



COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES



**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

**BILLS**

**Road Safety Remuneration Bill 2011,  
Road Safety Remuneration (Consequential  
Amendments and Related Provisions) Bill 2011**

**Second Reading**

**SPEECH**

**Tuesday, 13 March 2012**

BY AUTHORITY OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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## SPEECH

**Date** Tuesday, 13 March 2012  
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**Questioner**  
**Speaker** Neumann, Shayne, MP

**Source** House  
**Proof** No  
**Responder**  
**Question No.**

**Mr NEUMANN** (Blair) (16:49): When I was speaking to this road safety remuneration legislation previously, I addressed some of the issues raised by the member for Flynn, who spoke before me. He is a Queenslander like me and he raised two major issues in his speech. He thought that, firstly, there was inadequate road funding by this government, particularly for Queensland, and, secondly, he cast doubt on and in fact denied the linkage between road safety and rates and remuneration in the road transport industry. I will deal with both of those in the context of this speech.

I took the opportunity during the break to get hold of the budget investing in regional Australia. This is not a document prepared by the Queensland branch of the ALP. This was actually prepared in relation to the budget and it is a document that he and any LNP members in Queensland can access and it is dated 10 May 2011. It makes the point that this government will invest \$6 billion over 11 years, with \$5.6 billion conditional on the passage of the MRRT legislation. The point I made to the member for Flynn was that this government has doubled the road funding and increased by 10 times the rail funding to \$36 billion. Also, in my home state of Queensland we have doubled road, rail and port funding to \$8.5 billion. That is an incredible increase compared to the previous government's record. We saw the manifestation of that with the opposition of those opposite to the Ipswich Motorway, linking Ipswich and Brisbane, across three elections, and now their LNP candidate in the state seat of Bundamba is saying that it is a waste of money to build the motorway.

While the member for Flynn talked about roads, I make the point that the member for Flynn, who was saying that we should increase road funding in Queensland, where he and I both live, actually voted against the road funding increase that we will provide with passage of the MRRT legislation. In fact, I had a look at what the 2011-12 budget committed funding for across a number of years and it is interesting to note that so many of those particular road projects are in Queensland—the Blacksoil Interchange in my electorate, supported by the Council of South-East Queensland Mayors but opposed by those opposite; the Townsville ring-road; the Peak Downs Highway; the upgraded intersection of the Bruce and Capricorn highways. Then I came across another one, the Gladstone Port Access Road, in the electorate of Flynn. I would like all those persons who might be listening to this to note that the member for Flynn did not support that and neither did any of his LNP comrades and colleagues who voted against that. The funding for the Mackay ring-road study—\$9.5 million, in Queensland—and the Scone level crossing study—\$1.8 million, in New South Wales—was brought forward in that budget as well.

Queensland will benefit to the tune of \$2 billion in that regard under the regional infrastructure funding that we are providing as a result of the passage of the minerals resource rent tax. But those opposite, particularly LNP members, have voted against that particular funding for Queensland. All of the projects that I have listed are ones that the member for Flynn has voted against, and all his colleagues and comrades from the LNP in Queensland voted against them. They voted against every single one of those. So they should not come into this place and say that we should put more money into road, rail and ports and then sit over there and vote no again and again. Former US senator Robert Kennedy said that about 20 per cent of people would oppose everything all the time. The trouble with those opposite is that they oppose everything all the time—and they have opposed every single road funding project that I know of in South-East Queensland. Also, when it came to flood recovery—and we have rebuilt over 9,000 kilometres of the 10,000 kilometres of road that were affected in Queensland—they actually opposed the funding and the flood levy to help rebuild Queensland. So it is rank inconsistency, if not hypocrisy, for those opposite to ask us to spend more money on roads when they have opposed the very funding which will make a difference.

