




Speech By
Hon. Mark Bailey

MEMBER FOR MILLER

Record of Proceedings, 31 August 2022

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

Second Reading

 **Hon. MC BAILEY** (Miller—ALP) (Minister for Transport and Main Roads) (2.54 pm), in reply: The Transport Legislation (Road Safety and Other Matters) Amendment Bill 2022 includes amendments to improve road safety, increase the range of allowable motorised mobility devices and make improvements to court processes and digital photo shelf life. The bill brings equity and consistency to landowners and occupiers whose land is affected by transport infrastructure works and makes other minor enhancements to transport and housing legislation.

It is good to see the support for this bill from such a diverse range of members in this House, and I thank all members for their support across the board for this bill. I acknowledge the speeches of the various members who contributed to the debate who have been first responders in previous careers: the members for Macalister, Thuringowa, Nicklin and Greenslopes, who no doubt has treated many people who have been suffering road trauma. If I have left anybody out, I apologise. I think that is a pretty reasonable list. It is good to have that body of experience as a part of this discussion and debate. It is also good to hear the important message that ‘road safety is everybody’s responsibility’ echoed around the House. I will return to that a little later.

I acknowledge the contribution of the member for Chatsworth and shadow minister for transport and main roads and the support of the opposition for the bill. I also acknowledge the support of members of other parties and independent MPs. Some MPs raised concerns about the number of lives lost this year. I am sure that all members share those concerns. The member for Surfers Paradise acknowledged that the majority of these are a result of driver behaviour. That is something the member for Callide might like to take note of from his more esteemed and elder fellow MP.

The number of lives being lost on Queensland roads has been on a downward trajectory since 1973, broadly, when the number of lives lost was a shocking 32.1 per 100,000 population or, in that year, 638 deaths. That was 50 years ago. In 2021 there were 277 lives lost, which is down to 5.31 per 100,000 population. We do not accept, in any shape or form, that that is acceptable. This decrease is a result of the introduction of significant and effective road safety interventions over time by a whole range of governments. They have been effective; however, we are beginning to experience some diminishing returns on those efforts.

Since the record low of 220 lives lost in 2019—the lowest since records began—we have been experiencing an increase in the number of fatalities through the pandemic. I do not believe that is any coincidence. Sadly, this trend is continuing this year. A few figures were mentioned during the debate, and I will provide an update. As of yesterday, we are up 13 fatalities on Queensland roads when compared to the same time last year. Of course, this year, with flooding from Bundaberg to the border, we saw 14 people unfortunately lose their lives after driving into floodwater.

Since the pandemic began we have seen a real shift in behaviour playing out on Queensland roads, with more dangerous driving becoming prevalent. Increased risky driving through the lockdown periods and more people travelling by road has coincided with an increase in road trauma—a trend which has also been experienced in other jurisdictions and countries. This highlights the importance of being able to identify and be responsive to the changes on our roads.

This bill clarifies that Camera Detected Offence Program funds may be invested in the trial or pilot of innovative new solutions that address existing and emerging risky behaviours and patterns that lead to road trauma. A great example of using innovation to address road trauma is the speed camera signs pilot for school zones and roadworks, which was announced last week as part of Queensland Road Safety Week. This is a world-first road safety pilot that will run until the end of April 2024. It uses portable, high-tech speed cameras attached to powered road signs. Speeding is one of the Fatal Five dangerous road safety behaviours, and in 2021 we saw 74 deaths on our roads as a result of speeding. That is almost 26 per cent—one in four deaths on our Queensland roads. These new cameras will be in place to protect the lives of some of the most vulnerable road users in our community: schoolchildren, their families, school crossing supervisors, parents, school staff and, of course, road workers.

TMR monitors the implementation of all major initiatives and at an appropriate time undertakes an independent evaluation to address effectiveness. Ongoing monitoring and evaluation assists TMR to determine the success of each initiative and identify opportunities for continuous improvement of road safety initiatives. For example, the Targeted Road Safety Program was independently evaluated by the Centre for Accident Research & Road Safety, or CARRS-Q as everyone knows them, in June of last year. The evaluation considered the safety effects of 357 verified projects. The report concluded that TRSP provided a positive safety impact on the average number of crash reductions per year, in terms of both total injury crashes and lives lost, and had an overall benefit-cost ratio from this evaluation of 8.77.

