



Speech by

**Dr LESLEY CLARK**

**MEMBER FOR BARRON RIVER**

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Hansard 2 April 2003

### **TRAIL BIKES**

**Dr LESLEY CLARK** (Barron River—ALP) (10.46 p.m.): As residential urban development has expanded into previously rural areas of Barron River, the issue of illegal trail bike riding by young people has become increasingly problematic. Noise, dust, safety and environmental impact are the main issues, with adverse reaction from residents, land owners and other road users from illegal trail bike riding.

This recreational activity provides an exciting outlet that has positive physical, emotional and social effects for young boys in particular, yet there are no recognised trails or off-road areas in the immediate Cairns area that are readily accessible and where this activity can be legally undertaken without causing social or environmental problems.

In my view, state government and local authorities need to work in partnership with industry, motor sport clubs and organisations such as the Federation of Off Highway Vehicles Australia to provide opportunities throughout the state for legal trail bike riding and other off-highway vehicles based on successful US models. The issue of bike registration and policing of illegal, noisy trail bike riding also needs to be addressed, requiring a comprehensive, whole-of-government response.

I have joined a subcommittee of the Police Minister's backbench legislation committee and I am a member of a Cairns task force comprising representatives from the Cairns City Council, the Police Service, the EPA, Mulgrave mill, Ergon, motor sport clubs and, at my invitation, a parent of a trail bike rider. I am working closely with the member for Mulgrave, who chairs these committees and who also experiences problems with trail bike riders in his electorate.

Outcomes to date resulting from the work of these committees and relevant ministers include a commitment from the Cairns City Council to address the issue of trail bike riding in its sport and recreation plan, currently under preparation. The Cairns Police Service will widen its education and awareness strategy with young riders to encourage legal riding. The Minister for Transport has indicated that legislation to enable conditional registration of trail bikes is under active consideration. Last week a forum was held at Parliament House at which government departments outlined their responsibilities and role in the management of trail bike riding. The Police Service is considering possible options to amend the Police Powers and Responsibilities Act to give police additional powers to control illegal riding which causes a noise nuisance to residents.

I will continue to work on this issue at both the local and state levels because I want a win for young people and a win for residents. I know that it will take time to achieve this outcome. In the interim, I urge anyone adversely affected by illegal trail bike riders to contribute their ideas to the solution of this difficult issue. I urge the riders and their parents to be responsible and respectful of the needs and rights of residents who may suffer adverse impacts of trail bike riding in their locality.