




Speech By
Patrick Weir

MEMBER FOR CONDAMINE

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ADJOURNMENT

Warrego Highway, Upgrade

 **Mr WEIR** (Condamine—LNP) (2.18 pm): The first stage of the Warrego Highway upgrade from Toowoomba to the Kingsthorpe overpass saw the construction of a dual-carriage roadway that has made that part of the highway safer and allowed for the large volume of traffic on the road to flow more smoothly. If only the next promised section had already started construction, but we are still waiting. On each side of that section of the Warrego Highway private landowners have been affected by the building of the new roadway, both during the active construction phase and afterwards in various ways, including access to their businesses and loss of trade.

During the planning and construction of the roadway, the Department of Transport and Main Roads did liaise with landholders and information was distributed to those affected. For many landholders the problem that has arisen from the construction is the change to the flow of water now running into their properties. Water that originally did not flow into those properties now does, due to the changes of land use and associated changes to water flows created by the roadway's construction. That large volume of water has caused considerable erosion and gouging on the affected properties.

An initial rain event in March 2019 caused damage to one property due to run-off from the highway construction and pipes installed to carry excess water that discharged directly onto the property. The damage was repaired temporarily by the owner, at their own expense, at a cost of approximately \$30,000. A compensation claim for part of that works has been submitted to the department, with no payment to the property owner as yet. During the past four weeks, more water inundation has occurred due to substantial rainfall events in the region, with further erosion and scouring.

In early December, the Condamine office was advised by the minister's office that one of the affected properties will have the original location at which the road reserve water run-off enters their property reinstated by the Department of Transport and Main Roads in accordance with the approved soil conservation plan for that property. None of that work has commenced to date. Should this not have been a consideration in the original planning of the project? Surely changing the flow of water should have been part of any investigation and planning into the effects that the road's construction could possibly have on the adjacent landholders? Why not get it right the first time?

Consultation with landholders, who have local knowledge of water run-off, may have been a good idea rather than having property owners having to fork out additional expense to fix damage not of their doing. We have received a number of those complaints. The engineers need to take this into account when designing roads. We appreciate the new roads, but they can have a heavy impact on adjoining landowners.