




Speech By  
**Aaron Harper**

**MEMBER FOR THURINGOWA**

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Record of Proceedings, 30 August 2022

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

 **Mr HARPER** (Thuringowa—ALP) (4.39 pm): I rise to speak in support of this bill and to speak broadly on the road safety measures contained within it. At the outset, I thank the minister, the departmental staff and the member for Kurwongbah, whose committee looked at and reported on this bill. This is an incredibly important bill to improve road safety and reduce road trauma in our state.

For too many years we have seen far too many accidents. I spent three decades responding to road accidents in North Queensland. I can speak to the lives lost, in particular those tragically lost in front of schools. Last week was Road Safety Week. I applaud the minister for introducing more cameras to catch people speeding in front of our local schools and through roadworks. There is an enormous investment being made in Townsville. It would be remiss of me not to mention the safety upgrades—I know that members are thinking I will say Riverway Drive, but I will start with Hervey Range Road. I went to a number of fatalities on Hervey Range Road. With the support of that community, when I was first elected I tabled a petition of over 2½ thousand people seeking upgrades to Hervey Range Road. My constituents still talk about that now. I thank the minister for the work that has been done on that important section of road. It continues to get more upgrades, even as we speak.

North of Townsville there has been significant investment. Hundreds of millions of dollars have been spent north and south of Townsville. The Premier visited recently. The member for Townsville will recall that there is a \$500 million investment in upgrades in the Haughton area. When I was stationed at Giru station, I remember going to many a road accident there.

As the member for Thuringowa, I am going to talk about the ring-road investment. That upgrade was on the back of losing some lives on that section of road. That is being duplicated right now, supporting 400 jobs. The sum of \$230 million is a wise investment and the people of Townsville thank the minister for it. On Riverway Drive, we will see the second stage of the duplication commence. I invite every single person in this House to come along to that. Delivering safer roads not only reduces congestion but also reduces the rate of accidents.

I am sure that every single member of the chamber would have regular interactions with their principals and broader school communities. I still receive calls from concerned principals and P&C members about speeding in front of schools. They are asking for us to do more. I did a bit of radio, and I thank the *Townsville Bulletin*: they ran a decent letter to the editor on Saturday. Surprise, surprise! I was talking about our investment in putting those detection cameras there. A minority of people said that it was just revenue raising, but there were 500 traffic infringements in front of our schools in the Townsville LGA last year. That is 500 young lives put at risk. I said that if anyone gets a ticket in front of school it should send a very strong message to them to slow down, because our next generation is precious. We do not want any of our young schoolchildren put at risk. I again applaud the minister for that measure.

I want to talk about the announcement—I know it is coming in September—about getting people to slow down around emergency vehicles and first responders. I have some harrowing memories of cars speeding past accident scenes. When cars go past you at speed on a highway, it is nerve-racking. Nationally, 18 lives were lost at roadworks last year. Whether you are a first responder or a roadworker, everyone deserves to go home after a day at work. We simply ask people to slow down around these sites.

The bill proposes to achieve the policy objectives by amending the Transport Operations (Road Use Management) Act 1995 and by making consequential amendments to various regulations to modernise and clarify how financial penalties collected for camera detected offences can be spent on road safety initiatives. For anyone who complains I say: all of that money goes into a road safety initiative.

The bill also ensures that health professionals who provide information about a non-Queensland driver's licence holder's fitness to drive has the same legal protection as would apply if they provided information about a Queensland driver's licence holder. It also allows for documentary related evidence to be provided to courts for certain objective and non-contentious information relevant to vehicle standards related offences.

The Transport Planning and Coordination Act will be amended to provide that a digital photo—the member for Pine Rivers made some commentary about this—taken when a person is under 15 years old will have a shelf life of five years instead of 10. We all want to look a little younger on our driver's licence!

The bill will amend the Transport Infrastructure Act to clarify that accommodation works may be undertaken as a result of a rail project to provide certainty and consistency for landowners and occupiers and all transport infrastructure projects. It also amends the Housing Legislation Amendment Act to correct some drafting errors by renumbering the affected provisions before they are inserted into the Residential Tenancies and Rooming Accommodation Act 2008. A significant road safety element of this bill is the amendment to clarify the investment of financial penalties.

Road safety is an issue that affects all of us. Over the past two years we have seen an increase in the number of lives lost in Queensland. Sadly, this is a trend that is continuing this year, with devastating consequences to our communities, families and individuals. There are significant economic consequences. In 2020 alone, road trauma cost Queensland an estimated \$6 billion. With the human and economic cost being so high, we need to be able to invest in targeted, innovative and effective road safety solutions. I commend the bill to the House.