




Speech By
Dr Christian Rowan

MEMBER FOR MOGGILL

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PERSONALISED TRANSPORT OMBUDSMAN BILL

 **Dr ROWAN** (Moggill—LNP) (12.50 pm): As part of the Liberal National Party opposition in Queensland, it is a delight to be in Townsville. This city is very important to our economy in Queensland, as is the broader region.

I rise to contribute to the debate on the Personalised Transport Ombudsman Bill 2019. Noting the explanatory notes, the objectives of the bill are to support the protection of fare revenue under the new ticketing solution and clarify and improve the enforceability of existing provisions of the Transport Operations (Passenger Transport) Act 1994, but today I will be primarily focusing on the main complaints objective of the bill—that is, to establish the Personalised Transport Ombudsman to help resolve complaints relating to personalised transport services.

The relatively recent boom in new technologies, which has also led to new business models, has fundamentally changed the way goods and services can be purchased, delivered and/or provided. The pace at which this transformation has occurred and continues to occur has undoubtedly presented its own challenges, particularly when it comes to not only legislation but also regulation and oversight. Modern history in particular is rife with instances where governments all over the world have failed to adequately respond to the emergence of new and unknown industries and technologies and ensure sound regulation and compliance mechanisms.

In addition, whilst ensuring the consumer and society at large is adequately protected, governments must also contend with ensuring that businesses, be they established or emerging, can continue to flourish as well as ensuring innovation and creativity is not stifled. There can be no doubt that it is a balancing act and, unfortunately when it comes to personalised transport in particular, it is one which the Palaszczuk Labor government has failed miserably. Let us not forget that in 2015, after coming to power, Labor was spectacularly unprepared to deal with the disruption caused by personalised transport and associated systems. True to form, rather than deal with the issue in any meaningful way or make any hard decisions, the Palaszczuk Labor government instead did what it does best and opted to hold a review. As we have seen many times on many critical issues in Queensland, there has been review after review with a lack of action.

Whilst some reform measures were eventually proposed and implemented through Labor's Transport and Other Legislation (Personalised Transport Reform) Amendment Act 2017, nearly three years later this industry continues to be besieged by a host of issues, including enforcement and compliance. It is obvious that Labor believes that with this legislation and through the creation of the Personalised Transport Ombudsman and Office of the Personalised Transport Ombudsman these issues will simply go away or, better yet, that Labor can simply shift responsibility on to this new office. In reality, the legislation before this House is the very essence of what I described earlier—that is, it is the result of a Labor government that has failed demonstrably to grasp the emergence of new technologies and new business models and through failed consultation and failed regulation it simply has not got the balance right. That is not just my view; that is the view of many stakeholders.

Effectively, the same sentiment has been echoed page after page in report No. 17 of the Queensland parliament's Transport and Public Works Committee which was tabled almost six months ago, and we heard the member for Callide, who sits on that committee, outline concerns given the extensive delay. It must be noted that whilst recommending the bill be passed the committee found it necessary to make an additional seven recommendations to address a number of flaws.

The overwhelming feedback from stakeholders to the Transport and Public Works Committee is that, with so many flaws in the vision for a public transport ombudsman and how the Ombudsman looks set to carry out its role, this ultimately is little more than a waste of money and a pointless role. Indeed, in a rather cutting submission, the Taxi Council of Queensland put to the committee a host of issues and offered that—

... the Bill presents as establishing a PT Ombudsman that may become a 'toothless tiger'. With the role being so restricted in scope, it risks being of diminished utility for stakeholders in the Personalised Transport sector. Of concern for TCQ and our members, many of the substantive and pressing issues for the sector appear to be outside the purview proposed for the PT Ombudsman.

That is but one example of Labor's incompetence when it comes to this bill, but really can we be surprised? After all, this bill is the responsibility of Labor's Minister for Transport and Main Roads—a minister who has comprehensively failed to deliver any meaningful relief to the electorate of Moggill and the western suburbs of Brisbane when it comes to improving public transport and addressing the ever-growing congestion on our roads. Report after report issued by respected entities such as the RACQ and Infrastructure Australia continually list Moggill Road and the Centenary Highway as some of Queensland's most congested road networks, with travel times consistently growing longer and predicted only to get worse into the future.

Mr BAILEY: Mr Deputy Speaker, I raise a point of order simply on relevance. He has strayed well off the bill.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Stevens): Thank you, Minister. Member for Moggill, I ask you to return to the subject matter of the bill please.

Dr ROWAN: The important point around the Infrastructure Australia report, given that we are going to have more vehicles on roads in terms of personalised transport options, is that Infrastructure Australia has said that there were 100,000 vehicles travelling on the Centenary Motorway and Western Freeway in 2016 and by 2036 that is projected to increase to 150,000 vehicles per day on the Centenary Motorway and the Western Freeway and many of those will be personalised transport options. Unless something is done by Labor's Minister for Transport and Main Roads, it is only going to get worse in not only his electorate of Miller but also the electorates of Moggill and Maiwar and Mount Ommaney. The Labor government needs to work constructively with other levels of government such as with the federal Morrison coalition government through the city deal to ensure that solutions are collaboratively delivered to ease traffic congestion not only in the western suburbs of Brisbane but right across the south-east as well. This is a very important issue for my constituents locally and also for many other local electorates as well.

All road users, be it those who use public transport, prefer to cycle or even use their own car, in my electorate of Moggill have been fundamentally let down by a Labor government that simply refuses to act and plan the required infrastructure. Having failed to deliver for residents who wish to take a bus, a train, a bike or drive their car, I am not surprised that the Labor Minister for Transport and Main Roads has failed to deliver for the personalised transport and taxi industry as well.

Mr de Brenni: It's time for a Labor member for Moggill.

Dr ROWAN: There are so many issues in this bill before us today that we on this side of the House cannot give it support. I hear those interjecting on the other side, but Labor knows that it has failed the personalised transport industry here in Queensland. It has failed our taxidivers here in Queensland. We know that debt is going to reach \$90 billion by 2022-23. There are a range of other issues when it comes to the Labor government not delivering infrastructure and not delivering a fair and balanced legislative agenda, and this is further legislation in relation to that.

It is important that the Minister for Transport and Main Roads actually listens and works collaboratively with all affected stakeholders. Certainly, a number of the submissions that were in this committee report clearly indicated that more work needs to be done. I would certainly like to acknowledge and thank all members of the committee for the work that they have done and particularly thank my colleagues the member for Hervey Bay and the member for Callide for their work on the committee. I also want to acknowledge the work and the advocacy of the LNP's shadow minister for transport and main roads, the member for Chatsworth, because he has been doing some terrific work with respect to consulting stakeholders in relation to these matters. I would encourage all members of the House to read the LNP's statement of reservation which clearly outlines a number of flaws in Labor's proposed legislation. As the shadow minister outlined earlier, we will be opposing this bill.