



Speech By  
**Patrick Weir**


**MEMBER FOR CONDAMINE**

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Record of Proceedings, 14 February 2024

**MOTION**

**Miles Labor Government**

 **Mr WEIR** (Condamine—LNP) (5.16 pm): I rise to support the motion moved by the member for Toowoomba South. The residents of Cairns and surrounds have been taken for granted by this Labor government and Labor members for far too long. The issues that have been confronting the residents have been laid bare as a result of the recent flooding. Many of the issues should have been addressed many years ago. Many home owners have been calling for the local MPs to help find a solution to the ever-rising cost of home insurance. Many have been facing home insurance bills in excess of \$10,000. Sadly, many have found this cost simply unaffordable and have cancelled their policies. These home owners now have their homes in ruins and are facing repair bills that will take many years for them to repay. Those whose homes are unfit to remain in until repairs are done are now looking for alternative accommodation, but, as is the case in most of Queensland, the Cairns region is suffering a housing shortage as a result of this Labor government's failure to release land for housing whilst the members for Cairns and Barron River make excuses for this failure. This has seen many of these home owners living in caravans and tents, as this is the only option they have. Housing availability was at less than one per cent before the floods and now is non-existent.

The rebuild of the Cairns region is massive: housing, roads, bridges and other infrastructure. Where are the tradies and civil construction workers going to stay while these repairs are being done? Will they need to bring their own tents? Speaking of roads and bridges, there is one road in particular that cannot go without a mention—that is, the Kuranda Range road. Residents and businesses have been calling for action on this road for years—calls the local MPs have continued to ignore. This road is a vital link to the towns of Kuranda and Mareeba amongst others and the agriculture industry located on the Tableland. For those who have not travelled this road, it is a two-lane, winding road that climbs the Kuranda Range, most of it through heritage-listed rainforest. Often, the road is either closed or down to one lane due to vehicle accidents, heavy vehicle rollovers or land and rock slides. This has a direct impact on productivity and the cost of getting produce either up or down the range. All too often that cost is borne by the producers.

Last year, this state Labor government released a statement that the road did not need an upgrade for at least 30 years. The members for Cairns and Barron River were loud in their support of that position. From my many visits to Cairns I know and can assure the House that they are the only ones who support that position. Indeed, I travelled that road with the transport committee little more than a week ago. I am sure all the members of the committee who were on that trip would be concerned that the road may not survive another three months let alone 30 years. A number of sections have disappeared down the cliff and will be under traffic control for many months to come—if there are no more weather events.

This is another fail that is affecting the hip pocket of everyone who relies on the road for domestic or industry travel. It also affects the ability of emergency vehicles to respond to events in Kuranda and beyond. There is no 24-hour police station in Kuranda so officers must respond from Cairns. That is simply not good enough for someone suffering a break-in or a domestic violence situation. Unfortunately, the Cairns district has one of the highest incidence of domestic violence in the state. This also affects ambulance response times.

**Mr Harper** interjected.

**Mrs Frecklington** interjected.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Kelly): Pause the clock. Member for Thuringowa and member for Nanango, cease your quarrelling across the chamber or you will be warned. My apologies, member for Condamine.

**Mr WEIR:** Residents face the prospect of being held up by roadworks along the range and then ramped once they reach the Cairns Hospital. For too long, the good people of Cairns and district have been let down by the members for Cairns and Barron River. However, there is a light on the hill and there is a solution for the people of Cairns and district. That solution is the great candidates that the LNP have already selected for election in October. Yolonde Entsch for Cairns and Bree James for Barron River will give the community the representation that for so long they have been longing for and that they deserve.