




Speech By
Dale Last

MEMBER FOR BURDEKIN

Record of Proceedings, 29 October 2015

PRIVATE MEMBER'S STATEMENT

Drivelt NQ

 **Mr LAST** (Burdekin—LNP) (2.30 pm): I rise to inform the parliament of an important infrastructure initiative in North Queensland. On 7 October I attended the launch of Drivelt NQ, together with the members for Townsville and Thuringowa and the federal member for Herbert. Rarely have I seen so many political and community leaders come together with such a unified purpose.

Drivelt NQ, formed by the Driver Education Centre and Motorsport Action Group, comprises a group of passionate motorsport enthusiasts and community members committed to delivering a motorsport precinct in North Queensland. This is a group that has been lobbying all levels of government for nearly 10 years to have this project established in Townsville.

Last weekend a random toll road initiative to help crowdfund the cost of a development application took place in Townsville. Over the course of the weekend in excess of 1,000 community donations were collected at five toll sites across the city where volunteers collected donations and gave out merchandise branded with the message, 'I paid the toll to save the toll'. Importantly, Drivelt NQ are not content to sit back and put their hand out for funding. They are actually out there fundraising and showing their commitment to have this project delivered.

The group require seed funding for a development application that will enable them to move forward with this project. The \$28 million precinct on Townsville City Council land at Calcium, comprising 288 hectares, would foster driver education and motorsport in Townsville. Once completed it is expected that the Drivelt NQ facility will be home to more than 11 clubs, with a total membership of more than 6,000 members.

Beneficial impacts associated with establishing the driver education and motorsport precinct include: improved driver education and road safety; reduced incentive for illegal and dangerous driving and street racing; and improved tourism and events profile for the Townsville local government area, particularly as a destination for motorsports. This facility could also be utilised for other recreational purposes such as concerts, field days, auctions, major city outdoor events et cetera. AEC have performed an economic impact assessment which showed that the project could return \$22.7 million in extra economic activity each year and provide employment totalling 120 full-time equivalent employees.

The social cost to Australia of road crashes is valued at \$27 billion annually. There is no question that government has a significant role to play in facilitating and supporting driver education programs. I commend Drivelt NQ for taking on this initiative and I stand here today publicly stating my support for the establishment of a motorsport precinct at Calcium west of Townsville.

As a police officer for 25 years I attended my share of fatal traffic accidents across Queensland and there is nothing more tragic than losing young lives in this manner. If this driver education facility can save even one life, it will have been well worth it. I am now calling on the government to get behind this initiative, which is long overdue, and provide the necessary funding and support to ensure this vital project is delivered in a timely manner.