



Speech by


**Andrew Powell**

**MEMBER FOR GLASS HOUSE**

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## **DISASTER READINESS AMENDMENT BILL**

 **Mr POWELL** (Glass House—LNP) (4.57 pm): I rise to make a short contribution to the debate on the Disaster Readiness Amendment Bill 2011. As previous speakers have pointed out, this bill amends a number of acts. I want to focus particularly on the amendments to the Transport Infrastructure Act 1994 and the Transport Operations (Road Use Management) Act 1995 that are designed to reduce the incidence of people driving on flooded or flood affected roads and, more particularly, the amendments to the Sustainable Planning Act 2009, which will ensure that repairs to community infrastructure other than buildings—for example, roads and bridges—that are damaged because of an emergency such as a natural disaster or accident can be carried out as quickly as possible to restore the functionality and safety of the infrastructure. I am pleased to hear that. That is very good news in terms of wanting to make sure that our key infrastructure, particularly our roads, is repaired quickly and functionality and safety are returned. There are a couple of examples of roads in the electorate of Glass House that continue to go unrepaired. That is certainly leading to an increasing amount of frustration for constituents across the Glass House electorate. We still have a slip on the Maleny-Kenilworth Road. That is the main road connecting the communities of Kenilworth and Conondale with Maleny. That one slip has been there since the floods in January this year. It is still under traffic signalling by way of traffic lights.

I was recently approached by a constituent who suggested that, given that the line of sight is very clear in both directions, at the times that they are not actually repairing this road—which tends to be each and every day these days—replacing those traffic lights with give way signs would facilitate far quicker egress through that land slip.

**Mr Rickuss:** That seems a common-sense approach, doesn't it?

**Mr POWELL:** It certainly is a common-sense approach. I take that interjection from the member for Lockyer. If we are going to have to wait nearly 12 months for these repairs then let us have a bit of common sense. If drivers can see in both directions let us replace the traffic lights with give way signs. We still have a slip on the Maleny-Stanley River Road, again another important connection between Woodford and Maleny. We still have a slip on the Kilcoy-Beerwah Road at Peachester. Recently at the centenary celebrations of the Peachester State School I was approached on countless occasions by constituents who are getting pretty well fed up and frustrated with the fact that the road is not fixed. The common line was, 'When is our road going to be fixed?' It is nine months now since the incident. There is no action whatsoever being taken to repair this road. There is a barricade around it. The longer the Department of Main Roads takes to fix this the further it is deteriorating.

When one refers to that amendment that talks about ensuring that repairs to community infrastructure, for example roads and bridges, that is damaged is carried out as quickly as possible to restore the functionality and safety of the infrastructure, one asks the question, 'What is going on with these roads?' The most frustrating example is the ongoing closure of the Palmwoods-Montville Road. This road is fully closed. There are no single-lane operations. This road has been closed since March 2010. I would like to ask how many other state controlled roads have been completely closed for more than 18 months. It is frustrating that every time we ask for an update we get told the same thing. The goalposts keep shifting. It is always a case of 'we are still doing design work'.

My latest correspondence, received on 26 July, states—

The Department of Transport and Main Roads would like to update you on the progress of road works on Palmwoods-Montville Road.

As you are aware, the road has been closed since early 2010, when a 200m section of road slipped downhill. Following flooding in January 2011 this same section of road slipped further.

In January 2011, 32 slips were identified on Palmwoods-Montville Road, requiring varying degrees of repairs, and contractors have been working to repair numerous slip sites along the road. The contractors have recently been moved to other projects—

Obviously not other projects in the seat of Glass House. As I said, we are happy to be patient and acknowledge that there are others with far higher priorities than us. The letter continues—

until additional design work is finalised on the slip sites which require major stabilisation works to address the January 2011 damage.

The slip sites, including the 200m section closing the road, have required extensive geological investigations, testing and surveying to determine the most appropriate design solution for the restoration of each of the 32 individual sites. The design for these sites is continuing and is expected to be completed by the end of the third quarter of this year.

My understanding is that the end of the third quarter was the end of September. We have still not had any update. I jumped on the website today and, interestingly, those same words still sit there on the website. I again ask the question: has TMR even done the design work it said it would do and, if it has, when is it going to let the community know, when is it going to let me know and when is it going to get on to actually repairing this road? It is a serious matter. The Palmwoods-Montville Road is a serious tourist route. The community of Montville has a number of tourism operators, all of whom rely very heavily on the South-East Queensland market. They are bed and breakfasts; they are restaurants. It is a very iconic town that relies on the South-East Queensland tourism market and yet people are unable to get there because their satellite navigation device is telling them to go up Palmwoods-Montville Road. I admit that people tend to take their directions from their satellite navigation device in their vehicle over the directions that Transport are giving them. Transport have put up detour signs along Hunchy Road and Razorback Road, but it is pointless if we cannot get those updates through to the satellite navigation system so that people are aware of that alternative route. In the meantime tourists are turning around and going back down to the coast rather than spending time up in the hinterland.

The question is how much longer do we have to wait? How much longer do these tourism operators have to suffer the consequences of the fact that this government is unable to repair this road? Is it going to repair this road? In the same time frame, the Sunshine Coast Regional Council has actually managed to repair two significant slips on the alternative route of Hunchy Road and Razorback Road. They have been sizeable slips and it has had to do considerable work. The council has used those new concrete blocks to shore up the slope and then are resurfacing the road. It has been able to do two slips on that road in the same time that we are still sitting here waiting for this section of road to be repaired. I accept that it is going to be very expensive, but surely that is what natural disaster funding is all about. Surely the state government and Main Roads have made requests to the federal government for the funding required to repair this road. I do ask that it be done quickly. Until it is done, the communities of Palmwoods and Montville will suffer, particularly those that rely on tourism in the long term. It is just not acceptable that we continue to have to use a council road as the main route.

I am pleased to see that in future through these amendments there is an effort by the government to ensure that these kinds of repairs happen quickly. I would ask the Premier and the Minister for Main Roads for their urgent intervention in each of these instances but particularly in the instance of the Palmwoods-Montville Road. I hope to see design work done very shortly and construction actually commence before we hit yet another wet season. Who knows, even further sections of the road might end up sliding down the hill.