The Palaszczuk government is committed to maintaining a safe and resilient road network for all of our travellers. This is our government's seventh record rail and road commitment in the budget this year. A variety of MPs have used the debate to bid for more road funding, so let me remind people just to be very clear—I am sure that they have heard it before—where we are in terms of road and rail funding. We have nearly 50 per cent more in this year's budget than the last budget under the previous government. If you want road funding, it is this government that delivers it and no-one else.

Building on the \$29.7 billion QTRIP provides an increase of \$2.2 billion over the next four-year program, and I might add that for the last four or so years the Department of Transport and Main Roads has spent above our capital allocation for a given year, so we have absolutely delivered more than what we promised in terms of the budget. As a result there have been 25,200 direct jobs across that and 61 per cent of that—more than \$18 billion—goes outside the metropolitan region, representing an increase of three per cent compared to the previous QTRIP, with more than 16,000 jobs in those regional areas. In our current road and rail budget, we see a record nearly \$5 billion—\$4.94 billion—in terms of a maintenance, preservation and operations budget.

During the debate I heard a number of members being very critical about maintenance, but that is an increase of \$277 million on the previous year and is markedly higher than the \$2.77 billion under the last budget of the Newman government—an increase of more than \$2 billion on maintenance compared to the LNP—so let us not hear anymore nonsense about that. In this regard those opposite deliberately ignore their own record and the superior record of this government.

I want to acknowledge the contribution and supportive comments of the Palaszczuk government's sealing program by the member for Gregory, who in the debate thanked the government for the sealing of the Blackall Jericho Road and the Torrens Creek Road, so I thank the member for Gregory for his honesty. There was a billion dollars worth of stimulus coming into our roads here in Queensland and I ensured that \$100 million of that was allocated to sealing. Because we have the largest road network in the country, it was an incredible opportunity to get some of that sealing done and of course most of that was in regional and rural areas. The member for Gregory is benefiting from that and I know that there are other regional members—not all on my side—who have thanked me around the corridors for the commitment that we have made to regional roads through that stimulus.

Generally the issues raised by both sides of the House further illustrate what I have emphasised many times here before today, and that is that road safety is an issue that affects all of us. This bill will continue to ensure that CDOP funds are reinvested in road safety initiatives that will help Queensland achieve the road safety targets we have committed to in our Queensland Road Safety Strategy 2022-31—that is, a 50 per cent reduction in lives lost and a 30 per cent reduction in serious injuries on Queensland roads by 2031.

We need to support research and development, best practice, technical evolution and technological evolution, trials and the delivery of new solutions where trials are successful. We also need to be guided by data and evidence and tailor our road safety initiative to the needs of different regions and the types of road users throughout the state. These reforms include new and emerging targeted programs of work designed to reduce road trauma such as the trial and evaluation of distinct and increased drug-driving deterrents, education and driver awareness programs, anti-hooning technology and expanding the reach of the automated numberplate recognition technology.

Funding allocations will not be limited to where crashes have already happened and funds may be allocated proactively for sections of state controlled roads where crashes have not yet happened but where analysis shows a risk of serious crashes exists. This is an important reform because it was widely acknowledged by a range of members that this will see a much more proactive approach in terms of infrastructure for safer roads. The allocation of infrastructure funds will be prioritised using a risk assessment methodology.

This bill also includes positive changes for members of our community who rely on mobility scooters or motorised wheelchairs. Based on recommendations from the National Transport Commission, this bill will implement changes that will make it easier for people in Queensland to choose the mobility device that best suits their needs. These changes will assist people who require heavier and more powerful devices such as when the user requires special equipment attached to the device.

The bill also provides for legal protections from liability for health professionals who report on a non-Queensland driver licence holder's medical fitness to drive, and that is important as we see the ageing of the population. This amendment merely applies the same level of protection as would apply if they were reporting on a Queensland driver's licence holder. The amendments to evidentiary provisions relating to vehicle standard matters are simply a practical and sensible way of improving the efficiency of court hearings about uncontested and technical evidence for courts.

