



Speech by


**Grace Grace**

**MEMBER FOR BRISBANE CENTRAL**

Hansard Thursday, 7 April 2011

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

 **Ms GRACE** (Brisbane Central—ALP) (6.11 pm): I rise to support the Transport and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. I do so because I think that anything that we can do that continues a trend in reducing road deaths is a step in the right direction. I think that we have done a great job as a government by taking the issue by the neck, so to speak, to try to minimise the unsafe practices that occur when people drink and drive. I fully support this legislation before the House this evening.

In supporting this legislation I draw to the attention of the House that there is research that says that if a person is driving with an alcohol level of 0.10 they are five times more likely to be involved in a crash than a person on a zero alcohol level. That research is pretty compelling. That is why I am supporting the introduction of a new middle alcohol limit offence for drink drivers. This bill creates an offence for drivers with an alcohol level of 0.10 up to 0.15, with an increase in the maximum penalty for these drivers from \$1,400 to \$2,000. In addition, a person charged with this new middle alcohol limit offence will have their driver's licence immediately suspended. This extends the existing suspensions that apply to those with an alcohol level of more than 0.15. In a way, what we are saying is that there is clear research which says that if a person is driving with this middle range alcohol level they are very susceptible to a crash and we are taking steps to ensure that the law now takes their licence away if they are caught and that the fine they are going to pay is more than what it was before. This will ensure that those drivers who are caught with high levels of alcohol in their blood can be guaranteed that they will probably lose their driving privileges until they have been dealt with by the courts. None of us in this House condones drink driving. The message here is pretty clear. A person will not face any of this if they simply do not drink and drive. Believe me, it is just not worth it. That is a message that I put out to as many young people and members of the community as often and as many times as I can.

The other part of this bill that I want to address is the safety and wellbeing of our young and vulnerable people, which should be a paramount consideration for the public transport system. A world-class transport system is one that is more than just trains, buses and boats travelling from A to B. World-class public transport preserves the safety of commuters and there are no more valuable commuters than our young and the vulnerable. It is the driver authorisation regime administered by the Department of Transport and Main Roads that ensures that our taxi and bus drivers are people who can be trusted in these important roles. The importance of driver authorisation for protecting the young and vulnerable was acknowledged by the House when targeted refinements of the regime were passed in 2009. These refinements ensured that the Commission for Children and Young People and Child Guardian would be more involved in assisting the chief executive of the Department of Transport and Main Roads with driver authorisation matters. Many in the House would be aware that holders of driver authorisation are often transporting the young and the vulnerable. It is common-sense policy for driver authorisation to be aligned with the Commission for Children and Young People and Child Guardian legislation.

The strong bipartisan support for the amendments in 2009 prompted the government to consider a root-and-branch review as to how the relevant legislation for driver authorisation could best align with the Commission for Children and Young People and Child Guardian legislation, therefore reflecting a whole-of-

government best practice. I am pleased to support this suite of amendments which align the driver authorisation legislation because it is good policy based on sensible review. The Commission for Children and Young People and Child Guardian has successfully taken the whole-of-government lead on child welfare issues. These amendments, quite simply, will align the driver authorisation regime with the commission's policy where relevant. For example, under the new provisions any person who, due to their criminal history, for example, would be automatically excluded from gaining driver authorisation would automatically be excluded from similar Commission for Children and Young People processes such as a blue card application. I am sure that those in the House will agree that these thoughtful legislative changes warrant bipartisan support in a similar way to the important refinements that were made in 2009. These amendments are in line with public opinion and reflect a whole-of-government view that the wellbeing of children and vulnerable people is paramount. I take this opportunity to congratulate the minister on bringing the legislation to the House and I commend the bill to the House.