

Chicks lose their father

TWO cassowary chicks have been left orphaned after their father was killed by a car at the weekend.

The male cassowary had attempted to cross the road at its regular crossing point near the South Mission Beach turn-off.

There are now calls for the speed limit to be lowered.

Community for Coastal and Cassowary Conservation's Liz Gallie said it was beginning to be a case of "Ho hum, another one" as the endangered cassowary continued to be killed on Mission Beach roads at an "unsustainable rate".

"The two chicks are now prematurely left to survive on their own," she said.

This latest death brings the cassowary road death toll to four adults in seven months and 60 in 15 years.

"Each year this adult



Liz Gallie

cassowary has lost chicks to car strike at the same location and there have been many reports of near misses," Ms Gallie said.

"It isn't only a matter of the unsustainable rate of deaths... it hits at the very core of community pride and identity."

Ms Gallie said in 2008 the death of one of the chicks at the crossing prompted a rally of concerned community members.

"There is tragic irony in the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Ser-

vice (QPWS) recent crossing sign being attached to the 80 km/h road sign," she said.

"The willingness of the Queensland Main Roads Department to trial traffic management solutions at Mission Beach is most welcome.

"But it is being questioned by the increasingly concerned community why the speed limit cannot be simply lowered throughout the township given the multiple deaths at known locations.

"It may be a case of not enough soon enough.

"This is an iconic endangered species we are talking about. If the cassowary is allowed to be lost at Mission Beach, the Cassowary Coast region would not only lose its icon but a major part of its tourism economy and appeal."