

**House of Assembly
28 October 2009**

MOTOR VEHICLES (MISCELLANEOUS NO. 2) AMENDMENT BILL

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from 13 October 2009. Page 4167.)

Mr PEDERICK (Hammond) (17:35): I support the bill. I note that amendments in this bill will increase the required driving hours of supervised driving for learner drivers from 50 to 75 hours; that the minimum time on a learner's permit will go from six months to 12 months for drivers under 25 years; that there will be a restriction on driving high-powered cars for provisional drivers, both P1 and P2 under 25 years; and that there will be a change to the penalty ranging from disqualification to a fine and loss of demerit points for failure to comply with displaying two P-plates.

Amendments within the bill also replace the current hardship appeal provision with the offer of a safer driver agreement. The bill strengthens the current curfew conditions applying to drivers returning from a serious disqualification by restricting the carriage of passengers during the curfew period of midnight to 5am. There are some technical amendments which aim to improve the operation of the act.

It is interesting how far we have come in relation to people obtaining a licence in this state. My father still drives at 89, even though he lives in low category residential aged care in Murray Bridge. When he got his licence all he had to do was write in to whatever department it was at that time and they posted out a licence. The old joke, 'Where did you get your licence? Did you get it out of a cornflakes packet?' could not be closer to the truth, I guess. We have come a long way, and there are lots of reasons for that. My father would have attained his licence in the mid-1930s when there were not too many vehicles around. I know he, as a young lad, was involved with a horse and dray at an early stage, but they graduated to a Model T Ford car on the farm at Angle Vale, which they turned into a ute. I wish they still had it. I see the member for Schubert with a look of excitement on his face at my mentioning that.

Mr Venning: I have a Model T.

Mr PEDERICK: Yes. Model Ts were cut back to have a little tray on the back. I think the family had a little trailer and used to take a few prime lambs (they would have been fat lambs back then) into Gepps Cross. Obviously, things have changed dramatically since then. I look back to when I acquired my learner's permit in the 1970s. All you had to do was—

Mr Venning: A GTHO.

Mr PEDERICK: No, not a GTHO but, talking about driving high-performance vehicles, my family had a 308 cubic inch HQ wagon, and that was a very good motor. I should never have let that car go out of the family's hands but, be that as it may. That thing did go, and that is what I did some of my driver training in on my learner's permit.

Mrs Geraghty: I am just asking the relevance of it.

Mr PEDERICK: It is all about getting your driver's licence. I am going over the history and why the rules have changed. It is very relevant. Members on the other side will be able to make a contribution if they so wish at a later time, and I will be interested to see whether they are willing to make a contribution.

Being raised in the country was very fortuitous. We went out and checked the rabbit traps when we were nine or 10 years old. We had an automatic ute that we could drive out in, and that was very handy.

Mr Venning: That was legal, too, rabbit traps.

Mr PEDERICK: Yes, you cannot have rabbit traps now, either. Things have changed a lot. So we learned our driving skills from an early age. I know my two young boys like steering the car down to the bus stop, so at ages five and eight they are getting an early training in driving. In fact, Mackenzie, my oldest son, has his own motor bike at age eight, a little TDR 90

Yamaha. It was very interesting when I went to do my driving test with the local policeman at Coonalpyn—

Mr Goldsworthy: Was it Hausie?

Mr PEDERICK: Yes, I think it might have been John Hausler. You just had to do a drive around the block, essentially, and, as long as you managed to steer the car onto the road and get it around and back on the Dukes Highway and back to the police station, away you went. That is no reflection on John Hausler, who was a very good local policeman. I think the member for Kavel probably came across him when he was working down there in another life.

Mr Goldsworthy: All good, though.

Mr PEDERICK: All good, I must admit. In the country, and I think it still happens these days, you could get your truck licence at 17 years instead of having to wait until 18 years. I went down in our old International truck with the bulk bin on, loaded up. I think it was the same police officer, and away we went around the block. He asked me to double declutch up through the gears. I had been practising how to double declutch down through the gears but not up. So, I had a few problems and crunched the gears a bit and, by the time I got around to the local service station, I thought I had blown the test. Anyway, we got back on the road and back to the police station and he said, 'You would be better with a bit of load on in the truck,' and I said, 'It is half full of oats.' He said, 'You are laughing, then, you have got it under control.' Since then I have progressed.

