



Speech by


**Shane Knuth**

**MEMBER FOR DALRYMPLE**

Hansard Thursday, 15 November 2012

---

## **BRUCE HIGHWAY**

 **Mr KNUTH** (Dalrymple—KAP) (6.20 pm): The commitment by this government to allocate \$1 billion over 10 years to the Bruce Highway requires full analysis and examination of the causes of damage that makes the Bruce Highway one of the most dangerous highways in Australia. The destruction of rail freight has resulted in heavy congestion of freight, tourist and general traffic.

Considering that the zoning of Queensland designates the coastal route as a primarily tourism based economy, there is a strong argument for any strategic infrastructure improvement plan for the Bruce Highway to also include solutions to divert heavy vehicle traffic inland, where they can better service the resource and production zones of Queensland. With significant funding, the inland route would be capable of connecting Cairns to Melbourne and creating a freight superhighway that would provide a shorter national transport route connecting Queensland, New South Wales and Victoria. The government has predicted that unless major works are carried out on the Bruce Highway over 400 people could lose their lives over the next 10 years.

I recall that at the time of Cyclone Yasi the Bruce Highway was cut for almost 10 days. When the transport operators and tourists realised that there was an inland route from Charters Towers through to Mount Garnet, the pressure on the Bruce Highway was relieved. That resulted in a convoy of vehicles travelling inland. The transport operators acknowledged that the inland route, especially between Ingham and Townsville, had significantly reduced transport pressure and congestion.

I believe that it makes sense to create an inland highway. Bridges over Snake Creek, the Clarke River and the Basalt River could be upgraded. The inland could be opened up to triple road trains from Mount Garnet to Charters Towers, from Charters Towers to Emerald, and from Emerald right through to Toowoomba and Brisbane.

We are putting \$1 billion into the Bruce Highway over 10 years, but the alternative inland route would make a difference. An inland highway would relieve traffic congestion along the coast, would save a lot of infrastructure costs and would breathe life into rural communities. I believe that this could be the foundation of bigger things to come.