




Speech By  
**Steve Minnikin**

**MEMBER FOR CHATSWORTH**

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

 **Mr MINNIKIN** (Chatsworth—LNP) (5.35 pm): It gives me great pleasure to rise for the second time today here in beautiful Townsville to speak to a transport bill. I will say what I said when I began with my previous speech on the previous bill, and that is that it is the role of the opposition to scrutinise every bill that comes before the various opposition spokespersons and to not simply oppose for the sake of opposing. At the outset, I will state that the LNP will be supporting the Transport Legislation (Road Safety and Other Matters) Amendment Bill 2019. Given that the LNP has always advocated for sensible and practical measures that are designed to reduce accidents on Queensland roads, the opposition's position will not be to oppose the bill. However, the opposition questions whether the new arrangements applying to point-to-point speed cameras on stretches of road with multiple speed limits will be clearly signed for road safety purposes and that, indeed, is the LNP's policy.

I noted the Transport and Public Works Committee recommendation that the bill be passed and that no statement of reservation was made by the LNP members of this committee. In terms of the objectives of the bill, it tidies up a lot of legislation that is scattered throughout other statutes including legislation pertaining to the all-important issue of drink-driving. I note that one of the objectives of the bill is to strengthen the approach to drink-driving, which has been shown to be a significant factor in many road crashes.

As all members here would know, whether they are of an age where their hair is starting to recede, as mine apparently has done, or whether they are a relatively new member to this august chamber, we all share a cultural change in attitude over the past three decades towards drink-driving. It is almost hard to believe that when I was growing up in the 1970s it was pretty much commonplace that people would go to a barbecue, or a social function, and drink-driving did not seem to be taken anywhere near as seriously as it needed to be taken. I am so pleased that, through the efforts of men and women on both sides of the chamber over the past three decades, culturally, our attitude towards this all-important social issue of drink-driving has mercifully changed for the better.

Despite the introduction of the alcohol ignition interlock program for high-risk driving offenders with a blood alcohol concentration of .15 or more, along with other road safety measures, including random breath testing, fines and licence disqualification, on average drink-drivers are still involved—and this is an unbelievable statistic—in one in five fatalities on Queensland roads. Despite the best efforts of good men and women on both sides of this chamber over the past several decades, we still find that one in five fatalities on Queensland roads is as a result of drink-driving.

A further concern is that, in the five years to 31 December 2017, almost 25 per cent of drink-drivers involved in fatal car crashes had mid-range blood alcohol concentration readings, which is deemed to be between .10 and .149. According to research, even drivers in this middle category have a crash risk of 20 times greater than someone who has not had a drink. To address this issue, the amendments proposed in the bill extend the interlock program to include mid-range drink-driving offenders. In addition, international research, including a 2009 World Health Organization paper titled

*Evidence for the effectiveness and cost-effectiveness of interventions to reduce alcohol-related harm*, highlighted the success that intervention education programs are having in encouraging participants to reduce alcohol related harm. Accordingly, this bill seeks to introduce education programs for first-time drink-drivers as well as for repeat offenders.

It is worth noting that, in relation to drink-driving offences in New South Wales, it has recently been reported that effective from 20 May this year the New South Wales government has introduced a tough new penalty regime that will see first-time, low-range drink-drivers slapped with an on-the-spot suspension for three months and a \$561 monetary fine. In relation to speeding, it is also part of the Fatal Five. Speeding continues to be a significant factor in crashes and it is recognised that speed cameras play a legitimate role in the enforcement of speed limits. Road safety research has indicated that point-to-point cameras, which are part of the Camera Detected Offence Program, CDOP, have been found to be more effective at reducing speed over longer stretches of road than fixed or mobile cameras. Currently, these point-to-point camera systems can only be used on lengths of road where there is a single speed limit. Amendments before us today have therefore been included in the bill that will allow the operation of point-to-point speed cameras on stretches of road with multiple speed limits.

