

## Question on Notice

No. 166

Asked on 6 March 2024

**MR J BLEIJIE** ASKED MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT AND MAIN ROADS AND MINISTER FOR DIGITAL SERVICES (HON B MELLISH)—

### QUESTION:

With reference to the government's decision to end the Direct Sunshine Coast Rail Line at Caloundra—

Will the Minister advise (a) what road transport enhancements are planned for Caloundra Road to cater for the additional traffic heading to the rail station, (b) how many car parks will be available at the Caloundra rail station, (c) how many vehicles are estimated to be travelling from the Northern suburbs in the Kawana and Maroochydore Electorates to Caloundra to access the train station that under Labor's plan finishes at Caloundra and (d) whether 'Games Lanes' will be implemented during the Olympic and Paralympic Games to link the Caloundra station to venues and the Olympic Village?

### ANSWER:

I reject the premise of the question. The Direct Sunshine Coast Rail Line is being built in stages, between Beerwah and Maroochydore. This is the approach recommended by industry experts and reflects the findings of the detailed business case.

The Queensland Government's \$2.75 billion contribution to the Direct Sunshine Coast Rail Line project, subject to matched funding from the Australian Government, includes:

- building 19 kilometres of new rail from Beerwah to Caloundra
- going to market for Caloundra to Birtinya to understand delivery timeframes and costs associated with this complex section of the project
- protecting the updated corridor alignment to Maroochydore
- ongoing environmental, geotechnical, and site investigations.

Stage 1 to Caloundra will see over half of the line constructed by 2032, including track, bridges, stations, new bus facilities and active transport connections.

This significant funding commitment from the Queensland Government also includes detailed geotechnical investigations to inform design and construction methods for the proposed tunnel at Little Mountain, and further environmental and survey work to inform the design for bridges that will cross the creeks between Aroona and Birtinya. This is necessary work to de-risk future stages and will provide a clearer construction timeline between Caloundra and Birtinya.

Protecting this updated alignment will also make it easier to build future stages of the project, and enables planning work to continue with more certainty.

Staged delivery of the Direct Sunshine Coast Rail Line project means passengers can start accessing reliable and fast rail services sooner, in a region that has the second highest car ownership rate in Australia. The Direct Sunshine Coast Rail Line is the longest rail project undertaken in South East Queensland (SEQ) in over 15 years.

- (a) No new major road projects will be required to support the Direct Sunshine Coast Rail Line project. However, local road upgrades are included in the initial funding envelope. This includes:
1. adding more indented bus bays around stations
  2. improving active transport connectivity to and from stations
  3. connecting local roads to the park 'n' ride facilities.

To provide a new rail line with no level crossings, some roads will also require separation from the rail corridor, for example, rail and road overpasses. These works are also included in the funding envelope.

In proximity to Caloundra station, the Queensland Government has also committed \$2.5 million to progress a business case for the Caloundra Road, Pelican Waters Boulevard intersection. This work will determine the best transport outcomes – to improve safety and reduce congestion at this location, regardless of the Direct Sunshine Coast Rail Line project. However, any upgrades to this intersection will improve traffic flows around the proposed station.

As already outlined in community consultation, and on the public project website, Caloundra station is proposed to have two access points to the local road network. One from Pelican Waters Boulevard and the other from Caloundra Road. This will assist in managing vehicles around the station.

In addition, it is expected many people will access the rail stations via connecting bus services. An enhanced bus network is being planned as a part of the Direct Sunshine Coast Rail Line project, and will ensure that communities around the Sunshine Coast have convenient and reliable connections to their nearest rail station.

Upgrades to active transport facilities and new active travel options will mean that people can also choose to walk or ride to their nearest station. This helps mitigate local traffic impacts and provides health benefits to the communities surrounding the stations.

- (b) The funding envelope for Stage One includes park 'n' ride locations at each station. Preliminary layouts of these park 'n' ride facilities have already been shared with the public during community consultation in November 2023 and via the project website. Initial modelling forecasts between 500–750 spaces. The station will also include bus interchanges, kiss 'n' ride facilities and bike storage to encourage people to connect to the station via other modes.

Further work will now be undertaken in this next stage to refine park 'n' ride numbers at Caloundra station using more detailed modelling. Park 'n' ride updates will be shared with the community as the project progresses.

- (c) Modelling forecasts that approximately 200–300 vehicles will access Caloundra station from catchments to the north, when Stage 1 opens. This has been considered in the overall park 'n' ride numbers and the design of multiple access points to the parking facility, and the station.
- (d) The Direct Sunshine Coast Rail Line project will move people closer to key venues and accommodation sites on the Sunshine Coast. This means less buses will be required between the North Coast Line and the coastal region, as the time taken to move buses to and from the rail network is greatly reduced. This approach is not dissimilar to Games interchanges that were operational across SEQ to support the successful delivery of the Gold Coast 2018 Commonwealth Games.

Special transport arrangements will be required to meet the unique travel needs of Brisbane 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games (Brisbane 2032) athletes, officials and spectators. Requirements for 'games lanes' and other measures to support the reliable movement of people during this time will be determined and refined as more information is confirmed about the Brisbane 2032 schedule. Detailed operational plans will be developed collaboratively between the Department of Transport and Main Roads, Sunshine Coast Council and the Brisbane 2032 Organising Committee.