

Question on Notice

No. 922

Asked on 7 June 2007

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

QUESTION:

Will he advise what offers of financial assistance, if any, have been received from the Federal Government to upgrade the Gateway Motorway north of the Nudgee Golf Club?

ANSWER:

I thank the Member for Nudgee for the question.

The short answer to this question, is nothing.

The Gateway Motorway is a primary economic arterial road that connects interstate markets to the north, south and west with the Port of Brisbane, the Brisbane International Airport and the Australia TradeCoast precinct. Physically it connects the Pacific Motorway to the south and the Bruce Highway to the north with internal road connections to the Port Motorway, the Airport Motorway, and the Brisbane Urban Corridor at Mt Gravatt-Capalaba Road.

For the section from Nudgee Golf Course to the Bruce Highway, there is a growing need for widening and realignment from four to six lanes (with provision for eight lanes), including upgrading of at least five interchanges. This is part of the AusLink Network and as such, should be funded by the federal government.

On 21 July 2006, the Department of Main Roads forwarded a Stage 2 planning request and Project Proposal Report to the federal Department of Transport and Regional Services (DoTaRS) for consideration of funding \$6m for planning for the upgrade of 12.5km of the Gateway Motorway, from the Nudgee Golf Course to the intersection with the Bruce Highway, immediately south of the Pine River.

A response was received in January 2007 from DoTaRS advising that no funding was available in the current program. A follow-up letter was sent to DoTaRS in May 2007. The response from DoTaRS to this letter indicated that funding for this project could be considered with other priorities under AusLink 2. The Department of Main Roads will include this project in its submission for AusLink 2, but it must be pointed out that AusLink 2 doesn't commence until mid-2009.

That means that even if the federal government finally meets its responsibilities and provides funding, it won't be available for another two years at least.

However, so that this important project isn't delayed, the Queensland Government is getting on with the job. The Roads Implementation Program (RIP) 2007-08 to 2011-12 that I released on 29 June 2007 allocates \$6m for concept planning of the Gateway

Motorway North from Nudgee Road to the Bruce Highway. Once again, the state has stepped up to the mark where the federal government has fallen short.

We simply cannot sit on our hands and wait when it comes to major roads infrastructure projects like the Gateway Motorway North. Traffic volumes are growing on this section of the Gateway Motorway at an annual rate of up to 8% with the 2005 Average Annual Daily Traffic (AADT) in excess of 47,000. Crashes along this section of road are occurring at an unsatisfactory rate with 414 crashes recorded over a five-year period to 30 June 2005, including 80 killed or serious injury crashes.

Should funding be received for this vital roads project, I am advised that construction could commence as early as 2010. You would well be aware that the Gateway Upgrade Project (GUP) is scheduled for completion in 2011.

Unfortunately, I am not surprised that Queensland has not received any money for this important link. The federal government is not contributing a single cent to the \$1.88bn Gateway Upgrade Project, which will provide for a second Gateway Bridge and an upgrade of 20km of the Gateway Motorway to six and eight lanes from Mt Gravatt-Capalaba Road to Nudgee Road, including a new Brisbane Airport access interchange.

If the Commonwealth met 100% of its responsibility for the road part of the upgrade (\$900m), then the toll level would be \$2.20 in 2011 and remain at that level. The federal government will collect approximately \$14.4bn in fuel excise during 2007-08 and return only \$2.8bn or 19.4 cents in the dollar to roads. It's about time the federal government invested some of its record budget surplus into the infrastructure that Queensland needs and deserves.