Question on Notice

No. 430

Asked on 24 March 2005

MR JOHNSON asked the Minister for Transport and Main Roads (MR LUCAS)—

QUESTION:

With reference to the impact of the drought on cattle movements from areas adjacent to rail heads at Winton and Quilpie –

Will he give an unequivocal guarantee that Queensland Rail (QR) Cattle Train services will continue to be maintained and upheld until such time that we see a return to full productive capacity under normal seasonal conditions and will he guarantee that the Cattle Train network will continue to service these two centres in question, in the future?

ANSWER:

I thank the Honourable Member for his question.

For the 2005 livestock season QR is providing, subject to demand, three services per week originating from Winton and four services per week originating from Quilpie. As has occurred in previous years, these service levels were established in consultation with industry through the Cattle Industry Rail Forum. Should the level of demand exceed this capacity QR may be able to provide additional capacity subject to availability of rollingstock, traincrew and suitable train paths.

QR and Government are committed to rail playing a major role in the transport of livestock in Queensland. As an illustration of this commitment, Government is continuing to support QR's ability to meet the demand for livestock transport services from Winton and Quilpie by heavily subsidising the maintenance of the track to ensure it is fit for purpose.

Across the network QT is currently spending $270m per annum through the Below Rail Transport Service Contract. Planned spending on maintaining the Charleville to Quilpie line is expected to average around $3.5m per annum over the next eight years, while spending from Winton to Longreach is expected to average $1.2m per annum over the same period.

In addition, QR remains strongly committed to the development of a long term, commercially viable rail livestock service in Queensland and continues to work with the industry to achieve this.