



Speech by

Mrs D. PRATT

MEMBER FOR BARAMBAH

Hansard 18 October 2001

ESK STREETSCAPE

Mrs PRATT (Nanango—Ind) (7.29 p.m.): I table 404 letters of protest and one letter of congratulations to the Esk Shire Council. I have had several letters of complaint on this issue and a petition signed by 404 people against the Esk streetscape out of the entire population of Esk of 992. That 992 figure includes children, teenagers, adults and elderly persons.

Originally when the consultative process on the Esk streetscape began, the importance of tourism for Esk now and in the future was discussed. However, what eventuated is a lot different from what the residents of Esk supported and thought that they were getting. The reduction in parking space along the main street now makes it difficult for visitors to stop and patronise local businesses. People passing through Esk need to be able to pull up and park easily. When it is made too difficult for them, they will just not bother. With Fernvale and Toogoolawah in such close proximity, travellers with a map and those who have been to the area before will simply move on.

Whether or not the main street traders of Esk are disadvantaged may not be of paramount importance to those whose wages are not directly affected, but for those whose incomes have been affected, this situation is unacceptable. Visitors who say to each other as they continue on down the road—and this was reported at Toogoolawah—'Esk is a pretty town, but what a pity we couldn't see anywhere to pull up in a hurry,' do not help businesspeople pay their bills.

All of the centre parking has been removed. Yes, there were concerns about the safety of the centre parking. It is illegal to back out of centre parking and that practice should be minimised by signs. Blocked vision from bigger cars parking beside smaller cars can be alleviated by the use of appropriately placed mirrors. However, since the placement of the new gardens, the number of reports of near accidents has risen dramatically.

It may be the Brisbane Valley Highway, but in reality to the children, parents, the elderly and all the other folk of Esk, it is their home's main street, their main shopping area, not just a highway. People travelling along this section of the highway need to be forced to slow down in recognition of the fact that they are driving through a children's, parents' and elderly people's main activity area.

The centre parks may not have been 100 per cent safe, but they were better than the dangerous fiasco that has been reported to me to exist now. The people watch in fear every day. I ask that the Esk Shire Council review what it has done. Although there are problems that it has overcome to accommodate the people's concerns, I ask that it please consider very carefully returning centre parking in Esk.
