



Speech by

Dr LESLEY CLARK

MEMBER FOR BARRON RIVER

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SCHOOL ROAD SAFETY

Dr CLARK (Barron River—ALP) (11.05 p.m.): A petition from nearly 500 concerned parents and staff of the Peace Lutheran College in my electorate was tabled in the Parliament at the last sitting of this House. I organised and lodged this petition to enable the school community to bring to the attention of this House the urgent need to install traffic lights at the Harley Street intersection used every week by hundreds of families to access the school from the Brinsmead-Kamerunga Road. Late last year I tabled a petition relating to school safety issues from Caravonica school parents because students have to cross the same Brinsmead-Kamerunga Road to access the school from the existing car park.

It is no coincidence that road safety issues have arisen at this time at these two schools. The common feature in both instances is the opening of the \$20m Redlynch deviation section of the Brinsmead-Kamerunga Road that has brought enormous benefit to residents in the fast growing suburb of Redlynch and provides flood-free access into Cairns from the northern beaches for the first time. The value of this road is evidenced by the 20% increase in traffic at peak periods, but unfortunately its value for commuters and for traffic utilising what is in fact the Cairns western bypass has created a hazardous situation for parents and students of these two schools.

The solution to the problems experienced by these schools are different, but both are very costly. In the instance of Peace Lutheran College, installation of traffic lights will provide the level of safety needed, while at Caravonica school significant changes in parking arrangements for staff, parents and buses will be required. I am working closely with Queensland Transport, the Police Service, the Department of Main Roads, the Cairns City Council and the respective schools to address these serious problems. I commend all concerned for their cooperative, constructive approach to date. In both cases we have initiated short-term measures to alleviate the situation somewhat, but we still have a long way to go.

With respect to Peace Lutheran School, I have obtained the cooperation of the Stagecoach Bus Company to provide an improved bus service to and from the school to encourage more families from the northern beaches to use bus transport rather than cars to get students to school. Negotiations are also under way with the White Cars Bus Company to determine the viability of a bus service for the 32 children who travel to school from Kuranda. The police have also been very helpful and have provided advice to me on how to educate parents using the intersection to improve road safety. The Department of Main Roads is currently preparing the design for the traffic lights at the Harley Street intersection so that when funding is available construction time will be as short as possible.

At the Caravonica school, a Safe ST Committee has been formed to consider, firstly, how to improve the use of the existing parking space outside the school. The Department of Transport has employed consultants to prepare a number of possible road layouts that will avoid the need for students to cross the busy Brinsmead-Kamerunga Road. These are being considered by the school committee. I have also organised a meeting with officers from the Department of Main Roads, the Cairns City Council and the owner of land adjacent to the school to explore options for constructing a car park on that location which would overcome many of the problems currently being experienced. I am committed to achieving a successful resolution to both of these problems because there can be no higher priority than a child's life. I look forward to the continuing support of the Cairns City Council and the Minister for Transport with respect to solving these important school safety issues in my electorate.

In the short time remaining, I would also like to make mention of another school road safety issue in my electorate, this time at Edge Hill State School, the largest primary school in my electorate. While there are traffic lights at the Pease Street intersection and school crossing supervisors, the school community want to see a 40 km/h school zone introduced in this area. I fully support them in their endeavours. I will be taking the matter up with the Cairns City Council to seek their support for this initiative, which will further increase safety on this busy road.

Finally, I commend Queensland Transport and the Cairns City Council for their response to the Machans Beach State School Safe ST Committee in introducing a number of changes on two roads around the school that the school has identified as necessary to improve safety. The Cairns City Council has been very quick to respond to their concerns. I am very encouraged by the proposed changes around that school. As I said, I will continue my efforts on behalf of all schools in my electorate, because there can be no higher priority than the safety of our schoolchildren.
