




Speech By
Michael Healy

MEMBER FOR CAIRNS

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

 **Mr HEALY** (Cairns—ALP) (2.38 pm): It is an absolute pleasure to be in the beautiful city of Townsville, only 300 kilometres south of the capital. I rise to make my contribution to the Transport Legislation (Road Safety and Other Matters) Amendment Bill 2019. Specifically, the bill proposes to make amendments to the Transport Operations Act to enable the introduction of a range of measures aimed at what we have been discussing here, which is the most important issue of ensuring that we see far greater statistics in relation to the challenges we have on our roads.

It would be remiss of me not to take into account the contributions of members on both sides. I found the statements from the member for Macalister empowering. People who have experienced this, who have seen it at the coalface, would recognise the importance of it. Whilst I have never served in the police force I have unfortunately been involved in these incidents and I recognise the indelible imprint it leaves on us. This very important piece of legislation has the single goal and objective of making our roads safer. There are a variety of challenges that go with that. I acknowledge that death and serious injuries on Queensland roads continue to cause significant devastation for individuals, families and our broader community. As has been mentioned, we put a monetary value of around \$5 billion on it.

Improving safety on our roads must be and continues to be a priority for the Palaszczuk government. It is at this stage that I would like to acknowledge the hard work of the minister and the committee. I also acknowledge that the minister was in Cairns last week for Road Safety Week looking at some of the infrastructure around town, which I enormously appreciated as the state member for Cairns and certainly people in our community acknowledged that. Like other regional cities, once you get out of our CBD we are on open roads and it is important to ensure that we keep people thinking of the importance of safety.

Queensland's Road Safety Strategy sets an ambitious target, and why not? It should be ambitious. The goal is to reduce death and serious injury by 30 per cent by 2020, meaning we need to reduce road fatalities to under 200 and serious injuries to under 4,700. In 2017 the unfortunate figure of 247 people lost their lives and an estimated 6,462 people were seriously injured on our roads. This bill proposes road safety amendments intended to help achieve that 2020 target. I have heard it said by others in this chamber, and I would agree emphatically, that the attitude to drink-driving over the years has changed and that we need to ensure that change continues. Growing up in the seventies and eighties I can tell you that it needed to change, as a lot of us would be aware.

In 2017 the Department of Transport and Main Roads released a public discussion paper canvassing a range of options for reducing drink-driving reoffending, including education reforms and the enhancement of the interlock program that are in this bill. It is important to acknowledge that it attracted over 3,000 survey responses. There was strong community engagement, which is absolutely terrific. Sometimes a topic is put out into the community and it does not get a lot of feedback. This is

obviously a very important matter and that is reflected in the overwhelming numbers of survey responses, in addition to the nine written submissions from interested stakeholder groups. It is worth noting that all proposals received majority support.

The bill includes legislative reforms designed to enhance the existing alcohol interlock program. Broadly these amendments will introduce education programs for new and repeat drink-driving offenders, extend the current interlock program to include mid-range drink-driving offences and extend the current interlock program sit-out period from two to five years and provide for access to work licences for mid-range offenders participating in the interlock program. The intent of the package of reforms is to reduce road trauma and address behaviours associated with drink-driving and to provide means by which offenders can learn to separate their drinking from driving. This is about the science. This is about getting down to the granular detail. It is absolutely essential that people recognise the fundamental differences.

This bill will also allow for camera enforcement of speed limits on sections of road where multiple speed limits are displayed, for example, where variable speed limit signs are in use on managed motorways or where speed limits have been reduced for roadworks. It is at this stage that I would like to remind everybody, not just here but everybody listening, that it is legislated that any moneys raised by those speed cameras has to go back into road safety campaigns. The perception that government is a bit low on some coin and we need to whack out some speed cameras is far from the truth. There is a science to this. The legislation ensures that that money goes back into the program. I find myself regularly reminding people of the importance of this issue.

At this juncture I would also like to add that the bill contains a range of amendments that are not just related to road safety. This includes extending the existing ability of the state to recover the costs and expenses incurred in responding to a marine pollution incident beyond just port authorities to prescribed entities such as local governments and may I say, if you did not know, coming from Cairns I can tell members that our marine environment is an absolutely essential part not only of our economy but also of our lifestyle and this is very important and welcomed legislation. The bill also makes minor and technical amendments, including the evidentiary provisions, for clarity and to improve efficiencies and streamline the process.

The education programs that are being introduced for drink-driving offenders will focus on first-time drink-drivers. They will be required to complete a brief intervention education program prior to them being re-licenced. Driving a car comes with responsibilities which everybody needs to acknowledge. I am confident that these programs will remind people of the responsibilities that they have. Repeat offenders will be required to complete a more intensive, multisession education program. This program will be undertaken while the offender is participating in the interlock program and will need to be successfully completed before the interlock condition can be removed from their licence.

There are a number of key aspects that are absolutely vital. The Queensland Council for Civil Liberties, the RACQ, the Queensland Law Society, the Queensland Trucking Association, the Transport Workers' Union, Transurban and the Local Government Association of Queensland were all consulted. As I said, over 3,000 parties were involved. The people of Queensland expect their government to protect them in a range of areas and we are doing that. Safety on our roads is an enormous challenge and this piece of legislation reflects that we are listening, we understand the importance of it and we are doing the right thing in understanding the science and educating people on it.