




Speech By
Bart Mellish

MEMBER FOR ASPLEY

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HEAVY VEHICLE NATIONAL LAW AMENDMENT BILL

 **Mr MELLISH** (Aspley—ALP) (4.10 pm): I am very pleased to speak to another heavy vehicle bill. They seem to be as frequent as trains on the Redcliffe line under the new, improved timetable! I am a bit saddened, though, that I have not yet had an invite by the member for Callide to take a trip on the old Mack truck. Maybe I just have to ask as nicely as the member for Chatsworth did!

The heavy vehicle national law started in 2014 in the ACT, New South Wales, Queensland, South Australia, Tasmania and Victoria. As the member for Hervey Bay mentioned, it is a shame that Western Australia and the Northern Territory still have not yet joined, but we can hold out hope. Although the national law has not commenced in Western Australia and the Northern Territory, it applies equally to vehicles from those jurisdictions when they cross over into the rest of the country. In some cases, drivers may also need to comply with certain aspects of the heavy vehicle national law before they cross the border. One set of laws is administered through the National Heavy Vehicle Regulator, which is based in Queensland.

The amendments in this bill were developed with the National Transport Commission and the National Heavy Vehicle Regulator, in consultation with industry and jurisdictions. They were endorsed by the Transport and Infrastructure Council in late 2018 and early 2019. Some key changes to the national law in this bill include consequential amendments related to the Commonwealth's Road Vehicles Standards Act; amending the regulator's functions to provide for the giving of advice to industry on the obligations under the law; improved access for specified semitrailers; and harmonising requirements for issuing defect notices.

Vehicle modifications approved in nonparticipating jurisdictions are currently not recognised by the national law. Under proposed amendments, modifications approved by a nonparticipating jurisdiction that comply with the regulator's code of practice will be deemed to have been approved under the national law. That goes back to the issue of how to deal with Western Australia and the Northern Territory not being part of it yet.

There was only one recommendation of the committee—that is, that the bill be passed. I can certainly support that. During the hearings I asked about what is coming down the pipeline of the department and also of the regulator. I was satisfied with the response. It was outlined that the National Transport Commission is doing a bit of a review at the moment. It started in February this year and ends in February or March next year. We should expect a bill in late 2020 based on that consultation. We have passed our feedback through the committee that managing the bills going forward is an important process—making sure that consultation is done correctly and that we are dealing with it all in a timely and efficient manner.

At the sittings in Townsville we heard a bit about the road safety bill. That relates to this bill in that road safety is both a legislative and regulatory issue and an infrastructure issue. I am glad that we are dealing with a bit more of the regulatory and legislative side with this bill. On the infrastructure side, new infrastructure was mentioned earlier. For my part of the north side, it is great that we have funding

for Linkfield Road. There is \$20 million to match the \$100 million from the federal government. It would be great if they could bring theirs forward. We have funding for the Strathpine Road-Gympie Arterial Road diverging diamond intersection. It will be a great intersection. It is a really innovative design—the second one of its kind in the state. I cannot wait to see when that will be moving ahead. We also have funding for the Beams Road business case and some funding for noise barriers along Gympie Road. I thank the minister for his help on those matters.

It really is part of the dual approach. That is, you cannot just deal with the regulatory and the legislative aspects; you have to also deal with the infrastructure side. It was great to see the Toowoomba Second Range Crossing open recently. I had the opportunity to drive up it last weekend. It really is a fantastic piece of infrastructure that will bring a lot of safety benefits, particularly for the heavy vehicle industry.

There are a few minor and technical drafting issues with the bill. Other members will speak to those. This morning I was pleased to join with the Minister for Police in launching the Spring Break road safety campaign, which will affect all drivers, not just heavy vehicle drivers. That involves an increased police presence on the road during school holidays focusing on the Fatal Five—making sure that when people go on road trips they are not fatigued, not speeding, not drinking and not under the influence of other substances. It was great to see the police and emergency services presence there this morning for what will be, I am sure, a very worthwhile cause—that is, reducing as much as possible the road toll over the spring break.

I commend the bill to the House. I thank my fellow committee members, departmental staff, National Heavy Vehicle Regulator staff, other witnesses, the minister for his carriage of the bill and, of course, the committee secretariat.