




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR BROADWATER

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

 **Mr CRISAFULLI** (Broadwater—LNP) (3.13 pm): In my contribution to the Transport Legislation (Road Safety and Other Matters) Amendment Bill I intend to focus on two elements. The first is drink-driving and the positive initiatives which have been put forward in that regard. I thank both the minister and the shadow minister for the way in which they have debated this. They have put forward what I see as good, common-sense changes in this regard. The second relates to point-to-point cameras and variable speed limits. They are the two things I will focus on.

I will begin my contribution by reflecting that this is the beginning, not the end, of a journey to improve road safety. Many members have spoken about the loss of life. It is easy to quote a figure and say that 247 people lost their lives in 2017. As a young journalist, fatalities were something that became the norm in my life. I would hear it on the police scanner and I would race out and cover it. I hoped that covering it would help people avoid those errors—the drink-driving, the speeding, the lack of seatbelts—all of the things that contribute towards fatalities, but in a way we became numb to it because they happened so frequently. The number 247 indicates just how frequent it is, but every one of those 247 people has a story. Every one of those 247 people has a family. Every one of those 247 people has somebody who wishes that they had not made that fatal error on that fatal day or night. It is to those people that we owe every effort to improve road safety in this state, so I will begin with drink-driving.

The initiative that I am most pleased about is the change to mandatory education. I will not for one moment pretend there is not a large portion of people who drink-drive and do it knowing full well that they are drink-driving. There is a large percentage of people who just do the wrong thing and roll the dice with their lives and the lives of others, but there is an element of those people who do it through ignorance.

I remember running many sessions very close to here at a place called the Vale Hotel in Aitkenvale, where the police—to their great credit—would come along and test people after they had been drinking. You could test yourself progressively during the course of the night. It was an eye-opener for me to see the way that alcohol affects different people based on age, gender, size and all of those things. Some people can consume more alcohol and not be affected, while others consume less alcohol and are affected. Knowing your limit is important, as it is the morning after. Many people who drive over the limit are caught the following day because they did not know they had not had a sufficient rest period. Whilst you may think that a couple of hours makes you bulletproof, if it is in your system you are a risk. I would say to the minister that the idea of compulsory education is a magnificent step forward, and it is one that we should all embrace.

The issue of variable speed limits and point-to-point cameras is of concern to me. I note that speed cameras are proven to be an effective deterrent at slowing people down—I acknowledge that—but where there are variable speed limits, particularly when they relate to temporary variable speed limits such as at roadworks, I think we run the risk of this being more about raising revenue than it is about safety. That is something I would like the minister to address and acknowledge.

At the moment, on the M1 between Brisbane and the Gold Coast there is a section where the speed limit changes several times in very close proximity. In one section it goes from 80 to 100 and back to 80 within literally a couple of kilometres. I am sure there have been times where everybody in this House has come close to either overlooking that or almost overlooking it. I would hate to see a situation where people are being penalised for nothing more than goalpost moving. Where it is temporary and where the roadworks are not in operation at the time—for example, at night-time—there needs to be flexibility given so that it is genuinely about slowing people down and saving lives rather than raising money for the government.

The final thing I would like to acknowledge and reflect on is something that my good colleague, the shadow minister, talks about almost every time he stands up in this House: the need for better roads. Good laws and good deterrents will always help and we must always do better, but so too with the quality of our roads.

When an Auditor-General's report finds just how dire the maintenance backlog is in this state, we are risking people's lives. The government cannot continue to ignore maintenance. I say to the minister that it might not be sexy and it might not enable ribbon cutting, but it saves lives. If the government maintains the roads and gets good value for money whilst maintaining them, and if the government can drive costs down and manage the budget, then the government can fix more roads. By doing so, lives can be saved.

There are some excellent things in this amendment bill. There are some areas that we are concerned about and we have asked the minister to take them on board. It is indeed a great day when members in this place can come forward and in good faith put forward policies that can help make the lives of our magnificent Queenslanders safer for generations to come.