



Speech by

Shane Knuth

MEMBER FOR DALRYMPLE

Hansard Wednesday, 18 August 2010

ATHERTON TABLELANDS, CYCLIST SAFETY

Mr KNUTH (Dalrymple—LNP) (11.50 am): Yesterday I tabled a petition containing the signatures of 769 Tablelands residents calling on the government to provide funding for signage on all arterial roads and thoroughfares throughout the Tablelands to highlight awareness by all road users and the community of the many bike riders who share the roads. This petition was initiated by Mrs Sharyn Cook, whose husband, Lindsay Cook, was tragically killed in March this year while riding his bike along the Kennedy Highway between Atherton and Mareeba. He was one of three fatalities in the past 18 months as a result of accidents involving bikes and vehicles on the Tablelands.

These tragic losses of life emphasise the need for improved infrastructure and adequate signage to enhance the awareness of the increasing number of people who are choosing to ride bikes to improve their lifestyle. I acknowledge that this government is interested in promoting bike riding in Queensland and I welcome such projects as the Principal Cycle Network Plan for Far North Queensland. However, the majority of development has occurred in the south-east and urban centres. I would also like to acknowledge the state member for Cook's efforts in pushing for improved road infrastructure for bike riders on the Atherton Tablelands and in the Far North.

This petition is asking that the government urgently fund the erection of signs to raise awareness of bike riders to prevent further deaths and near misses on Tablelands roads. There are an increasing number of bike riders on Queensland roads. Research indicates that there are three times more riders per head of population in Far North Queensland than in Brisbane. It is becoming more evident on the Tablelands, where there is a rapidly expanding community of recreational bike riders who ride six days a week at six in the morning. Many Tablelanders are choosing to commute on their bikes.

The fact is that government initiatives aimed at promoting healthier living and greener lifestyles are still premature in regional and rural Queensland. Bike riders on the Tablelands are at high risk of being injured if nothing is done and are pleading for appropriate funding to erect signage to increase bike rider awareness throughout the Tablelands road network in an effort to save our families from tragic and preventable loss of loved ones.