




Speech By
Bryson Head

MEMBER FOR CALLIDE

Record of Proceedings, 31 August 2022

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

 **Mr HEAD** (Callide—LNP) (2.47 pm): While this bill came before the committee that I sit on, being new, I must thank the other members of the committee for their work along the way. I also thank the member for Condamine for his work prior to me taking his place.

Road safety is an incredibly important issue and it is amplified by the sheer size and distances within my electorate. Callide has the highest road toll in Queensland, according to the RACQ, and this is a statistic I take very seriously as the member for Callide. I encourage all actions that dramatically improve road safety across Callide and wider Queensland.

If we want to get really serious about improving road safety, fixing the state of our roads also needs to be a top priority. Try driving a truck up the Wondai highway, which I have done a number of times, and passing other trucks with only inches left between the wing mirrors. I can tell honourable members it is not something anyone enjoys doing. This is one of the many roads I have a genuine safety concern for. I also have genuine safety concerns for the Leichhardt Highway, the Mundubbera Dulong Road and the Burnett Highway, just to name a few. There are also a number of council owned roads where further funding and upgrades would assist in improving their road safety, and I actively call for this investment. I welcome anything that will bring tangible benefits to road safety in Callide and our state.

Imagine how much better our roads would be if we did not have a \$5.7 billion maintenance backlog. That could drastically improve road safety. I encourage the government to not stop with this bill if they want to have a significant impact on reducing our tragic road toll. Let's see them get on top of the maintenance backlog. Think of the road safety improvements and infrastructure that \$220 million would get the people of Callide. I would like \$220 million to spend on road upgrades and to improve safety for the people of my electorate, but no. Unfortunately, it was wasted on Wellcamp.

I believe that we should be doing all we can to improve road safety, and that is why the LNP are supporting this bill. If we want to see significant improvements in road safety, then let's not stop here. Let's get real about the need for driver awareness. Awareness programs in regard to driving around livestock and driving with wildlife for those unfamiliar with rural roads should be strongly encouraged, as should awareness around driving on single-lane bitumen. How many people grow up in metropolitan areas and cities, come to a country event—whether it be the Thangool Cup, which just so happens to be on this weekend, or the Chinchilla Melon Festival in February of next year—and do not understand how to negotiate oncoming cars, let alone oncoming caravans or road trains? You will not have safe roads if you do not have appropriate driver awareness.

Drivers who may have never driven anything other than a Tesla are now buying four-wheel drives, buying a large caravan and hitting the open road. While I encourage people to come and visit the bush, I also strongly encourage them to undertake a towing course and make themselves aware of the hazards and risks of driving on rural roads. On their travels, I also encourage them to drop in and

support many of our great cafes, servos and small businesses. In my travels I see far too many smashed-up caravans along our roads as a result of traffic incidents. Further, I encourage caravanners to be well aware of the \$5.7 billion maintenance backlog, as the roads they will be travelling on are not as they should be. This directly impacts road safety and risks the lives of Queenslanders.

Speaking of driver awareness and education, we have an empty facility sitting west of Toowoomba that might just be perfect for a driver education facility. It is called Wellcamp—in case members did not pick that up! We have a minister for transport who has been in the position for seven years. Unfortunately, we continue to see massive budget blowouts—

Mr BAILEY: Mr Speaker, I rise to a point of order. The honourable member is misleading the House. I have not been the Minister for Transport for seven years.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Martin): Minister, there is a process if you believe a member has misled the House. Member for Callide, I ask you to withdraw and come back to the long title of the bill.

Mr HEAD: I withdraw. Unfortunately, we continue to see massive budget blowouts on the likes of Cross River Rail, while my roads continue to be neglected. This is a genuine road safety concern. Our road statistics continue to worsen. This is a huge safety issue for my electorate. If we want to continue to improve road safety we should not accept road hazard signs being left in place on a semi-permanent basis. We should fix road damage, including potholes, damaged bridges and rough shoulders, as an absolute priority. Let's keep working on road safety, because it is critically important.

Police numbers impact road safety. When there is a strong police presence, it is clear that people are more likely to obey the law. As I said at the start of my speech, my electorate has the highest road toll in Queensland according to the RACQ. Improving roads and infrastructure in my electorate was a significant priority for my campaign, and it is still a significant priority for me today. If anyone wants to come to my electorate and see firsthand how a lack of maintenance impacts road safety, I welcome them to come to the great electorate of Callide.