




Speech By
Barry O'Rourke

MEMBER FOR ROCKHAMPTON

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PERSONALISED TRANSPORT OMBUDSMAN BILL

 **Mr O'ROURKE** (Rockhampton—ALP) (3.36 pm): I rise to speak in support of the Personalised Transport Ombudsman Bill 2019. There are three main components to the bill. The first component is the establishment of an independent Personalised Transport Ombudsman to manage complaints received with regard to the personalised transport industry. The second component is the new smart ticketing solution about which I am very excited and which also will assist in the continued enforcement of fare evasion and related offences. The third component is to improve enforceability and clarify the operation of the existing provisions. The new charter will encourage innovation and greater choice for customers and flexibility in the industry to ensure services, safety, accessibility, affordability and accountability.

The establishment of the Personalised Transport Ombudsman will provide a reputable and independent regulator. Provisions in this bill will provide for criminal history checks and exclude a person with a potential conflict of interest to ensure there will be public and industry confidence in the integrity and independence of the appointee.

The Personalised Transport Ombudsman will be responsible for helping to resolve complaints received by the personalised transport industry in a timely and cost-effective way. It will be required to perform its functions independently, impartially and in the public interest. Services will be provided to the public free of charge. To reinforce further the independence of the role, the Personalised Transport Ombudsman and its staff will not be subject to direction from outsiders regarding these functions. For example, the Minister for Transport and Main Roads will not be able to direct the ombudsman.

With regard to the smart ticketing amendments, this bill introduces new amendments to existing legislation to support the enforcement of fare evasion and related offences under the new smart ticketing solutions. The new smart ticketing solution will give customers greater choice of payment for public transport use. It will allow customers to use debit and credit cards, smartphones and wearable devices in addition to the existing go card and paper tickets.

This is something that I believe regional Queenslanders will really appreciate. I know that when I have travelled to Brisbane I have found it challenging to use public transport. Maybe it is just my age. You have to find a newsagency or the like to buy a go card and then you are not sure how much money to put on it. Being able to use your debit or credit card will make travel so much easier.

The other part of this bill allows for future advancements as new smart ticketing solutions are developed and rolled out. Another important factor is the continuing ability to recover unclaimed credit on dormant or expired accounts. Customers will continue to be able to claim unused credit on their own accounts through the varied means that are readily available. This bill also facilitates the continued sharing of information so that we can provide customers with the concessions they are entitled to. It is important that we balance customer privacy with provisions that are robust and effective.

This bill also includes some minor amendments to the transport operations act 1994 to improve the enforceability of legislation and provides greater certainty for the personalised transport industry. Minor and consequential changes are also made to other acts. I thank the committee for the work they did on this bill. I commend the bill to the House.