




Speech By
Dale Last

MEMBER FOR BURDEKIN

Record of Proceedings, 14 October 2021

PRIVATE MEMBERS' STATEMENT

Bowen Basin, Roads

 **Mr LAST** (Burdekin—LNP) (2.30 pm): Many times I have spoken in this House about the goat tracks that are meant to pass as roads in the Bowen Basin. I have spoken about people's vehicles being destroyed by the roads, the suspension of the school bus service due to the condition of the roads and the damage to emergency service vehicles, not to mention delays in medical attention and the threat to the safety of QAS staff. Yet we have seen nothing from this government. Despite the billions in royalties and the charges levied against companies that are developing the area and creating jobs, nothing has changed.

I have spoken of the Kilcummin Diamond Downs Road, but there is also the Peak Downs Highway, which is frequently reduced to a crawl or closed due to accidents. We have the Suttor Development Road and the Mount Coolon Road where vehicles are forced to travel at speeds as low as 10 kilometres an hour to avoid destroying their vehicles. We also have the May Downs Road that shreds tyres on a daily basis. Still there is nothing from this government.

This government is all talk and no action when it comes to improving roads in the Bowen Basin. That hypocrisy is not just costing the residents today but also hindering the future of the entire state. In order to capitalise on the potential for growth in areas like agriculture and mining, our roads need to keep pace. On the Kilcummin Diamond Downs Road, for example, we are seeing patch-up jobs at best where less than 12 months after the work is completed the road is once again destroying truck tyres and smashing windscreens. We are talking about hundreds of heavy vehicle movements a day, particularly now when the grain crops are coming off. These roads are well past their use-by date. What is needed is a complete re-evaluation and a complete upgrade of these roads from the ground up.

At the heart of mining and agriculture—the industries that have kept Queensland afloat during the pandemic—is people. Those people deserve safe roads for their families—roads that are built to carry the equipment and produce into and out of the area that is feeding Queensland's economy. Those people deserve roads that mean their children can get to school and roads that mean an ambulance can reach them in their time of need. Those people deserve roads that will help them thrive, help them grow and, in turn, help Queensland grow.

I will continue to speak about these roads until people throughout the Bowen Basin are treated fairly and equally. I receive calls on a daily basis from property owners, residents and workers in that area complaining about the roads. I am going to continue standing up in this place and highlighting these issues until those roads are fixed and until the services that we take for granted down in the south-east corner of this state are of a similar standard in the rural areas of Queensland.