

Question on Notice

No. 757

Asked on 18 June 2004

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

QUESTION:

With reference to his comments earlier this week in relation to the creation of the Central Queensland Ports Authority wherein he indicated that one of the benefits of this new body will be that Port Alma can now share in the success of the Port of Gladstone —

Will he further elaborate on why the creation of this new body is essential to the future viability of Port Alma and what steps the Government will take to achieve this?

ANSWER:

I thank the Member for Fitzroy for the question. I would like to acknowledge the Member's strong support for Port Alma and his keen interest in the formation of the new port authority.

The Rockhampton Port Authority (RPA), the port authority for Port Alma, was facing severe financial difficulties which stem primarily from high compliance costs, infrastructure issues and a reducing revenue stream due to a declining trade throughput.

Over the last ten years throughput levels have been variable with a general downward trend. This not only reflects the change in commodity throughput but also the change in the logistics and supply systems used by industry.

Additional compliance requirements have also gradually led to increasing administration and operating costs including consultants' costs for internal audit, risk management, town planning, environmental issues, security planning and structural engineering.

Given the strategic nature of ports, its facilities and services, it is essential to keep Port Alma open as a fully operational port. Therefore ownership, management and control of Port Alma were transferred from the RPA to the renamed Central Queensland Ports Authority (CQPA) on July 1 2004 to ensure the continued viability of the port and its contribution to the regional community.

The Government will ensure the board of the CQPA will be representative of all stakeholder interests and to ensure the interests of Port Alma are represented, former Chair of the RPA, Charles Ware, was recently appointed to the board.

There will be specific reference to the requirement to support and grow Port Alma in Central Queensland Ports Authority's Statement of Corporate Intent which will be legally binding.

There will be no job losses as a result of this merger.

The CQPA will implement whole-of-government programs aimed at achieving best practice in managing the marine and land-based environmental programs for this important wetlands area. The new authority will take early steps to ensure that the central Queensland stakeholders are provided with consultative mechanisms so that their concerns and views are heard by both the Board and the management of the new authority.

These changes are part of the Government's program to provide both the Fitzroy region and the State with world class transport infrastructure and best-practice logistic and marine services to support industry, regional development and employment.