




Speech By
Patrick Weir

MEMBER FOR CONDAMINE

Record of Proceedings, 14 September 2023

ADJOURNMENT

Toowoomba North South Transport Corridor; Cecil Plains State School, Anniversary

 **Mr WEIR** (Condamine—LNP) (6.11 pm): Recently the Department of Transport and Main Roads released a proposed north-south corridor on the western side of Toowoomba. The intent is to divert traffic from traversing Toowoomba itself and to also provide access to the fast-developing Charlton industrial precinct. The proposed corridor would connect with the New England Highway near Geham in the north, travel through Meringandan and Gowrie Junction, cross the Warrego Highway then go through Wellcamp, along the edge of Westbrook, across the Gore Highway and link back up with the New England Highway at Vale View in the south.

This announcement has caused widespread concern and outrage at the poor consultation process and resulted in the community having many unanswered questions. In an attempt to seek some answers, I held two public forums and invited representatives from TMR to attend, which they did. I thank them for their attendance, as they were aware that the impacted property owners were not happy. Whilst these forums addressed some misunderstandings as to the intent of the corridor, the community is justifiably upset that there was no local input into the actual location of the corridor to minimise the impact on their area. I have had individual meetings with local community leaders, who have accepted that there is a need for such a corridor and have offered sound alternatives to the proposed corridor.

I wrote to the minister to request an extension to the consultation period, which was granted and has again been granted since. I have also requested a meeting with the minister, which the minister has agreed to. I look forward to that taking place, be it Brisbane. It is vitally important that the community's concerns and input are taken on board, and I look forward to the meeting with the minister to address these concerns.

Last weekend I attended the 125-year anniversary of the Cecil Plains State School, not in an official role but as a past pupil. The official duties were conducted by the local member, the member for Southern Downs, James Lister. In saying that, I was asked to say a few words as a past student, join in the singing of the school song and cut the cake with the youngest student. It was a great day and a chance to catch up with some old friends, but the day was a little overshadowed by the bushfire in the Dunmore Forest not far from town. The fire was believed to be started by a lightning strike and resulted in 25,000 hectares being burnt before it was brought under control by the rural fire brigade, assisted by water-bombing aircraft. This is a timely reminder to us all to have our bushfire plans in place. The state is tinder dry and in many areas it would only take one spark to burn. Everybody, be bushfire aware.