




Speech By  
**Hon. Bart Mellish**

**MEMBER FOR ASPLEY**

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### **TRANSPORT AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL**

 **Hon. BJ MELLISH** (Aspley—ALP) (Minister for Transport and Main Roads and Minister for Digital Services) (12.53 pm), in reply: It is my pleasure today to speak for the final time on the Transport and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2023. It is pleasing that support for this bill has come from such a broad range of members in the House. I extend my appreciation to all of you for your endorsement of this important bill.

Tragically, last year we lost 278 lives on our roads. While this was 19 less lives lost than the previous year, every life lost and every person seriously injured on our roads is an absolute tragedy. The Queensland government's road safety public education program StreetSmarts aims to improve road safety by impacting the attitudes and behaviours of Queenslanders. These include behaviours such as driving around heavy vehicles and driving on regional roads. The 'fatal five' are addressed through strategic, targeted campaigns and engagement activities as part of this program.

The goal of this bill is to enhance road safety outcomes in Queensland and to make our roads safer. One of the ways to achieve this is by managing safe interactions between vehicles and other vulnerable users. In particular, the bill expands the application of careless riding offences to e-scooters and other personal mobility device riders as well as bicycle riders on road related areas such as footpaths and bikeways. This aligns with the increasing use of these vehicle types on this infrastructure and the ongoing need to protect vulnerable users such as the elderly, people with disability and children.

In addition, the bill applies consistent post-crash obligations on all drivers and riders. In particular, e-scooter and bike riders involved in a crash will now be required to stop and render medical assistance to another injured person and exchange relevant details. Consistent obligations for drivers and riders on roads and paths will ensure that everyone receives equal treatment before the law and it protects our most vulnerable path users. The bill also introduces important safety protections for vulnerable persons who feel that exchanging their personal information may expose them to harm. In this scenario a vulnerable person, such as a victim of domestic violence or a child, could report the crash to police instead.

These amendments build on the recent reforms that have been implemented as part of the PMD Safety Action Plan. The action plan also commits to long-term action to investigate ways to crack down on drink riding on e-scooters. This investigation is currently underway, with the department currently consulting with road safety experts and the community on potential measures. It is anticipated that a package will be progressed for my consideration following this investigation.

E-scooters and other personal mobility devices such as bicycles are a great way to get around, but it is critical that we have a regulatory framework in place to support the safe use of vehicles without compromising the safety of other road and path users. Everyone deserves to feel safe on our road and path network. This bill is the next step towards achieving this, and I am proud that Queensland continues to lead the rest of Australia in this space.

The Queensland Police Service undertakes the regular, proactive and high-profile enforcement of personal mobility device rules. E-scooter riders who do the wrong thing should expect to be caught and receive a fine. Sweeping reforms to e-scooter rules commenced 1 November 2022. In the 11 months post these reforms, up until September 2023 police issued more than 3,800 infringements for a range of offences. Failing to wear a helmet, riding on prohibited roads and speeding are the most common infringements issued. I am encouraged that this enforcement is taking place right across Queensland as we see e-scooter usage boom across the state. These amendments will be supported by a tailored communications campaign to ensure that all Queenslanders and tourists are aware of the changes and their obligations when riding.

I noted that the member for Toowoomba North mentioned the Toowoomba bypass during his contribution. It is important to remember that the Miles government inherited the Toowoomba bypass contract from the previous Newman government when we took office in 2015, and the lowest price dominated considerations.

The *Queensland Transport and Roads Investment Program 2023-24 to 2026-27* outlines a steady and sustainable pipeline of road and transport infrastructure, with \$32.1 billion of investment programmed over the four financial years. It is estimated it will support over 25,000 direct jobs over the life of the program. The current four-year allocation for maintenance, preservation and operations is over \$5 billion.

The Queensland government is committed to maintaining a safe and resilient road network for all travellers, and this is our government's eighth record QTRIP in a row. Building on the previous \$29.7 billion 2022-23 QTRIP, our \$32.1 billion QTRIP provides an increase of over \$2 billion across the four-year program. Our investment in roads and transport infrastructure will sustain 25,200 direct jobs across Queensland. Of this, approximately 57 per cent will be spent outside the metropolitan region, representing an increase of over three per cent when compared to the previous QTRIP. This level of investment in regional Queensland is estimated to support an average of 16,220 direct jobs over the life of the program.


