




Speech By
Hon. Yvette D'Ath

MEMBER FOR REDCLIFFE

Record of Proceedings, 18 August 2016

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

Vehicles, Offensive Slogans

 **Hon. YM D'ATH** (Redcliffe—ALP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Justice and Minister for Training and Skills) (9.59 am): I want to outline the strategies that the Palaszczuk government is developing to remove offensive slogans from Queensland roads. I, like many members of the House, have been disgusted by some of the derogatory, sexist and outright offensive slogans and cartoons on the side of some commercial Queensland vehicles.

As I reflected during our estimates hearing, I want to acknowledge the work of all political parties and all governments that have tried to deal with this issue over many years. I include in that the former leader of the opposition, the member for Southern Downs, who I know is genuinely passionate about this issue. I appreciate him offering his cooperation when he was leader. I appreciate those on both sides of the House who have written to me over the last 18 months raising this issue.

It was a problem that many MPs, community groups and parents in our community had been concerned about for years, but an easy solution was not forthcoming. I am delighted that we have found a way forward to take offensive slogans off the road. Thinking a little outside the box as to how we address this issue, we have built on discussions with other governments across Australia and overseas, and I have spoken to my New Zealand counterparts who are also seeking to deal with this issue.

We are the first government to act in this way. I am pleased that since my announcement we have been contacted by other jurisdictions that have indicated their interest in keeping abreast of our efforts and expressing their willingness to work with us.

I understand the level of emotion and community concern that these vulgar, crass and offensive slogans cause. Until now the operators of these vehicles have ignored findings against them by the Advertising Standards Board. One of the key aims in the way I have tackled this issue is to try to starve the operators of these vehicles of what they want most—free publicity. By targeting the registration of commercial vehicles, operators have two choices: get rid of the slogans or see the vans off the road where they cannot be seen and cannot cause offence and are unable to generate revenue.

It is important to note that this is not about whether you, I or any individual finds a particular picture or slogan offensive. This is about having an enforcement mechanism for the decisions of the independent Advertising Standards Board so that the concerns of the community, validated by the ASB, can actually have some impact. This provides input from the community as well as ensuring procedural fairness for advertisers or operators.

I want to thank my colleague the Minister for Main Roads and his department for the cooperative and innovative way we have worked together. What we are working to do with Minister Bailey is to amend the Transport Operations (Road Use Management) Act 1995 to introduce a process to allow the Department of Transport and Main Roads to issue notices and to deregister vehicles with advertising that has been found to be in breach of the relevant ASB standards. Between now and when the legislation is introduced I hope that operators will finally recognise that the time has come to take these disgusting slogans off our roads.