

Our ref: MC14444

Your ref: 486--05

Mr Neil Laurie
The Clerk of the Parliament
Parliament House
Cnr Alice and George Streets
Brisbane Qld 4000

Dear Mr Laurie

**Re: Petition No 486-05 - bridge across Herbert River at Halifax
Chief Petitioner: Mr Jim Biviano**

I refer to a petition lodged with the Legislative Assembly by Mr Marc Rowell MP, Member for Hinchinbrook, on 9 June 2005 requesting that safety measures be investigated to allow fishing activity to continue from the Herbert River Bridge at Halifax and to reduce the speed limit over the bridge.

The Halifax local police alerted the Department of Main Roads to the safety issue for people fishing from this bridge at a Road Safety Advisory Committee meeting. Main Roads had no choice but to take immediate action to minimise the risk of a road accident involving pedestrians on the bridge. Public safety is a top priority and erecting signs prohibiting fishing, jumping and diving from the bridge provided an immediate response until longer term options could be considered.

I have been advised that Main Roads officers have looked into alternative safety measures that would allow fishing to remain on the bridge and also address pedestrian safety.

Main Roads officers reviewed the current speed limit to determine if it could be reduced. The review indicated that reducing the speed limit below 80km/h would not be accepted by most drivers and would result in poor compliance, even with continued enforcement by police. Therefore, the speed limit will not be changed over the bridge or its approaches.

The installation of overhead lighting would not improve safety for fishing or pedestrians because the main problem is lack of safe space for pedestrians to stand and/or walk on the bridge. Lighting might attract even more fishers at night.

Main Roads also looked at creating a proper pedestrian walkway on the bridge with a barrier between the road traffic and pedestrians. The existing bridge is not wide enough to allow a pedestrian walkway which complies with Australian Standards and to still have an adequate width for traffic lanes.

Therefore, the fishing ban will remain on the Herbert River Bridge at Halifax for the safety of pedestrians and the travelling public.

However, Main Roads is looking at an option to provide a more suitable location for fishing, such as a jetty or pontoon. Main Roads will ask Hinchinbrook Shire Council and Queensland Transport to list this project for consideration in their future programs for maritime infrastructure.

Yours sincerely

ORIGINAL SIGNED 12/7/05

PAUL LUCAS MP
Minister for Transport and Main Roads