



Speech by

Jarrold Bleijie

MEMBER FOR KAWANA

Hansard Wednesday, 20 May 2009

SCHOOLCHILDREN, SAFETY

Mr BLEIJIE (Kawana—LNP) (9.03 pm): I rise in this chamber tonight to discuss an issue which is very important to me as my eldest daughter, Taylor, is in year 1 at Meridan State College. How appropriate it is that I am able to address this issue tonight, the day after the Queensland teachers' strike, which highlighted the inability of the government to resolve disputes and also highlighted this government's continual failure to take a proactive stance on issues. It always chooses the reactive approach or, as I like to now refer to it, the 'we've completely run out of ideas, so let's go with the flow' approach. One particular issue that this government has failed to address is the safety of our schoolchildren outside of their schools. Whether it is the parking facilities for the parents and teachers or the road network which surrounds schools, the state government has continually ignored this issue.

In my electorate of Kawana this issue is one that is spoken about at every P&C meeting that I have attended. To highlight my point, recently during the state election campaign, there was an issue involving illegal U-turns outside a local school. The Department of Main Roads and the Sunshine Coast Regional Council were not interested in erecting a sign on the traffic light that would indicate to drivers that U-turns were illegal. The parents of this school were outraged as this intersection was the main exit and entry point for the school and the local community. Despite repeated requests by the P&C, no sign was erected and we resorted to me standing on the side of the road with a no U-turn sign to educate the parents. To save the Table Office the pressure, I will not table the metal sign, but I will make it available to the Minister for Main Roads and invite him to attend this dangerous intersection with me to erect the sign. That is, of course, if the current minister sets himself apart from the now Minister for Health and is actually interested in local issues. I cannot give the Minister for Main Roads mice, but I can give him a great sign worthy of two Main Roads sign bolts.

Having realised the frustration of parents around my electorate, I am determined to bring some awareness to their plight. As a result, on behalf of the Kawana electorate schools, I take pleasure in announcing the launch next Thursday, 28 May of the Kawana Electorate Schools Road Safety Awareness Month. For the purposes of this program, the month of June will be divided into Traffic Safety Week, Pedestrian Safety Week, Responsible Driving Week and Child Safety Week. The idea of this awareness month is not only to draw attention to the issue of road safety around our schools, but to the broader issues of stranger danger, drug and alcohol awareness and the responsibilities of younger drivers.

I note that no representatives from the government visited my electorate during the recent election campaign. However, now that the election is out of the way, I extend an invitation to the ministers for Education, Main Roads, Transport and Child Safety—

Mr Reeves interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Minister for Child Safety!

Mr BLEIJIE: Thank you for your protection, Mr Deputy Speaker. I invite the ministers to the electorate of Kawana so that perhaps this government will take seriously its responsibility in ensuring that our schoolchildren are protected, particularly on the roads around their schools.