




Speech By  
**Joseph Kelly**

**MEMBER FOR GREENSLOPES**

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

 **Mr KELLY** (Greenslopes—ALP) (4.30 pm): I rise to speak in support of the Transport Operations (Road Use Management) (Offensive Advertising) Amendment Bill 2016 and want to thank the committee for its work and those who made submissions. One of the things that I have enjoyed most about parenthood is observing my children developing their reading, writing and language skills. Imagine how exciting it is after reading to your children every night to hear them finally sounding out words and reading signs independently. Most parents will be very familiar with the phase where a child suddenly starts to read everything. They read cereal boxes and advertising brochures. They even read election signs! It is great to be present and observe that natural human curiosity being used to develop and nourish a young mind. Imagine my horror when driving around I heard my young daughter saying a phrase that was extremely derogatory towards women. That happened about five years ago and it was the first time I really took any notice of the advertising on Wicked Campers and I started to read them myself. Some were clever. Some were funny. Some were satirical. Some had been designed to shatter sacred idols and provoke thought and others had been designed to raise awareness about an issue. However, disturbingly, many were designed to denigrate women and some even seemed to be glorifying rape.

We have relied on a voluntary code of conduct to try to control this sort of thing and I am pleased to say that the vast majority of advertisers comply with this code of conduct, but sadly not all. That is why I am supporting this legislation. It is taking real and practical action to deal with this issue. Of course, some people will throw up the usual arguments and statements about the nanny state and interference with freedom of speech, but I do not think the people who originally conceived the notion of freedom of speech would tolerate those arguments. They no doubt used it to make statements about a range of things that were wrong in our society. They no doubt railed against power being concentrated in the hands of one person or against slavery or against women being denied education and the vote or against children being sent into industrial workplaces. I suspect they never would have used it to normalise and build acceptance of the denigration or sexual assault of women and nor would they have used it to make a profit by making fun of homosexuals and ethnic groups.

No doubt many other people with legal skills will duke out the legal points about freedom of speech, and I note the report's comments in relation to this. I prefer to take my cues from the people in my electorate. When I have spoken to them about this issue, they agree that these slogans are not acceptable. The people of my electorate find many of the slogans on the sides of these vans offensive and they agree that they serve absolutely no purpose in terms of making an artistic, political or moral statement. They certainly agree, like me, that they do not want to be stuck in traffic with kids in the car and have to explain what these things mean. We are a very tolerant society. We accommodate a wide range of views, beliefs and lifestyles. However, we should not fall into the trap of allowing freedom of speech arguments to be misused. We should be unafraid to recognise and enforce standards of common decency. I commend this bill to the House.