

QUESTION ON NOTICE

NO. 747

Asked on 18 June 2004

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

QUESTION:

With reference to the recent announcement by the Deputy Prime Minister and Leader of the Federal National Party on the Auslink transport initiative - How will this initiative benefit the Gold Coast and particularly the Southport Electorate?

ANSWER:

I thank the Member for Southport 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.

While the federal government's \$120m commitment to the Tugun Bypass over two years from 2006-07 has been provided, there is no extra money committed under AusLink for constructing other transport infrastructure on the Gold Coast of obvious national importance, such as six-laning of the Pacific Motorway, south from Nerang which is a designated RoNI and is part of the AusLink Network.

Queensland requires a similar level of commitment as that obtained by the New South Wales government for upgrading the Pacific Highway in that state. In advance of AusLink, I put a proposition to the federal minister for 50/50 (federal/state) funding of major upgrades to the Pacific Motorway over the next five years and beyond. This was not recognised under AusLink. However, I assure the Member for Southport that I will continue to lobby the federal government for assistance in funding such major works.

In the meantime, the Beattie government is getting on with the job of delivering improved transport infrastructure outcomes for Queensland.

As part of the 2004 State Budget, the Queensland government committed an extra \$1.06 billion over five years to accelerate priority roadworks across the state – Smart State Building Fund (\$186.25m); roads election commitments (\$301m); Arterial Roads Infrastructure Package (\$571m).

The extra funding provided under each of these special state government initiatives for south east Queensland enables acceleration of much-needed Gold Coast roadworks. Under the Arterial Roads Infrastructure Package, in particular, a \$16m project is included in your Southport electorate for four-laning the southern end of Frank Street, between Robert Street and Stevens Street, by 2007.