



Speech by

Mark McArdle

MEMBER FOR CALOUNDRA

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SUNSET DRIVE, CALOUNDRA

Mr McARDLE (Caloundra—Lib) (9.04 pm): In January this year Meridan State College opened its doors to schoolchildren in the local and surrounding areas. The school is going to provide a facility for years to come to cater for the growth of Caloundra and to provide an excellent service for the children who will access it. The school, however, sits on what is a very dangerous road named Sunset Drive. Sunset Drive, by its configuration, borders the front and one side of the school. The front provides a drop-and-go zone. The side is the main access for vehicles taking children to and from school and provides parking for parents who are staying some time at the school.

The danger exists because of the state of Sunset Drive at both the front and the side of the school. The side road actually provides an access to the school and also to a retirement complex situated on the same road. This road is in a deplorable state. Given its condition, without doubt a major motor vehicle incident, possibly involving death, is going to occur in the near future. Combine that with the fact that the portion of Sunset Drive at the front of the school will shortly be taking between 8,000 and 10,000 vehicles per day due to a major feeder road leading into it. The configuration of that portion of Sunset Drive is inherently dangerous. It is snake shaped and is already collapsing due to heavy vehicle use. It has a power pole at one twist and a very narrow street over a bridge.

The combination of these factors makes the collecting and delivery of children extremely hazardous, let alone children walking or riding bicycles to and from the school. In fact, it is very dangerous for any child to use Sunset Drive, and a bike path cannot be built for the simple reason that the roads around the area are not constructed in a manner that will allow a safe bike path to be built.

This is a situation where both the state and local governments must come to the party. Whether or not it is the liability of either the state or the local government is beside the point. The issue here is that children's lives could well be at stake. Unless something is done to rectify it, there is a very serious concern that there will be a death.

A road taking between 8,000 and 10,000 vehicles per day and which also has heavy duty vehicles that will use it to go to and from different construction sites for years to come is a recipe for disaster. I do not care who pays for the road or the upgrade and nor do the parents of the children who attend the school. These children must be protected. If that means the state government and the local government pay one-half each towards upgrading the road, then it has to be. If we do not, the result will be the death of a very young child.