seen this argument before. The government promised that electricity prices would not rise after the distribution grid was privatised, yet they still ballooned out of control. What commitment does the government have to Queensland motorists that, when Queensland Motorways is sold off in the fire sale of assets, toll prices will not balloon out of control in the way electricity prices have?

The bill also caters for the restructuring of Queensland Rail's coal and freight division and the Port of Brisbane as part of the fire sale of assets regime, which the LNP will continue to oppose. Can I say how interesting it is to read the minister's second reading speech. One has only to refer to the fifth paragraph on the first page to see that the minister herself said—

Third, the bill will amend legislation to create a robust port planning regime for the future, maintain Queensland Rail as a passenger focused government owned corporation and establish QR National as a proud, Queensland based company.

It is a slap in the face for Queenslanders when the Minister for Transport talks about proud Queensland based companies, when two or three pages later they are talking about selling the assets in the same department. It is a slap in the face for Queenslanders. It is a shame that the minister does not hold that same view about proud Queensland owned assets with respect to other money-making assets contained in her own department.

Queenslanders are already paying enough levies and taxes for the construction of transport infrastructure in this state. This is a third levy that motorists will have to pay for the use of Queensland roads as a result of PPP arrangements with the private sector that will always be ongoing. This illustrates the difference between Labor and conservative governments. Conservative governments always look at reducing taxes and levies when it is fiscally responsible to do so, and the Labor Party is in the business of increasing expenditure, racking up public debt and putting continual pressure on inflation.

The second provision in this bill that I wish to raise a reservation about relates to the compensation for land resumed for transport purposes. It is always hard to deal with property resumptions. I am of the view that the government should resume property only as a last resort. However, if resumptions are essential to a particular project, those having their properties resumed should be fairly compensated and dealt with in an appropriate manner. Circumstances in the CoastConnect transport project, linking Caloundra to Maroochydore through my electorate, have seen residents and business owners treated with absolute contempt. While the project has never received final approval by the department, property resumptions have been undertaken to widen the Nicklin Way for bus and cycle lanes. Clearly, the government has not learnt the lessons—any lessons—from the Traveston Dam waste and debacle of last year. The government's arrogance exudes on a daily basis.

The provisions in the bill that relate to the Gold Coast Rapid Transit project clearly indicate that the Gold Coast is the golden child of this government, with consequences for the Sunshine Coast. While I understand that the growth of the South-East region requires infrastructure management and attention, the Gold Coast is always at the top of the list. Whether it is for a hospital or, in this case, a rapid transit project, the Gold Coast is at the top of the tree. While I support the rapid transit project on the Gold Coast as a means of improving transport infrastructure in the region, the Sunshine Coast has been neglected by the government for too long. 'CAMCOS' has become a dirty word as, for over a decade, Sunshine Coast residents have had the term thrown in their faces by Labor governments as a transport initiative for the region. The good people of the Gold Coast should not miss out on infrastructure, but priority should be given to the entire South-East region, and not just to areas south of the Pine River bridge.

The provision in the bill that deals with the new Queensland driver's licence is a dangerous step in the direction of impinging on the civil liberties of Queenslanders. As members in this chamber would know, I am a strong supporter of civil liberties when they are being trampled on by governments. While I embrace modern technology, with the collection and storage of such personal information as security pin codes and next of kin information, emphasis needs to be placed on who will have access to that information. The importance placed on the collection and storage of this data should not be understated. As these technologies are continually embraced, society has seen an escalation in crimes such as identity theft and other similar fraudulent occurrences.

**Mr Shine:** No crime under Joh, hey?

**Mr BLEIJIE:** I take the interjection. As technology has grown so has credit card fraud, as it becomes easier for people to skim details off credit cards and electronic devices. As I said, unfortunately the escalation in these crimes is occurring on a more frequent basis in Australia. Any government storage of personal information needs to maintain the highest level of security. That goes without saying, but it needs to be continually stressed.

Other reforms in this legislation are welcome transport initiatives for the state. Heavy vehicle road safety has been addressed and balanced so that motorists' protection is balanced with operator breaches followed through by the department. Provision is also made for the repair of road and rail infrastructure damaged by heavy vehicles to be at the cost of the operator, not the taxpayer. Other regulations in the bill that reduce time delays on transport and bureaucracy are certainly welcome. I commend the bill to the House, with the reservations that I have stated.