




Speech By  
**Dale Last**

**MEMBER FOR BURDEKIN**

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

 **Mr LAST** (Burdekin—LNP) (5.04 pm): I rise to contribute to the Transport Legislation (Road Safety and Other Matters) Amendment Bill 2022. Like several of my colleagues on this side of the House, I have seen the effects of road crashes firsthand. I acknowledge the emergency service workers who have done likewise. In our time of need Queenslanders rely on our paid and voluntary emergency services and it is no different when Queenslanders are affected by road trauma. The sad fact is that our road toll has reached 200. That is 200 people who have lost their lives on Queensland roads this year. That is a 28 per cent increase on the same time five years ago. While I will not be opposing this bill, I feel that I must address several elements contained therein focusing on both my work experience and my role as the shadow minister for rural and regional affairs and shadow minister for police.

What should send a chill up the spine of every Queenslander is that more than 75 per cent of fatalities on Queensland roads this year have occurred on roads in rural and regional Queensland. This sobering fact is the reason that I speak about the substandard roads in rural and regional Queensland and it is why I will continue to do just that. If I use my electorate as an example, some of the deplorable roads in that electorate, roads that are the arteries for the electorate, the roads that people travel to and from work on, to do their shopping, to visit medical practitioners, those roads in many cases are unsealed.

Recently we had a case where we had two road trains with livestock roll on the Mount Coolon road. Stock had to be destroyed. It highlights just how far we need to go in terms of bringing our roads up to standard. Just a couple of weeks ago at Home Hill we had a double fatality. Unfortunately those white crosses on the side of the road just keep increasing in number. It is a sobering thought when you think that we are on track this year to have the worst road toll in history.

For me—and I will call it for what it is—that is a massive fail by this government. It is a massive fail, when they talk about road safety and all the initiatives they are putting in place, that we are on track in this day and age to have the worst road toll in Queensland's history. I note that a key element of this bill relates to the use of revenue from camera detected offences. Whilst I welcome the intention of the amendments to maximise the reduction in the frequency and severity of road crashes, with the budget documents showing revenue from fines and forfeitures increasing by 75 per cent in the five financial years from 2020-21 to 2024-25, there can be no argument that there are insufficient funds available to address Queensland's road toll.

Whilst the revenue from camera detected offences provides hundreds of millions of dollars of revenue and has its place in addressing the road toll, the fact is that nothing changes driver behaviour faster than a police vehicle. Driver behaviour is one of the key factors that must be addressed if we are to reduce this carnage. Last week the RACQ revealed that almost one in 10 Queensland drivers admitted to not wearing a seatbelt at some time over the past 12 months. Furthermore, over 74 per cent admitted to speeding, over 41 admitted to driving tired and more than 13 per cent thought they may be

over the legal blood alcohol limit. According to the most recent Road Crash Weekly Report, those three behaviours were contributing factors to 65 per cent of fatalities in 2021. To put it bluntly, those three behaviours led to 140 deaths.

There are many amendments contained in this bill that relate to a wide range of issues that all play a part in road safety, and my colleagues will address many of those issues, but at the heart of this debate are Queenslanders who have lost a family member, a friend or a colleague. Every single fatal crash leaves a permanent hole in our communities and every single fatal crash has an impact on the people called on to respond. We simply cannot have a debate on road safety without acknowledging the horrific increases in deaths on our roads. Even during lockdowns and travel restrictions the road toll continued to climb. Today I urge all road users to do the right thing, but most of all today I urge this government to do the right thing.

There is no doubt that the bill will pass tonight, giving this government the powers that they have requested to address Queensland's road toll but let us be clear: with that power comes responsibility and unless the road toll is addressed this government will be held to account. We have heard from previous speakers about the impact of road maintenance and poor road conditions. It is a pity that the minister has just left the chamber because I have a 30-kilometre section—

**Ms PUGH:** Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. The member well knows the convention that we do not reflect on the absence or otherwise of a member from this place.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Martin): The member for Mount Ommaney is correct. I ask you to withdraw.

**Mr LAST:** I withdraw. If poor road conditions are leading to fatal accidents and if fatal accidents are occurring on sections of the highway that are currently being upgraded or are the subject of maintenance then that is a pertinent point. When a 30-kilometre section of the Bruce Highway was abandoned by the contractor six months ago, you have to question the priorities of this government. Six months of inaction on a 30-kilometre section of the Bruce Highway means that that section of highway is even more dangerous. It is about time that we started focusing on some of those issues if we are truly to address the road toll in this state.