



Speech by

**Shane Knuth**

**MEMBER FOR CHARTERS TOWERS**

Hansard Wednesday, 21 February 2007

---

## **TRANSPORT LEGISLATION AND ANOTHER ACT AMENDMENT BILL**

**Mr KNUTH** (Charters Towers—NPA) (3.41 pm): I rise to speak to the Transport Legislation and Another Act Amendment Bill 2006. One purpose of this bill is to address the problems of young drivers being overrepresented in road crash statistics. Anything that addresses the road toll is positive, but I believe there is a bigger picture that has not been fully addressed. There were 231 road fatalities in Queensland in 2005. Of that number, 47.2 per cent of these accidents occurred outside the south-east corner. They occurred in the southern, central, northern and far-northern areas. Approximately only 30 per cent of the population of Queensland lives in these regions. We must look at the reasons why rural and regional Queenslanders are losing their lives on the roads disproportionately to those in metropolitan areas. Without a doubt, the fatal four contribute to too many of our accidents, but why is a greater proportion of the population in regional and rural Queensland dying in accidents?

The condition of roads is a major concern within many of these regions. Many of the state controlled roads in rural areas are still unsealed or in urgent need of upgrading. Fatigue is a major factor in accidents. Mining companies provide single-person accommodation and then employees are frequently travelling home on their days off. This has resulted in greater risks. If we add to this the increase in traffic volume and the poor state of the roads, it is a recipe for disaster. Residents are tired of regular reports in the media of accidents and fatalities on their roads.

The Gregory Development Road, the Peak Downs Highway and the Clermont-Alpha road are roads that are frightening not only to young drivers but to all who are game to use these roads. I want to bring to the attention of the house the shocking state of the Gregory Development Road, particularly the section between Greenvale and Bluewater Springs. It is not ethical and it is downright dangerous to allow regular road users to be confronted by triple road trains on a single sealed road with winding bends, no vision or warning of any oncoming traffic and any slight veering will see you end up down an embankment into a tree or head-on into an oncoming prime mover. Local road users refer to this road as a billygoat track and a one-lane nightmare. There has been at least one fatality and 23 accidents in the last two years between Charters Towers and Greenvale. Two of them involved bulk fuel tankers which overturned and ruptured, spilling diesel which took up to nine hours to be cleaned up.

In recent times there has been a significant increase in population, both within the township of Greenvale as well as the surrounding districts. Greenvale has grown from a population of 60 to 150 since 2002 and there have been a number of new mines kicking off, such as Kagara zinc mine at Conjuboy Station which employs 200 people at the mine site. There are also a number of other mines such as Sapphire mine at Mount Fox, Christmas Creek mine at Christmas Creek Station just 40 kilometres south of Greenvale and the Pandanus marble mine at Pandanus Station. Metallica Minerals is also aiming for a 2009 nickel-processing operation tipped to generate up to \$120 million a year in revenue. This site is in the vicinity of the old Greenvale nickel mine as well as a smaller deposit at Lucky Break south of Greenvale. Ark Homes also uses this section of road to transport home units through to the gulf. Ark Homes has already moved 50 of these homes through to the gulf and will move 50 more in the next 12 months under escort because they are 2.5 metres wide.

Transport, grazing, tourist, and mining industries as well as Townsville Enterprise, Charters Towers Chamber of Commerce, local residents and parents are screaming out for this road to be fixed. This road is heavily used by ore road triples that service these mines, livestock carriers, an increasing number of tourists—

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Ms van Litsenburg): Member for Charters Towers, which section of the bill does your speech refer to?

**Mr KNUTH:** If I am going too much off the track here, I will deliver this in the adjournment debate tonight. I want to bring these issues to the attention of the minister. I also invite him to come up and have a look at this road. I would appreciate it if the minister could read my adjournment speech tonight. Just to finish off, in relation to licences, there are towns in the Central Highlands and the Bowen Basin where it is impossible to be tested for an HR-class licence as the police being sent to these areas do not have the qualifications.

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Member for Charters Towers, resume your seat.