

REPUBLIC OF NAURU
MOTOR TRAFFIC BILL 2014
SECOND READING SPEECH
Honorable Valdon Dowiyogo M.P
9 SEPTEMBER 2014

Mr. Speaker Sir,

I have the pleasure of introducing to the House today a Bill for the *Motor Traffic Act 2014*.

The management of motor traffic issues is a multi-dimensional and multi-sectoral issue. It includes orderly development and management of roads, provision of safer vehicles, and a comprehensive law that is accessible and responsive. The traffic laws of each country should therefore be modern and in line with the traffic laws of other countries.

Traffic laws affect not just the driver, but passengers and pedestrians alike. Mr. Speaker, if there is one life lost due to the insufficiency of our laws to respond that is one life and reason enough to move for change.

Traffic laws have changed since our own legislation was enacted in 1937. This change has been to both to the language of the law and the substantive clauses. This Bill has maintained some provisions from the 1937 Act while amending the language and phrases used.

The Bill contains a better system of registration of motor vehicles that requires vehicles to be checked first for road worthiness. This ensures that any vehicle running on our roads in Nauru is fit and proper to be carrying passengers and will not pose any danger to all.

There are also improved provisions on road rules and safety for drivers is now a distinct part within the proposed Bill. Much of the language in this part has been modernized while substantive provisions added relate to the obligation on drivers to give way to police, emergency and escort vehicles, the use of hazard lights, the duty when drivers are approaching pedestrian crossings as well as general road and safety rules.

Seatbelts have always been a point of contention for drivers and passengers everywhere. This Bill introduces a clause that makes it an offence for anyone in a vehicle that is found to be travelling over the prescribed speed limit to be doing so without wearing a seatbelt. Of course the Act provides clear exemptions for our police and emergency vehicles. Also included is a new part dedicated solely to passengers of motor vehicles. It will now be an offence to have a child under the age of 5 in the front seat of a vehicle. It is of paramount importance that children be seated in the back seat of any vehicle because their bodies are so fragile that should an accident occur, they would not be able to withstand the shock of either being thrown through the windscreen or having an airbag crush their bodies.

This new part also creates new legal obligations as well as penalties for those travelling in vehicles and either standing, having a part of their body out of the vehicle or having children ride in the back tray of vehicles unaccompanied. Simply put – it is dangerous.

Police powers have also been expanded to include the power to impound vehicles and to issue traffic infringement notices or TINs. Having the police issue TINs will reduce the caseload on the police and the court as rather than having to precious time and resources collating evidence and presenting them in court, matters are expedited with extreme ease, especially if one does not dispute their penalty.

Also important is the clause relating to our government vehicles. Government vehicles will not be exempt from being issued TINs under this new Act. As servants of the Republic we must be seen to be upholding the law and being made subject to its judgment. In this case, admitting a wrong and paying the fine.

This updated law is not new. It has simply been improved so to enhance and support the Nauru Police Force in carrying out their duties under this law.

Members, I thank you for your continued support for the betterment of our country and the traffic laws of Nauru.

Mr. Speaker, the explanatory memorandum describes in more detail the provisions of the Bill.

I commend the Bill to the House.