



Speech by

Andrew Cripps

MEMBER FOR HINCHINBROOK

Hansard Wednesday, 24 November 2010

EL ARISH, SPEED LIMIT

Mr CRIPPS (Hinchinbrook—LNP) (11.14 pm): Yesterday I lodged on behalf of 126 petitioners from my electorate a petition relating to the speed limit on the Bruce Highway through the town of El Arish. The petitioners have requested that the speed limit on the Bruce Highway through the town of El Arish be reduced from 80 kilometres an hour to 60 kilometres an hour on the grounds that El Arish is the only town of its size on the Bruce Highway between Cardwell and Cairns that does not have a 60 kilometre speed limit, El Arish has four residential streets directly connected to the Bruce Highway, and El Arish has one of the busiest intersections on the Bruce Highway between Cardwell and Cairns—the intersection of the Bruce Highway and the El Arish-Mission Beach Road.

The petitioners have put forward a very reasonable request to be treated equally and fairly in terms of road safety through the town of El Arish. While the intersection between the Bruce Highway and the El Arish-Mission Beach Road does have turning lanes for both northbound and southbound traffic, the petitioners are concerned that these turning lanes are not adequate to accommodate the significant amount of traffic that uses this intersection. The four residential streets in the town of El Arish that are directly connected to the Bruce Highway—being Royston Street, Ryrie Street, Wilson Street and Glasgow Street—have neither northbound nor southbound turning lanes to facilitate traffic turning off the Bruce Highway. The petitioners feel that this is both unfair and unsafe. The petitioners would be satisfied with either southbound and northbound turning lanes being installed to accept traffic entering these residential streets or the speed limit on the Bruce Highway through the town of El Arish being reduced from 80 kilometres to 60 kilometres an hour.

The petitioners rightly point out that the reduction of the speed limit from 80 kilometres an hour to 60 kilometres an hour would be the quickest and least expensive of the two options. However, I am also very aware that the Bruce Highway is the National Highway and that the department of main roads may have a view that it is desirable to keep traffic moving at a reasonable speed on this major road and transport route. If that is the case, the Minister for Main Roads and the department of main roads need to provide funding for the turning lanes necessary for traffic to be safely accepted into the residential streets connected directly to the Bruce Highway within the town of El Arish.

On behalf of the petitioners and the people of El Arish, I call on the Minister for Main Roads and the department of main roads to give this matter very serious consideration in the interests of road safety. As part of the response from the Minister for Main Roads and the department of main roads to this petition, it would be appreciated if up-to-date traffic surveys could be undertaken and provided to demonstrate the adequacy of the intersection between the Bruce Highway and the El Arish-Mission Beach Road, the volume of traffic moving through El Arish on the Bruce Highway and the number of vehicles turning into the residential streets directly connected to the Bruce Highway.