




Speech By
Hon. Mark Bailey

MEMBER FOR MILLER

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

 **Hon. MC BAILEY** (Miller—ALP) (Minister for Transport and Main Roads) (3.29 pm), in reply: I thank all members for their contributions to the debate of the Transport Legislation (Road Safety and Other Matters) Amendment Bill. Many of the contributions were heartfelt accounts, and I particularly acknowledge the contributions of the members for Macalister, Mackay and Hervey Bay. This bill contains the Palaszczuk government's latest proposals to improve the safety of Queenslanders on our road network. If passed by this House, the bill will strengthen our crackdown on drink-driving. When the Palaszczuk government launched its Road Safety Strategy in 2015, we committed to an ultimate goal of zero fatalities and serious injuries and to reducing trauma by 30 per cent by 2020. It may sound ambitious, but logically no other vision is acceptable.

Over the past 10 years Queensland road fatalities have dropped by 35 per cent. In the last financial year, the number of people killed on Queensland roads is the lowest recorded for a financial year since accurate records began in 1952; however, I acknowledge that there were still 141 deaths to date this year, a reduction of 34 on the previous year. Still, 141 represents absolute tragedies for many people to deal with. A number of initiatives, including those introduced by the Palaszczuk government, have contributed to the significant decrease in fatalities, but much more needs to be done. That is why we continue to reform with new initiatives to improve road safety outcomes as set out in the bill.

Some of the key actions include our targeted road safety program, active transport program, flashing lights program, tackling drug driving, proposals that I put out there on distracted driving, campaigns on seatbelts—that is still a problem, particularly in regional areas—and the rebadged Street Smarts Engagement education program. The first national summit on driver distraction occurred in early July and some very good work is flowing through as a result.

In our QTRIP program, there is an additional \$212 million in funding for the targeted road safety program, bringing total state investment to \$830 million. That is a very strong commitment compared to the cuts of the previous government. As members know, drink-driving continues to be a significant road safety issue, with 43 people killed due to crashes involving drink-drivers or drink-riders last year. That represented 17.6 per cent of total fatalities. In 2018, 620 people were hospitalised due to a crash involving a drink-driver or drink-rider, making up 9.1 per cent of all hospitalised casualties. I am very proud of this government's introduction of education programs for drink-driving offenders as they will provide the opportunity to influence and encourage positive behaviour change. There is a much larger proportion of people who have addiction issues with alcohol who need that intervention and assistance.

The brief intervention education program is designed to support and educate participants about their alcohol consumption and specifically to teach them how to separate drinking from their driving. All first-time drink-driving offenders will be required to complete a brief intervention education program and to complete it prior to reapplying for a driver's licence. Based on the average number of drink-drivers

over the past five years, it could be expected that approximately 15,800 people will complete this program in the first year of operation. That is a shocking forecast, but it does show the critical need for more action on drink-driving to make our roads safer.

If a person commits a subsequent drink-driving offence within five years of conviction for their first offence, they will need to complete the repeat offender education program. That is an intensive, face-to-face program delivered in group sessions that will provide broader strategies to separate their drinking from their driving. The program must be completed before a person's interlock condition is removed. Evidence suggests that alcohol ignition interlocks are more effective when combined with an education program. It takes several years for that program to reach its capacity as a person will be required to undertake the brief intervention prior to being eligible to participate in the repeat offender program.

The bill also includes amendments that will enhance our current alcohol interlock program. Under the current interlock program, the alcohol ignition interlock is removed at the end of 12 months. This is despite any failed breath test the person may have while using the interlock. This is certainly not the most effective means in terms of improving safety on our roads.

The interlock program will move from being time based to performance based so that people must demonstrate that they have separated their drinking and driving to complete the program successfully—that is, the interlock cannot be removed until there are no failed breath tests during the last four months of interlock use. To support the performance based interlock program, the current two-year sit-out period that applies to those people who chose not to fit an interlock will be increased to five years. Essentially, that is to stop people sitting it out and their behaviour not being addressed, which some people choose.

