



Speech by

**Shane Knuth**

**MEMBER FOR DALRYMPLE**

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## **RAVENSHOE, ROAD INFRASTRUCTURE**

**Mr KNUTH** (Dalrymple—LNP) (9.00 pm): This morning I tabled a petition with 1,129 signatories from the residents of Ravenshoe and surrounds. The petition calls on the Minister for Main Roads to direct funds to upgrade a number of areas on the Kennedy Highway from the East Evelyn Road junction to the intersection of the Kennedy Highway and Tumoulin Road.

For many years now, permits have been issued to some transport companies for B-doubles to transport goods in and around the township of Ravenshoe. However, this system has ignored the most practical and safest route, which is the section the residents are asking to be upgraded and designated as a B-double route. The current route results in increased traffic through the centre of the town. Not only is this unsafe for residents; it also makes it difficult for transporters to satisfy fatigue management requirements and results in increased costs for farmers. It is also proving damaging to the existing road network in and around the town.

Fruit and vegetables from this area are transported to southern markets including Brisbane, Sydney and Melbourne. Currently B-double drivers without permits need to unhook trailers before travelling this section and then go back to retrieve them. This has consequences for their own fatigue management and logbook entries and also for the freshness of the produce they are delivering. The local council is supportive of this initiative, as are the local residents, tourists and businesses within and around the township.

The upgrade of this intersection would result in large trucks being moved away from the more populated areas of the township. However, the road in its current state is too dangerous not just for B-double drivers but for all road users. By upgrading the intersections and adjacent road sections, the road will be safe for all road users and will provide a suitable and permanent B-double route away from the centre of town. It would be safer for all residents and satisfactory for farmers and truck drivers.

This section of the road was considered suitable for the time when it was built, but not in current times or for future users. Increased road transport, increased tourist numbers and other industries have resulted in a road network that is completely inadequate for this area. Unless funds are allocated to improving and upgrading this road, all industries will suffer. This region produces millions in gross revenue yet has an access road that is described as a billy goat track. This petition calls on the minister to consider the request of the residents and provide the necessary funding to upgrade this section of the highway.