

QUESTION ON NOTICE

NO. 625

Asked on Tuesday 15 June 2004

MR REEVES asked the Minister for Transport and Main Roads (Mr Lucas) -

QUESTION:

With reference to the recent Auslink announcement by the Federal Government

What does this mean to the Brisbane Urban Corridor, in particular, Mt Gravatt-Capalaba Road which is part of the National Highway system?

ANSWER:

I thank the Member for Mansfield for the question.

The federal government's recent announcement about AusLink transport initiatives has not been good news for Queensland.

Queensland's 2004-05 to 2008-09 National Highway System (NHS) Forward Strategy Report identified a jointly agreed requirement of in excess of \$600m p.a. to bring Queensland's NHS up to an acceptable standard. Under AusLink, Queensland's overall share of federal government funding for both the NHS and roads of National Importance (RoNIs) averages \$293m p.a. over the next five years – less than half the funding required to address Queensland's identified NHS needs alone. Further, the bulk of this five-year AusLink allocation is not provided until years four and five of the plan, and there has been no direct AusLink funding for Queensland's rail network.

The recent AusLink announcement allocated a total of \$573m over five years to Brisbane urban connectors, but the federal government was not specific as to which projects would be funded or the timing of the works. Further, only \$36m has been provided over the first two years to effect improvements to urban connectors in Brisbane.

This level of federal funding leaves a massive federal funding shortfall of some \$1.2 billion to adequately address the national road network task in south east Queensland (SEQ) over this five-year timeframe.

By comparison, in recognition of the significant growth in traffic demands in SEQ, in the 2004 State Budget, the state government committed an extra \$984m over the next five years for SEQ roads alone as part of the Smart State Building Fund, 2004 roads election commitments and Arterial Roads Infrastructure Package. An extra \$1.02 billion also has been provided by the Beattie Government for rail and public transport infrastructure improvements in SEQ over the same timeframe.

On 30 June 2004, former federal Roads Minister, Senator Ian Campbell, advised that the Australian Government is committed to working with the Queensland government to develop a longer-term 8-10 year strategic plan for south west Brisbane.

This commitment can only be met if the federal government meets its existing NHS responsibilities for major upgrades such as Ipswich Motorway (\$700m); Brisbane Urban Corridor (\$226m); Gateway Motorway (NHS component \$900m), and joint funding of future upgrading of the Pacific Motorway which is a designated Road of National Importance (RoNI).

At this stage, the only clear indication is that AusLink funding will be provided for construction of the Ipswich/Logan Motorway interchange (\$160m over the next four years); and to complete a Northern Option Study by December 2004.

The former federal Roads Minister also has stated that the federal government will fund a 12-month toll-free trial for trucks between 10.00pm and 5.00am on the Logan Motorway at Stapylton and the Gateway Extension at Kuraby. This was a BUC Study recommendation, with some \$1.1m to be provided to reimburse Queensland Motorways Limited (QML), the toll operator, for lost revenue and other costs.

This trial will enable Main Roads to monitor the effect of heavy vehicle night use along the BUC. The BUC study investigations indicated one in three heavy vehicles that used the BUC at night could have used the Logan Motorway. Subject to receipt of federal funding, Main Roads is working with QML to commence this trial as soon as practical.

I believe the only other works on the BUC, which the federal government may consider funding under AusLink in the short-term, include some minor improvements to intersections, noise barriers, pedestrian fencing, and to undertake detailed planning of improvements to major intersections such as Logan/Kessels, Mains/Kessels, and Beaudesert/ Granard Roads. Federal contributions towards acceleration of electronic tolling of heavy vehicles and a heavy vehicle surveillance system are also under consideration.

All of these activities were listed as priorities in the BUC study report submitted by the state government to the Commonwealth in December 2003.