

Question on Notice

No. 528

Asked on Wednesday 19 April 2006

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

QUESTION:

- (1) Will he advise the details and progress being made on the Government's \$42m Ring Road project in Bundaberg?
- (2) As this \$42m project appears to be the biggest project ever undertaken in Bundaberg, will he also advise how this huge investment in our roadwork infrastructure compares to main roads funding to the Bundaberg district by previous State Governments?

ANSWER:

I thank the Member for Bundaberg for the question. The Member has been a strong advocate and has worked tirelessly for the people of Bundaberg in support of this project and the benefits it will provide to this growing region now and well into the future. In the June 2005 budget, I announced \$42m for the 14.3km Bundaberg Ring Road. At the Bundaberg Community Cabinet in February 2006, the Honourable Member and I had the pleasure of announcing the contractors who would complete the design work for the new two lane ring road.

The project will provide a new route to the south and east of the city to enable traffic to avoid travelling through the city.

The route goes from the Isis Highway to Bargara Road via Von Deest Street, a bridge over the North Coast Rail line, Lovers Walk and Greathead Road to Bargara Road near the Gahans Road junction.

To date, Main Roads has consulted the community through media, information sheets, and in late 2006 there was a public display at Sugarland Shoppingtown, and static displays at various locations. This consultation will continue throughout the life of the project.

The preliminary design of the Bundaberg Ring Road, being undertaken by consultants Maunsell Australia, is well advanced.

Many design issues are being considered by the consultants, such as how to manage storm runoff in very flat areas; which Telstra cables and Ergon power lines need to be shifted; what form the bridge over the North Coast railway will take; how the intersection with Goodwood Road, Elliott Heads Road and FE Walker Street will be designed; and what noise impacts the ring road will have on adjacent properties.

The consultants have already had some noise measurements carried out and more measurements are underway this month.

As the preliminary design progresses, the areas of land that will need to be resumed for the ring road are being calculated. This information will allow action associated with land resumption to commence towards the end of this year.

Current progress is in line with expectations that construction work on the ring road will commence in late 2007 and final completion by mid 2009.

In terms of overall roads funding to the Bundaberg area, Main Roads' records show that since the Beattie Government assumed power in 1998 state-funded roadworks expenditure incurred in the local government areas throughout the Bundaberg – Wide Bay area has increased by 20 per cent, from an average of \$21.7m per year in 1996-97 and 1997-98, to an average of \$26.2m over the subsequent period to 2004-05.

The 2005-06 to 2009-10 Roads Implementation Program (RIP) also shows that the Bundaberg – Wide Bay area will receive significantly increased state government investment in roads over the next five years, with average annual state funding climbing to \$47.3m (or a total of \$237m) over this period. This increased funding includes the special initiative allocation of \$42m for the Bundaberg Ring Road, as outlined above.

In comparison, the federal government has committed average annual funding of only \$5.3m (or a total of \$27m) for road infrastructure to the Bundaberg – Wide Bay area over the same period.

Across Queensland, the state government has committed significant additional funding in recognition of the need for major transport infrastructure investment over the next 10 to 20 years to meet the social and economic development needs of the state.

In recognition of population growth and industry demands right across Queensland, the 2005-06 State Budget and October 2005 Mini-budget provided extra funding for roads totalling \$2 billion over five years to 2009-10 – over and above normal state road funding sources.

Reflecting these funding increases, the 2005-06 to 2009-10 Roads Implementation Program (RIP), which was launched on 29 November 2005, provided total funding of \$10.5 billion over five years – up \$2.5 billion on the previous five-year RIP.

The total roadworks budget for Main Roads for 2005-06 (comprising capital works, maintenance and operations) is \$1.58 billion, reflecting a total year-on-year increase of \$360m (or 30%) over the 2004-05 works program as outlined in the RIP. Funding for roadworks is planned to grow further to a total of \$2.06 billion by 2007-08 (representing a 69% increase on the 2004-05 works budget).

The Bureau of Transport and Resource Economics 2001 survey of state roads expenditure showed Queensland spends more, per capita, on roads than the national average – and around 2½ times that is spent by Victoria. Reflecting the population growth and industry expansion needs of Queensland, state funding grows, in real per capita terms, from \$213 per person in 1996-97 (including Pacific Motorway) to \$378 per person in 2006-07 (firm year 2 of the RIP) – reflecting an increase of 77.5%. By comparison, in real per capita terms, federal funding to Queensland only grows from \$68 per person to \$84 per person, (or 23.5%) over the same period.