




Speech By
Daniel Purdie

MEMBER FOR NINDERRY

Record of Proceedings, 12 October 2022

ADJOURNMENT

Road Safety, Youth Justice

 **Mr PURDIE** (Ninderry—LNP) (7.19 pm): There have been 21 people killed in traffic crashes on the Sunshine Coast this year, which is 10 more than this time last year. Across Queensland, 231 people have lost their lives, with another 490 requiring hospitalisation. Unsurprisingly, 17-year-old P-platers are at a higher risk of being killed or killing someone else on our roads. They are twice as likely to be killed as other drivers and six times more likely to be killed than learner drivers. They represent 14 per cent of Queensland licence holders but are involved in 25 per cent of road deaths. A Sentencing Advisory Council report has previously highlighted that almost 10 per cent of dangerous operation of a motor vehicle causing death offences in Queensland are committed by 17-year-old drivers, so it should be alarming to every member in this place and every Queenslanders that once again this government's broken youth justice legislation is failing to keep our young drivers and all Queensland road users safe.

Before the inclusion of 17-year-old persons in the Youth Justice Act, 17-year-old drivers were sentenced as adults for drink, drug and other dangerous driving offences. Now they are routinely getting a free pass—no fine, no licence suspension or disqualification, and no finding of guilt. They drive away from court thumbing their noses at police and laughing at the weak laws of this state, but it is no laughing matter. Innocent victims who have been injured by these dangerous young drivers often have no recourse for compensation—as occurred in a local court again this week, where a magistrate, acknowledging the stupidity of the situation, could not take a previous drink-driving offence into consideration during the application of a restricted work licence because the driver was 17 years old at the time, giving the driver a second free pass.

Amendments made to the Youth Justice Act in the Tow Truck and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2017 purporting to close this loophole have failed. The explanatory notes claimed the amendments would ensure 17-year-olds remained subject to mandatory disqualification periods for serious driving offences. I note that during the debate on this bill on the first full sitting day of the 56th Parliament members on this side and government ministers understood the importance of this issue. Minister Bailey said—

The bill ... makes straightforward, necessary amendments relating to 17-year-olds transferring into the youth justice system.

Minister Farmer said—

This means for the purpose of road rules 17-year-old drivers will be treated the same as adult drivers.

She said—

The risks are significant and the consequences are tragic ...
before she commended the bill to the House.

However, successful applications are still being made in the Childrens Court under section 24A of the Youth Justice Act, which allows the mandatory disqualification requirements under section 253 and 254 of the Youth Justice Act to be avoided by the dismissal of the charge because the operation of

the mandatory disqualification in section 254(4) of the Youth Justice Act only applies once a child is found guilty. I call on the government to urgently rectify this dangerous failure of their legislation and admit that their soft-on-crime regime is failing to keep people safe.

(Time expired)