




Speech By
Trevor Watts

MEMBER FOR TOOWOOMBA NORTH

PRIVATE MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Toowoomba Range Crossing

 **Mr WATTS** (Toowoomba North—LNP) (3.42 pm): When I was elected and gained the trust of the people of the electorate of Toowoomba North I assured them that their voices would be heard in this place. Unfortunately, my topic today is yet again the Toowoomba range crossing. The Toowoomba range crossing is undergoing some serious upgrade works and I wanted to give the House an update on how that is going. Over the past week there have been delays of over three hours for people who are trying to get across the range, which is really making business very difficult for not only many businesses in Toowoomba but also those to our west. There have also been delays on the down range, which has caused tailbacks of up to two kilometres through the centre of town which has completely immobilised the eastern side of town at those peak hour times.

So what have I done? I have been speaking to the Director-General of the Department of Transport and Main Roads, Neil Scales, and I have been speaking to the minister. Neil made a visit to Toowoomba and we talked about possible solutions, which ranged from ensuring that instead of having one lane for the 15 months that these roadworks will take, we get two lanes. Geotechnical work is being done in that area to ensure that it will be safe to do so. We have also tried to fast-track the repairs on Murphy's Creek Road, which will allow people to be able to drive their cars an alternative way up the range. We will shortly be implementing a program where people can register their mobile number to get SMS messages sent to them informing them of any delays or if there are any hold-ups or breakdowns on the range.

I thank the minister and I thank the director-general for coming up and listening to the people of Toowoomba. I would also like to thank my office staff who have taken over 200 calls in relation to this matter. It is a very important issue for Toowoomba. How to traverse the range properly is a 150-year-old issue. There is only one solution and that is for a federal government of any colour to make an appropriate allocation of funding for a second range crossing. Quite simply, western Queensland is being deprived of being productive and being able to run its businesses effectively and efficiently because this road has not been built. Further, I would like an investigation into a rail line so that we can get some double-stacked containers down the range so that some of this truck traffic is taken off the road. I would encourage the minister to allocate some funds in the budget this year so that the range crossing corridor can be surveyed accurately and we can be shovel ready.