




Speech By
Ray Stevens

MEMBER FOR MERMAID BEACH

Record of Proceedings, 23 February 2023

ADJOURNMENT

Traffic Infringement Notices

 **Mr STEVENS** (Mermaid Beach—LNP) (6.17 pm): I have had several people complaining to my office of the unfair and unjust penalty imposed by this Palaszczuk Labor government's seatbelt fines, which are creating millions of dollars in revenue for Treasurer Dick to pay the interest bill on his massive borrowings. In June 2022 the fine was \$391; now it is \$1,078 and a four-point loss on your driver's licence, even if it is a passenger incorrectly wearing their seatbelt. That is a 275 per cent increase in less than 12 months. One woman who has recently been made homeless was fined three times in a row—amounting to over \$3,000 and loss of licence—before she even received notice that her child was incorrectly wearing his seatbelt, but that was because of a rash on his body.

These seatbelt spy cameras have been erected everywhere, so where was the education process about seatbelt wearing for passengers before this backdoor, money-raising exercise was put into practice by the main roads minister? He sold it to the public on stopping distracting mobile phone use, which was causing serious accidents and the consequential loss of life. I understand that and I support this, but fining drivers over a thousand dollars for the incorrect wearing of seatbelts by passengers is over the top, unfair and unjust. It has no causal relationship to influencing accident control. The driver is still in charge of the vehicle and is not distracted. Therefore, a passenger's seatbelt failing has no equality in penalty to a driver using their mobile phone while driving.

The proliferation of these spy cameras across South-East Queensland at the rapid rate they have been installed by the Labor government tells the public what a great fundraising measure they are. Even one of my family members had a young child in the back seat who was going to vomit. The mother undid her seatbelt to turn around to provide a bowl for the child to be sick in. Almost immediately they drove under a spy camera and were dreading the \$1,000 fine and loss of four points, but it did not come. It was an emergent situation, but that is not what the photo would have shown. They would have had to go to court, spend thousands on solicitors and take time from their jobs. No fine arrived. It is time for the minister to do a breach-of-bail backflip and reduce the seatbelt fine to its previous level of penalty. A passenger's seatbelt incorrectly worn is no justification for the driver of the car to lose four points on their licence and cop a \$1,000 fine. In fact, checking if your passenger is wearing the seatbelt correctly on an ongoing basis would be more distracting for a driver than fiddling with their mobile phone.