




Speech By  
**Hon. Glenn Butcher**

**MEMBER FOR GLADSTONE**

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**HEAVY VEHICLE NATIONAL LAW AMENDMENT BILL**

 **Hon. GJ BUTCHER** (Gladstone—ALP) (8.52 pm): I rise to support the Heavy Vehicle National Law Amendment Bill 2025, a bill that puts safety first, cuts red tape and gives the industry the certainty that it deserves. Let's be clear: this bill builds on nationally agreed reforms developed by every state and territory transport minister, including Queensland's minister under the previous Labor government. It is proof that when governments work together Australia's transport sector benefits. It is proof that road safety is too important to play politics with.

This bill strengthens the Heavy Vehicle National Law by introducing mandatory safety management systems, ensuring every operator has clear and accountable safety practices in place. We are talking about safety, so I want to pay special attention to the fatal five. Just to be clear, I have rearranged them. The first of the fatal five is speeding. The second is distraction, and distraction whilst speeding is certainly a big issue and we do not want that happening in our state. The third, fourth and fifth are drink and drug driving, seatbelts not being worn and fatigue. The bill expands the duty to be fit to drive, because no load, no deadline and no profit is worth a life. It gives the National Heavy Vehicle Regulator stronger tools to ensure compliance, while also giving operators flexibility and fairness.

Here is the truth: this government did not come up with these reforms. The LNP is simply catching up on work Labor had already started. While the former Labor government drove these national reforms, the LNP sat on the sidelines. They talked tough on safety—although some in this House do not show it—but they were nowhere to be seen when it came to doing the hard yards of policy work. Let's call it for what it is: the bill is a Labor policy delivered late by an LNP government that is more focused on headlines than on heavy vehicles.

**Mr SPEAKER:** There is too much chatter in the chamber.

**Mr BUTCHER:** Thank you for your protection, Mr Speaker. Labor supports this bill, but we will not stop holding the LNP to account. Safety is not something that you legislate once and walk away from; it takes commitment, big investment and leadership. Where is the LNP's investment in driver training as part of this program? Where is their plan to help smaller operators meet new compliance standards? Truck drivers across Queensland have every right to ask, 'Who's really got our backs?' This bill matters because behind every truck is a worker, a family and a community depending on them to get home safe.

I want to pay a little bit of attention to my electorate of Gladstone, particularly the port. The port of Gladstone is an economic powerhouse. It is vital for our community to be able to get product both in and out of the port on trucks. There will certainly be opportunities moving forward with better access to the Gladstone port, as everyone in Queensland knows. Some of our bridges still have restrictions on big trucks. It does not help businesses in Gladstone when they get projects and contracts for large-scale manufacturing and repairs of equipment from Western Queensland only to find that they cannot get through to the Gladstone port because of the structural integrity issues we have on some of our bridges. There needs to be continued investment into that.

These reforms will certainly save lives. If the government does not do its job and deliver the education, enforcement and infrastructure that go with that there will continue to be issues on the road networks not only in Queensland but also right around Australia.

While we support this bill, we say to the LNP, 'Don't pat yourselves on the back for implementing Labor's reforms. Deliver them properly. Fund them fairly. Make sure Queensland's heavy vehicle industry is safer, stronger and more sustainable for the long haul.' Road safety is not a slogan; it is a shared responsibility.

I reiterate: if you are out and about driving on our roads in Queensland, make sure you are not distracted while you are driving, like taking videos from the backseat. Make sure you do the speed limit too, because it is really important. Speed is a killer here in Queensland. We need to make sure we keep to the speed limits and are not distracted at the same time. Drugs and alcohol are certainly a major player in accidents here in Queensland. Fatigue is certainly important to manage as well, particularly for our long-haul truck drivers here in Queensland. I commend the bill to the House.