

Question on Notice

No. 535

Asked on 11 May 2021

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

QUESTION:

With reference to Queensland's bid for the 2032 Olympic Games—

Will the Minister advise if the State Government will support heavy passenger rail on the Sunshine Coast from Beerwah to Maroochydore?

ANSWER:

I thank the Member for Kawana for the question.

As the Member would be aware, it was the Morrison Government, through Infrastructure Australia, that rejected the business case for Sunshine Coast rail. In contrast, the Palaszczuk Government has got rail upgrades moving on the Sunshine Coast. The Beerburrum to Nambour Upgrade project is now underway that will improve Sunshine Coast passenger services and support freight movements along the North Coast line.

The Palaszczuk Government has locked in \$550.8 million in joint investment with the Australian Government towards the initial stage of the Beerburrum to Nambour Rail Upgrade on the Sunshine Coast after the previous Newman Government ignored it while it was in office. The Palaszczuk Government also provided the Beerburrum to Nambour upgrade business case to the North Coast Connect Consortium as an in-kind contribution—worth \$5 million—to assist the development of its business case.

Relevantly, the Palaszczuk Government is also delivering the \$5.4 billion Cross River Rail project that provides a second river crossing in Brisbane, unblocking the current bottle neck and therefore allowing more trains to run more often and is an important first step towards other network expansions including the extension of the rail line on the Sunshine Coast to Caloundra and Maroochydore. That is a necessary first step in facilitating faster rail to the Sunshine Coast.

It is also relevant to contrast this investment approach to that of the previous LNP Government, which cancelled the Cross River Rail project, and cut \$1.6 billion from roads and transport funding, making the state-wide allocation of funding for competing priorities, including rail upgrades, more challenging.