

Cyclist tragedy on Nudgee Road

Councillor FLESSER:

Thank you Madam Chair. I'd like to talk about Nudgee Road and Nudgee Beach. Last Monday afternoon I was confronted by a terrible tragedy while I was on my afternoon bike ride. It was a terrible cycling accident where one of my constituents, Mr Ian Gilmore, 38 years old, was killed.

Ian leaves behind Helen and three month old Alistair and I attended a very sad funeral this morning.

Madam Chair, when a 10 kilo bike and a 10 tonne truck come together, there's only one outcome, and we don't need to use our imagination too much to understand what that outcome would be.

Since the tragedy, I've been contacted by many cyclists and residents of Nudgee Beach, raising safety issues on Nudgee Road. The problems are with trucks, cars, cyclists and pedestrians are all trying to use this one narrow road at any one time. The bikeway that runs beside the road caters for slower recreational cyclists, but it gets very crowded with bikes, kids on bikes, joggers and people walking dogs. The safest place for faster road bike riders unfortunately on the road.

Now Madam Chair, Saturday's Courier-Mail featured a story that hinted that the accident might have been avoided if Council took the problems on this section of Nudgee Road more seriously. Madam Chair, I want to make it absolutely clear that I'm not pointing the finger of blame for this accident to anyone. I'm not pointing the finger of blame to anyone.

In that article in Saturday's paper, Ms Tineke de Vries of Nudgee Beach was quoted as saying that it wasn't only the trucks that concerned residents, but the condition of the road and the lack of a safe cycling—safe crossing for cyclists.

It was also reported that the Nudgee Beach residents thought that they had won their battle with the Council when in 2006 Campbell Newman met with the residents about the Neighbourhood Plan, and promised to investigate an upgrade to Nudgee Road to reduce the problems.

Madam Chair, we need to keep in mind that this section of road carries a high number of trucks and passenger vehicles and there are constant conflicts with cyclists. There's been problems with cyclists at the entrance to the waste transfer station, as has been recently reported in the local paper, and the Sunday Mail also reported a couple of weeks ago that this area is one of the hooning hotspots in the State.

I was with the LORD MAYOR at that meeting in 2006 where the residents confronted the LORD MAYOR during the meeting for the Nudgee Beach Neighbourhood Plan. I remember the one clear consistent issue that residents were demanding of the LORD MAYOR, and that was to fix the problems with Nudgee Road!

And Madam Chair, yes the LORD MAYOR did talk about spending \$200,000 to fix the problem; that's been widely reported on many occasions in the media. Every year since then, the residents have been asking me what's happened to that commitment? So Madam Chair, every year we wait to see the budget and hope that money will come through to improve the safety on this section of road. And every year of course I remind the LORD MAYOR of my very strong support for that commitment that he made to those people in my budget submissions, but unfortunately money has not been forthcoming so far.

We need to look forward to do whatever we can to improve safety for all the users of Nudgee Road, and Madam Chair, you and other councillors would remember that only a couple of weeks ago I

spoke about another tragedy on this road, where a passenger in a vehicle was killed, which was only about a kilometre from this site.

So Madam Chair, today I'm calling on the LORD MAYOR to join with me in a bipartisan manner to meet with the Nudgee Beach locals and local cyclists to discuss the problems and come up with solutions. I'm clearly asking the LORD MAYOR in a bipartisan manner to come up with solutions with me.

We all know that the LORD MAYOR and I clash on many Council issues, and I suppose that's good for democracy. But today I want to put out my hand to him to work together, for the two of us to try and fix this problem.

Madam Chair, on Sunday morning I spent an hour at the location where Ian was killed. Someone has placed a brightly painted bike at the site with a sign 'Cyclist Died Here' to warn other cyclists of the danger. Now, I don't know the exact circumstances of the accident. It would be wrong for me to speculate at this time. However, there was a clear consensus amongst the bike riders that I spoke to on Sunday morning. They said that Nudgee Road needs to be widened and Madam Chair, that's exactly the same view that the Nudgee Beach residents made so clearly to the LORD MAYOR and I back in 2006.

So Madam Chair, it's (LORD MAYOR interjecting) —I'm disappointed the LORD MAYOR just interjected with no they didn't; because Madam Chair I clearly remember what the residents were saying to the LORD MAYOR at that meeting on Nudgee Road.

Madam Chair, it's time—I believe it's time for the LORD MAYOR and I to sit down and meet with these users of Nudgee Road. There's not too many people that I don't know personally in this small suburb of Nudgee Beach, so I promise to try to make sure the meeting will be cordial, and that LORD MAYOR, you'll be treated with respect. But it is really, really important that the two of us meet with those residents.

I certainly know enough cyclists in the local area to get them to come along to come up with a range of suggestions and some important feedback for the problems there.

Madam Chair, in all the emails and calls I've had in the last week, there's been a common theme and I'll read a couple of them. The first one from Michelle Dahl. She says: It would be an excellent idea for the Lord Mayor to come down to Nudgee Beach and discuss the traffic issues directly. There are a lot of people who have concerns about the volume of traffic using this end of Nudgee Road near the transfer station and we'd like to press for change.

Another one from Rosemary Ross. She says: I would love to invite our Lord Mayor Campbell Newman to accompany you on a bicycle trip around the beautiful Nudgee Beach bicycle paths and general areas leading into them. I fervently hope the Lord Mayor agrees to this jaunt and sees for himself the good, the bad and the downright dangerous aspects of Nudgee Road.

Madam Chair, I'd also like to remind the LORD MAYOR that I did write to him on the 18th of July last year, inviting him to come down to Nudgee Beach to discuss these local traffic issues with residents. That invitation of course is still valid. I actually believe it is now critical that we do that for the residents of Nudgee Beach and the users of Nudgee Road.

So Madam Chair, this evening I'd really appreciate if the LORD MAYOR would respond to my invitation. I'd like to organise a meeting in the next few weeks and I've made a promise to Helen Gilmore that I'll get back to her as soon as possible with any developments to ensure that something like this never happens again to someone's loved one on Nudgee Road.

Madam Chair, it's over to the LORD MAYOR.
END