

Question on Notice

No. 693

Asked on 12 May 2005

MR SHINE asked the Minister for Transport and Main Roads (MR LUCAS) -

QUESTION:

With reference to the proposed second range crossing, will he advise -

- (a) the stage which the project has reached,
- (b) the nature of recent requests by him to the Federal Government concerning necessary funding,
- (c) the reply of the Federal Government to such requests and
- (d) where this now leaves the project?

ANSWER:

I thank the Member for Toowoomba North for the question.

Main Roads has completed the Toowoomba Bypass Planning Project which identified a new route across the range and around Toowoomba. The route is to the north of Toowoomba. The Preconstruction Business Case and Detailed Planning Report were submitted to the federal government in 2004.

Resumptions are nearing completion and Main Roads expects to own the proposed road corridor in July this year.

\$10m was requested from the federal government in January 2005 to allow completion of stages 3 (Business Case), 4 and 5 of the PPP process to proceed.

I met with the Honourable John Anderson MP, Deputy Prime Minister and federal Minister for Transport and Regional Services on 20 January 2005 to discuss a range of issues, one of which being the second range crossing. At subsequent meetings with both the Deputy PM and the federal roads minister, Hon Jim Lloyd, I have restated Queensland's position on the Toowoomba Bypass Planning Project that no further progress will be made regarding preconstruction or investigation of the PPP potential of the project unless further funding is provided.

Despite repeated representations, to date, the federal government position continues to be that no further funding will be provided for the PPP process to proceed.

Meanwhile, the state government has identified the Toowoomba Bypass in the 2010 to 2015 timeframe as part of the South East Queensland Infrastructure Plan and Program for 2005-2026 published in April 2005.

I will continue to pursue this issue with my federal counterparts as this is a significant project which will not only provide an efficient heavy transport route through the Great Dividing Range and around the city of Toowoomba but will overcome the congestion and safety issues on the existing range and through the urban street system of Toowoomba.

It is the responsibility of all federal, state and local government representatives to also pursue a funding commitment from the federal government so the next stages of this critical project can proceed.

We are investing in more than roads. We are investing in the people who live and work in regional Queensland by providing jobs, and giving them a road network that is second to none.