



Speech by

**Steve Wettenhall**

**MEMBER FOR BARRON RIVER**

Hansard Tuesday, 27 October 2009

---

## **REGIONAL ROAD SAFETY SUMMIT**

**Mr WETTENHALL** (Barron River—ALP) (10.04 pm): In 2008, 28 people were killed on roads in Far North Queensland. Each year we hope and expect that fewer people will die in road crashes on Queensland roads than the year before. In 2009, however, 40 people have already died in road accidents in Far North Queensland, already 12 more than the total for last year. I am sure that all members would join with me in expressing our condolences to the families and friends of those who have lost their lives. If people continue to die at this rate, which is currently one a week, we will nearly double last year's toll. These statistics, whilst horrifying, can never convey the terrible grief, loss and suffering that is left in the wake of fatal road crashes. Whilst we rightly focus on road fatalities, scores more people are seriously injured, in some cases suffering permanent and catastrophic injuries.

Following the news of yet another fatal road crash some time ago, I decided that it was time that we ought to conduct a further examination of our region's spiralling road toll in the form of a regional road safety summit. I did this because I firmly believe that as a community we can never give up the fight against road crash fatalities and trauma. We can never accept the inevitability of this human tragedy.

I am very grateful for the support shown for the concept of a regional road safety summit. The ministers for police and emergency services, the Minister for Main Roads and the Minister for Transport have all agreed to attend. The Premier's office also supports the idea. The concept of a regional road safety summit has been widely debated in the community in Far North Queensland and has been generally endorsed. I think that this reflects the widespread and deep community concern about the issue of road safety. Road safety experts from the Police Service, the Fire and Rescue Service and the Ambulance Service will attend the road safety summit and analyse the fatal road crashes in the region with a view to identifying strategies to be employed in the future to improve our road safety and road safety messages. I particularly want members of the public to have an opportunity to contribute their ideas to the summit. Some 500 members of the community have participated in an online forum to contribute their ideas and 200 have registered to attend the summit which will take place on 17 November at the Hilton Hotel in Cairns. This is an important strategy in continuing the fight against road fatalities and serious injuries in our region.