



Speech By
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MEMBER FOR MUNDINGBURRA

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HEAVY VEHICLE NATIONAL LAW AMENDMENT BILL

 **Mrs POOLE** (Mundingburra—LNP) (7.58 pm): Every Queenslanders has the right to travel on safe roads. Parents should be able to pick up their children from school safely. Workers should be able to get home safely at the end of the day and our truckies and heavy vehicle operators deserve to work in a safe environment. That is what the Heavy Vehicle National Law Amendment Bill 2025 is all about—delivering safer outcomes for every road user across the state. This bill makes the heavy vehicle national law simpler, more flexible and more responsive, with safety front and centre in every amendment. It introduces a new duty for drivers not to drive while unfit, strengthens the accreditation scheme, enhances ministerial powers and increases accountability for the National Heavy Vehicle Regulator. These reforms will improve safety, streamline compliance, reduce red tape and ensure our national laws meet the needs of both industry and community.

All drivers should be fit to drive, and that includes our heavy vehicle operators. This bill expands the existing duty not to drive while fatigued to a broader duty not to drive when unfit, whether due to alcohol, drugs, illness, or simply knowing you are not capable of driving safely. Previously, that duty only applied to vehicles over 12 tonnes but under this bill, it applies to all vehicles over 4.5 tonnes. This is a sensible, practical and life-saving change. Enforcement will be undertaken jointly by the National Heavy Vehicle Regulator and police agencies in the participating jurisdictions.

We all know the pressures of the workplace, the pressures to perform, to meet delivery deadlines and to meet targets, but no-one should ever be pressured to operate a heavy vehicle when they are unfit to do so. This bill makes that clear—safety must always come first. Drivers who feel pressured to drive when unfit can report those concerns confidentially through the regulator's heavy vehicle reporting hotline. The regulator will continue to work with drivers and operators to support compliance and ensure officers are properly trained to enforce the law. This is not just about protecting heavy vehicle drivers; it is about protecting everyone who shares the road with them.

In nearly 30 years as a police officer I have seen too many devastating crashes. I have been first on the scene and I have had to deliver that unimaginable knock on the door. Those moments stay with you. They remind you that every decision we make in this chamber about road safety can mean the difference between life and death. Families want to see their loved ones walk through the front door. That is why this bill is so important. Every provision, from clearer duties to stronger regulation, is about protecting lives and preventing tragedies.

As the member for Mundingburra, I know that road safety is not an abstract concept; it is a daily concern for families right across my community. In Mundingburra we have major freight routes, we have school zones and busy suburban roads all intersecting. Whether it is the parents doing the school run in Wulguru and Stuart, workers commuting across the city, or our heavy vehicles travelling through our industrial precincts along the Port Access Road, everyone deserves to be safe on our roads. Our school zones, in particular, are areas we must continue to prioritise. Every parent should have confidence that their children can walk or ride to school safely. Every truck driver should be supported and guided to ensure they can operate safely near those high-traffic areas.

As the Assistant Minister for North Queensland, I also want to highlight how vital heavy haulage is to our regional economy. From Mackay to Cardwell and all the way out to Mount Isa, heavy vehicles are the lifeblood of North Queensland. They carry our mining exports, our agricultural produce, our fuel and our building materials. They keep our ports running, our shelves stocked and our industries strong. On any given day, thousands of heavy vehicles travel along the Bruce Highway, the Flinders Highway and the inland freight corridors that connect our communities and our economy. Our truckies work long hours, often in harsh conditions—heat, fatigue, wildlife hazards and remote stretches of road. They do it with professionalism, they do it with pride and they do it with a strong sense of responsibility. They deserve laws that recognise their realities, laws that protect them and every motorist they share the road with, and this bill does that. It sets clear expectations, supports good operators and promotes a culture of safety across the entire transport industry.

It also strengthens governance of the National Heavy Vehicle Regulator, ensuring greater transparency and accountability. It gives ministers the power to act quickly when there is a serious public safety risk and ensures penalties are proportionate, stronger for serious breaches and fairer for minor errors. That is what good law making looks like: firm where it needs to be, practical where it should be. I want to thank the Minister for Transport and Main Roads for bringing this bill to the House and for his continued focus on improving road safety across the Mundingburra electorate and across Queensland.

I acknowledge the work of the State Development, Infrastructure and Works Committee for its careful review and recommendation that this bill be passed. The Crisafulli government made an election commitment to restore safety where you live and that commitment extends to every road, every suburb, every school zone and every regional highway. We know that safer roads mean stronger communities. We need fewer families shattered by tragedy and more Queenslanders getting home safely to the people they love. This bill delivers on that promise. It strengthens safety, supports industry and keeps Queenslanders safe from the suburbs of Mundingburra to the highways of North Queensland. I commend the Heavy Vehicle National Law Amendment Bill 2025 to the House.