



Speech by

Andrew Cripps

MEMBER FOR HINCHINBROOK

Hansard Thursday, 20 August 2009

CANECUTTER WAY, PETITION

Mr CRIPPS (Hinchinbrook—LNP) (9.38 pm): The Old Bruce Highway from Silkwood to Innisfail via the towns of Japoonvale, Mena Creek, South Johnstone and Wangan is now known as the 'Canecutter Way'. The Canecutter Way runs through agricultural land and is particularly busy during the sugarcane harvesting season. In recent years, the road has become extremely busy with drive tourism visitors, including many caravans and motorhomes, mainly heading for the very popular tourist attraction Paronella Park, which is No. 11 on the list of Queensland's 150 iconic locations and No. 1 on the RACQ's list of must-dos for domestic and international visitors to Queensland. Main Roads is responsible for the Silkwood-Japoonvale Road and the Innisfail-Japoonvale Road, which make up the Canecutter Way. This route is approximately 42 kilometres long.

Since the new Bruce Highway alignment was established, the grade and condition of the Canecutter Way has deteriorated. In recent years, drive tourism, primarily associated with Paronella Park, has added an enormous extra burden on this road in addition to the local traffic. The deterioration of the Canecutter Way has accelerated.

Tonight I table a non-conforming petition on behalf of 386 petitioners who are calling for the upgrade of the Innisfail-Japoonvale Road and the Silkwood-Japoonvale Road.

Tabled paper: Non-conforming petition relating to an upgrade of the Japoonvale Road between Innisfail and Silkwood [\[762\]](#).

The petitioners are concerned about the number of accidents and the damage caused to vehicles from travelling on this route. The petitioners also complain about the perceived lack of maintenance by Main Roads and point to the increase in tourist traffic associated with the success of Paronella Park as justification for additional funds. The petitioners request that Main Roads allocate sufficient funds to upgrade the Canecutter Way to accommodate the increased traffic and improve safety.

I have been concerned about the condition of the Canecutter Way for some time. Over the last two years, I have raised various aspects of the condition of the Canecutter Way with the previous minister for main roads, including the condition of the Liverpool Creek bridge at Japoonvale and the condition of the road over the range between Silkwood and Japoonvale, particularly while the Maccarone Bridge on Walter Lever Estate Road was closed.

I have also raised concerns about the narrowness of the road and the poor maintenance of the road between Innisfail and Japoonvale, particularly between South Johnstone and Mena Creek. Earlier this year, I was pleased to undertake an inspection of the Canecutter Way with Main Roads officers. I am pleased to advise that Main Roads has been able to allocate additional funds to this road.

The Innisfail-Japoonvale Road will be upgraded for 1.42 kilometres between Juhas Road and Germantown Road, while the 1.5 kilometre section of the same road between MacDonald Road and Bombeeta Creek will also be upgraded. The cost of upgrading these two sections of the Innisfail-Japoonvale Road will be approximately \$600,000 and will primarily widen the road. Some of this work will be undertaken later in 2009, while some will be undertaken in 2010. These works are relatively small and fall short of what the petitioners are seeking. I share the concerns of the petitioners and I will continue to push for improvements to the Canecutter Way.

(Time expired)