

DR MARISA PATERSON MLA SPEECH
23 March 2022 – Road Transport Legislation
Amendment Bill 2021

I am pleased to stand here today in support of Minister Steel and the Road Legislation Amendment Bill 2021, addressing the serious issue of dangerous driving behaviours on ACT roads.

The Government has committed to the realisation of Vision Zero – that is zero deaths or other serious injuries on ACT roads. As my Colleague has outlined to the Assembly today, deaths and serious injuries on ACT roads are preventable.

In 2020, there were 5,760 ‘on-road’ recorded traffic crashes which resulted in 622 casualties, including seven fatalities and 90 hospital admissions. This is despite the Territory wide shutdown of all non-essential travel and services was implemented on 23 March 2020 to slow the spread of COVID19 in the community.

Madam Speaker, the Bill we are debating today is one measure we can take to prevent death and other serious injuries on our roads resulting from dangerous and unsafe behaviours on our road network. The amendments in the Bill seek to protect *all* road users on all transport modes and all parts of the road network.

The potential for dangerous and unsafe conduct on our roads to have serious or catastrophic consequences is high. Strong enforcement tools play a critical role in deterring these behaviours on our roads.

Strengthening enforcement tools to better address negligent driving that occasions actual bodily harm will ensure that where a driver disregards the safety of fellow road users, the Territory's legislative framework provides strong and proportionate penalties that are commensurate with the road safety risk associated with the unsafe behaviour and support behavioural change.

The consequence of a driver driving a motor vehicle in a negligent manner is not solely borne by them. All road users wear the risk of this behaviour including other drivers, vulnerable road users and people using our road and public transport networks. For this reason, I acknowledge the importance of the fact that the reforms proposed to be made today address dangerous and unsafe behaviours across *all* road users and all transport modes. A regulatory framework that supports Vision Zero is vital to ensuring *every* Canberran gets home safely to their families.

I commend the work of the Minister to address the issue of dangerous and unsafe behaviours on our road network and I stand today in support of this Bill. I commend the Bill, including the Government Amendments, to the Assembly.

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