




Speech By
Scott Stewart

MEMBER FOR TOWNSVILLE

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

 **Mr STEWART** (Townsville—ALP) (11.05 am): I rise to speak in support of this bill. This bill addresses a number of important road safety issues. It delivers some crucial improvements to sentencing and rehabilitation of drink-drivers. Road safety is everyone's business. One of the most important aspects of that road safety message is education of young drivers. I will share a story about one of my past students at Northern Beaches State High School, an only child, the only daughter of some wonderful parents. Her name was Kaitlyn Wright. One fateful Saturday night she accompanied three of her friends as they went out and watched a couple of videos, back in the day, out at Pallaranda. On the way home, those four kids did not make it home. Four kids from school. This was an only child, a beautiful child, who did not make it home that day. I am sure the member for Broadwater can remember that night; it was terrible. Four young kids killed on a street in Pallaranda. There was no alcohol involved, but we did see changes to road safety.

The laws and the rules that we make today impact each and every driver but, more importantly, we have a number of future young drivers in our audience today. These laws that we make will impact on them and how they operate cars. I never want to see another situation like the one at Pallaranda in which Kaitlyn Wright and her three friends were killed. When I talked to the parents, they blamed themselves. They can never do that. We need to ensure that the future drivers in our gallery today and in the future get every opportunity to operate their vehicle in the safest way. In Townsville, the Department of Transport and Main Roads Road Safety Unit, including the Indigenous Driver Licensing Unit, deliver or facilitate a number of road safety initiatives. Mr Deputy Speaker, I know that your children are not at that driving age but, when you are fortunate enough to be the supervising parent for those magic 100 hours, they can be some of the most stressful times that you will go through with your child. I know there are a number of other members in the House who have been through those 100 hours—

Mr Minnikin interjected.

Mr STEWART: Thank you member for Chatsworth, yes, a lot of us have endured those driving times.

Mr Minnikin interjected.

Mr STEWART: Pulled your hair out for it, member for Chatsworth, I can see that! Something to remember is that, when we are in that car teaching our child how to drive, they are learning how to drive. They are replicating what we do in the car, because when we are behind the wheel in the car they watch how we drive. Every time we get behind that wheel, we model what driving looks like. Do not drive angry. Make sure that you are aware of how you drive.

More importantly, while all in this House have the ability to complete those 100 hours of driving time with their children or grandchildren, as it may be, there are many people in our community who for a range of reasons do not have the ability to do that supervised 100 hours of driving.

The department of main roads' road safety unit works with a number of services, including Queensland Youth Services, to deliver the GR8 Expectations initiative, assisting disadvantaged clients and at-risk youth to become safe, compliant and licensed drivers. This program is about more than just teaching people how to drive. This is about giving them the opportunity to then get a job, because a lot of work here in the north requires people to travel. An independent worker who has their own licence can travel. That becomes a real asset to the employer. The work that is happening through this is absolutely brilliant.

The road network on the great Palm Island in my electorate stretches for a total of about five kilometres. Members can imagine doing the supervised 100 hours of driving on five kilometres of road on Palm Island. I am sure they would know every single bump and rock in the road. They would know every square inch of those Palm Island roads. This is about providing opportunities for our future drivers to learn the skills to operate machinery that can travel at great speeds on our roads—100 or 110 kilometres per hour.

Students, particularly the primary school students joining us today, are aware of our school crossing supervisors. Those people do an amazing job keeping our kids safe every morning and every afternoon as they travel to school. More importantly, every time I have seen kids using those crossings I have seen the school crossing supervisors greeting the kids, saying g'day and asking how their day was. They are the kick-off and finishing point for school each and every day. I thank every single one of our school crossing supervisors across the 37 schools in Townsville. The work they do is amazing. They are unsung heroes in our community. They do an outstanding job not only keeping our kids safe but also building their capacity. It takes a village to raise a child. In Townsville, two road safety officers coordinate those crossing supervisors. They also work with the Department of Youth Justice to deliver supported learner licence testing as part of the Transition 2 Success initiative, a great program being run here in Townsville.

Safety also requires significant investments in infrastructure—good, safe roads. When we have good, safe roads we have better drivers. The Queensland government, in partnership with the Australian government, is currently delivering more than \$550 million worth of major road upgrades on the Bruce Highway between Townsville and Ayr, at the Haughton River and between Mailman Road and Mackenzie Creek. Usually the drive from Townsville to Ayr takes about an hour. At the moment it takes between an hour and 20 minutes and an hour and 30 minutes because of all the roadworks—short-term pain, long-term gain. These upgrades include wide centre line treatments, intersection upgrades and overtaking lanes and will deliver significant improvements to road safety between Townsville and Ayr.

The Queensland government is also planning to deliver further safety upgrades on the Bruce Highway north of Mackenzie Creek. Why did we do this? It is because we in the north deserve it. We deserve high-quality, good roads to keep our kids and every road user safe. That is exactly what we are committed to. TMR is currently reviewing planning for this section based on recent crash history and will complete its review by early 2020.

The Queensland government is committed to continuing targeted road safety upgrades, including overtaking lanes, road widening and wide centre lines, at locations where crashes are more likely to occur. However, the best thing we can do is run an education program designed to make sure that our future road users—and, in fact, our current road users—have the capability, the capacity and the skill set to make really good choices when using our roads. This bill is about providing the skills, capacity and capability of road users to make good, informed decisions—to make sure they are safe and everyone around them is safe as well.

As announced in the recent state budget, the Queensland government has allocated an additional \$205 million over four years for safety upgrades, boosting Queensland's targeted road safety budget to \$900 million. That is absolutely sensational. I support this bill. This is great news for us. This is great news for our future road users. I am sure I can speak on their behalf in thanking the minister for this initiative. I thank all those who are wearing red socks today. I commend the bill to the House.