



MEDIA RELEASE

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For immediate release

CRIPPS WELCOMES CARDWELL RANGE CONTRACT ANNOUNCEMENT

Member for Hinchinbrook, Andrew Cripps, has welcomed today's announcement by the Federal and State Government's awarding the contract for the upgrade of the northern section of the Cardwell Range crossing to Abi Group Contractors and SMEC Australia.

Mr Cripps said North Queenslanders had been waiting a long time for the upgrade of the notoriously twisted northern section of the Cardwell Range, the scene of too many motor vehicle accidents, after the southern section was previously upgraded many years ago.

"This is good news for local residents, good news for visitors to North Queensland and good news for road transport operators. The northern section of the Cardwell Range crossing on the Bruce Highway is notorious, especially in wet weather, for accidents and landslides that can delay traffic for many hours and in the past, sadly, have cost lives" said Mr Cripps.

"Both sides of politics have acknowledged the importance of this project to the National Highway network. The previous Federal Coalition Government provided the funding for the planning work. Both Labor and the Liberal-National Coalition promised funding for the upgrade during the 2007 federal election campaign and now it has arrived" he said.

Mr Cripps said he also welcomed the news that the project would include an overpass of the rail level crossing at Rungoo, the scene of a fatal accident between a B-double truck and the Tilt Train on 27 November 2008, where two QR employees lost their lives and added that he had lobbied for the overpass to be part of the Cardwell Range upgrade.

"I wrote to the Queensland Government in December 2008 following the accident at Rungoo and asked for grade separation between the North Coast railway line and the Bruce Highway to be incorporated into the upgrade of the northern section of the Cardwell Range, in the interests of both road and rail safety, given its recent accident history" said Mr Cripps.

"I specifically raised the issue again during debate on the *Transport (Rail Safety) Bill* in the Queensland Parliament in February this year. I am pleased to see the Federal and State Government's have taken notice. I think it will take every bit of the \$115 million price tag announced today to undertake this significant road upgrade, under traffic" he said.

Mr Cripps said he hoped local contractors and businesses would benefit from the project.

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