



Speech by

Mrs D. PRATT

MEMBER FOR NANANGO

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KILCOY-BEERWAH ROAD

Mrs PRATT (Nanango—Ind) (7.24 p.m.): Recently I attended a meeting held at the Woodford ambulance station which was convened to address the horrendous accident and death toll that the Kilcoy-Beerwah road has recorded. Most people would be aware of the two motorcycle deaths which occurred on 15 February this year. For the third bike rider it was fortuitous that he was lagging 500 metres behind or it would have been a triple fatality. As a police spokeswoman said, neither of them stood a chance at the speed they were going. Another policeman said that it was the worst accident he had seen in his 14-year career.

The concerned citizens of the Kilcoy-Beerwah road and others convened the meeting not only because of the two lives lost that day—in fact, that was the catalyst—but also because this section of road has a long history of accidents. The Queensland government's own graph of accidents shows that there have been 89 accidents over the last 12 years and that 48 of these have occurred in the last five years. On top of that, residents report that there are a number that have never been reported. These accidents predominantly occurred along the section from Cruices Drive to the 4000, which is at the bottom of the range. This section is a long open road on which bike riders and other vehicular traffic feel unrestrained compared with the confining, winding, steep section of road they have just come down or are about to go up. They push the pedal to the metal and speed.

Forty-nine people attended the meeting and crowded into the very small venue. This number was far more than was expected and truly represented the concern of those who live in the area. As any retailer will tell you, for every one person who reports a complaint or concern it would be recommended to multiply it a number of times to get the true picture.

Main Roads is well and truly aware of the situation. I must thank them, for they have engaged consultants to undertake the planning and design of the project for the proposed upgrade of a section of the road. But these planning and project exercises take a lot of time, and immediate action is required to make sure that this ongoing dangerous situation does not continue and result in further property damage, injury and unnecessary deaths. The representative of the local council who attended the meeting has assured the community that measures will be taken to ensure that council not only confers with and assists Main Roads to address issues but also will, where funds are required, look into it very seriously.

The meeting asked that measures which were implemented to reduce traffic accidents during the Woodford Folk Festival, which attracts enormous crowds, be implemented until the roadworks are completed, because those measures ensure that no increase in the number of accidents occurs despite the increase in traffic at that time.

Families who drop off and pick up their children from school buses face particular difficulties because at the current time they reportedly have no safe places to pull over during this process. I would ask that special emphasis be placed on the children's welfare—not at some time in the future but right now.

One thing all who attended the meeting agreed upon was the importance of the traffic flowing to and through their town. They do not want to give the impression that tourist traffic, whether it be vehicular or motorbike, is not welcome, because in this day and age as industries decline, whether it be the timber industry or any other, it is often the only avenue left for those in rural based towns to remain viable.

It was reported to me that in the year 2000, 1,500 vehicles per day had been recorded travelling the road. Today that has risen to 2,000 plus per day. That number will continue to grow as people see the area as a beautiful place to visit.

Time expired.