



PARLIAMENT OF AUSTRALIA
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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Media Release

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Another fatality at Bolivia Hill shows need for New England Highway realignment

The stretch of the New England Highway at Bolivia Hill south of Tenterfield has unfortunately claimed another life reinforcing claims by the Independent Member for New England Tony Windsor that it should be of the highest priority for major realignment work.

Even though this most recent fatality is alleged to be related to a police pursuit, Mr Windsor believes that it is still a timely reminder of the unsuitable condition of that section of the road.

Mr Windsor has as recently as September last year called for funding to be allocated to undertake the work.

He told the parliament during the AUSLINK (NATIONAL LAND TRANSPORT) AMENDMENT BILL 2008, "The New England Highway traverses seven electorates, I think, but a significant part of it is in the electorate of New England. There is one section of that road, only about 1.8 kilometres, that is highly dangerous—probably the most dangerous section left on the road in the electorate. There has been quite a lot of money spent over the years on fixing up the really bad spots on it. We would all like more money spent on roads. I would like more money spent on those key priority areas where there are real dangers. As some members of the chamber would know, the Bolivia Hill, south of Tenterfield, is a highly dangerous area—there was a death there a few years ago. It is narrow and it would involve a major reconstruction. But I would place on notice again for Minister Albanese that that section of road is possibly the worst of the between Sydney and Brisbane, the worst piece of road that is left. It is a short piece, 1.8 kilometres, to fix, and there will be deaths on that section of the road otherwise. There have been in the past and there will be again.

There is a farcical situation that develops in this place where the New South Wales Roads and Traffic Authority claims to have ownership of all the money and all of the decision-making processes and then, when something is built, the minister and the Commonwealth claim the accolades for having supplied the money to have it built. This tennis match of who makes the decision about prioritising major upgrades of our roads, which is quite handy for the political players, has to stop as well. I implore the minister to go and have a look at this piece of road south of Tenterfield on the New England Highway, the Bolivia Hill. It is very, very dangerous indeed. Even at low speeds it is quite dangerous, particularly with heavy transport using that road."

Mr Windsor had also invited the previous Government's Roads Minister, the Hon Jim Lloyd to visit the area to see first hand the New England Highway at Bolivia Hill and also the Tenterfield Main Street in need of a heavy vehicle by-pass.

The Mayor of Tenterfield, Clr Toby Smith also had asked the previous Minister for Transport and Regional Services, the Hon Mark Vaile about funding for both projects.

../2

Mr Windsor says that the Bolivia Hill section of the New England Highway has been identified as being a major problem area being highlighted in The Australian Roads Assessment Program (AUSRAP) Report released as far back as 2004.

“The AUSRAP Report identifies the section of the New England Highway between Glen Innes and the Queensland border with 8 fatalities in 5 years (prior to 2004) as a medium/high risk in terms of danger.

This analysis would identify with the Bolivia Hill south of Tenterfield.

The report was a valuable non political analysis suggesting that the Bolivia Hill should be the highest priority on the New England Highway within the New England electorate.

I ask the Minister for Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government, the Hon Anthony Albanese to visit the area to see first hand the need for the Bolivia Hill upgrade and the Tenterfield Heavy Vehicle Bypass,” Mr Windsor said.