




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR MAROOCHYDORE

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**TRANSPORT OPERATIONS (ROAD USE MANAGEMENT) (OFFENSIVE
ADVERTISING) AMENDMENT BILL**

 **Ms SIMPSON** (Maroochydore—LNP) (4.14 pm): Cruelty is not funny. Wicked vans are just nasty and they are cruel, and women and children are the losers under their marketing strategies. The sexualisation of public space and the publishing of violent and cruel advertising slogans devalue women and children. Kids miss nothing with regard to what is published in the public square and what adults say is permissible to publish in the public square. Broadcasters have tough rules of enforcement and require published warnings about sexualised and violent content. While these rules are not perfect, there is recognition that this material is regulated in these forums and that warnings help people to choose not to see things. Kids going past a billboard or a Wicked van with offensive images or slogans do not get the benefit of a warning, which would not solve the problem anyway because there is no way to unsee some of the vicious and nasty things which are being published.

It is somewhat ironic that the parliamentary committee, which I believe did a good job trying to tackle this issue, published a warning at the front of their report about the material in the report because it is so offensive, and yet children in the public space do not get the benefit of being able to unsee the very same material. We do not want children to potentially follow the behaviour advocated by these crass and vicious slogans or be subject to them. We do not need them to tolerate the intolerable as just a joke or, at worst, to believe that they themselves are not valuable and therefore are not worthy of respect in the behaviour which others practise towards them.

That some commercial interests reject the rules of good corporate citizenry and fail to do the right thing under self-regulation proves that there have to be penalties rather than limp lettuce leaf warnings from the ASB in response to significant breaches of the code. This bill is not the total solution. It does need to go further to address the problem. It is better than nothing and it does help, but I think we all need to try harder to get it right, as kids deserve safe public spaces where cruel and violent and sexist comments or images about girls and women are not laughed off as just a joke.

The bill with regard to Wicked vans comes two years after the Labor government took office and inherited a bipartisan parliamentary report into the broader issue of advertising breaches in the public space, which the LNP initiated during the previous parliament. There was good bipartisanship with regard to this issue and I think that does continue with respect to the problem but, as I said, I think we need to find better ways to address these issues.

The report and inquiry clearly established that there was a problem with a lack of penalties for breaches of the advertisers' code of ethics as determined by the Advertising Standards Bureau and canvassed possible solutions. In effect, the penalty as proposed in this bill will now allow for vehicles in breach of the code, such as some of the cruel nasties of Wicked vans infamy, to be deregistered. The bill does not overcome the problem of other billboards in the public space which are in breach of the code, nor does it prevent people from registering their vehicles interstate, but it does provide one mechanism with regard to vehicles registered in Queensland.

This is an issue that is not going to go away. As I have outlined, it is not a perfect bill. I think that we share a concern about the issues at hand. I think we need to continue to strive to get this issue right.