In relation to other issues in the bill before us today, under the existing arrangements a marine pollution incident can involve several government agencies and these agencies are obliged to take separate legal action in order to recover their costs. In view of this, a further objective is to enable the state to, on behalf of prescribed entities, recover costs and expenses incurred in responding to a marine pollution incident. Certain administrative and technical enhancements or clarifications, including restructuring evidentiary provisions and amendments to cater for future uses of transport corridors, are also proposed in this bill before the House.

In relation to other details of the bill, the bill proposes amendments to various transport acts and others in order to achieve its stated objectives which include a range of things which are indeed worthwhile spelling out. In relation to TORUM, the Transport Operations (Road Use Management) Act 1995, the bill is expanding the existing interlock program to include mid-range drink-drivers; introducing the requirement for first-time drink-driving offenders as well as repeat offenders to complete a brief education program; to allow the operation of point-to-point speed cameras on stretches of road with multiple speed limits, as I said earlier; apply drug and testing regimes for people interfering with the operation of a vehicle; for placard loads that exceed a threshold quantity, to update existing evidentiary provisions; for applying heavy vehicle inspection fees; and driver licence disqualifications. In relation to the Transport Infrastructure Act 1994, the bill is to provide evidentiary certificates to confirm the identity of a toll road operator; and to enable certain exempt activities to be published on the department's website rather than by gazettal. In relation to the Transport Operations (Marine Pollution) Act 1995, the bill enables the state to, on behalf of prescribed entities, recover costs and expenses incurred in responding to a marine pollution incident.

Specifically, death and serious injury on Queensland roads, as has been alluded to, costs around about \$5 billion every single year. In addition to the devastation for individuals and families, these accidents place a high cost on the community through hospital and healthcare costs, lost productivity and the use of emergency services. As such, improving safety on our roads must be a priority and the Transport Legislation (Road Safety and Other Matters) Amendment Bill proposes road safety amendments intended to reduce these accidents and thereby help meet road safety objectives.

A snapshot of the road accident statistics does indeed bring some chilling figures to light. In 2017 there were 247 people who tragically lost their lives in road crashes, with an estimated 6,462 people seriously injured. Queensland's Road Safety Strategy 2015-2021 has an ambitious target to reduce death and serious injury by 30 per cent by 2020. For this target to even be approached, it is clear that much greater effort by everyone involved is, in fact, required. Although it is well recognised by the general community, two of the contributing factors in many road accidents remain alcohol and speeding. Together, as has been rightly pointed out, they are indeed a deadly cocktail. To gain community feedback on further road safety initiatives, a range of options were canvassed among stakeholders and the broader community via a discussion paper. The proposals receiving majority support were included in the reform measures designed to improve speed management and safety on all Queensland roads.

In addition to the road safety related amendments, the bill also extends the existing ability of the state to recover the costs and expenses incurred by prescribed entities when responding to a marine pollution incident as outlined earlier. These incidents have the potential to cause a significant risk to the environment and the economy so it is important that their costs are fully recovered by offenders.

Providing they can demonstrate to be a practical measure to reduce road accidents, road safety initiatives typically enjoy bipartisan support, as they indeed should do. Nobody has a mortgage on anyone's life. With respect to speed cameras, all members recognise the contribution this technology can make in this vital area of road safety. Importantly, where the LNP does differ from the Labor

government is in the way the approved signage for this equipment is, in fact, to be used. The LNP policy is that these should be clearly signed to promote road safety, whereas the Labor government has supported a less conspicuous and more covert placement. It should be noted that Labor removed the requirement for mobile speed cameras to display 'camera in use' signs to alert motorists to the presence of camera equipment. Unfortunately, such an approach can give rise to a perception—I stress can give rise to a perception—by the public that they are being used for mere revenue raising purposes. I stress for the third time it is the perception. In 2017-18 revenue from speed camera fines was \$160.6 million and under Labor this is forecast to grow to \$237.2 million in the 2021-22 financial year.

