




Speech By
Lachlan Millar

MEMBER FOR GREGORY

Record of Proceedings, 30 August 2022

TRANSPORT LEGISLATION (ROAD SAFETY AND OTHER MATTERS) AMENDMENT BILL

 **Mr MILLAR** (Gregory—LNP) (3.13 pm): I would like to make a contribution to the Transport Legislation (Road Safety and Other Matters) Amendment Bill 2022. Firstly I would like to thank the committee and its chair. I also pay tribute to our former secretary Deb Jeffrey, who has left the parliament after decades of service to this place. I welcome Dr Jodhi Rutherford as our new secretariat and I wish her all the best and look forward to working closely with her. I also want to give a shout-out to Dr Amanda Beem, who is on our islands inquiry and doing a fantastic job.

The bill makes the following changes relevant to transport legislation: currently all revenue from camera detected offences must be used for road safety education, road accident rehabilitation and safety improvements on state controlled roads where actions most frequently happen. It is proposed to broaden where the revenue can be spent to include: collaborating with organisations and local communities to develop and implement safer practices; enabling vulnerable road users to participate in programs to improve their safety on the road; and proactively researching innovative solutions to existing or emerging problems. Changes are also proposed as to where funding can be used for infrastructure safety improvements. Currently the legislation limits this to state controlled roads where accidents most frequently happen. This bill will broaden this to fund any safety improvements on state controlled roads prioritised to maximise the reduction in the frequency and severity of road crashes.

Road safety is paramount right across Queensland. There would not be a person in this chamber who does not want to make it even safer. One road death on our roads is one too many. It is an absolute heartbreaking tragedy for the parents of a young person to get a knock on their door to be told that something terrible has happened and that their child has passed away, or for children to get a knock on the door to find out that a parent or a grandparent has passed away. With the current road toll around 200, that is 200 families that have been affected. That is 200 funerals that have to be organised. That is 200 families that have a massive hole in their heart and nothing—no words, no actions—can undo what has happened. It is so important that we get people home safely. Whether it is in mining, on the road or at a job, a person has to come home and go through that door. It is paramount that we get road safety right.

The LNP will not oppose the bill. We do, however, have to look at the lack of road maintenance funding for regional state controlled roads across this state, which I have continued to advocate for. Over \$5 billion—

Mr Minnikin: \$5.7 billion.

Mr MILLAR: I will take the interjection from the shadow minister: \$5.7 billion. As the member for Gregory, I cover 460,000 square kilometres of this great state. I have to travel along those roads, which I enjoy. I love getting out on the road and visiting the different communities. I get to see firsthand the state of those roads. I will give credit where credit is due. Thank you for completing the Blackall-Jericho Road. That will play a significant role in getting our organic beef out of the Channel Country into the

abattoirs. We need it to be in Rocky or Townsville. The Torrens Creek Road has been finished. That gives us another access point to get beef down from the Diamantina, through Longreach, up through Hughenden and into Townsville to an important market.

We are starting to see a live cattle trade out of Townsville. The condition of the roads affects the condition of the cattle. I continue to get complaints through my office from either graziers or processors that cattle have lost condition in the time from being loaded on property to being unloaded at the abattoir. When I talk to companies like Blenners, a major refrigeration operation out of Tully, one of the major problems they have at the moment is the massive rub on avocados or mangoes such that when it gets to the Sydney Markets—

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Kelly): Member for Gregory, you are straying a long way from the long title of the bill. I have given some leeway to see if you would come back. I would ask you to come back to the long title of the bill.

Mr MILLAR: I will come back to the title of the bill. I am saying that the condition of our roads is having an impact on not only road safety but also produce. Let us get back to road safety, as the Deputy Speaker has requested. I will always follow the Deputy Speaker's rulings.

Road safety is important. I believe that previous road safety action plans are failing. In 2016 the road toll was 251 fatalities. In 2021 it was 275 fatalities, which is almost 10 per cent higher despite improvements in vehicle safety. So far, as we heard this morning, around 200 people have died on Queensland roads. That is 15 per cent higher than at the same time last year and 35 per cent higher than the five-year average. Just to bring it home, for my seat of Gregory and the seats of Keppel, Rockhampton and Callide, in the Central Queensland police region we have seen an increase of 84 per cent. Tragically, in 2021, 22 people died in Central Queensland and so far in 2022—I have in front of me the fatality figures by police region—we are looking at 39 fatalities. That is devastating.

We have to put more effort into education. As a parent, I believe we need to encourage our children to drive responsibly and we absolutely need to look at defensive driving education programs. In my electorate I know young people who think they are six foot seven and bulletproof. They do not realise the power of the car they are driving, whether it is a four-cylinder Hilux or a six-cylinder diesel Toyota trayback—especially the young blokes who are all care and no responsibility. I was one of those. I would drive along dirt roads at unacceptable speeds not knowing, if a kangaroo came out from the side or something like that, how to be evasive. Naturally you turn the wheel to try to avoid the kangaroo, but that puts pressure on one side of the car and it spins out, and there will be a gum tree waiting there.

We have to have a campaign for young country male drivers who think they are six foot seven and bulletproof, as I thought I was. I am lucky. I was in an incident. When I was a young bloke, we were travelling to Brisbane late at night and the car spun out. Both my brothers were in the car as well as my older brother's fiancée. The car spun out just past Blackwater. I was in the back seat. We went round and round and down an embankment. Can you imagine what that would have done to my parents, my father? We were travelling to Brisbane for a family reunion when we spun out. I have never forgotten that. It has made me very careful about driving. In fact, believe it or not, I stick to cruise control in the Toyota because in this job it is important that I retain my licence and I cannot afford a chauffeur—not that I need one.

I support the bill. Yes, it is important that we put money towards other educational programs, but let us get to the crux of the matter: if I can make only one contribution it would be to say that we need a digital media campaign for young male country drivers. While I do not think it would cost much at all, if we saved one life it would be worth every cent. I cannot afford to lose young families and young people from my region. This is important. We have a mental health issue at the moment that is affecting people right across Queensland. This is something that we can actively participate in. We can start doing something so that more people stay alive and more people get home safely.