



Speech by

Glen Elmes

MEMBER FOR NOOSA

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TRANSPORT OPERATIONS (ROAD USE MANAGEMENT—GREEN VEHICLES CONCESSION) AMENDMENT BILL

Mr ELMES (Noosa—Lib) (7.45 pm): This is a bill that really needs little explanation or debate. It is a matter of simple common sense. If this government is serious about reducing greenhouse gas emissions in Queensland, then it needs to get serious about providing some incentive for people to do so in the short term. It needs to act now. One simple way for the government to do this is by encouraging people to drive vehicles that emit little or no greenhouse gases. It was disappointing to note that the Premier, when she was Treasurer and handed down this year's budget, did not offer an incentive to Queenslanders to drive energy efficient vehicles at the time but chose instead to increase the registration payable on those vehicles. I note in the comments by the minister the number of these hybrid vehicles that are around the place. There are only a few hundred of them on the roads in Queensland and yet in 2007 there will be an additional 157,000 new passenger car registrations in Queensland. In terms of revenue raised from registration, it is not a problem in that particular area.

There is a great opportunity for the government to provide an incentive for each of us to reduce our own carbon footprint. It also provides an incentive for Queensland to reduce its reliance on oil, especially considering that as a country we are reaching our relative position of peak oil status. The smart way for this government to encourage the uptake of climate friendly attitudes and behaviours is through incentives rather than punishment. This bill presents an opportunity for the government to offer such an incentive for a relatively cheap amount, considering the current number of hybrid vehicles on the road. To be specific, with regard to the benefits of this bill, the Australian Bureau of Statistics has recorded that the bulk of Australia's greenhouse gas emissions comes first from stationary energy generation followed by transport. Within that amount, passenger cars are the largest emitter at 41.7 metric tonnes, and that was in 2004. This represents a growth of 18 per cent in 14 years between 1990 and 2004.

Passenger car emissions far outstrip the amount emitted by domestic aviation, shipping and railways combined. Clearly, this is an area that needs to be addressed. Given the cost effectiveness of passenger cars and their importance to the average Queensland as compared to planes, trains or ships, this is an area that the government can get a big bang for its buck. If the Queensland government is interested in tackling climate change with real initiatives and real policies that will pay dividends immediately, then it should start by attacking the greenhouse gases emitted by passenger cars. Clean coal technology and improvements in renewable energy is good for the long-term and we do need long-term solutions if we are to avoid the worst effects that climate change could bring. If we are to have an immediate effect on climate change, then approaches like this are both necessary and prudent.

All of us know, and the scientists keep reminding us, that the danger is being done to the planet now. That being the case, we need to start acting now. This bill represents a strategy to target one of the largest sources of greenhouse gas emissions very simply by encouraging people to be climate clever. I support efforts to make a real difference to climate change. This bill ought to form part of a suite of approaches that this government should undertake. I commend the bill to the House.