



Speech by

Ros Bates

MEMBER FOR MUDGEERABA

Hansard Thursday, 3 September 2009

M1, UPGRADES

Ms BATES (Mudgeeraba—LNP) (7.43 pm): I rise tonight to speak on behalf of the thousands of motorists who travel the M1 on the Gold Coast every week and refer in particular to the lack of safety barriers on the M1 between Nerang and Mudgeeraba. Those opposite and the minister for roads will beat their drums and say that barriers will be installed when the M1 upgrade is complete, but let us just put that into perspective. The upgrade of the M1—and we are only talking about the four-kilometre section between exit 73 and exit 75—is due to start early next year and, as announced by the minister, will take two years to complete. One only has to look at the Nielsens Road interchange, which took seven years to complete, and they can understand why local residents and motorists are hesitant to believe anything will be completed on time or, in fact, on budget.

Since 2000 there have been 10 fatalities and 64 hospitalisations as a result of accidents between exit 73 and exit 79—a mere 12-kilometre section of the M1. Safety barriers improve road safety for all road users by reducing the consequences of crashes into potentially hazardous environments. Safety barriers shield vehicles and their occupants, riders and pedestrians from hazardous objects and other vehicles on the roadside and the median. We are not perfect. Excursions from the traffic lane will occur. Alcohol and speed are obvious contributing factors, but a large proportion of crashes result from human error. Similarly, the role of fatigue in crashes, from falling asleep at the wheel through to decision-making errors and reduced attention, is increasingly being recognised as of greater importance than previously considered.

I read with interest in the *Gold Coast Sun* last week that three other Gold Coast families also received a bill from Main Roads. Families throughout Queensland have had to deal with this heartless and callous bureaucracy. However, it seems that there is a light at the end of the tunnel. I take this opportunity to, firstly, thank the minister for his apology to the Flett family and secondly, congratulate him on his announcement that the policy of recouping costs from fatalities is now under review. As has been shown, even though the policy is meant to be administered sensitively and compassionately, this has not always been the case.

So where to from here? Temporary safety barriers need to be installed on the M1 between Nerang and Mudgeeraba now before the upgrade works commence. Why wait? The more accidents that occur, the more money it costs our community, and our road toll continues to rise. The minister made no apology last week on the Gold Coast Channel 9 news bulletin about the barriers on the Gold Coast Highway which are there to protect pedestrians and motorists alike, so I strongly urge and plead with him to install temporary safety barriers on the M1 before further lives are seriously impacted through major injuries or, worse, another fatality occurs.