

Question on Notice

No. 695

Asked on 10 May 2006

MS BARBARA STONE asked the Minister for Transport and Main Roads (MR LUCAS) -

QUESTION:

What does the Federal Budget mean for the people of Springwood, in particular, the Pacific Motorway upgrade project in Logan City, and how has that changed since the last Federal Budget?

ANSWER:

I thank the Member for Springwood for the question. I acknowledge that the local member is a very determined advocate for improved roads and transport options in her electorate.

I am disappointed to inform the honourable member that despite a massive budget surplus and the \$14 billion it expects to collect in fuel tax, the Federal Government did not allocate a cent towards the construction of the planned improvements along the Pacific Motorway between the Gateway and Logan Motorways which are so vital to motorists along this increasingly congested corridor. Despite this, the Department of Main Roads has progressed planning for the upgrade in consultation with the local community.

As the honourable member is aware through her lobbying efforts, the draft planning layouts for the Pacific Motorway Transit Project between Eight Mile Plains and Daisy Hill are currently on public display for further community feedback and are to be finalised shortly. Planned improvements along this section include widening to accommodate new bus and transit lanes; improved on and off-ramps; an upgrade of the Loganlea Road interchange and the final link of the V1 bikeway. The Queensland Government recognises the need to encourage more efficient use of our investment in road infrastructure – but the federal Government must meet its funding responsibilities before construction can begin. The state department of Main Roads will continue working to be ready to start construction – as early as mid-2007 – should the federal government commit its share of funding.

There was no new funding in the Federal Budget for any major projects in the south-east. In regard to the Pacific Motorway corridor - apart from the reaffirmation of a \$120 million commitment for the Tugun Bypass announced in March 2003 – which is not due to be paid until 2006-07 and 2007-08 - there has been no federal road funding for major projects since then.

Both local and state levels of government as well as key stakeholders support the upgrade of the Pacific Motorway. Earlier this year the Logan City Council adopted a resolution to “write to State and Federal Members representing the Logan City area highlighting Council's concerns regarding delays in upgrading of the Pacific Motorway through the Logan City area and seeking their support in lobbying for Commonwealth Government matching funding for this project to ensure it proceeds forthwith”.

Most recently, the Premier has written to the Prime Minister requesting that part of the current Federal Government surplus be applied to a matching dollar-for-dollar funding package for the upgrade of the Pacific Motorway between Eight Mile Plains and Tugun. I have personally raised the requirement for a matching federal funding commitment to a \$1.5bn upgrade of this AusLink route in numerous meetings with my federal counterparts, as well as made a number of formal written requests for the necessary funding. The Queensland Government has already committed \$392m over five years towards this major upgrade. I have even offered to successive federal transport and road ministers, the option of Queensland making a start on these essential works now on the basis that the Queensland Government would fund the early works, subject to a firm Federal Government commitment to fund its share at a later date, via a formal federal/state agreement. All to no avail.

The Pacific Motorway is part of AusLink designated road network and in dire need of upgrading to meet the demands of rapid population growth - but the Federal Government refuses to give serious consideration to a 50/50 funding request proposed by the Queensland Government to fix it!

It is a national disgrace that the growth needs of Queensland and resulting increased traffic demands on this nationally-significant corridor are being ignored, and the local federal coalition members along this corridor are doing absolutely nothing about it!

These sitting federal members should ask why the Federal Government continues to pour money into the Pacific Highway in New South Wales and why their constituents are being ignored. Under AusLink, it has committed \$1.6bn over ten years to upgrading works south of the border and, as part of the 2006 federal budget an extra \$160m supplementary payment was also provided to New South Wales.