

QUESTION ON NOTICE

NO. 250

Asked on 28 April 2004

MRS SULLIVAN asked the Minister for Transport and Main Roads (Mr Lucas) -

QUESTION:

With reference to the Federal Member for Longman, Mal Brough's keen interest in the State declared road through the Ningi township -

- (1) Is there any Federal funding available for his suggestion of a bypass?**
- (2) Are there any other road issues in the area where the Federal Government is not meeting its obligation for funding?**

ANSWER:

I thank the Member for Pumicestone for the question.

- (1) Under the existing *Australian Land Transport Development (ALTD) Act 1988* Notes on Administration, federal funding for the proposed Ningi Bypass on Bribie Island Road could be provided, subject to this link being declared by the Commonwealth Roads' Minister as a Road of National Importance (RoNI).

Mr Brough has been content to offer opinions from the sideline but provide no indication of Commonwealth Government support.

This is in contrast to the recent Federal Budget where the only new federal funding announced for roads in Queensland was \$1m announced for the part cost of a bridge connecting Burnet Heads with the Bundaberg Port.

If this represents Federal funding priorities in Queensland then clearly the Howard Government has no interest in the people of Ningi and Mr Brough has no political clout.

- (2) The Bruce Highway forms part of the National Highway System (NHS) for which the federal government currently has full funding responsibility.

In the mid 1990s, the federal Labor government committed \$5m to commence planning of the eight and six-lane upgrade of the Bruce Highway, between the Gateway Motorway and Caboolture.

Subsequently, upgrading the Bruce Highway north to Caboolture was a 1999 Howard Government election commitment, with \$35m provided in March 2000 for Stage 1 (eight and six-laning between Gateway Motorway to Dohles Rocks Road). These works were completed in April 2002.

After some 12 months delay, Centenary of Federation funding of \$40m was ultimately approved by the federal government in April 2003 for Stage 2 six-laning works, north to Boundary Road. These works are currently under construction and expected to be completed later this year.

Main Roads is currently undertaking the planning, design, resumption of property and relocation of public utility plant on the Boundary Road to Uhlmann Road section (Stage 3), as well as planning for the balance of the six-lane upgrade between Uhlmann Road and Caboolture (Stages 4 and 5).

The cost of completing six-lane construction of the Bruce Highway to Caboolture is estimated at \$195m. To this end, in March 2004, Main Roads submitted a further funding request to the federal government for \$108m to at least allow a construction start on Stage 3 (Boundary-Uhlmann Road) this year.

Unfortunately, the May 2004 federal budget did not provide any additional funding to allow these six-laning works to proceed. Yet, in the same federal budget, the current local member for the marginal federal seat of Hinkler, Mr Paul Neville MP, secured an, as yet, unmatched \$1m RoNI funding contribution towards a new road and bridge connecting Burnett Heads with the Bundaberg Port. This future road could not be classified as a road of state importance, let alone one of national importance.

The pro-active and constructive stance taken by the Member for Pumicestone, who organised a meeting with me on 31 May 2004 for Pine Rivers Shire Council and community representatives to discuss state road funding priorities in her electorate, including the need for a Ningi bypass in the foreseeable future, is an approach Mr Mal Brough MP, federal Member for Longman, might consider adopting in representing the needs of his constituents in order to deliver urgent federally-funded road priorities in the electorate of Longman. His efforts to date in securing essential federal funding to complete the six-lane upgrading of the Bruce Highway have been less than spectacular.

It is a fact that the Commonwealth government currently collects \$11b per annum in fuel excise in Australia – yet it only returns \$2b (or 18%) to motorists in terms of road system upgrades and improved road safety.

Completion of the upgrading of the six-laning of the Bruce Highway north to Caboolture has been confirmed by the Honourable John Anderson MP, Deputy Prime Minister and federal Minister for Transport and Regional Services as a pre-AusLink commitment. I expect to see positive federal action as a consequence.

Mr Brough would better serve his electorate by ensuring the essential NHS funds to complete the six-lane upgrade of the federally-funded Bruce Highway, north to Caboolture, are secured without delay.