



Speech By  
**Dale Last**


**MEMBER FOR BURDEKIN**

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## ADJOURNMENT

### Burdekin Electorate, Bruce Highway Funding

 **Mr LAST** (Burdekin—LNP) (9.46 pm): In recent days, a lot has been said and written about the condition of the Bruce Highway. When I drive that highway and I see all those white crosses, I often wonder how many of those lives would have been saved if that highway had been constructed and maintained to an appropriate standard. A recent study by Adjunct Professor Colin Dwyer and Dr Tracy Cheffins ranks the section of the Bruce Highway between Bowen and Home Hill as the most unsafe section of the entire length of the highway. For those of us who drive this road every day—and I know my colleague the member for Chatsworth has recently driven it—don't we know it!

Let's compare regional roads in my electorate to those around the nation. Professor Dwyer found that between Rockhampton and Ayr the fatal and serious injury rate is five times that of roads in regional New South Wales or Victoria. It was Labor at the federal level that slashed Bruce Highway funding by 30 per cent, and it is this Labor government that has watched on while the Bruce Highway and other key roads have literally fallen apart over the last decade.

Who could forget that during his 2022-23 budget speech the Treasurer committed to a funding boost for regional Queensland due to the new royalties regime. His forecast of an additional \$1.2 billion would be, he said, going into regional Queensland. In fact, this government actually siphoned more than \$18 billion out of regional Queensland that year. When it comes to roads, what do we have to show for it? Absolutely nothing.

**An opposition member:** Potholes.

**Mr LAST:** Potholes—I take that interjection. Almost \$50 million per day hit this Labor state government's coffers while people in the Bowen Basin drove on nothing more than goat tracks and travellers on the Bruce Highway between Bowen and Home Hill faced 23 narrow bridges in the space of 100 kilometres.

People in regional Queensland value being treated fairly and with respect. We do not ask for more than our share. According to Professor Dwyer, we contribute more than twice our fair share to the economy based on population. Despite contributing more and asking for nothing more than our fair share, this Labor government has pledged the same amount of funding for an 800-metre bridge in the south-east as it committed in additional funding for the Bruce Highway over three years.

The Bruce Highway is the artery of the north and it is about time we received the necessary funding and commitment to reflect the importance of that highway to North Queenslanders. The money provided to date would not fix the potholes, let alone fund the upgrades required, and I for one will spend every single day between now and 26 October reminding North Queenslanders how this government has let them down. That highway is the backbone of North Queensland and it deserves its fair share of funding. This state government and the federal government need to step up and acknowledge that they have neglected it and it is about time they rectified it.