




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR WHITSUNDAY

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

 **Ms CAMM** (Whitsunday—LNP) (2.29 pm): I am pleased to contribute today to the Transport Legislation (Road Safety and Other Matters) Amendment Bill 2022. As has been outlined by many in this House, what this bill aims to achieve is the use of revenue from camera detected offences, for road safety and ensuring that that revenue can be adequately directed and targeted in a way that hopefully is going to support greater education and greater improvement to road safety, in particular on state controlled roads where accidents most frequently happen.

What I am not pleased to contribute is that I represent a region in Central Queensland where we have had the highest fatality rates this year. I share that region with the member for Mackay, the member for Burdekin and other colleagues in Central Queensland. In the Mackay, Isaac and Whitsunday areas, we have seen sadly a tragic loss, with 39 fatalities already recorded—some families I know personally, including a young man who was lost returning home with his mum and brother from a swim meet in North Queensland.

As has already been outlined, data released by the Australian Road Safety Foundation shows there were 1,127 road fatalities nationally in 2021. Queensland had the highest number in the nation at 275. In the Central Queensland district area, there were 22 deaths recorded in 2021, whilst 39 have already been recorded this year.

In our region of Central Queensland, the highways are the roads which take commuter traffic. They are also used for hauling cane, moving aquaculture and horticulture produce, heavy vehicle routes, oversize and overmass routes for mining equipment, as well as being, as I said, commuter roads for members of our community to attend doctors' appointments, to travel to school and also to just go about their daily lives. They are also major tourism routes.

The increase in the number of caravan and camper trailers we have seen on our major road networks, being both the Bruce Highway and the Peak Downs Highway, post COVID is enormous. I think it is important to outline where the committee received submissions that there does need to be greater education when it comes to those who are hauling or towing, whether it be caravans or camper trailers, who may not have the experience to do so or understand the road conditions when they are travelling—in particular, in rural and regional Queensland. It is also proposed to broaden areas where revenue can be spent from these camera detected offences, in collaboration with organisations and local community groups.

In my community, the Road Accident Action Group, RAAG, which has been established across my region now for 20 years, since 2002, has been advocating for good driving behaviour across the Mackay-Isaac community. This was brought about by a need which was identified when we saw an increase in fatalities in particular of commuters out to the Bowen Basin on the Peak Downs Highway. While part of that road is not in my electorate, the majority of people who live in my electorate are employed in the Bowen Basin and travel each and every week out to those mine sites.

It is important that any initiative which this funding and revenue seeks to fund is delivered from an evidence based approach. It is important that it is targeted. I also hope that the department will be transparent with the data that it collects over this time and correlates that in consultation and engagement with regional officers. In particular, I know many regional MPs would like to know the evaluation of how this revenue over the next 12 months and coming years is being invested in our electorates, in our communities, and in partnership and collaboration with some of our organisations which are already doing an amazing job.

When it comes to road safety and this legislation, I do need to highlight the great work of some of our frontline officers—in particular, Sergeant Steve Smith and Sergeant Nigel Dalton—who travel all across Mackay, the Whitsundays and the Isaac region, educating, in particular, our year 12 students and have recently undertaken enormous efforts to address the fatal five on the back of last week's Road Safety Week. Most particularly, they are educating students and ensuring that there is an engaging discussion around drink and drug driving, the wearing of seatbelts, distractions, speeding and fatigue, which is also a major contributing factor in our region.

There has also been a proactive approach taken by my local Queensland Police Service with Operation Mackay Edmonton results in from 15 and 16 August where we saw static interception sites manned by officers from Mackay Northern Beaches division, including on my local road, Mackay Bucasia Road—I am a strong advocate for ensuring upgrades occur there and that planning for upgrades occur over the next several years—as well as out to the Peak Downs Highway. We saw pleasing results. Almost 730 roadside breath tests were performed over a two-day period.

I am very pleased to advise that, whilst several drivers did return positive readings on the roadside, secondary tests confirmed they were not over the legal limit and that no drink-drivers were found over that period. One driver was caught for alleged drug driving and a further person was charged with unlawful possession of dangerous drugs. However, that does not correlate with why people are losing their lives on our roads. There does need to be further investigation and further research. We cannot wait for coroners' reports. We do need to ensure our police service is adequately resourced to be able to get to the bottom of the cause of deaths when it comes to these fatalities to ensure we can address any safety issues in a timely manner.

I would also like to highlight in my own community the Whitsunday Emergency Services Field Day where there was a massive campaign in educating around road safety. I acknowledge Constable Jess Leech, who was formerly from the Whitsundays and is now serving in the Queensland Police Service in Emerald. I know she will do an incredible job educating the community in Central Queensland.

In particular, our chamber of commerce also participated in Road Safety Week at Paget in Mackay. We have to give a huge thankyou to local business. That is an opportunity that the state government and, in particular, the department can take. There are proactive businesses all across our state. In particular, in my community I give a shout-out to Treadwell Tyres for hosting what was an incredible collaborative event in the Mackay region to educate people. They are teaching young drivers how to change tyres and how to be safe in their own vehicle on the roads—those practical things that young drivers are not necessarily equipped with if you did not grow up on a farm like I did where your father made you learn how to change a tyre before you were allowed to drive the car. I am forever grateful for that.

With regard to the fatality statistics across our community, I would also like to highlight the incredible work of our RACQ CQ Rescue chopper where there has been an increase of 30 per cent in callouts for road accidents. That is a doubling on last year. Predominantly that relates to Central Queensland. The funding for those first responders and the impact that has going forward across our entire community is incredible.

I would also like to thank and highlight the work of the chair of CQ Rescue, Chris Wright, and the CEO, Tim Healee. They raised, in conjunction with the CEO of RACQ, David Carter, over \$240,000 in our community last weekend as part of their gala event. I know that the fatality rate, which is already unacceptable in Central Queensland, would be much higher if we did not have that service, which is funded by the community for the community.