

Question on Notice

No. 1578

Asked on 1 December 2021

MS F SIMPSON ASKED MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT AND MAIN ROADS (HON M BAILEY)—

QUESTION:

Will the Minister (a) outline what specifically the government has done to advance design and costing of the CAMCOS Beerwah to Maroochydore heavy rail to date, (b) release this information and (c) address Infrastructure Australia's concerns that there is no proponent of this project and take ownership of the project to move it forward?

ANSWER:

I thank the Member for Maroochydore for the question.

The Palaszczuk Government is investing at record levels to deliver better rail services, and the Sunshine Coast is no exception.

Achieving faster, more frequent and reliable journeys requires a whole-of-system approach, including delivering new trains, world-class signalling, track upgrades, level crossing removals and park n rides.

The \$5.4 billion Cross River Rail project will transform the South Eastern Queensland transport network, unlocking the bottleneck at its heart by providing a second river crossing. This is a critical first step, enabling the government to then expand capacity across the rest of the network, including to the Sunshine Coast.

Investment in the North Coast line to the Sunshine Coast continues to be a priority for the Palaszczuk Government. In the Sunshine Coast region, the \$550.8 million Beerburrum to Nambour Rail Upgrade project has commenced and will improve services for passengers and freight. The Australian and Queensland governments have also committed \$6.25 million towards the Beerburrum to Nambour Rail Upgrade Duplication Study, which will inform Stage 2 of the Beerburrum to Nambour Rail Upgrade project and progress planning for the future needs of the north coast rail line in this location.

The Palaszczuk Government is committed to the Caboolture to Maroochydore Corridor (CAMCOS) concept. The CAMCOS corridor has been preserved since 2001. Track upgrading and duplication from Caboolture to Beerburrum was completed in 2009, as was the elimination of the open level crossing at Beerwah. This provides an option for a future branch line from Beerwah to the East Coast.

To support these efforts, earlier this year, I wrote to the Australian Government seeking matching funds of \$3 million for Investment Planning for a Sunshine Coast Rail Extension. I am pleased that in the Australian Government's Mid Year Economic Forecast, the Australian Government has confirmed funding for this purpose. This work will support a realistic assessment of the cost and timing for a Sunshine Coast Extension after Infrastructure Australia recently rejected a Fast Rail proposal (the North Coast Connect Detailed Business Case developed by the North Coast Connect Consortium).

The Australian and Queensland governments have also committed a further \$1.5 million to develop a comprehensive 20-year investment program for the north coast rail line to 2041, to identify further opportunities to improve the capacity and efficiency of this line between Beerburrum and Brisbane. Further investment and construction timing will be dependent on and staged according to the highest priorities across the transport and rail networks to meet population growth and service demand in the growing South East Queensland region.

The Sunshine Coast is Australia's largest population centre without an internal mass transportation system. The Palaszczuk Government has recently received a copy of an analysis, commissioned by the Sunshine Coast Council, into options for moving people around the Sunshine Coast Community and avoiding congestion on the road network. The Department of Transport and Main Roads is using this options analysis to commence a detailed planning process, in partnership with the Sunshine Coast Council.

The Palaszczuk Government is delivering its sixth record transport and roads infrastructure program in a row, outlining \$27.5 billion in investment over the next four years and estimated to support an average of 24,000 direct jobs over the life of the program. Of this, \$2.927 billion is committed across TMR's North Coast Region, which is estimated to support an average of 2640 direct jobs over the life of the program.