




Speech By
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MATTERS OF PUBLIC INTEREST

Bruce Highway

 **Mr MINNIKIN** (Chatsworth—LNP) (2.50 pm): One of the real benefits of being the shadow minister for main roads is driving on the highways and byways of this great state. Last Wednesday I flew up to Townsville, hired a car and over three days drove southwards from Townsville through to Mackay then down to Rocky. The specific purpose was to actually see firsthand the condition of the Bruce Highway. Pretty much every member in this chamber who has ever driven the Bruce Highway would know that there are particular sections that are absolutely woeful. The Minister for Transport and Main Roads—and if I just pick up one part of that title: Main Roads—has been in that particular role now for eight long years. Last year, with my learned colleague to my side, Dale Last, the member for Burdekin, I specifically travelled to the Bowen intersection on the Bruce Highway. When I was last there it was—and I think used the words at the time—like an apocalyptic scene out of *Mad Max*. It was absolutely atrocious. That was one of the big reasons why I went back there to have a look. What saddens me is that while it is true that there are roadworks being undertaken—and I am not a traffic engineer, but I had a good deep look—it appears as though yet again it is going to be screeded over, bituminised over and there is no flood resilience being built into it. I stand to be corrected but after the next significant rainfall event I know that when I go back up to that section of the Bruce Highway it will be pretty much back to where it was a few years ago. This is the recurring point. We seem to be throwing money after money, whether it be on the Bruce or any other highway. We are not taking the opportunity to do it right.

That was just the start of it. I spoke with the mayor, the deputy mayor, truck drivers and small business operators and to a person they all said you literally take your life into your own hands on certain parts of the Bruce Highway. It defies belief that the Minister for Transport and Main Roads has done away with the Bruce Highway Trust that was put together for the betterment of the Bruce Highway. That is not the only thing that the Minister for Transport and Main Roads has done away with. I asked a specific question about Driver Reviver centres. I cannot believe that last year we had one of the worst road tolls in living memory. It was absolutely terrible. It breaks my heart. The reality is that one of those contributing factors is people falling asleep at the wheel needing to be revived. If it was going to cost a million dollars to get some of these Driver Reviver centres back up to speed, why would the government not do it? The figure is around about half a billion dollars in fine detection revenue. We all know that is meant to be put towards road safety programs. Why would the Minister for Transport and Main Roads not use a million dollars to get those Driver Reviver centres up to speed.

The Minister for Transport and Main Roads must have had a shocking recent holiday because of, as we heard earlier, the learner licence fiasco. For week after week after week nothing was done. That is another example of government being run, incredibly, on this side of the chamber. That was another backflip that was done through good old fashioned people power. The bottom line is this is a minister with a track record with Cross River Rail, which is a huge fail on many, many fronts. We have the Beams Road crossing. There is lots and lots of social media but not much happening—in fact,

virtually zip. We have the Centenary Bridge duplication. There is nothing happening there as well. This is a minister who spends far more time on social media than actually spending time doing what I have done and drive the Bruce Highway or pick any other highway. Do not just fly in there and get chaperoned by staff. Hire a car, put the seatbelt on and go for a decent drive.

The other thing I will say in passing is this: my first destination was Townsville. I cannot believe that pretty much from the moment that I arrived to the moment that I drove south all I could hear were police sirens.