

Legislative Council

Tuesday, 27 September 2011, Page 3919

ROAD TRAFFIC (RED LIGHT OFFENCES) AMENDMENT BILL

The Hon. A. BRESSINGTON (17:49):

I rise very briefly to indicate that I will be supporting the Road Traffic (Red Light Offences) Amendment Bill. The bill extends the existing provision of the Road Traffic Act 1963, specifically section 79B, to include level crossings (termed 'twin red lights') so that drivers caught both speeding and crossing against the lights can be fined for both offences. This is in line with what occurs at road intersections, and there is no question in my mind that those who speed through a level crossing whilst running a red light should definitely be fined for both offences.

While many will see supporting this bill as supporting red-light and speed cameras at level crossings, I think it is important to distinguish between the policy decision to install cameras at some six level crossings (as was announced earlier this year) and this bill which, as I said, simply seeks to bring level crossings in line with what occurs at road intersections.

That said, I do have some sympathy for the position of the Law Society, which concludes that the policy decision to install cameras at level crossings is 'just another revenue raiser'. They do so after analysing the statistics provided by the government showing the number of vehicle collisions at level crossings is falling—a fact to be welcomed—and that twin red lights (referred to in another place as ding-dings and wig-wags) remarkably reduced the number of motorists speeding across level crossings.

There is no doubting that many in the public see existing red-light cameras, particularly the snap-happy trio—the cameras near the Port Adelaide hospital, St Peter's Cathedral and Bakewell Bridge—as revenue raisers. When they each raise, I believe, nearly \$1 million per year on the back of the highest fines in the nation, it is hard to escape that conclusion. Consequently, many will no doubt see the use of such cameras at level crossings as the government chasing extra revenue.

While there are many reasons to support cameras at level crossings, the cynic in me does believe that there is probably a money motivation here somewhere, but I would hope that, after spending \$11 million to install those cameras, if any extra money is raised, it would be put back into making level crossings far safer.

On the issue of revenue, the Minister for Road Safety has often highlighted that revenue raised from speeding fines is—and I quote from an *Adelaidenow* article—'dedicated to enhance road safety throughout the state'. In an ABC 639 radio interview, the minister stated that revenue raised goes into a road safety fund, despite the popular perception that fines go straight to general revenue. I am asking the minister in this place, prior to the committee stage, to clarify for me and my constituents what the arrangements are for the disbursement of revenue from fixed cameras.