



Speech By
Bart Mellish

MEMBER FOR ASPLEY

Record of Proceedings, 30 October 2025

HEAVY VEHICLE NATIONAL LAW AMENDMENT BILL

 **Mr MELLISH** (Aspley—ALP) (5.50 pm): The bill updates the Heavy Vehicle National Law Act 2012 to deliver reforms to the National Transport Commission's review of the Heavy Vehicle National Law endorsed by infrastructure and transport ministers. It aims to improve road safety, productivity and compliance efficiency in the heavy vehicle sector. It simplifies complex provisions, reduces red tape and introduces a more flexible, risk-based regulatory framework for drivers, operators and the National Heavy Vehicle Regulator itself.

The committee received 11 submissions from key stakeholders, including industry associations, local government, safety advocates and individuals during the public consultation process on this bill, noting, of course, that there was a prior round of community consultation undertaken on the proposed changes in the national context, with the National Transport Commission releasing an exposure draft of the bill for consultation back in 2024. I will keep my contribution short, given the nature of the concurrent national law and the prior consultation that has been undertaken on these measures.

The committee held two hearings—one in Brisbane and one in Cairns. A variety of issues were raised relevant to National Heavy Vehicle Law at both hearings. At the Cairns hearing we heard that the government's proposal to truck cane from Mossman to Gordonvale was currently a nightmare for heavy vehicle operators. Dale Bray, director of Bray's Transport, told the committee on the Mossman mill to Gordonvale trip—

We currently do that nightmare. There are a few things. Obviously, we have traffic management plans. It is all well and good to go through that and tick all the boxes. With any processes moving forward with bigger, heavier vehicles on that road, there is a bit of a debate about where we are allowed to go with that. I had my reservations and there are other people with different reservations. There are safety concerns with that current road infrastructure, especially with the roadworks.

He went on to say that the process was very confusing at the moment. Dale further stated—

Nothing is set in stone on what combination. I do not think there has actually been an approved vehicle. The biggest problem was that the miller was running away on their own little tangent and basically getting trailers built for what they thought. These people are not doing the run. Essentially, I did not contribute to any of the manufacturing or design work—what they should be using. That was my concern. We had an incident there on Friday. The same thing went through my head: if they think they are going to run back to a full-length B-double on that road, they are dreaming.

He goes on. Let's not forget why this confusion is happening with regard to heavy vehicle regulation.

Last year, in a media release titled 'LNP commits to Mossman Mill future', the now premier said the LNP would ensure the long-term success of Mossman's sugar industry. The media release stated—

The LNP's plan includes a commitment to work with growers, the industry and the community to ensure a long-term future for the Mill and town.

The LNP's plan will protect local jobs.

Under the plan—

Mr MICKELBERG: Madam Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order on relevance.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Marr): Member, are you able to tell us how what you are saying is relevant to the bill, please?

Mr MELLISH: I am responding to matters that were raised in the consultation on this bill. In the public hearing we held in Cairns, we heard at length about issues to do with heavy vehicle regulation between Mossman and Gordonvale.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: I will get some advice. Member, without looking at the transcripts, you have to remain relevant to the long title of the bill, so I ask you please to bring it back to the long title of the bill.

Mr MELLISH: Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. I am happy to go on with regard to other measures within the bill. I would just say on Heavy Vehicle National Law with regard to the movement of cane from Mossman to Gordonvale that it is clear this government has no plan to continue that on from this year. That is yet another broken promise from this government.

Key provisions from this bill include: the existing fatigue duty is broadened into a new duty to be fit to drive, applying to all heavy vehicles over 4.5 tonnes, not just those over 12 tonnes; and responsibility for developing and approving codes of practice shifts from industry to the National Heavy Vehicle Regulator. The regulator must consult stakeholders and can issue, amend or revoke codes of practice. The minister retains oversight powers to direct changes to ensure consistency and practicality.

There are some reforms with regard to the NHV Board: it will expand from five to up to seven members, with stronger conflict-of-interest provisions and limits of 10 years total service. Penalties are recalibrated, with 50 increased and 21 reduced, to ensure fairness and deterrence. Some minor or overlapping offences are removed or consolidated to simplify compliance. We heard a bit about the increases and decreases during the committee hearings.

We do not oppose the bill as it represents a continuation of nationally agreed reforms developed through the NTC and endorsed by all state and territory transport ministers, including Queensland under the previous Labor government prior to the October 2024 election. We support a continued commitment to the responsible management of the heavy vehicle industry, in close consultation with the heavy vehicle industry including the Queensland Trucking Association, the Australian Trucking Association, relevant unions and other key stakeholders. I commend the bill to the House.