



Speech by

**Mr JIM PEARCE**

**MEMBER FOR FITZROY**

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Hansard 6 August 1998

### **RURAL ROADS**

**Mr PEARCE** (Fitzroy—ALP) (7.27 p.m.): The Federal Government must, as a matter of urgency, consider ways of assisting rural local authorities to maintain and upgrade strategically important rural roads. I am not talking about those roads that are controlled by the State or the Federal Government; I am talking about those roads that are controlled by local authorities. With the expansion of the coal, grain, livestock and cotton industries in central Queensland, there is a real concern about the deterioration of roads that were not constructed to a standard to carry the heavy loads that multi-axel transporters of today carry.

Many of those roads are also school bus runs. That alone is a good enough reason for a road to be kept of a high standard. I am not necessarily talking about bitumen; I am talking about a good gravel base and enough money to continually apply the maintenance to those roads that is necessary. It is known that ratepayers, as contributors to local authorities, need to pay for a wide range of services and for the maintenance of infrastructure. There is not a lot of money left for those jobs that are necessary, such as the upgrade and maintenance of rural roads. Local authorities need a helping hand from the Federal Government. They need a greater proportion of the moneys obtained from the taxpayers, from people who have licences and from the fuel excise. A greater proportion of the money that is specifically targeted for roads needs to be returned to rural roads, because those roads will continue to deteriorate.

In one place in central Queensland— although the issue has been resolved—it appeared that we would lose the production at a timber mill simply because the road was falling apart.

Time expired.

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