

QUESTION ON NOTICE

No 623

Asked on Wednesday, 18 April 2007

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

QUESTION:

With reference to the closure of the Queensland Rail depot at Maryborough and its relocation to Hervey Bay - Will he reconsider this decision due to:

- (a) the inefficiency of driving trucks through Maryborough to Hervey Bay, only to unload the trucks, repack them and send them back to Maryborough and
- (b) putting staff out of jobs or transferring them to Hervey Bay, whilst living in Maryborough?

ANSWER:

The consolidation of the Maryborough and Pialba depot operations will assist QRN in improving the financial performance of the business which is necessary if QRN is to provide a sustainable general freight business in the area and throughout Queensland generally.

Pialba was chosen as the preferred location of operations because of Hervey Bay's continuing rapid growth. As a result of that growth, Queensland Rail (QR) advises that Pialba is strategically the most suitable location for QR's freight operations into the future. Additionally, as QR already has depot operations at Pialba, centering operations there requires minimal capital expenditure to facilitate operational changes.

QR also advises that it does not have suitable alternative facilities at Maryborough for ongoing general freight operations. Following detailed financial analysis by QR, relocating the depot to other than Pialba would involve a substantial capital expenditure which cannot be justified.

All freight to the Wide Bay region will be conveyed in B-Double truck configurations to Pialba depot. Pialba is approximately 30 minutes travelling time from the current Maryborough freight depot. Freight will be unloaded, checked, sorted and loaded onto local distribution trucks for delivery to customers in Pialba, Howard, Burrum Heads, Torbanlea, Maryborough and surrounding areas. This process is no different to the current operation other than being consolidated in Pialba. QR advises freight distribution from Pialba is more efficient given the origins and destinations of freight being transported.

The proposed arrangements will not impact on QR staff numbers. QR staff from the Maryborough freight depot will continue to be employed and work at either Pialba or at QR's container operations at Maryborough West. Some staff living in Maryborough may be required to work at Pialba, and QR has policies and procedures in place to facilitate staff relocation (for example subsidising removal costs where necessary) and has previously worked through similar situations on a number of occasions. Individuals and their unions have been involved, and will continue to be involved, in the process of relocation. QR will comply with its policy of no forced redundancies and no forced transfers.

QR has a strong commitment to the Maryborough region and makes a major contribution to its economy. QR currently employs over 200 people in Maryborough and Maryborough West. QR also currently has approximately \$645m in contracts with EDI Maryborough including over \$500m for passenger rollingstock and over \$100m for freight locomotives.