The interlock program will be expanded to require mid-range drink-drivers who have a blood alcohol content of .1 to less than .15 to participate in the program. Last year, more than 4,000 offenders were mid-range drink-drivers who now will be required to participate in the interlock program. I support those members who have an equal view that this is a required measure. I was very disappointed to hear the member for Mirani's irresponsible comments as I do not believe the member has sufficient concern for other road users in that regard. We already know that the risk of a crash involving a mid-range drink-driver is 20 times the normal risk. A drink-driving offender must complete the brief intervention education program prior to a work licence being issued. That is appropriate.

In relation to the contributions of the members for Traeger and Hill about speeding, there are no 130-kilometre-per-hour zones in Queensland. Let us be very clear: the top speed on any road is 110 kilometres per hour. I understand that we have different cultural issues in different parts of the state, but we must acknowledge that fatalities are three times the rate in regional and remote areas than in urban areas. There are a lot of different reasons for that, but some of those reasons need to be addressed and we need leadership from people on this. I understand that there are a long distances involved. I live in an electorate very different from those members, but we must provide leadership because fatalities in regional and rural areas are much higher than in urban areas. It is important that we all send out the right signals and the right leadership values and principles if we want to save lives on our roads. It is very important.

I am happy to advise the member for Toowoomba North that in January 2018 it was publicly announced that there would be a point-to-point camera on the Toowoomba bypass. In terms of variable speed limits, a speed limit is a speed limit. We have to be very clear about this. If there is a signposted speed limit, it should be enforced. That is what this bill looks to do in terms of where there is a variety of speed limits it is done fairly, but speed limits are put in place based on engineering, science and the manual for traffic control. We all must ensure that at all times we adhere to those speed limits.

Point-to-point locations are currently signed. In Queensland, motorists will pass at least one sign before passing a combined red-light/speed camera and a fixed speed camera or a point-to-point camera. Unattended speed camera trailers are also highly visible by being painted in bright yellow colours. A mixture of overt and covert camera deployment is used in the speed camera program. There is a clear science here. This is important for members to understand. Research undertaken by Monash University's Accident Research Centre in 2009 determined that the combined use of both covert and overt mobile speed cameras produces the best road safety outcomes due to the strong effect covert cameras have on suppressing vehicle speeds across the network. The centre recommended that 30 per cent of all mobile speed camera deployments be covert.

The research stated that covert cameras have the greatest impact on reducing fatal crashes. Unfortunately, some people will only slow down if they think they will be caught speeding. The uncertainty of covert cameras creates greater compliance across the road network as these motorists are unsure whether speeding enforcement will occur.

There are a couple of matters I highlight. Hospitalisations are an important part of the road safety equation, but let us look at fatalities. From 2004 to 2009, fatalities ranged from 360 to 311. There was not a single year in which they were below 300. Covert speed cameras were announced in late 2009 and brought in in March 2010. In that year, the fatality rate dropped to 249—82 fewer deaths on our roads. The rate increased to 269 in 2011, 280 in 2012 and 271 in 2013 but has since been dropping—to 223, 243, 251, 247 and 245. We are now regularly in the mid-200s in the covert speed camera era.

I note the contributions to the debate from a range of people. The member for Gregory said that people in his electorate support better road safety and the LNP always supports improvements to road safety. The member for Bonney said that any sensible road safety measure all MPs should support. He also said that we need the community behind us. We heard comments from a range of members. LNP members had a bit of a song sheet. A lot of people have said positive things about road safety. I am also conscious of the words of the Deputy Leader of the Opposition. Mr Mander said that if the LNP wins the next election they will completely get rid of all covert speed cameras in Queensland. The LNP will sign all speed cameras and will get rid of covert cameras. Let us be very clear about this. I say sincerely to everybody in this chamber: that will mean more deaths on our roads.

There is no doubt that the threat of covert speed cameras reduces speeding on our roads and reduces the numbers of crashes, hospitalisations and deaths. I point people to the number of fatalities in Queensland since covert speed cameras were introduced. They are a very important road safety measure. Opposition members come into this chamber and say that they support anything that enhances road safety, but the only outcome of their policy position is a reduction in road safety. They should look at the Monash University research. I say sincerely: saving lives on our roads takes courage and leadership. That is how we have got reforms over time, whether it is random breath testing, seatbelts or covert speed cameras. There is a bit of a mythology that all of those measures were popular when they were brought in. Of course they were not. There was a lot of resistance to all of those reforms. It took real courage from political leaders to bring them in.

