




Speech by

Andrew Cripps

MEMBER FOR HINCHINBROOK

Hansard Thursday, 8 September 2011

KIRRAMA RANGE ROAD

 **Mr CRIPPS** (Hinchinbrook—LNP) (5.00 pm): I rise to draw to the attention of the House a very important issue of concern to the people of Cardwell and the Kennedy Valley in my electorate, the Kirrama Range Road, which is currently closed and has been for several years. It is a pressing matter for many people across my electorate and across North Queensland because the Kirrama Range Road is a very important connection between the coast and hinterland areas in the electorate of my colleague the member for Dalrymple. I believe that the restoration, repair and maintenance of the Kirrama Range Road in the Kennedy Valley north of Cardwell should be funded by all three levels of government in recognition of its history, its regional significance to the tourism and cattle industries and its recreational use by local residents.

The file on the Kirrama Range Road in my office is very substantial, reflecting the strong views of my constituents about this issue. I have fought hard to try to get the state Labor government to recognise that it has both a historical responsibility and a contemporary interest in the Kirrama Range Road. The Queensland government previously benefited from decades of royalties from the timber industry in that area and the road is now used to support the cattle industry in North-East Queensland and is an important tourist road linking the coast to the hinterland.

I had not previously been successful in getting the state Labor government to acknowledge its interest, but this year Main Roads has allocated \$471,000 over the next two years for works on the Kirrama Range Road. This is not enough to address all of the issues associated with the road, but it is a small step in the right direction. I believe DERM and DEEDI should make similar contributions because the Kirrama Range Road provides access to the national park facilities and walking tracks at Blencoe Falls and the road is a vital link for the cattle and tourism industries. If each department made a fair and reasonable contribution, we could address the major problems with the road.

I believe the federal government should also make a contribution to the repair and maintenance of the Kirrama Range Road, because it was the federal Labor government's decision to declare the area as World Heritage in the early 1990s that destroyed the timber industry, leading to the state government neglecting the road's condition and its eventual closure. The federal Labor government insisted that new tourism jobs would replace lost timber jobs in North Queensland after the World Heritage listing, but it has not supported the maintenance of infrastructure needed for the tourism industry to sustain those jobs. The current federal Labor government must acknowledge this legacy and its responsibility.

The Cassowary Coast Regional Council has been left carrying the can for repairing and maintaining the Kirrama Range Road without any support from the state or federal governments and is copping the blame for its closure. The Cassowary Coast Regional Council should contribute its fair share to the repair and maintenance of the road in recognition of the strong interest of many local residents who use the Kirrama Range Road for recreational activities, but it should not shoulder this burden alone.