

QUESTION ON NOTICE

NO. 835

Asked on 18 August 2004

MS NELSON-CARR asked the Minister for Transport and Main Roads (Mr Lucas) –

QUESTION:

With reference to the keenly awaited Douglas Arterial Road in Townsville/Thuringowa rapidly taking shape – What is the progress of construction?

ANSWER:

I thank the Member for Mundingburra for the question.

Progress is being made on all sections of the Douglas Arterial project which extends from University Road at Douglas to Upper Ross River Road at Condon.

The project includes 5.3km of two-lane roadway and five bridge structures, the major structure being a 250m long, high-level bridge over Ross River.

Progress on construction is evident at many locations along the project:

- At University Road, northbound traffic has been reduced to one lane so that the road connection between the existing University Road and the Yolanda Drive roundabout, past the CSIRO, can be built. This work will then enable the arterial's connection to University Road to be constructed.
- Riverside Boulevard was closed for two weeks from 23 August 2004, to allow completion of the overpass known as the Mid-Point Access. This closure was needed so that the work could be completed as quickly as possible.
- On the northern part of the project, the four-lane, divided road works on Upper Ross River Road are continuing. The pavement and asphalt surfacing of this section will be completed in October and will allow a return to four-lane traffic operation. This milestone will be appreciated by Upper Ross motorists and businesses, who have been very patient with the road works.
- Work is progressing well on the new Ross River Bridge. All bridge girders have been erected and deck construction has begun.

The whole project (both bridge and roadworks) must be completed before it is practical to open it up to traffic. The final stage of the works will be to complete the asphalt surfacing over the whole 5.3km length of the project.

The opening date is now expected to extend to March 2005. The original finish date of December 2004 was based on earlier forecasts and was always subject to weather conditions. The contractor was not able to make up delays incurred during the early 2004 wet season, despite trying to do so throughout the year.

The contract date for completion is currently mid March 2005 and the contractor, Belmadar Constructions Pty Ltd, is expected to achieve this contractual commitment.

I acknowledge the keen interest the local member has in the project's completion. It will be a substantial asset to the Townsville/Thuringowa road network, relieving pressure on the existing national highway, particularly at the Nathan Street/ Ross River Road, which is not only Townsville's busiest intersection, but also one of the busiest in Queensland. I am sure highway traffic and Townsville/Thuringowa motorists will appreciate the benefits of this new road link early in 2005. The state government is providing funding for about one-third of the project's cost, with the federal government providing the remainder.