

**Question on Notice**

**No. 815**

**Asked on 16 June 2021**

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

**QUESTION:**

With reference to the answer to Question on Notice No. 552 asked on 12 May 2021 and the Minister's claim that the Federal Government through Infrastructure Australia had rejected the business case for North Coast Connect which incorporates the CAMCOS heavy rail link into Maroochydore—

Will the Minister advise if (a) the Minister is aware that Infrastructure Australia stated one of the reasons the North Coast Connect project wasn't prioritised was it 'is not currently identified in Queensland's transport strategy' and that the Queensland Government had not confirmed who will be responsible for delivery and that 'this contributes to project delivery risks' and (b) if the Queensland Government will take ownership of the project and include it in current Queensland Government transport strategies to allow it to progress?

**ANSWER:**

I thank the Member for Maroochydore for the question.

The Palaszczuk Government is committed to delivering a single integrated transport network that is accessible to everyone and is proud of its record investment in South East Queensland's rail network.

To this end, we have fully funded and are delivering the \$5.4 billion Cross River Rail project, which will unlock the bottleneck at the core of our rail network, deliver new stations and revitalise precincts. New generation signalling will allow more trains to run more safely and the Palaszczuk Government is investing over \$600 million in new trains to be built locally in Queensland. While Smart Ticketing will make choosing public transport even easier, customers will also benefit from a significant program of station upgrades, level crossing removals, park 'n' ride expansions, and better active transport and bus connections.

I would again point out the contrasting investment approach to that of the previous LNP Government, which cancelled the Cross River Rail project—not once but twice—ordered non-disability compliant trains from overseas, 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.

As mentioned in my response to Question on Notice 552 tabled on 11 June 2021, the North Coast rail line is a priority for the Palaszczuk Government. This is why the \$550.8 million Beerburum to Nambour Upgrade project is now underway to improve Sunshine Coast passenger services and support freight movements. The Queensland and Australian governments have also committed \$6.25 million as part of 2021–22 Federal and State Budgets towards the Beerburum to Nambour Rail Upgrade Duplication Study Stage 2.

The Caloundra to Maroochydore Corridor is an important part of the Queensland Government's long-term vision for public transport on the Sunshine Coast and the corridor has been preserved since 2001. Track upgrades and duplication from Caboolture to Beerburum were completed in 2009, as was the elimination of the open level crossing at Beerwah. This ultimately provides for a future branch line to the East Coast.

It is important to unlock the capacity of the existing network prior to building new capacity.

The Palaszczuk Government is working in collaboration with the National Faster Rail Agency to review the findings of the North Coast Connect Business Case in line with network priorities. Further investment in rail for the Sunshine Coast will be dependent on, and staged in line with, highest priorities across the network to meet population growth and demand.

Given the many competing investment pressures across Queensland, it is important that the Palaszczuk Government's economic plan focuses on uniting and recovering post-COVID-19 and delivering the infrastructure that Queenslanders need, while also planning for high-capacity transport access to potential Olympic venues.