The transition of certain regulatory services from the Department of Transport and Main Roads to the National Heavy Vehicle Regulator is the final step of the National Services Transition program. As I mentioned in the introduction of this bill, operational provisions of the heavy vehicle national law commenced in 2014, and the regulator relied on state and territory agencies to deliver most of the frontline heavy vehicle regulatory services. The transition program commenced in 2017, when participating jurisdictions transitioned these services to the regulator.

Considerable consultation was undertaken with the National Heavy Vehicle Regulator, Together union and Transport and Main Roads employees to ensure the best possible outcomes for the transfer of regulatory services, employees—importantly—and assets. The transition provides for the delivery of heavy vehicle regulatory services under the heavy vehicle national law to the regulator, which leads to greater national consistency in the regulation and enforcement of heavy vehicles.

Further, the bill ensures efficient delivery and quality service outcomes for industry. It provides authorised officers of the regulator with the ability to undertake state-based, non-national law regulatory services and the delivery of Queensland's programmed vehicle inspection scheme. The consultation for the transition ensured that the legislation provided a fair and seamless transition for employees moving. They will have their rights protected through the creation of ministerial transfer schedules that include relevant Queensland Public Sector Act directives that will apply to these staff. There are also provisions to ensure benefits, entitlements, remuneration, superannuation and all forms of leave—

Debate, on motion of Mr Mellish, adjourned.

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 **Hon. BJ MELLISH** (Aspley—ALP) (Minister for Transport and Main Roads and Minister for Digital Services) (3.02 pm), continuing in reply: An employee preference process was run in October 2023 and 183 employees chose to either remain with the department or transition to the regulator. There has been continuing engagement and communications with all affected employees and the Together union throughout this transition. This support and communication will continue in the lead-up to the transition day and for a time afterwards.

TMR has been actively engaging with employees and their union representatives on the National Services Transition for more than two years. This has included regular updates from leaders, regional road shows, a dedicated information hub and the ability to submit questions at any time. Over the course of the past two years, more than 200 written responses have been provided back to employees in

response to their questions. TMR also implemented a comprehensive change-in-wellbeing program to support its employees throughout this period, including a request for dedicated one-on-one support from change management experts.

During the engagement activities with employees and their union representatives, TMR considered 10 different proposals on how to best balance the needs of TMR, the NHVR and affected employees. They co-designed a preference process with input from not only the Together union but also transport inspectors who are delegates representing the cohort. As a result, all TMR employees were given the option to choose their preferred employer and work location.

To date, only a very small number of employees have not transitioned into either a compliance role with TMR or the NHVR. Some of those employees were unwilling or unable to relocate to secure their preferred employer and others from that cohort have decided that they do not wish to work in a compliance role for either organisation. Those employees will remain permanent employees of TMR at transition and will be actively supported by TMR to secure alternative employment, in line with the relevant Queensland government directives. TMR will be putting in place dedicated and tailored support resources to assist that small number of employees to secure alternative employment post transition.

Again I extend my thanks to the TMR's National Services Transition team and the regulator for working collaboratively to ensure the success of this program and for a smooth transition of these regulatory services. I acknowledge the contributions of various members to the debate on the bill and I appreciate their participation and support. I also acknowledge the support of the House to approve amendments during consideration in detail to increase the width of safer freight vehicles which will accelerate the adoption of advanced safety technologies in the Australian heavy vehicle fleet. These amendments will improve road safety, particularly for our most vulnerable road users, and will ensure that the heavy vehicle freight industry operates in a nationally consistent regulatory environment.

During his contribution the member for Callide inquired into permits for the Callide Power Station. I can advise that my department worked closely with CS Energy to move two very heavy loads, with a total combined mass of approximately 630 tonnes, from the Gladstone port to the Callide Power Station. Those loads, moved during December 2022 and January 2023, were amongst the heaviest loads to ever move on the Queensland road network. My department conducted significant engineering work and analysis to determine operating conditions, strengthening works and traffic management to enable those loads to safely move on the road network. I commend the department as there has not been another load of similar scope and/or mass to that of the Callide move in recent history. Finally, I thank the ministerial and departmental officers who have worked hard on this bill. I commend the bill to the House.