

Queensland Parliament Hansard Green

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SUBJECT: Pakleppa, Ms Z; Keppel Electorate, Yeppoon Road

MEMBER: Mrs LAUGA

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 **Mrs LAUGA** (Keppel—ALP) (2.09 pm): It is with great sadness that I report to the House of a tragic accident in my electorate that has claimed the life of a nine-year-old girl. Zara Pakleppa was travelling in a car with her mother and siblings when it collided with another car on Yeppoon-Rockhampton Road on Sunday. Her six-year-old brother was flown to and treated in the Queensland Children's Hospital. I want to pass on my sincere condolences to both families involved in this horrible accident, which has cut the life of a nine-year-old-girl far too short. Zara would have been getting for week nine of school on Sunday, yet she is no longer with us. I cannot fathom—I cannot imagine—the heartbreak that her parents, family and friends must be suffering. According to police, the two vehicles collided at the intersection of Artillery and Yeppoon roads on Sunday morning. The crash involved two families in separate hatchbacks—a mother and her three children and another mother with her two children. One of the children had to be cut free from one of the cars.

Since the accident, I have spoken with both the district officer of the Queensland Police Service and the regional manager of the Department of Transport and Main Roads, because I want to see this intersection upgraded so that no more lives are lost. Whether the intersection needs better signage, better line marking, reduced speed or any other safety measures, I want to see the engineers on the ground as SAP so that we can make this intersection safer. Yeppoon Road to Rockhampton is a busy road with more than 12,000 vehicles using it every single day, with almost 1,200 of those being heavy vehicles. More heavy vehicles are using that road. As well, a growing number of tourists to the region are driving on it. That extra traffic has slowed travel times and increased the potential for head-on crashes as more people try to overtake.

As the state member, I support improved safety for Central Queensland, including on Yeppoon Road. I travel that road on a daily basis and I know that it can be dangerous, which is why I am calling on a safety audit to be carried out on the road as soon as possible. I fought for funding for the planning to duplicate Yeppoon Road and I was pleased when Bill Shorten and federal Labor committed \$47.5 million to the first stage of the duplication. Today, I am calling on the federal government to commit to match this funding from federal Labor.

Although the federal government's commitment of \$190 million for the Mount Isa to Yeppoon corridor is welcomed, we need certainty about where the dollars will be spent along this 1,400-kilometre corridor of road. We will have to wait and find out the detail with respect to the distance that this \$190 million will be spent across. In the meantime, I call on the federal LNP to match federal Labor's commitment so that the people of Yeppoon, Rockhampton and the surrounding communities have some certainty around future upgrades.

I agree with the community that improvements are needed. There has been lots of discussion on social media and across the community in the last couple of days after the accident with respect to safety upgrades that are needed at this intersection. I think we really need to work together to get this safety audit undertaken as soon as possible. I will continue to work the Department of Transport and Main Roads and the Queensland Police Service to make the safety audit happen as soon as possible.