

ROAD TRAFFIC AMENDMENT (VEHICLE LICENSING) BILL 2001

Cognate Debate

On motion by Mrs Roberts (Minister for Police and Emergency Services), resolved -

That leave be granted for the Road Traffic Amendment (Vehicle Licensing) Bill 2001 and the Road Traffic Amendment (Vehicle Licensing) (Taxing) Bill 2001 to be considered cognately, and that the Road Traffic Amendment (Vehicle Licensing) Bill be the principal Bill.

Second Reading

Resumed from 28 June.

MRS HODSON-THOMAS (Carine) [1.45 pm]: The Opposition will not oppose the legislation. I understand that the Road Traffic Amendment (Vehicle Licensing) Bill has been a long time coming. It was initiated by the coalition while in government and the only change made to the Bill by the Labor Government is to the date, which has been changed from 2000 to 2001.

Mr McRae: It was a good Bill then.

Mrs HODSON-THOMAS: Absolutely. Having responsibility for metropolitan transport I hope people will appreciate that I am not fully conversant with farming equipment. In fact I had a lesson in farming equipment yesterday at the briefing and discovered what an auger is. It is very difficult dealing with legislation that refers specifically to farming equipment when one does not even understand what the equipment looks like. Perhaps I will gain a better understanding of those heavy vehicles in time.

As I said, having responsibility for metropolitan transport I took the liberty of making contact with a number of industry stakeholders, who confirm their support for the Bill. It provides a uniform framework for a more efficient customer-orientated vehicle licensing system. One of the key features of the Bill is the deletion of "agriculture implement" from the Act. I understand the definition was far too narrow and failed to keep up with the ever-advancing technology in farming machinery and equipment. I understand that the definition will be included in the regulations and that the regulations will be tabled some time in November.

Another key feature of the Bill is the provision of more flexible registration options for heavy vehicles. It is important to note that these flexible options will be welcomed by people particularly in farming communities who will have an opportunity to obtain pro rata, seasonal vehicle registrations. I am certain that the farming sector will welcome seasonal registrations, particularly the ability to have three, six or nine-monthly registrations, which will obviously complement the seasonal nature of farming.

I was interested during the briefing of the department in the advice that the Bill will address jurisdictional shopping by a few heavy vehicle operators in an endeavour to obtain the cheapest vehicle registration, which has important implications for road funding in our State. When registering vehicles, these vehicle operators will have to provide proof of a residential address in the form of a drivers licence. That will prevent jurisdictional shopping. I understand the Bill contains a definition that is in line with the commonwealth definition of a "garage address" to ensure that a vehicle is housed in this State.

I have no further comment on the Bill; it speaks for itself. It is supported by the Opposition and I am happy to endorse it.

MR McNEE (Moore) [1.48 pm]: I support the Bill. The issue of farm machinery has been a real problem for some time. No-one wants to operate outside the law. A few years ago when we bought a new fuel trailer nobody knew whether it should have four wheel brakes and tail lights or, in fact, whether it should have wheels at all. Of course, that was a few years ago, and things have changed since then. I suppose that at least now we are able to get some direction on what we need in those areas. I read the Bill and saw that sheep-feeder trailers and mobile yards had to be covered. I had never even thought of that and I guess that neither had a lot of other people. It is good for the agricultural industry that the Government has introduced this legislation and is tidying it up.

Although the Government has increased the price of licensing of some units - for example, combine harvesters - they can at least be licensed for a limited period, and that is much more effective than previously has been the case. An anomaly used to exist whereby air seeders were covered by the legislation - they are machines used to sow crops - and sheep-feeder trailers were not covered until now; that example illustrates the importance of this legislation. These issues had to be tidied up so that everybody knew where they stood, and that is most important. I often wondered why, for example, a farmer with 20 of these types of units, could not pay X dollars and why they were not licensed all the time. This Bill is a good compromise.

We need to keep an eye on the increasing paper warfare that is generated by not only Governments, but also private industry and anybody else who wants to know what I or some other business is doing. The Bill will

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control the people who we do not want in industries; for example, people who break the law with rapidity in the eastern States will not be able to establish businesses in WA, and that is important. I support the Bill and am pleased that the Government has introduced it.

MRS ROBERTS (Midland - Minister for Police and Emergency Services) [1.51 pm]: I thank the members for Carine and Moore for their support of this Bill. As has been pointed out, this matter has bipartisan support. The member for Moore is quite correct in saying that a key advantage of this legislation is that many people will be able to have seasonal or part-year licences. That will result in significant cost savings for many people, particularly in country areas. I thank members for their support for this legislation.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time, proceeded through remaining stages without debate, and transmitted to the Legislative Council.