



Speech by

VAUGHAN JOHNSON

MEMBER FOR GREGORY

Hansard 17 September 1998

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

Drummond Range Crossing

Mr JOHNSON (Gregory—NPA) (10.03 a.m.), by leave: This morning in Longreach, ABC radio broadcast an interview between Tom Harwood and the Minister for Transport, Steve Bredhauer, in relation to the upgrade of the Drummond Range crossing. I believe that I have been misrepresented by the Minister for Transport in relation to this issue.

Owing to a couple of mishaps on the Drummond Range, one which occurred about five years ago and another which occurred about two years ago, I immediately sought from the Government led by Mr Borbidge emergent expenditure of \$14m to upgrade that very necessary range crossing—a crossing that had not been touched since about 1880 when the track was first built. This morning on ABC radio, Mr Bredhauer said that since the contract has now expired the job has not been completed and that I made no representation whatsoever for emergent expenditure to fix the rest of the crossing.

I addressed the issue with my Premier, Mr Borbidge. The situation was that, as we were approaching the Budget and the contract was expiring, we were going to address the issue as emergent expenditure. I say to the Minister today——

Mr SPEAKER: Order! We do not need a debate on the issue.

Mr JOHNSON: This is a life and death situation. Five years ago a train load of North Australian Pastoral Company bullocks ran off the rails, and the Spirit of the Outback travels that route too.

Mr SPEAKER: Order!

Mr JOHNSON: I say to the Minister here today——

Mr SPEAKER: Order! This is not a personal explanation. The member has the opportunity to raise this matter in the two-minute debate.

Mr JOHNSON: The Minister has misrepresented me on the issue. The Minister must show some credibility and retract what he said on ABC radio this morning. He needs to find the emergent expenditure to finish the upgrade of the range crossing. I ask the Minister: what does the AFULE and the PTU think of his leadership on the matter?

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The member will resume his seat.

Mr JOHNSON: The Minister has to find the necessary chaff and finish the project.

Mr SPEAKER: Order!
