



PARLIAMENT OF NEW SOUTH WALES  
LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

**FIRST SESSION OF THE FIFTY-SIXTH PARLIAMENT**

**Private Members' Statements**

14 February 2017

**BERESFIELD DRIVER REVIVER STATION**

**Ms SONIA HORNERY ( Wallsend ) ( 12:29 ):** In the early hours of Christmas morning I joined Helen and Tony Prior from the Wangi Wangi Lions Club at Beresfield's Driver Reviver. Working from 2.00 a.m. until 6.00 a.m. I met many travellers making the long drive through the Hunter to destinations as distant as Brisbane and Townsville. Christmas is a time for being with the people we love and for many that means travelling vast distances, often in a very short space of time. For those people, Driver Reviver stations are crucial, giving them a chance to have a break from the road— to grab a cup of coffee and to walk around to get the blood flowing again. Arthur Tumeth, coordinator of the Morisset Lions Club, told me:

We provide the service 24 hours a day, 60 days a year during peak travel times. It's amazing the number of people who stop there. A lot of people visit us over and over again. We have second-generation return visitors, people who tell me that they used to stop there with their parents as they travelled through.

The Beresfield Driver Reviver is a vital road safety resource for the area. Unfortunately, the Driver Reviver, which has been based at the roundabout on the M1 at Beresfield for almost 30 years, may be closed. Roads and Maritime Services [RMS] says that it needs the land occupied by the rest stop to replace the roundabout with traffic lights, and Morisset Lions Club, which runs the Driver Reviver, is looking at what the future brings. Public reactions to the planned closure of the Driver Reviver were reported in the *Newcastle Herald* before Christmas, with an online poll indicating that an overwhelming majority of respondents—more than 85 per cent—wanted the Driver Reviver to remain open.

According to Roads and Maritime Services, the changes to the M1—replacing the roundabout with traffic lights and broadening the road to five lanes—require the removal of the Driver Reviver from its current site. I understand that the Lions Club is still in discussions with RMS about the site's future and I urge RMS to do everything possible to work with the creators of the Beresfield Driver Reviver. Romy Brien was travelling through from Wollongong on the day that the *Newcastle Herald* reporters visited the site, and she said:

There's got to be somewhere else to put it. It's a valuable community resource, and so important for motorists on a long journey.

Underscoring Mr Tumeth's point that the Driver Reviver has become a fixture, Ed Earl from Albury said:

It's very disappointing—I make a point of stopping here every time.

Chris Brennan, also from Wollongong said:

You get to meet so many interesting people. And, importantly, it's free.

Though the RMS contributes to the leasing of the space to store Driver Reviver supplies, the Lions shoulder the majority of the burden by paying for maintenance and insurance. This is not a commercial enterprise. The venues are manned by volunteers who have a sense of community and spirit of generosity. They serve all travellers with a smile, knowing that they are helping to save lives. I acknowledge the Lions for their efforts in running the Beresfield Driver Reviver. I enjoyed my time there, meeting interesting people who needed a break but who could not stomach the thought of stopping at chain restaurants in the area for food. I truly hope the RMS can help the Lions find a new home for the Beresfield Driver Reviver; it is too important for motorists. I urge everyone to consider volunteering some of their time at their local Driver Reviver venues; they are a worthwhile community enterprise in every sense.