

Question on Notice

No. 552

Asked on 12 May 2021

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

QUESTION:

With reference to the recently released 2021 Regional Transport Plan, which does not provide any timelines for construction of heavy rail on the Caloundra and Maroochydore Corridor Options Study (CAMCOS) corridor from Beerwah to the employment hub of Maroochydore —

Will the Minister advise what the Minister is doing to bring this project forward and when will it happen?

ANSWER:

I thank the Member for Maroochydore for the question and refer the Member to my answer to Question on Notice 535.

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, that will improve Sunshine Coast passenger services and support freight movements along the North Coast line, is now underway.

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 they were in office. We 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 their 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.