The second point I want to make is that the member for Flynn should consult with his colleague and comrade the member for Hinkler, who was actually the chair of a committee that looked into the issue of the linkages between safety and the rates and structure of remuneration in the road industry. I will give the title of the report and suggest that the member for Hinkler go and have a chat with the member for Flynn. The report was called *Beyond the midnight oil: managing fatigue in transport* and it was prepared by the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Communications, Transport and the Arts in 2000, 12 years ago. As I said, it was chaired

by the Hon. Paul Neville, the member for Hinkler. Then there was the Quinlan inquiry in 2001 and there was the Mutual Responsibility for Road Safety case in 2006. We had the Wright-Quinlan inquiry in 2008, the National Transport Commission Review report in 2008 and the Safe Rates Advisory Group report in 2010. So if we have the experts all telling us the same thing and the many inquiries, coronial findings, reports and investigations across decades telling us there is a linkage between road safety issues and the rates and structure of remuneration in the transport industry, it beggars belief that those opposite should come into this place and say there is no linkage. Unsafe roads result in accidents, deaths and injury—and it is not to be sniffed at and sneezed at and laughed at and it is not to be belittled, because it is a tragedy. Three hundred and thirty Australians die every year in truck crashes in this country, 5,300 Australians are injured every year in truck crashes and the trucking fatality rate is 10 times the national fatality average by industry. Those truck related deaths and injuries are a cost to taxpayers of about \$2.7 billion. This is a major issue.

I want to applaud the work done by Tony Sheldon of the Transport Workers Union of Australia, its Queensland state secretary, Peter Biagini, and all the people in the Queensland branch of the TWU because in a big state like Queensland this is a particularly important issue. There was a survey done by the TWU, conducted in 2011, and I think it is worth putting in *Hansard* its stark findings. Forty-eight per cent of drivers reported almost one day a week in unpaid waiting time, 56 per cent of owner-drivers had to forgo vehicle maintenance because of the economic pressure of the need to work to keep up with the high cost of repairs, 27 per cent of the people surveyed felt that they had to drive too fast, too quickly, and nearly 40 per cent felt pressured to drive longer than they were legally permitted to do so. Many said that came directly or indirectly from the person that was paying the remuneration and from the paying client.

So this is an important issue and we are morally bound to make our roads safer. It is the key to making sure that Australians are cared for. Road transport is really the responsibility of all of us. It is the responsibility not just of the industry but of all the states and territories, as well as the national government. This legislation is a world first and it is high time that we did this, and the fact that those opposite cannot bring themselves to support it is a shame and a tragedy and a disgrace. The bill will establish a new road safety remuneration tribunal. It is about safety and fairness in the industry. It will be empowered to make inquiries. It will be empowered to negotiate, mediate or conciliate. It will have the power to make determinations called road safety remuneration orders, which are in addition to any rights that people might have through collective agreements, through industrial instruments, through contracts of employment and, in the case of the self-employed, independent contracting arrangements. Those orders can be made by the tribunal on application or the tribunal can initiate the orders itself. It will be empowered to help resolve disputes in the industry among all those people involved—the drivers, the hirers, the participants—and, as I said, it can do it by mediation or conciliation or, indeed, by private arbitration if agreed between the parties. It will establish a compliance regime, and it will make a difference.

I think this is an important piece of legislation. Prior to the last redistribution in Queensland I had the privilege of representing the Lockyer Valley. I attended the Lights on the Hill memorial—a day when truck drivers came in their thousands, with their families, to Gatton to remember those people who were killed and those people who lost their loved ones, as well as the importance of road safety. I saw important people like Kathy White, who was one of the founders. I saw what this meant to those people, and I saw how important the trucking industry is. Each year they place on the walls the names of the drivers in the industry who have passed away. We take pride in this industry. This industry delivers its produce from the farming sectors of our economy to the markets, at places like Rocklea, and to the ports. It delivers not just food but also clothing to retail outlets. This industry involves sacrifices by men and women and by families who do not get to see their loved ones.

This legislation will make a difference. It is supported by all parts of the sector. And the only major political institutions, economic institutions and societal institutions that will not support this legislation are the coalition parties that sit opposite. I find it extraordinary that they will not listen to the sector and will not support the trucking families and partners—and the whole industry—in the way we need to through this legislation.