




Speech By  
**Laura Gerber**

**MEMBER FOR CURRUMBIN**

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

 **Mrs GERBER** (Currumbin—LNP) (2.10 pm): In 2012 Jordan was on his way home from his work Christmas party. He had been drinking; at some point he had smoked some marijuana. He was speeding at 30 kilometres over the speed limit. Somewhere around Beenleigh he hit a guardrail but continued on. When he got to about three kilometres north of Dreamworld he hit a broken-down stationary car on the side of the road that had five young adults inside. It was one of the darkest scenes on the M1 and it still is. Five young lives were taken that night. Only one of the five young teens in the stationary car survived.

My constituents Melissa and Peter McGuinness have embarked on a social mission to push for change in the reckless driving behaviours of young drivers. Jordan, the driver, was their son. He too was killed in the accident. They have shared their experience with over 150,000 young people across Australia because they seek change in youth driver behaviour through their road safety education and awareness program. As the shadow assistant minister for youth, I am very proud to stand up in this House and inform members about their road safety mission. They do not receive any state government funding, and it is my hope that the amendments in this bill will open some funding up to them.

Mel and Pete's youth road safety program You Choose takes an innovative social project approach to road safety education for teens. It focuses on peer advocacy as an integral part of changing behaviours and attitudes. You Choose places students in a place of personal reflection around their own intentions, choices and actions and how those intentions, choices and actions affect others and their loved ones because we all know that driver behaviour is a massive contributor to road trauma. In Peter and Melissa's words—

The program stimulates young people's instincts as social change agents ... similarly to how teens change their world for the better by being energised about the climate, bullying, consent and so on.

Luck and passivity are replaced by choice and accountability. Protecting each other, their families and their communities from preventable tragedy. One student, one friendship group, one school, one family, one community at a time.

When Mel and Peter go into schools they create this change. Road safety is not just about skills and cautionary tales: it is about wellbeing. Mel speaks with high school students right across the country and challenges young drivers to put themselves in Jordan's shoes and to put their own families in Mel and Peter's shoes. Mel and Peter are making a real difference and they have been acknowledged nationally for their work. I am very proud to report that Mel and Peter will be attending the national awards for charities event tomorrow night. They have been nominated as finalists for the emerging not-for-profit of the year award.

**Mr Minnikin** interjected.

**Mrs GERBER:** Thank you. This is not the first award they have been put forward for. Mel and Peter were awarded Australian Road Safety Award for school programs and Mel was an Australian of the Year runner-up in both 2021 and 2022, yet they receive zero funding from the state government for the critical program they deliver in our schools. One of the objectives of this bill is to ensure revenue

from camera detected offences is invested back into road safety initiatives and allow revenue raised to be used to collaborate with organisations and local communities to develop and implement safer practices. You Choose has made an incredible impact on young Australians. They applied for funding from the state government last year and were rejected. It is my hope that this bill will mean charities like You Choose get the funding they need to continue to deliver road safety programs in our schools.

Initiatives like You Choose have never been so important. Yesterday Queensland reached a tragic milestone: more than 200 lives have been lost on our roads this year. That is 18 more fatalities when compared with the same time period last year and almost 40 more fatalities than the five-year average. Recent fine increases announced by the state government do not seem to be changing behaviour quickly enough, but hopefully education and collaboration with organisations like You Choose will.

This bill also implements changes to where funding can be spent on infrastructure safety improvements. Existing legislation determines that this funding can only be spent on state controlled roads where accidents most frequently happen. This bill will broaden this to allow revenue to be spent on funding any safety improvement on state controlled roads prioritised to reduce the frequency of crashes. It is my sincere hope that this proposal will open funding up to provide safety upgrades to projects like 'Devil's Elbow' on Tallebudgera Connection Road before it is too late.

It took a massive community campaign to get the state government to commit to planning safety upgrades at that hazardous corner. It took crash after crash, it took the section of the road to be dubbed 'Devil's Elbow', it took petitions and it took me raising it time and time again in this House, but for years Main Roads said there was not enough data to support this section of the road requiring safety upgrades. It should not take someone being killed or injured before we get the upgrades we need. I am hopeful this amendment will mean that funding can now be spent on dangerous intersections like 'Devil's Elbow' before there are 40 crashes.

In considering the proposed extended use of this revenue for research into innovative solutions to existing or emerging problems I want to touch on two local intersections. The first is the Currumbin Creek Road and Bienvenue Drive intersection at Currumbin Waters. It has been a trouble spot for our community for years.

As our community grows, so does the need for transport solutions that balance efficiency with road safety. Overwhelmingly, our community is concerned that the \$4 million upgrade, both state and federally funded, will not address the congestion and subsequent safety concerns that have riddled the intersection for years. When speaking with locals about this intersection just last month I heard a number of road safety concerns, particularly concerning the left-hand turning lane into the Meadows Estate. One frequent visitor to the Meadows Estate told me that because of the confusing layout she is really worried that she will hit someone while trying to do the right thing.

The second intersection I want to touch on is the dangerous Toolona Street intersection at Tugun. At the end of the 2020 election the government made a commitment to upgrade this intersection. This intersection needs a complete safety reconfiguration. It is incredibly dangerous and it is the constant location of accidents for locals. This is what our community needed and this is what our community expected when the state government committed to upgrading this intersection. What did our community get? We did not get the upgrade we asked for. We got some safety improvements but no upgrade to the intersection.

The whole intersection needs to be looked at. It needs to be properly planned and it needs to be upgraded, because it is extremely dangerous. What makes matters worse is that the feedback I have received from my community is that it feels more dangerous now than it did beforehand. Matt from Tugun wrote to me saying—

The government have spent \$1.5 million on this. An eye watering sum of money for what many locals call a 'downgrade'. It doesn't work properly and most people who attempt to cross the road here risk their lives.

It is this kind of planning I am talking about that we need from the state government. I am hopeful that this bill will allow for proper funding and the proper planning of intersections that need fixing. This is a broken promise to my community and it is simply not good enough. I have provided this feedback to TMR. Unfortunately, the response I have received is that no further works are planned for this very dangerous intersection.

I hope this bill will allow for a research proposal so that a safer upgrade can be planned and provided, but I will not be holding my breath because I have raised this time and time again in this House with no result. Our community deserves to feel safe on our local roads, and at the moment the Toolona Street intersection is so dangerous that my community does not feel safe. I implore this government to ensure they commit to their promise. They made a promise to upgrade the Toolona Street intersection and we did not get the upgrade we were promised. This state government needs to stay true to their word and upgrade the Toolona Street intersection.