




Speech By
Jessica Pugh

MEMBER FOR MOUNT OMMANEY

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

 **Ms PUGH** (Mount Ommaney—ALP) (10.58 am), continuing: Under this legislation, projects just like the Jindalee bridge can be funded to reduce the number of road crashes in black spots. In addition to saving lives, of course, these safety upgrades will also save hours on the road and deliver economic and social wellbeing benefits as people spend less time in their cars and more time with their families or at work.

It is important to note that the Jindalee bridge project differs from other key upgrades we have seen in my electorate since I was elected in 2017. The Ipswich Motorway upgrade, while a busy motorway, is not a known black spot. The amazing Sumners Road overpass named after Len Waters is a game-changing piece of infrastructure that frees up capacity for 35,000 vehicles a day to get moving around Brisbane, but it was not a black spot. I take a moment to acknowledge the recent passing of Len Waters' widow, Gladys, in the previous month. Gladys attended the opening of the Len Waters Overpass last year alongside me, the minister and the Premier. Her passing is very sad and deeply felt in my community.

Black spots are a unique and special challenge for Transport and Main Roads because they have a deleterious effect on traffic moving around our city. Accidents make travel times unpredictable at best. Some mornings it can take 45 minutes to get into the city from Riverhills, but if there is an accident it can be well over an hour. People never know if today will be the unlucky day that they will be rear-ended by somebody tailgating them.

While I am on the subject of tailgating, I will take a moment to talk about this incredibly dangerous driver behaviour. As our cameras become more advanced and sophisticated I am very hopeful—and I know many people in my community are too—that tailgating is the kind of driver behaviour that we will be able to target using this kind of sophisticated technology. Tailgating is the kind of intimidating behaviour that can lead to changed driver behaviour by the drivers of the cars around that vehicle and by the people being tailgated, which can result in those drivers making unsafe driving decisions. It is bullying behaviour on our roads and it needs to stop.

All drivers need to remember that they are behind the wheel of a lethal weapon and when they wield that weapon in a dangerous way they are responsible for the consequences. That is why I support the minister's proposal to change the word 'accident' to 'crash'. Behaviours like tailgating are responsible for a large number of road crashes and they are no accident.

I often say to my son, who is 10 years old, 'If you do something silly and something bad happens, like you ride your bike at a wall at high speed and you hit it—which is a thing he likes to do—it is not an accident, Heath; it is a consequence of a choice you made.' It is the same with dangerous behaviours like tailgating. If someone crashes while exhibiting dangerous driving behaviour that is not an accident, that is a consequence. There is only one way to stop that. That is a change of driver behaviour. That is exactly the kind of education program we are going to see funded under this legislation.

I used to be a very proud member of the Transport and Resources Committee. During a committee hearing a few years ago I was struck by a statistic that was provided by a departmental representative that about 20 per cent of our road fatalities still involve drink driving. When members of this House reflect on the vast amount of community education over a long period of time—and I have spoken before about the highly effective advertising campaigns that have been run; they do use unparliamentary language so I will not repeat the slogans here today—we should note that the advertising campaigns were incredibly effective. It is concerning that the rate of drink driving is still so high.

In that hearing with the department I asked why we continue to see such a high rate of fatalities involving drink driving despite the hugely changed social mores. The response of the staff member stayed with me. They comment that people who drink and drive in this day and age are not acting logically and they are probably in the throes of addiction. This program will target those people and work with them. There will be rehabilitation programs. We have already had legislation passed around alcohol interlock devices. With 20 per cent of fatalities involving alcohol we still have a long way to go to stamp out this scourge in our community.

Finally, I would like to speak about the legal protections that will be provided for doctors who report on those who will no longer be driving or should no longer be driving. I am not sure about other members of the House—it might be particular to my community—but I often have people come into my electorate office who have had their driver's licence taken away by their doctor. It is often well overdue. They ask if there is anything I can do to help.

I know it is a hard decision for a GP or practitioner to take away what for a person can feel like a big piece of their freedom, independence and their ability to get around in their community. That is a huge decision for a doctor or physician to make. We all know just how dependent a lot of us in Queensland are on having a driver's licence. We also know that road safety has to come first so I support the measures that we are putting in place to ensure that doctors can make those decisions without fear of recourse or repercussion.

I would say to drivers that it is good to think ahead and think about the time when they will not be driving anymore. For most of us that day will come. It is a hard day. It is a day that we have to plan for. I would encourage all drivers—even ones as young as I—to have a think about when that day comes what their plan is, how they are going to move and how they are going to stay engaged with their community. We need to ensure that the roads are a safe place for each and every one of us. The best way to do that is for people to make sure they have a plan B for getting around their community when they no longer have a licence. I encourage everybody to think about that so it is not such a hard thing when the time comes.

In closing, again I say what a huge supporter I am of this bill and how excited I am to see some of the funding that will be quarantined for road specific projects aimed at projects in my community like our much awaited Jindalee bridge. I commend the bill to the House.