If we want to improve road safety in this state, we all have to play a role. I would like to see, as a baseline, that we do not go backwards on road safety. The policy of those opposite will cost Queenslanders' lives. I have no doubt whatsoever about that. It is highly irresponsible for the Leader of the Opposition and the Deputy Leader of the Opposition to appeal to the base vote around revenue raising and to reduce road safety to go for votes. That is what that policy is about.

I say to the opposition: I will continue in this manner. I would love the opposition to reconsider their policy, because I do not want to see more people lose their lives on Queensland roads. We need the bipartisan position that we will not go backwards on road safety. Getting rid of covert cameras will see more people killed on Queensland roads. That is totally unacceptable. It is an abrogation of leadership, responsibility and courage. I urge the opposition to reconsider that irresponsible policy. It is not based on evidence or anything to do with road safety. All members of this parliament should have the courage to say, 'This is the baseline. We have to keep getting better.'

In terms of road safety outcomes, people look to Queensland. The members for Hill and Traeger referred to the Northern Territory. That jurisdiction's performance is the worst in Australia. They had 28 fatalities per 100,000 compared to 4.5 per 100,000 in Queensland. That is not the jurisdiction to look to in terms of outcomes. We perform better than every state in the United States of America with the exception of DC. We have to keep getting better on this. Covert speed cameras are an important part of the solution.

This has been a very good debate. There has been a lot of sincerity. I thank all members who contributed to the debate. We need to see stronger positions on alcohol, which this bill includes. We need to continue this. I have put a position out there in terms of distracted driving. The next big reforms that will save lives on our roads will address the very important issue of distracted driving. I think it is under-reported. No-one can tell me that some of those head-on collisions are not caused by distraction. In the aftermath of some crashes it is very hard to determine the causes. We all know that there is a high level of noncompliance.

My proposal for a very large first fine—a \$1,000 fine—and loss of licence for a second offence needs to be considered. I hope that by moving in that direction and getting a lot tougher on distracted driving we will see reform in that regard. I was heartened to see the public response to my suggestion. Stakeholders were very supportive of it. In fact, there was a lot less social media negativity than I expected. A lot of people want us to go even harder than that. When it comes to people dying on our roads, there is a problem there. A lot of people are addicted to their phones. We need to get tougher in that regard. That is a separate matter.

We have had a very broad and I think productive debate when it comes to road safety. I am very proud of this bill. We have to deal with people who have alcohol issues, because they are still causing problems on our roads. Even though the vast majority of people do the right thing, those who have

problems need assistance. While we were national leaders at the time with the interlock program, we have fallen behind over time as other states have brought in reforms. In terms of the targeting of mid-range drink-driving, I accept the contributions of some members that there is no excuse. If your blood alcohol content is .1, you have absolutely no excuse. We need to be very clear about that.

This is a very strong bill. It contains quite an array of reforms that reduce the administrative burden for the courts and the departments and make the application of the law more effective. I endorse the comments regarding more effective provisions relating to marine pollution. There is a range of aspects there.

I say to the parliament: let's be very clear about the baseline on road safety. People look to this state for leadership. We have a very strong record over the past 40 years of bringing in a lot of measures that other jurisdictions saw saved lives and then implemented. Distracted driving is an area we have to address, but we cannot go backwards on road safety. I acknowledge the contributions of members who were first responders in their previous careers. Those people have been in very difficult circumstances. We have former paramedics, police officers and a range of other professionals.

I say to all members: do everything you can to ensure we do not go backwards on road safety. Search your consciences. You know the right thing to do. We cannot go backwards. People's lives depend on it. Many of us have had personal experiences with road trauma. We know how important this is and how deeply this affects our state. This bill is important. I acknowledge the positive contributions people have made. We cannot go backwards.

This is an important issue for the major parties in this chamber. I know where our members stand: we will never go backwards on road safety. I say to the members of all parties—I ask the member for Mirani to reconsider his position—that we all have to be part of the solution. People look to us for leadership and values. If we are ironclad and clear on this, we send out the right signals to help save lives. This is a very good bill. It has taken a lot of work. I thank all of the ministerial and departmental staff for their hard work. I commend the bill to the House.