




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR MOGGILL

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**TRANSPORT LEGISLATION (ROAD SAFETY AND OTHER MATTERS)
AMENDMENT BILL**

 **Dr ROWAN** (Moggill—LNP) (3.03 pm): I rise to make a contribution to the Transport Legislation (Road Safety and Other Matters) Amendment Bill 2019. As we all appreciate in this House, road safety is a very important issue. We all use roads, whether driving cars as motorists or travelling on public transport or as cyclists. I would like to begin my contribution by reiterating a key passage from the bill's explanatory notes as it goes to the very basis of what we are debating today. With reference to Queensland's Road Safety Strategy 2015-2021, the explanatory notes outline—

The Queensland strategy sets the ambitious target to reduce death and serious injury by 30 per cent by 2020—meaning we need to reduce road fatalities to under 200 and serious injuries to under 4700 per annum. In 2017, 247 people were killed and an estimated 6462 were seriously injured on our roads. This Bill proposes road safety amendments intended to help achieve the 2020 target.

To achieve the stated policy objectives, this bill seeks to make a number of amendments to legislation including six related acts and four pieces of regulation. It has been said that death and serious injury on Queensland's roads costs \$5 billion each and every year. However, more than simply a dollar amount, the true human and emotional cost is ultimately borne by affected individuals and their families. From a professional perspective, I have certainly seen that in relation to our emergency departments where people are treated for a range of physical injuries, but there is also the additional psychosocial impacts—the depression and the post-traumatic stress disorders—that happen as a consequence of road trauma. Then there is also the ongoing rehabilitation costs which can be borne by not only health services but other service providers over many years to come.

At a time when motor vehicles and road transport have never been safer, fatalities and serious injuries are still happening all too frequently on our roads. I note in statistics published by the Department of Transport and Main Roads on Monday this week that in the year to date, as of 1 September 2019, Queensland has seen 123 fatal crashes—down by 36 on the previous year—with 140 fatalities—down by 33 fatalities, or nearly 20 per cent, on the previous period. Whilst we are here this week for the regional sitting of parliament, I note that sadly 33 fatalities have been suffered in the northern police region, which includes Townsville, in the year to date as of 1 September 2019—up five fatalities on the same period last year.

Whilst Queensland road fatalities are thankfully currently down when compared to this point in time over the last year and the previous five years, the fact remains that 140 fatalities is 140 too many. That is why it is so important that improving safety on our roads must be an absolute priority. Just last week it was reported that the Queensland University of Technology's Centre of Accident Research and Road Safety had found that 25 per cent of drivers and riders killed on Queensland roads in the five years to 2017 were over the .05 legal blood alcohol limit. The Department of Transport and Main Roads has also stated in the five years to December 2017 that almost 25 per cent of drink-drivers involved in fatal crashes had a mid-range blood alcohol reading—that is between .10 and .149. Such statistics paint a bleak picture—which is why this bill seeks to strengthen the approach to drink-driving through amendments which will extend the interlock program to include mid-range drink-driving offences.

Similarly, in seeking to address the significant contributing factor that is speeding on our roads, this bill has proposed amendments which will allow the operation of point-to-point speed cameras on stretches of road with multiple speed limits. Whilst the Liberal National Party is a strong advocate for measures to improve road safety—and in fact has a proud history of supporting and implementing initiatives to make travel safer for motorists and road users—it must be noted that the Liberal National Party's policy on speed camera enforcement is that they should be used in locations of greatest risk and clearly signed to alert motorists of their operation. It is an unfortunate reality that under the current Labor government the requirement for mobile speed cameras to display a 'camera in use' sign to alert motorists has been altered. Further, with revenue from speed camera fines forecast to rise from \$160.6 million in 2017-18 to \$237.2 million in 2021-22, it is little wonder that the public often perceive such measures as efforts to only further raise revenue.

We certainly need cultural change here in Queensland, particularly with respect to road safety. That involves education. We know that the Fatal Five—speeding, intoxication, fatigue, inattention and failure to wear a seatbelt—can have devastating consequences with respect to road safety. Whilst we are talking about road safety, I must also stress the urgent action that is required to improve road safety for my electorate of Moggill and the western suburbs of Brisbane. Infrastructure Australia has said, 'There were 192 crashes recorded on the Centenary Motorway between 2010 and 2016, and increasing congestion will contribute to further safety issues.'

Once again I take this opportunity to urge the Palaszczuk Labor government and the Minister for Transport and Main Roads to work collaboratively and constructively with the federal Morrison coalition government in relation to the City Deal to ensure further infrastructure investment in the western suburbs of Brisbane to enhance and improve road safety and travel times. Residents of the western suburbs of Brisbane need real action and a commitment to an integrated road and public transport plan with funded solutions—not only for the electorate of Moggill but also surrounding areas—to tackle congestion on these roads and improve road safety overall. That is critically important, particularly for cyclists.

I have had correspondence with the minister. I know he is examining some of the issues relating to the fatalities that have occurred on Moggill Road. There are also issues in relation to pedestrian safety and a requirement for footpaths, particularly along certain parts of Moggill Road and out to the Moggill District Sports Ground. I know the minister has indicated there is a shared jurisdictional responsibility between state and local governments in relation to that. It is important for safety as well on some of our state owned roads.

Before I conclude I would like to make a few comments with respect to drug driving, because drug driving is certainly a significant and serious issue here in Queensland and across Australia. Not only illicit drugs but also synthetic and prescription drugs can affect people's capacity to safely operate a motor vehicle or other forms of transport. I remember a number of years ago I was travelling on the Cunningham Highway between Warwick and Inglewood when I came across an accident. I was then the medical superintendent at the Mungindi Hospital. This is going back last century to the late 1990s. A truck had unfortunately turned over, and I had to climb into the cabin to assist the driver. At the time I was staggered by the amount of drug paraphernalia in the cabin. We took the individual back to Warwick Hospital. I had the great assistance of some of our ambulance officers who also attended the scene.

There are risks associated with drugs, whether they be illicit or prescribed. They can affect people's cognition, their capacity to operate vehicles safely, and that is of significant concern to me and many other elected members in this place. We know that the Fatal Five are a significant risk to people when they operate vehicles of all descriptions, and more work needs to go into education across Queensland in relation to that.

Finally, I would like to thank all people who provided submissions to the Transport and Public Works Committee during the examination of the bill. I particularly thank my colleagues, the member for Hervey Bay and the member for Callide, for their work on this committee. They have been doing some terrific work around this. As I said earlier, I support the bill and I commend it to the House.