



Speech by

Mike Horan

MEMBER FOR TOOWOOMBA SOUTH

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RUTHVEN STREET, TOOWOOMBA

Mr HORAN (Toowoomba South—NPA) (9.57 pm): Tonight I want to speak about the increasing traffic problems in Ruthven Street, particularly near the intersection of James Street and Ruthven Street. For some time the Department of Main Roads has mooted putting in some traffic control methods in Ruthven Street.

This area sees a lot of increased traffic from the southern side of Toowoomba where all the new suburbs are. That has meant a lot of increased traffic into the city. The city is growing rapidly. In the immediate vicinity there are three schools: St Saviour's Primary, St Saviour's Secondary and the Toowoomba South State School. Lawrence Street abuts this area and the Kath Dickson Family Centre, which is one of the larger child-care centres of Toowoomba, is located in that street.

The Department of Main Roads has drawn up some plans which show that there will be placements through the centre of Ruthven Street that will mean those cars travelling from the north, heading south along Ruthven Street, will not be able to turn right into a large number of businesses on the right-hand side. One of those buildings is the Bernoth Centre. There are approximately 12 major retail outlets there and 250 off-street car parks. Organisations such as the Fernwood gym attract a lot of people. In the same area of the street there are other businesses. The proposal is to have a centre construction which will stop right-hand turns, but a little further up in Perth Street there will be a set of traffic lights where U-turns will be allowed. Unfortunately, that will cause some real problems for the customers, the businesses and patrons generally.

I think we are very fortunate in Toowoomba that we have an absolutely outstanding professional in charge of the Department of Main Roads in Mr Gill Heaton. I know that he and his staff have had meetings with the people from the shopping centres. I certainly hope that something can be worked out to allow these right-hand turns. The shopping centre will lose the ability of people to turn right and head south as they exit the shopping centre. They are giving up something in that regard. People use this big shopping centre to access a number of businesses in the area that have very limited access to James Street and Ruthven Street. A lot of people come through this shopping centre. So it does serve a community service in that regard. Even if an interim measure can be put in place whereby a right-hand turn can be made, perhaps there might be redevelopment a few years down the track at the shopping centre where they are able to get out via Perth Street or something like that. I think that should be done. It is one of the major CBD shopping centres in the city, and I thank the Department of Main Roads for giving it careful consideration.