




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR TRAEGER

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**TRANSPORT LEGISLATION (ROAD SAFETY AND OTHER MATTERS)
AMENDMENT BILL**

 **Mr KATTER** (Traeger—KAP) (6.24 pm): I rise to make a contribution to the debate on the Transport Legislation (Road Safety and Other Matters) Amendment Bill 2019. There were five submissions on the bill which were mostly supportive of the bill. The intent of the bill is to reduce road traffic deaths and serious injuries, and that is something no-one could complain about. I think it is good that the government has tried to address these things in line with the National Road Safety Strategy.

I would like to bring an issue in relation to this to the attention of the House. It is timely that we are in Townsville so we can look at the intent of the bill and how it applies to different areas of the state. I think the intent of the bill is good, but there are some unintended consequences and impacts on rural and remote areas that are not necessarily taken into consideration, and one of these is speeding.

I noticed that Derek Barry from our local newspaper was in the public gallery. He beats me to just about every event out in the west. I could be driving from Normanton to Karumba on a weekend to go to an event, and that is a 700-kilometre drive one way or a 1,400-kilometre return trip. If people are driving in the suburb of Aspley or Wilston at 60 kilometres per hour in a 40-kilometres-per-hour zone, they should not be speeding. That is dangerous in the city; there is no question about that. Is it the same if I am doing 130 kilometres per hour in a 110 zone going to Normanton? All of that is called speeding, but it has a different meaning to people in a remote area.

An honourable member interjected.

Mr KATTER: You will hit wallabies and you will hit a lot of things out there. I am trying to make a point about spending 30,000 kilometres a year in the car and the impact of cracking down on speeding. I could drive from the Northern Territory back into my electorate in Camooweal at 130 kilometres per hour but then I have to go down to 110 kilometres per hour, but there is no discernible difference in the road, the number of people on the road or the traffic. We are saying that that is all terrible, but I think it has a different meaning. Once I get down through Camooweal or Cloncurry, then fair enough and that is an issue if you are speeding through there. I do not believe what we call speeding on these remote open roads has the same risk and impact as it does in the city.

I think the speed limit on some of these remote roads is something to contemplate. I could drive to Birdsville for eight or nine hours at 110 kilometres an hour battling fatigue. That is a big issue for me, and the member for Gregory would battle the same things. It is very difficult. Spending all that time in the car is a large impost on your life. There is a temptation to do that. That is being cracked down on. That is very good in the city and those built-up areas, but I do not think it has the same need in remote areas. That is something I am concerned about. There is also the point-to-point. I am not sure we are doing a great job for people with the point-to-point between Birdsville and Bedourie and whether that will help reduce road fatalities. I do not think that is where the effort should be.

The other issue is interlocking devices. I think the intent is really good and it is trying to discourage people from drink-driving, but I have concerns. For example, it could be in a car in Doomadgee and it is the only car that someone in the family uses to get to work and there could be a problem with servicing or credited servicing. That proposition is a lot different from what someone in the city could face. That could be an issue.

They are the concerns I have. Obviously, I am not going to stand here and say that we should be allowed to speed. That is a silly proposition, but I am just saying that the word 'speeding' means different things in remote areas compared to the city. A lot of people in those remote areas would agree that it is not as concerning for them on those open roads as it is once you get to those built-up areas and environments. They are the points I would like to make.

I agree with the intent of the bill and I see what the minister is trying to do. That is worthwhile but I would ask the minister to be mindful of how that impacts those areas and to watch closely the rollout of the interlocking device in places like Doomadgee or Mornington. We need to try to get people back into jobs and to get their licences. That is a big challenge.

I ask that we watch that space, how it rolls out and its impact. We need to try to marry it with those other issues out there as it is not just about speeding and associated issues. There are a lot of other social issues and impacts that we need to consider at the same time to see if all the interests in all those areas are being served.