I want to make a couple of additional comments. Some of this revenue that the bill is subject to of course will go to speed cameras in construction zones and school zones based on risk. They will mean a safer work environment for our fireies, for our paramedics, for our police, for our RACQ first responders, for our tow truck operators and for our school crossing supervisors. If you ask any school crossing supervisor if they support this, I bet they will say that they support it 100 per cent. However, what does worry me is that I have not yet heard an LNP MP or leader in this state back in this reform. We have heard a lot of good words about road safety in this debate, and I welcome them, but this is an important reform. If you are speeding through a school zone, we should throw the book at you as far as I am concerned. If you are whizzing past road workers at 80, 90 or 100 kilometres an hour and risking other people's lives, I likewise make no apologies for using technology to make workers and families and kids safer.

I say to the opposition sincerely that it should come out and support these reforms because they are important reforms—

Opposition members interjected.

Mr BAILEY: I have listened to the debate and those opposite have been very wobbly on this. They have not come out and said, 'We support this 100 per cent.' Road safety should be bipartisan. I say to the opposition: if you are sincere with your rhetoric, support the reforms because the reforms will save lives. It is as simple as that.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr BAILEY: Instead of interjecting, come out and say you are supporting it.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Martin): Order, members!

Mr BAILEY: The interjections are a concern. They do not tell me that the LNP is backing up its rhetoric with a firm position supporting speed cameras in school zones or construction sites. Let it clarify this issue.

I want to make a couple of further comments. We all have a joint responsibility on road safety. People look to members in this chamber, no matter who we are, as community leaders. As a government we have some influence over some of that debate, but of course every member does. If members support road safety it is good to say good things in this House, but it is really important—and I put this sincerely—to say these things on all of the social media platforms and get that message out

there. To be quite frank, the member for Traeger will probably have more influence over people in his area than me, but I want that road safety message out in every part of this state. If all members support road safety, I ask them to think about what they might or might not have said and if they have not said enough on their socials get out there and say it on different platforms, because people look to the cues we put out there, particularly in regional and rural areas.

It was acknowledged by a range of members that there is a bias in fatalities in rural and regional areas and that affects quite a lot of members across this chamber. We have to get across the message on seatbelts. There are a lot of myths out there about seatbelts and people thinking that it is safer not to wear them, and that is what kills a lot of people in this state. If someone goes off the road, at speed or otherwise, there are often other factors at play, but it is seatbelts that save lives. This is a sincere challenge to everybody: let us get that road safety message out there and repeat it over time. We have to get that message out to our communities, because the number of people not wearing seatbelts for instance, aside from the others in the fatal five, is a concern.

I am disappointed at the amendments to be moved by the Greens party. On Monday we saw reports that the government is looking at a whole range of issues around road safety, including medicinal cannabis. We will take a very thorough, evidence based approach. As every member knows, as the minister for road safety I will not compromise in any way, shape or form. That process is already underway. The technology is changing. We have to have the evidence base. We have to have operational changes. We have to have everybody on board. We have to talk to stakeholders. We have to be thorough. When we make a significant change, it has to be robust, it has to be 100 per cent safe and it has to be defensible in a court of law.

I have had many people write to me about medicinal cannabis. Some of them have some very good points to make. As the minister, I need clear specialist advice on this issue. Work has to be done on the difference between somebody taking medication on one day and then driving immediately versus someone who might have taken it three or four days before. We currently do not know how to detect the level of impairment compared to alcohol.

For the Greens party to move these amendments without that work having been done is reckless in terms of road safety. It is political pointscoring and it is disappointing. Any change has to be evidence based. There has to be a thorough reform. I have already announced that that is what we will do. I say very clearly to the chamber that to propose this cheap amendment two days after that announcement, without any work done behind it, is political and disappointing.

In closing, I thank everybody who has made a sincere contribution to this debate. I thank the parliamentary committee and the chair, the member for Kurwongbah. I thank all the TMR staff who worked very hard on this bill and the parliamentary drafting staff who worked so well on it. I think it is a very worthy bill. I think it will save lives on Queensland roads. I am proud of this bill and I commend the bill to the House.