In the early 1990s I went for my heavy articulated driver's licence and there was a compulsory operation you had to do that is probably still in place today. You had to back around a corner. It is a bit hard to describe, but you are down on your left hand and swinging around blind and you have to get the semitrailer within a metre of the kerb. Anyway, I failed the first test, so that was the end of that. Anyway, I did some instruction with some driver training in Murray Bridge, then I did the test. One of the O'Hara blokes brought up from Meningie was the tester, and I did it the first time. He said, 'Would you like to do that again, Adrian?' and I said, 'No, I have done it once, I know I have passed.' I did not want to take any chances.

Mr Goldsworthy: Who was that? Mick?

Mr PEDERICK: I cannot remember, whichever one was working there. No, it was not Mick O'Hara. It was someone else.

So, things have changed, and rightly so. We have come a long way from the days when you could basically just apply for a licence and have it delivered. In my day you only had to have a learner's permit, then we graduated to having to get a P-plate, and now we have gone to P1 and P2 and different restrictions on supervised hours. It is a consequence of the change in the power of vehicles and the number of vehicles on the road, and also the modernisation of life as we have moved ahead. I think, in the main, these are good ideas.

I note that the bill talks about restrictions on P-plate drivers driving high powered cars also being in place in New South Wales, Queensland and Victoria; and for P-plate drivers aged under 25 years in these states the ban applies to vehicles with eight or more cylinders, supercharged or turbocharged vehicles, or vehicles with an engine output of more than 200 kilowatts. It is interesting, because I know what happened when motorbike licences (and I think rightly so) were changed so that people with motorbikes could not just go out and buy a 1,000cc or a 1,100cc motorbike and tear off down the road, and that was the first and last trip they ever did.

However, what would happen with the 250cc restriction on a motorbike was that when someone gained their licence they would just spec them up and make them go a lot faster. You only have to look at what the WRX Subaru can do. A relation of mine had to sell his because he was going to lose his licence; there was the temptation to drive fast.

I think we need to take a careful look at which vehicles are excluded. I have an old V8 ute at home, which I think is only 185 kilowatts, and it tickles along all right. However, there are certainly now four-cylinder cars which can be tuned up or which can generate better than 200 kilowatts. I am wondering whether there is a list of the sorts of vehicles that will be banned. Because of obvious engineering advances, cars are better made and more efficient, with turbochargers and intercoolers, and so on. You only have to look at the twin turbo 200

series diesel Land Cruisers these days. I am not sure what power they put out, but they can churn along.

I now want to talk about the statistics from SAPOL, which indicate that young drivers aged between 17 and 24 make up only 11 per cent of the total population but account for 28 per cent of all the road fatalities and 27 per cent of serious injuries. It is noted that the University of Western Australia has stated that its research indicates that a substantial amount of supervised driving is required to reduce the crash risk of novice drivers. I think that is certainly a good idea.

However, the problem is that we still get idiots out on the roads. Far too often we see on the news that people have been dragging each other or someone in a car has gone down the road and run into another vehicle that was just sitting at the lights and an innocent life was taken. It is the same with the young fools getting out on the roads, whether they be country or city roads. They think they are bullet-proof, but then we see the results: people have killed themselves or someone else or someone has lost a limb or has been put in a wheelchair—and that is for life. Not enough people think about the consequences. We see reports where someone has driven people home from the city and they are travelling down city roads at over 120 km/h. It is absolute madness, especially if they have been out drinking. However, either way, driving at that speed in the city is just sheer madness.

I note that the RAA is seeking more detail from the government with respect to the restriction criteria that I spoke about before.

Mr Goldsworthy: We have a bit more information.

Mr PEDERICK: I am informed that we have a bit more information coming from there. I note that the member for Kavel said that not a lot of conclusive work has been done on which restrictions have worked with respect to people not being able to drive high-powered vehicles.

We on this side of the house support the bill. It is a busy world out there, and people need to undertake the appropriate training and do the right thing.

Mr Piccolo interjecting:

Mr PEDERICK: I note that the member for Light interjected. The town of Gawler in his electorate is very busy in this day and age. I have had a bit to do with that area; my grandparents came from up that way. It has changed from quite a steady country town to a real metropolis. In some ways it is a little bit sad. It has one of the best main streets in South Australia, but there is so much more traffic on the road, as is the case on all other roads. Anything to keep everyone alive, but especially our young people, is a great thing. We were all young once, and we know it is hard to tell young people how to do the right thing. As a father of a couple of young lads, I believe that the more we can do to keep young people alive and not hurt themselves, all the better. I commend the bill.