




Speech By
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Record of Proceedings, 30 August 2022

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

 **Mr WATTS** (Toowoomba North—LNP) (3.32 pm): I rise to make my contribution to the Transport Legislation (Road Safety and Other Matters) Amendment Bill 2022. I start by promoting a particular program in my electorate which is related to road safety and is always looking for funding. I encourage the minister and others to look at that.

My PCYC runs a program called Braking the Cycle. During Road Safety Week I met Paul, an 80-year-old man in my electorate who has volunteered 9,000 hours of his time to sit next to someone whilst they are trying to get their hours up while learning to drive. One hundred and thirty eight different drivers have gained their licence. These are usually people from low socio-economic backgrounds and/or immigrants who have come to Toowoomba for a safe haven but who do not have their driver's licence. Paul, we thank you.

Certainly some of the revenue that is raised through camera detection can be used for such programs—to create awareness and opportunity to ensure that people on our roads have the practical experience to operate vehicles safely and know and understand the rules completely. The Braking the Cycle program is run at my PCYC. Paul, thank you very much for what you do.

As we broaden the scope of how this revenue can be spent, it is very important to ensure that that revenue remains focused on safety on our roads. We never want the revenue from our cameras to leak out to other things. With that in mind, I think the broadening of this bill is perfectly acceptable. We want to make sure that it is targeted. Enabling vulnerable road users to participate in programs to improve their safety on the road is clearly a good intent in terms of the spend of this money.

In terms of proactively researching innovative solutions to existing or emerging problems, there is no doubt that as technology in vehicles changes into the future we need to make sure that Queensland is leading the way. If this is a source of revenue that can be used for looking at those innovative solutions, I encourage that. That is why we are not opposing this bill. We think it is a measured and sensible way forward for this additional revenue.

People should be aware that, in line with the increase of technology in the vehicle, there is increased technology that monitors what is going on in the vehicle. I think everybody in Queensland is now well and truly aware that we have cameras detecting mobile phone use and/or seatbelt wearing. Revenue raised from offences should be put to good use. As I say, I think this is a sensible way forward when it comes to road safety, but there are some other things that I think we should look at.

A lot of state government roads traverse my region. If we look further west, we see state government controlled roads in poor repair. There is a backlog of maintenance that should come from general revenue. When people are losing their lives, we who live west of Ipswich will take any revenue source to improve our roads. Too many times as my children were going through school I would hear of a young person, perhaps a boarder in Toowoomba—I have a lot of boarding schools—whose father, mother or brother—or themselves—lost their life getting to or from school, coming to pick them up or

getting home from work. Our roads are not great. The standard of road network that we have west of the divide is far below what I see east of the divide, whether it be because it is traversing black soil or because it is not getting maintained due to the backlog. Sometimes it is because it is difficult to do. A life in the country is worth just as much as a life in the city. If we look at the rate of people who die on our roads to the south and the west of me as a percentage of population, it is much worse than in other parts of the state.

Whilst we are looking at road safety education, Rotary and others deliver some great education programs to year 12 students. I know that the Rotary Club of Toowoomba East, in conjunction with other Rotary clubs, has been delivering that program for a long time. Increasing funding for such programs to make them more widely available to every year 12 student, so that they not just read about stopping distance but actually watch a car and see what happens to an item inside the stopping distance when it is hit, ensures they understand what it means to not follow the road rules and therefore not drive as deemed safe by the state.

There are a couple of other things in the bill that I want to mention briefly. One is increasing the range of allowable motorised mobility devices. These are very important for members of our community as they age and start to become immobile. Having the ability to get a little mobility scooter is just fantastic. There is somebody in my electorate who for years has driven his scooter thousands of kilometres all over Toowoomba. Without it, his life would be ruined.

To change the rules so that we have a bigger range available is sensible. I think maintaining the speed limit whilst travelling on a public path is also important. Every once in a while I see someone nipping past me who is going well and truly above the 10-kilometre-an-hour limit. Whilst the new vehicles might have the capacity to go faster, people should not misunderstand the reason we have limits in place. The reason the capacity of these vehicles has been increased is so that we fall into line with manufacturers to bigger markets. Therefore, there will be more mobility scooters available, and hopefully that will help drive down the price for pensioners and others who are trying to buy one. That is the reason for the change in weight and change in speed, but make no mistake: it is not about zipping along faster on our pathways. Let's keep the speed down.

Another change—and I know that time is going to beat me—relates to recommendations for licences. Some people may rely on doctors' reports or the reports of others outside the state. Medical practitioners outside the state deserve the same protections as those within the state. Again, that is a sensible change.

Overall, the bill is pretty sensible. This piece of legislation tidies up a few things. I will touch on tidying up. There have been a few sloppy practices that have come through with this government. We have seen the guillotine drop and legislation rushed through. We are not getting as much of an opportunity to debate legislation as we would like. Ultimately, what that has caused is drafting errors to slip through into legislation. For another time now we have to come back and tidy up legislation that was drafted badly.

An opposition member: Eleven times.

Mr WATTS: Eleven times in the 56th Parliament we have had to do that. That is not good enough. The ministers have plenty of staff. Maybe they should redirect some of their media staff into helping check the drafting of bills to ensure we do not have these problems. Maybe we should allow a little more time for the bills to be debated to ensure we do not have these errors repeatedly needing to be fixed up by this incompetent government.

(Time expired)