




Speech by

Shane Knuth

MEMBER FOR DALRYMPLE

Hansard Thursday, 25 August 2011

TABLELANDS, ROADS

 **Mr KNUTH** (Dalrymple—LNP) (2.39 pm): Yesterday I tabled on behalf of Tablelands residents a petition containing 4,085 signatures with regard to the deplorable condition of the Gillies Highway from Atherton to Lake Eacham. The petition calls for the minister to upgrade this major tourist route as a matter of priority to ensure the safety of all road users. The minister has said that work will commence on the stretch between Barron River and the Marks Lane turnoff by the end of 2011.

Residents are growing tired of this government making the same commitments year after year to fix long-term issues on the Tablelands but only providing bandaids solutions to major deficiencies in our road network. The Gillies Highway is a major highway for the Tablelands region. There are over 8,000 bike riders from the Far North Queensland region who ride this road frequently. The condition of the road poses a danger to all road users.

It is not only the Gillies Highway that is in urgent need of major work. The Tablelands produces half a billion dollars in gross revenue and yet we have some of the worst roads in Queensland. The appalling condition of major tourist and freight routes throughout the Tablelands network is affecting everybody from motorbike riders, tourism and transport operators to locals in the form of rising car repair costs.

The work that has commenced on the road into Atherton from Yungaburra is long overdue, but it is only the start of what should be an urgent priority. The Tablelands road network needs a major overhaul to support the growing population, to get agricultural produce to market, to improve tourism and to prepare for the upcoming wet season. I call on the minister to make the upgrade of the entire Tablelands section of the Gillies Highway an urgent priority for the safety and benefit of all road users.