



Speech by

Shane Knuth

MEMBER FOR CHARTERS TOWERS

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KENNEDY DEVELOPMENT ROAD

Mr KNUTH (Charters Towers—NPA) (11.40 p.m.): I would like to draw members' attention to an urgent matter that is currently costing rural Queenslanders thousands of dollars in vehicle damage, road maintenance and endless hours of misery. I refer to the Kennedy Development Road—the road that the media is currently calling the worst road in Australia. Within a two-week period, we have seen nine accidents on this road and an untold number of near misses. How many people must be injured or how many fatalities must there be before action is taken?

We keep hearing that because only a limited number of people use this road an upgrade is not justified. That is a myth. If the government had the foresight or the vision to seal the Kennedy Development Road, it would open up the west and allow transport to southern markets, increase tourism and the safety of residents in this region, and breathe life into those rural communities. There have been nine accidents within two and a half weeks and some accident victims were flown out by the Royal Flying Doctor. There are also hundreds of thousands of cattle to be trucked out of this area and the road condition is deteriorating with bulldust more than 15 inches deep.

I call on the government to provide urgent funding for this road to be sealed on the grounds that it is not only a deathtrap; it is a road of regional significance. It is a future inland highway from Cairns to Melbourne and a north-south link from the Atherton Tableland to Hughenden and centres south and west. It will alleviate traffic congestion on the coastal routes, provide increased tourism, economic benefits for transport companies, open up the area to southern markets, breathe life into communities and help alleviate infrastructure problems in the south-east corner from the influx of people moving to the area each month.

The Cairns and Hughenden chambers of commerce, the Richmond and the Flinders shire councils and the general public are behind this project. We are calling on this government to seal this road.