




Speech By  
**Shane King**

**MEMBER FOR KURWONGBAH**

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Record of Proceedings, 3 September 2019

### **PERSONALISED TRANSPORT OMBUDSMAN BILL**

 **Mr KING** (Kurwongbah—ALP) (12.18 pm): I rise today to make a small contribution on the Personalised Transport Ombudsman Bill 2019. The contribution from the previous speaker took me back to when I was the chair of two committees in two parliaments that dealt with this. We consulted widely and I have to say that both committees worked in a largely bipartisan way, so it was fairly disappointing to hear some of that because the previous government did not do anything. We felt the pain and we heard the pain of the taxi industry. We heard the optimism of the rideshare industry. We heard from the limousine industry. A lot of it was tough going. We are trying to do what we can and we are getting there. Give us time. The committee worked together in a bipartisan way, and that should continue. I just want to state that.

This bill has three key policy objectives. The main one, as discussed, is to establish the independent Personalised Transport Ombudsman to help resolve the complaints for the industry. The second is to support the continued enforcement of fare evasion and related offences under the new smart ticketing solution. The third is to improve enforceability which will clarify some existing provisions. Our committee made a number of recommendations, and I will use what remains of my time to talk to those. Firstly, the committee did recommend that the bill be passed, so I was surprised to hear there would be some opposition. I will address the two recommendations we talked about most and they were to do with the personalised transport component of the legislation. The committee recommended—

... the Minister for Transport and Main Roads consider amending the Bill to remove the time period a potential candidate has been absent from the industry and only exclude current industry participants.

That was fairly contentious during all the hearings we had from a lot of stakeholders. The committee report stated—

The committee noted the concerns of stakeholders regarding 5 year exclusion period for employees, members or representatives of an advocacy group, peak body or trade union that was involved in personalised transport services when the person was an employee, member or representative.

We did consider this time period to be unwarranted. We considered that the selection process should seek to attract the best possible candidates, whether they have industry experience or not. We considered the legislation should preclude candidates who were current industry participants and had skin in the game. The minister has considered the arguments raised during the committee process, and an amendment will be moved during consideration in detail to reduce the period in which candidates must be absent from involvement in the personalised transport industry from five years to three years. A three-year exclusion will hopefully be sufficient to build industry and consumer confidence in the impartiality of the Personalised Transport Ombudsman. This period is consistent with the ineligibility period that applies to members of the state or Commonwealth parliament and local government members, as well as office holders wishing to become the Queensland ombudsman.

The committee also recommended that the Minister for Transport and Main Roads reconsider the Personalised Transport Ombudsman's ability to make binding decisions. This recommendation was not supported as the PTO will be there to assist parties to resolve complaints themselves. The

government's response also advises that allowing the PTO to make binding decisions would duplicate already existing services provided by other state and federal agencies and bodies. There will be a review of this office within three years of commencement to address any concerns picked up with its operation.

Another function of the ombudsman will be to report to the minister on where there are trends in the complaint data showing systemic issues. I note that the minister has accepted the committee's recommendation and that this data will also be published for the general public to access yearly at a minimum. I thank the minister for that. The data published will include the overall number of complaints, the number of complaints the ombudsman decided not to deal with, the number of complaints that were withdrawn and how complaints were dealt with. That is welcome. This model of PTO is not exactly what was recommended for the industry by the former public works and utilities committee that I chaired last parliament, but I hope the solution does work well. If not, as I said, it will be reviewed and we can continue to work together on that.

On the new ticketing solution, as mentioned earlier, this bill will see the new smart ticketing system being rolled out. The Minister for Transport announced that in June 2018. It will allow commuters to be able to use their contactless debit or credit cards, smartphones and smart watches to pay for public transport trips, in addition to the existing go card and paper ticket system. The rollout of this system will include new readers, quicker fare gates and system equipment, an updated app platform, and real-time and new ticketing equipment on urban buses.

The current go card operator, Cubic, has been selected as the successful tenderer following a competitive global procurement process. The new ticketing system will be implemented in the metropolitan south-east as well as 18 regional areas, which include Cairns, Innisfail, Townsville and Magnetic Island, Bowen, Airlie Beach, Proserpine, Mackay, Yeppoon, Rockhampton, Gladstone, Bundaberg, Maryborough—

**A government member:** Hear, hear!

**Mr KING:** I will take that interjection. Also included are Hervey Bay, Gympie, the Sunshine Coast hinterland, North Stradbroke Island, Kilcoy/Woodford to Caboolture, Toowoomba and Warwick. As someone who has a real problem with misplacing go cards, I am looking forward to getting a more tech savvy person to show me how to use this technology, and I say bring it on.

In conclusion, I would like to thank my fellow members of the Transport and Public Works Committee for their work on this bill. I would like to, as always, thank our hardworking secretariat, Deb, Margaret and Amanda, for keeping us honest. I also thank everyone who submitted to this inquiry. I commend the bill to the House.