

Question on Notice

No. 323

Asked on Tuesday 17 March 2020

MR J LISTER ASKED MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT AND MAIN ROADS (HON M BAILEY)—

QUESTION:

With reference to the bilateral agreement on inland rail between the Queensland and Australian Governments on 29 November 2019—

Will the minister advise (a) what role does the Queensland Government have in the selection of the route for the New South Wales border to Gowrie section of the Inland Rail project, (b) what is the Queensland Government's position on the Condamine River floodplain route proposed by the Australian Rail Track Corporation and (c) as a signatory to the bilateral agreement what efforts has the Minister taken to satisfy himself that the Australian Rail Track Corporation route selection processes, including its flood modelling, is accurate?

ANSWER:

I thank the Member for Southern Downs for the question.

As the Member is aware, it is the Member's party—via the Liberal-National Federal Government—that is driving the Inland Rail Project. The Member will also be aware that the Australian Rail Track Corporation (ARTC) is leading the planning and development of the Inland Rail Project on behalf of the Liberal-National Federal Government. The ARTC is chaired by a former Liberal-National Federal Deputy Prime Minister and Leader of the Nationals, the Honourable Warren Truss AC.

I would encourage the Member to reach out to the Member's Liberal-National colleagues at the Federal level to discuss these issues and their management of ARTC.

The Palaszczuk Government negotiated the Inland Rail Bi-lateral Agreement to protect Queensland's interests. In relation to the proposed corridor alignment of Inland Rail in Queensland, ARTC is refining its preferred corridor through the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) processes under the provisions of the *State Development and Public Works Organisation Act 1971*. This process is ongoing with stakeholder, landowner and public consultation a legislated requirement.

The Inland Rail Bi-lateral Agreement—negotiated by the Palaszczuk Government—includes protections to ensure the needs of Queensland communities along the proposed railway are addressed, including:

- a more meaningful and rigorous consultation process, which includes a requirement for ARTC to proactively resolve issues affecting land holders, greater focus on floodplain modelling and design solutions
- establishment of a panel of independent experts to advise and make recommendations to the Queensland and Australian governments on floodplain modelling and related issues.

The panel is not only considering the issues of the Condamine River floodplain, but the whole ARTC alignment in Queensland, which includes the Macintyre River and the Lockyer Valley.

The ARTC has been working with communities to determine and refine the route from the New South Wales border to Gowrie near Toowoomba since before the release of the 2015 Inland Rail Business Case, and this work is ongoing through the EIS process.

In relation to the Condamine River floodplain route, the Palaszczuk Government will ensure ARTC complies with all legislative and policy requirements, especially those in relation to community and environmental impact issues along the Inland Rail alignment. Further details are available on the Inland Rail website at www.inlandrail.artc.com.au/B2G.

The Palaszczuk Government is committed to ensuring Queensland achieves the best outcome from the project, and that the Liberal National Federal Government considers and responds appropriately to issues raised by Queenslanders.