




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR SOUTHERN DOWNS

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

 **Mr LISTER** (Southern Downs—LNP) (12.39 pm): I rise to make a contribution to the debate of the Transport Legislation (Road Safety and Other Matters) Amendment Bill 2019. I have listened with interest to the contribution of many members. I have learned a bit in the process. I commend the member for Macalister for her contribution.

It has been said by a number of speakers that road safety is everyone's responsibility. That rang a bell for me. I remember as a youngster the bumper stickers and the signs around the place with a finger pointing to the reader saying 'Road safety: finally it's up to you'. That stems from a conversation that former transport minister Don Lane had with former treasurer Llew Edwards. Sir Llew had said to him, 'Isn't it odd that you get blamed as minister for transport every time someone dies on the roads? It must be the government's responsibility.' He made the point that that was odd because, in his opinion, road safety is everyone's responsibility. From about that time society began to accept that that was the case.

The Queensland Road Safety Council adopted that particular strategy—'Road safety: finally it's up to you'—for about a decade. I think you can see that in that period the road toll started to fall. There were a lot of things happening. Lollipop ladies, as we used to call them—crossing supervisors—were introduced around schools. I certainly remember that. That helped to reduce the road toll. We had improvements to roads. We also saw the introduction of random breath testing, which was a very unpopular measure at the time. The prospect of having a sanction against you for driving whilst over the limit has reduced the amount of drink-driving. We know that one in five fatalities on our roads involves a vehicle operator with a blood alcohol content in the medium range. That is a damning statistic, even today. We have better, safer cars. We have also seen driver education.

At the time that campaign first started, about 700 people a year were dying on Queensland roads. At that time there were about half as many vehicles on the road as there are now. Compare that to where we are at today. The most recent report, for 2017, shows 247 tragic deaths. Whilst that number is still far too high and we will all do what we can to reduce it, it shows how far we have come.

This bill aims to make Queensland's roads safer. For that reason, the LNP and I will be supporting the bill. It aims to expand the alcohol ignition interlock program to those who have been found guilty in the mid range. It introduces the capacity for point-to-point speed cameras to be used where there are varying speed limits between two points. Whilst I accept the evidence for the value of speed cameras—speed enforcement is a crucial part of keeping the road toll down—I share the concerns of some of the speakers before me that it is vital for the community to have confidence in the system and to not perceive that the purpose of having speed cameras is to raise revenue. I do not believe that revenue raising is the purpose of speed cameras, but it is vital that community confidence in the government's motives be maintained. For that reason, the LNP and I believe that the position of speed cameras should be signed as a way of proclaiming to the community that enforcing speed limits is important and to show the community that the government has nothing to hide.

The bill applies a drug and alcohol testing regime for people interfering with the operation of a vehicle—the member for Macalister spoke about that; clarifies evidentiary provisions relating to placard loads that exceed a threshold quantity; updates existing evidentiary provisions for applying heavy vehicle inspection fees and driver licence disqualifications; provides for evidentiary certificates to confirm the identity of a road toll operator; enables certain exempt activities to be published on the department's website rather than by gazettal; and, interestingly, enables the state, on behalf of prescribed entities, to recover costs and expenses incurred in responding to a marine pollution incident. I think that is a step in the right direction.

The member for Mackay made the point that it is people who cause crashes, not roads. Whilst that is true on one level—we are all responsible for driving to the conditions we are presented with—it cannot be said that investing money into improving our roads does not reduce the road toll. In my electorate, the Gore Highway, the Cunningham Highway and the New England Highway have stretches that are notoriously uneven and urgently require fixes. We all deserve safe roads. There needs to be a sustainable maintenance program to allow that. The Auditor-General's 2017-18 report titled *Integrated transport planning* summarised that the state was \$4 billion behind in renewal of the road network. That was two years ago now. If current trends continue, the state will be \$9 billion behind. That will be really difficult to recover from. In electorates like mine, road safety includes having safe roads. It does everywhere. If we are to be honest with ourselves, we need to do this as well as provide safer roads—making sure that the roads we have are maintained in the best possible condition.

My sister is a paramedic who works in Stanthorpe. I know that she and her colleagues share the difficult job that the member for Macalister and other speakers alluded to in responding to traffic crashes. It behoves us all to think about those emergency services personnel who have to deal with the memories and the effects of fatal road accidents. They are not pretty at all. It is not something they do occasionally; it is something they do as part of their job. We owe it to all of them to do all we can to reduce the road toll. The government aims to reduce the road toll by 30 per cent by 2020. That is a very ambitious target. No-one holds that against it, of course. We all do our bit. I commend the bill to the House.