




Speech By  
**Michael Crandon**

**MEMBER FOR COOMERA**

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

 **Mr CRANDON** (Coomera—LNP) (5.00 pm): I rise to make a contribution to the Heavy Vehicle National Law Amendment Bill 2019. The LNP has always advocated strongly for measures that are designed to enhance administrative efficiency, reduce the regulatory burden on industry and improve the productivity of the road freight task. As such, the LNP will not be opposing this bill. The Transport and Public Works Committee recommended that the bill be passed and there were no other recommendations.

The bill will amend the Heavy Vehicle National Law Act 2012 to implement nationally agreed reforms or necessary amendments 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 and technical amendments; and make consequential amendments arising from the enactment of the Commonwealth Road Vehicle Standards Act 2018 which will repeal the Commonwealth Motor Vehicles Standards Act 1989.

The bill amends existing provisions of the heavy vehicle national law to maintain currency and further enhance clarity and operability. As such, it will address a number of issues that will improve roadside enforcement, reduce the compliance burden for industry and reduce the administrative burden for the regulator. This will be achieved by: inserting new definitions in relation to defect notices, including 'self-clearing defect notice' in the definition of 'vehicle defect notice'; removing minor inconsistencies between major and minor defect notices and self-clearing defect notices; allowing authorised officers to permit the use of a heavy vehicle subject to a self-clearing defect notice after the period to take corrective action has expired; recognising certain modifications to heavy vehicles approved in nonparticipating jurisdictions; and removing the requirement for a road manager to identify, in a statement of reasons, all documents relevant to a decision to grant or refuse a mass or dimension permit.

Other amendments to ensure policy objectives of maintaining currency and continued application of heavy vehicle in-service standards under the Road Vehicles Standards Act are also being made. As well, the policy objective of increasing allowed volume on certain heavy vehicles where mass is not a constraint is achieved by amendments providing for the specified semitrailers to operate at 4.6 metres high under the legislation without the need for a notice or individual permit. Finally, the policy objective of improving administrative efficiency and reducing complexity is achieved by miscellaneous technical or minor amendments.

The heavy vehicle national law is the cornerstone of the Council of Australian Government's national heavy vehicle reform agenda. As a single national law, it was designed to ensure that the heavy vehicle industry could operate across most of Australia without conflicting regulatory requirements. Since the heavy vehicle national law passed into law in 2012 there has been a subsequent multistaged

process to reduce the level of complexity and increase its effectiveness. Advancements in technology have also been a factor in the need for ongoing review. The proposed legislative amendments contained in this bill are part of that process.

Road safety must always remain at the forefront of policy settings. We must also ensure that, with the operation of the heavy vehicle fleet, the protection of public safety is maintained and the risk of damaging infrastructure is carefully managed.

The amendment to increase the allowed volume on certain heavy vehicles where mass is not a constraint by providing for the specified semitrailers to operate at 4.6 metres high without the need for a notice or individual permit will assist in improving the productivity of the road network and freight fleet, which is the key to reducing freight costs. This action will deliver better outcomes for the industry, as well as the community.

Importantly, this amendment is accompanied by a further amendment that provides for protecting public safety and managing risks to infrastructure caused by high-productivity vehicles. The proposed amendments were endorsed by the Transport and Infrastructure Council in November 2018 and March 2019. The broad approach that has been fundamental in gaining support for amendments to the heavy vehicle national law is that the National Transport Commission and the regulator developed the amendments in close consultation with state and territory government transport and enforcement agencies.

In fact, Western Australia and the Northern Territory, which are currently not participating jurisdictions, were consulted on the development of these amendments and their views were fully considered. In the future, modifications that are approved in those jurisdictions which comply with the regulator's Code of Practice for the Approval of Heavy Modifications will be deemed to have been approved under the national law. Finally, on a reassuring note, consultation with peak transport industry organisations and other key stakeholder representatives was undertaken and the indications from these stakeholders was to support the amendments.

One other area that is fundamental for achieving positive outcomes is the condition of the road network. It is in everyone's best interests for a sustainable maintenance program to be in place to ensure our roads remain fit for purpose. As has been noted by other members in this House, it was therefore alarming to read the Queensland Auditor-General's 2017-18 report on integrated transport planning and, in particular, the summary of the audit findings which indicated that the Department of Transport and Main Roads has calculated that as at 30 June 2017 it had a \$4 billion renewal backlog for its road network. Furthermore, it was forecast that this renewal gap will increase to more than \$9 billion over the next decade. This underfunding—

**Mr BAILEY:** I rise to a point of order, Mr Deputy Speaker. The member is speaking about matters totally unrelated to the heavy vehicle amendment bill and I ask him to come back to the bill.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Kelly): Member for Coomera, I would ask you to stay within the long title of the bill.

**Mr CRANDON:** Certainly, Mr Deputy Speaker. Thank you for your guidance. We are talking about safety and improvements in safety. We are talking about the national road network. We are talking about heavy vehicles. We are talking about the quality of roads and the shortfall in road funding. This underfunding has resulted in serious risks to the sustainability of the transport network. This will affect the ability to meet minimum performance targets. As well, it will compromise standards and it will have consequences for both road safety and productivity.

This is no surprise to me, as the member for Coomera, the fastest growing region in Queensland. I have been battling for infrastructure upgrades in the northern Gold Coast. A case in point is that it took a commitment from the federal government to exits 41 and 49 before there was a commitment from those opposite.

**Mr BAILEY:** I rise to a point of order, Mr Deputy Speaker. Once again, this has absolutely nothing to do with the bill. I ask the member to come back to the bill we are debating.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Member for Coomera, I am struggling to see how that relates to the long title of the bill. I will bring you back to the long title.

**Mr CRANDON:** Certainly. I was about to point out that exit 41 in the state seat of Coomera is one of the most heavily used exits by heavy vehicles. Exit 41 feeds directly into the Yatala Enterprise Area. The Yatala Enterprise Area is one of the biggest enterprise areas in this state. Exit 49 also feeds into that same area. I am absolutely talking about the heavy vehicle industry when I talk about those exits. Indeed, there is still a shortfall in their commitment to the upgrade of those exits.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Kelly): Pause the clock. That was a good effort, but I bring you back to the long title of the bill. It is not a licence, shall we say, to talk about anything to do with heavy vehicles. I bring you back to the provisions within the bill.

**Mr CRANDON:** Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, for your guidance. I note that the minister talked about road investment in his second reading speech, and that is exactly what I am referring to in my speech tonight. As I said a moment ago, exit 41 is one of the most heavily used exits by heavy vehicles—

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Pause the clock. As I said before, member, that is not relating to the long title of the bill. If you cannot come back to the long title of the bill, I will finish your contribution. I ask you again to come back to the long title of the bill.

**Mr CRANDON:** It is the Heavy Vehicle National Law Amendment Bill. Once again, safety and productivity improvements would flow if things were better managed in relation to those exits. As mentioned above, it was a commitment only just matched by those opposite in 2019. The LNP has always sought to introduce measures designed to improve the productivity and safety of those working in the heavy vehicle sector and has long been an acknowledged supporter of businesses large and small and especially family businesses such as trucking where significant capital investment has been made.

In closing, I make this point: the LNP would favour an independent review of the overall legislative framework so that some fresh thinking can be brought to the challenges and opportunities facing the heavy vehicle industry. There is a compelling need to build on the important work done to date to ensure the national legislation is fit for purpose.