

Question on Notice

No. 736

Asked on 11 May 2006

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

QUESTION:

With reference to roads funding which impacts on Commonwealth funded roads in my Electorate - Is there any reason for my constituents to celebrate following the recent Federal Budget?

ANSWER:

I thank the Member for Nudgee for the question.

Regrettably there is little for your constituents to celebrate after the May 2006 Federal Roads Budget. Apart from extra funding for the Bruce Highway in response to the devastation and disruption to highway traffic caused by Cyclones Larry and Monica, there was absolutely nothing new for South East Queensland!

Why the Howard Costello Government continues to ignore the growth needs of South East Queensland and the people of Queensland is mystifying; and the lack of dedicated action from state and federal sitting coalition members is frustrating.

The Federal Government has yet again walked away from its funding responsibility for national highways – for which it previously had 100 per cent funding responsibility – and for the AusLink-designated Gateway Motorway, in particular.

The Federal Government provided \$8.037m over four years from 2001-02, towards part of the planning for the \$1.64 billion Gateway Upgrade Project, between Mt Gravatt-Capalaba Road and Nudgee Road, part of which runs through the Nudgee electorate. However, it subsequently advised the state government that the full cost of the road component of this major upgrade (approx. \$1.05 billion), for which it previously had full funding responsibility, should be met by road users through increased tolls.

Work on the Gateway Motorway corridor, including the duplication of the Gateway Bridge, is critical to the economic growth of the region. Without the commitment to provide the extra capacity, growth in the area will be frustrated. Upgrading the existing Gateway Motorway corridor will provide improved access to the port, airport and the Australia TradeCoast and encourage expansion in both industry and employment in the area. The Gateway Motorway between Nudgee golf course and the Bruce Highway is a major route from southern states and the Port of Brisbane to central, north and far north Queensland. Clearly, six-laning of the Gateway Motorway, between Nudgee Road and Pine River will be required by the time the Gateway Upgrade Project is finished in 2010-11.

Given the long lead times to complete preconstruction activities associated with major roads projects, I have instructed the Department of Main Roads to prepare a federal funding submission and to make a start on planning for that section now, so that Queensland is in the best possible position to secure funding for the construction works as part of AusLink2.

Queensland has been advised by the Federal Government that there is no additional funding in the current five-year AusLink plan (2004-05 to 2008-09) beyond that which has already been committed. Yet, as part of the 2006 federal budget process, the Commonwealth recently found an extra \$800m to four-lane the Hume Highway in New South Wales – a road which carries less than 7,000 vehicles per day, as compared with Gateway Motorway which carries up to 100,000 vehicles per day; and an extra \$160m matching federal funding commitment was provided (on top of the existing \$1.6 billion 10-year matching AusLink funding) for the Pacific Highway in New South Wales.

In the meantime, the Queensland government has been working with the Federal road and transport agency to finalise an 8-10 year AusLink Investment Strategy for south-east Queensland. Please be assured that planning and upgrading of Gateway Motorway, between Nudgee Road and the Bruce Highway, will be incorporated into this strategy – and that the state government will be seeking a federal funding commitment for these upgrading works in AusLink2.