




Speech By
Stephen Bennett

MEMBER FOR BURNETT

Record of Proceedings, 24 February 2021

ADJOURNMENT

Burnett Electorate, Bargara-Hughes Road Intersection

 **Mr BENNETT** (Burnett—LNP) (7.08 pm): Tonight in a desperate bid to save a child's life I stand before this parliament before it is too late. Parents, teachers and students are calling for urgent action at a dangerous intersection at Bargara Road and Hughes Road in my electorate. Primary school aged children are playing Russian roulette every day to cross this busy road to get to Bargara State School. I am sad to say that I have heard many witnesses report near misses at this intersection every week. Bargara State School is one of the very few schools that does not have a formal crossing in place. There is no lollipop supervisor or traffic lights in sight, despite an ever-increasing population.

We have a situation where a year 6 student, a school captain, is playing lollipop lady along this busy road, often herding groups of half a dozen from one side of the road to the other with their bikes. Pria Grills, who is 11, is fearful that young children will be hit. Today she rang my office and said, 'With a lot of younger children it is scary because you have to be in charge of the little kids since you don't want them to be hurt.' Young Pria said that she often witnesses kids going too early or too late into the path of oncoming traffic. It is inexcusable to have a child take responsibility for protecting other children. As representatives of our community it is our job to keep children safe.

The bureaucratic response we received as a result of petitions and other engagement is that there are not enough children crossing the road to warrant a designated pedestrian crossing. That simply does not cut it. It is cruel and offensive that the minister's department does not consider dozens of children's lives worthy of protecting by implementing essential safety measures. What the department has not taken into consideration is that more parents would be happy to let their children walk or ride to school if a designated safe pedestrian crossing was installed. It is important for us to acknowledge that many parents are reaching out with desperate pleas for this Labor government to stop ignoring their pleas and act immediately to upgrade the Bargara-Hughes Road intersection before our worst fears are realised.

It is also important to talk about the other upgrades that are happening around the region, which I am very thankful for, but again we cannot turn our minds away from this important intersection upgrade on Hughes Road. More and more car accidents are presenting every day and there are more and more near misses. I thank the school for their advocacy. They have also tried to put in place safety responses. They do need urgent attention and funding to get this done before we have more permanent solutions. I thank those families who joined us recently to highlight the need for the safety upgrade to the Bargara-Hughes Road. It is a dangerous intersection. It does need upgrading. Until that time the government is failing our kids.