



Speech by

SHAUN NELSON

MEMBER FOR TABLELANDS

Hansard 24 August 1999

GILLIES HIGHWAY

Mr NELSON (Tablelands—IND) (10.26 a.m.): I would like to speak about the Gillies Highway. We have two access routes to the tablelands. One is the Kuranda Range and the other is the Gillies Highway, which does not receive as much attention as it should.

Mr Barton: Have you ever heard of the Palmerston?

Mr NELSON: Palmerston is also an access road. Okay, we have three. However, I would like to speak about the Gillies, because it is more important inasmuch as it is actually the access route to Cairns. With Cairns being the major centre to which we need access, that is certainly an area that should be looked at a little more by the Department of Transport. I do not know if many members here have driven up and down the Gillies Highway, but it is a very dangerous section of road. I think it has approximately 320-odd turnbacks on itself. It is an area that has been upgraded in the past and overtaking lanes have been put in in three separate places.

However, I would like to speak about the issue of putting more emphasis on the southern tablelands access route. While not taking away from the access route up the Kuranda Range, I think that we should also look at the access for the southern tablelands because, at times of emergency and at times of disaster, for example, both routes can be cut as well as the third route, the Palmerston Highway. When the southern tablelands area is cut off from Mareeba, sometimes the Gillies Highway would be our only access route.

I would like to put the emphasis back onto the Gillies Highway so it has the same planning as we have for the Kuranda Range. Both these areas are very important, and I would like the Government to take that into consideration at the next traffic consultation for the tablelands.
