




Speech By  
**James Lister**

**MEMBER FOR SOUTHERN DOWNS**

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### **HEAVY VEHICLE NATIONAL LAW AMENDMENT BILL**

 **Mr LISTER** (Southern Downs—LNP) (4.47 pm): I rise to speak to the Heavy Vehicle National Law Amendment Bill 2019. As members have heard from previous speakers, the LNP will be supporting this bill. It is good legislation. It is aimed at safety foremost and also improving the efficiency of regulation to some extent for the heavy vehicle industry.

The objectives of this bill are to: maintain currency, improve administrative efficiency and reduce complexity of the heavy vehicle national law; amend the heavy vehicle national law to improve the productivity of the road network and freight fleet by increasing the allowed volume on certain heavy vehicles where mass is not a constraint; reduce the administrative and regulatory burden for the National Heavy Vehicle Regulator and/or the heavy vehicle industry through the inclusion of a number of minor technical amendments; and make consequential amendments arising from the enactment of the Commonwealth Road Vehicle Standards Act that will repeal the Motor Vehicle Standards Act 1989.

I would like to thank the committee for its consideration of the bill. As always, a lot of work goes into a bill before we see it in the House. I note there was only one submission and that was from the Queensland Trucking Association. I would like to acknowledge the CEO, Gary Mahon. He is certainly the go-to man for anything in this sphere. In the early days after my election I made a point of going to see him as an important industry leader in my electorate of Southern Downs.

In his second reading speech, the minister talked about investment. Certainly I agree with his observations on the investment in physical infrastructure associated with heavy vehicle transport. However, in responding to what he said I would say that that is not the only kind of investment that is needed. The CEO of the Queensland Trucking Association, which made the submission, Mr Mahon has said to me that other areas are also important, such as having rest areas for truck drivers. He told me about one particular driver who was nine minutes over his maximum driving time because there was nowhere for him to stop safely, and he was fined for that. Those sorts of things and some of the matters that the member for Gregory mentioned, such as spelling errors in logbooks and so on, need some attention.

Also in response to what the minister has said, another investment could be in the department's ability to handle the regulation for heavy vehicle operators if a heavy vehicle operator needs an oversize overmass permit. I get angry complaints from constituents and businesses in my electorate about unnecessary delays in achieving those things. In many cases, a business will need to respond quickly to customer demands. If you are in the business of moving D11 bulldozers you will need to apply for a permit, but the client will want the job done straightaway. This is even an issue in the case of state government work. An operator in my electorate was working on the Captain Cook Bridge in Brisbane. That work was being done for the state government. He was unable to get the necessary permit for a crane to work on the Captain Cook Bridge at night. The traffic was to be stopped and there was a lot at stake. It required intervention from just below director-general level on a Friday night to get the necessary permit issued. Investment there would be beneficial to the heavy vehicle industry.

The LNP recognises the vital contribution that the heavy vehicle transport industry makes to the national economy. We have always sought to introduce measures designed to improve productivity and the safety of those working in the sector. We have no problems with the bill and I note that, in its submission, the Queensland Trucking Association concurred with that. However, I would like to add to what the member for Gregory said. There is no reason why we cannot look at ways to do this better. We could have a review to see if there are more efficient ways for business to comply and achieve the safety and the national coordination that we aim for under this system.

Queensland has played an active role in the heavy vehicle national law. Both sides of politics have been generally supportive of the measures and the aims of the law. Notwithstanding the amendments supported by all jurisdictions, the bill does continue along the well-worn legislative path. Gary Mahon from the Queensland Trucking Association showed me how big the law has become. Back in the 1930s—I think it was in about 1936—the first antecedents of this law came into force. At that time it was only a page or two long. Over time, as is common with statutory things, it has grown and grown and now is the size of a phone book. I wonder how sustainable that is if we are to have a heavy vehicle law that acts in the interests of safety and productivity for all.

There is a need for some fresh thinking and a review to see how these excellent ends can be achieved as efficiently as possible whilst minimising the regulatory burden on the hardworking businesses that are the base of our economy. The private sector funds the public sector. It funds us and the things that we need such as schools, hospitals and police. We need always to have an eye on minimising the burden on business. I say again that we do support the bill. It is a good bill.