

Question on Notice

No.1560

Asked on 29 October 2008

MRS ATTWOOD asked the Minister for Main Roads and Local Government (MR PITT)

QUESTION:

Is there any substance to the Member for Moggill's claim that there is a secret plan to add toll lanes to the Centenary Motorway?

ANSWER:

I thank the Member for Mount Ommaney for the question.

In August this year, I announced that the Department of Main Roads had begun a \$4.5m concept planning study to look at ways to upgrade the Centenary Motorway between the Ipswich Motorway and the Toowong roundabout.

The Centenary Motorway Planning Study takes into account a draft feasibility report that was prepared in 2007 to assist in the continued investigation of the upgrade.

The Centenary Motorway Planning Study is only at the beginning of the planning process and is still underway. At this stage, funding for the project's construction has not been allocated nor has a fixed construction timeframe been identified.

Main Roads is considering various options for congestion management solutions as part of the planning study. These options would include consideration of combined transit and bus priority lanes, tidal flow lanes and provision for HOT lanes.

HOT lanes are high-occupancy tolling lanes for which vehicles that do not include the designated vehicle occupancy, for example, one occupant in a vehicle using a T2 lane or one to two occupants in a T3 lane, would incur a toll.

The clear benefit of HOT lanes, therefore, is to encourage car pooling, which also has significant environmental benefits. It is, however, important to note that HOT lanes are only one possible option being considered as part of this early stage of the Centenary Motorway Planning Study.

In my media release of August 2008, I made reference to Main Roads considering various options for congestion management solutions, such as combined transit and bus priority lanes, tidal flow lanes and provision for tolled access for some lower-occupancy vehicles based on initiatives in use overseas.

This was then reported in several media items/reports during August 2008.

- ABC 612 Brisbane on 8 August 2008 when reporter Melinda Howells detailed options for the Centenary Motorway including tolls on low occupancy vehicles
- ABC 612 Brisbane on 9 August 2008
- *The Satellite* (Northern Edition) newspaper of 13 August 2008 – Motorway study starts as road nears capacity
- *South West News* newspaper of 13 August 2008 – Study to look at road needs
- *The Courier-Mail* of 15 August 2008 – Transit toll for those going solo.
- *Sunday Mail Brisbane* of 17 August 2008 – Tolls option for highway.

The widespread media coverage shows there is absolutely no substance to the Member for Moggill's claims that there was a secret plan to add toll lanes to the Centenary Motorway.

Finally, it is important to note that no decision to introduce HOT lanes to the Centenary Highway has been made. The suitability of facilities such as HOT lanes in addressing congestion will be assessed during the planning study.