One thing I vehemently agree with the minister on is in relation to the whole issue of a third important variable in relation to deaths on the road, and that is pertaining to the use of texting whilst driving. I note that it is in this particular state jurisdiction that we have now some of the toughest laws in the country as it pertains to texting whilst driving. It is quite ironic that, when all of us here speak on bills, some of us speak from past experience, whether it be in the workforce, wherever we have come from. It might be from our days at uni, but it might also be speaking from this common-sense experience doing what every member of the Queensland public does, and in this case it is in relation to being serious about road safety as it pertains to teaching one of your own children as they start to embark upon the journey of having the privilege of holding an open driver's licence.

I am presently, with my second son, undertaking the 100 hours system which I absolutely agree with. It is absolutely amazing that what we are proposing to do here today could not be more relevant or timely when one considers the number of people who appear to be very cavalier when it comes to not taking on board the very fact that when one gets that little piece of perspex card that gives them an open driver's licence the mindset needs to change to that of it is a privilege to be able to drive on our 33,372 kilometres of state controlled roads as well as local roads.

These measures are, indeed, important. There are many things that divide us in this particular chamber, regardless of its physical location. We are blessed at the moment to be having parliament here in the regional city of Townsville. It makes no difference whatsoever where these words are recorded. At the end of the day, when one is teaching a loved one the basics of being able to drive safely on the roads, the expectation is that other people on the road comply with the laws of the state.

We fundamentally agree with what the bill proposes. I urge the minister to take on board the fact that, if we want to be fair dinkum about safety on Queensland roads—and I completely agree that alcohol, speeding, texting and other distractions play an important part—we must consider another very tangible variable, which is quite literally where the rubber hits the road.

Given the importance of well-maintained roads as a key measure to support overall road safety, which is what we are all trying to achieve, it was alarming to read the Auditor-General's report. I have referenced that document in the past and will do so again to highlight the significance of where we are at in relation to making sure that road users are absolutely protected by trying to maintain the best possible road conditions and surfaces. You cannot try to legislate for fools, but you need to govern to protect every single citizen, including when it pertains to the physical infrastructure that people are driving on. Members would be aware of the Auditor-General's report No. 4 of 2017-18 titled *Integrated transport planning*. In particular, I refer to the summary of the audit findings, which indicated that the Department of Transport and Main Roads has calculated a \$4 billion renewal backlog.

**Mr BAILEY:** Madam Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order on relevance. The speaker is getting well off the bill topic and making very broad statements that are totally unrelated to the bill.

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms McMillan):** Thank you, Minister. There is some relationship to safety, but I caution the member to come back to the bill.

**Mr MINNIKIN:** Thank you for your guidance, Madam Deputy Speaker. The relevance is that, if we are serious about overall road safety, as part of the overall kitbag of issues that we need to address, while the things that have been mentioned—speed, alcohol, texting et cetera—are absolutely vital, so too is the physical condition of the road. That goes to the very core of what it is that a government should be doing to give its citizens, when they leave their homes, the best possible chance of arriving back safely, regardless of whether they are going to the corner store or on a long distance journey up and down or across the width of this great state. I implore the minister to get on top of the ever-growing backlog of maintenance on our road network.

Furthermore, the LNP has a proud record in relation to supporting initiatives designed to make travel safer for motorists. Among other measures, in 1996 the LNP convened the inaugural road safety summit, which brought together a host of stakeholders to assist in forming the road safety action plan. That comprehensive approach helped to form the foundation for future road safety strategy plans, and long should they be refined and reviewed. In 1996, when the LNP was in government, it initiated a popular engagement program that sought community feedback on road safety, including on getting grassroots input into a review of speed limits and grant funding for roads.

I highlight the LNP policy on speed camera enforcement, which is that they should be used in locations of greatest risk and be clearly signed to alert motorists of their operation to avoid, as I have said earlier in my contribution, the perception by the public that they are being used merely for revenue-raising purposes. The LNP opposition also maintains that a high-profile active police presence on our roads remains the greatest deterrent for dangerous driving behaviour. At the end of the day, no-one in this chamber would dispute the fact that, when it comes to issues such as speed, alcohol, texting and the other factors that make up the dangerous five, we all completely support any initiatives that will enhance road safety. I support this legislation.