

Question on Notice

No. 905

Asked on Tuesday, 14 June 2011

MS NELSON-CARR asked the Minister for Main Roads, Fisheries and Marine Infrastructure (MR WALLACE)—

QUESTION:

Will the Minister inform the House of any roads and marine infrastructure developments which the government has initiated to assist the growth of North Queensland?

ANSWER:

I thank the Member for Mundingburra for her question.

I am pleased to advise that North Queensland is benefiting from a number of major infrastructure projects that will directly assist with the region's growth.

For example, the \$190m Townsville Port Access Road, funded 50/50 by the state and federal governments, will improve freight efficiency and road safety, as well as ease traffic congestion, by providing a direct route into the Port of Townsville for heavy vehicles from the south and west. Section one of this 10km project – the \$88m, 2.5km Stuart Bypass was opened to traffic in January 2010. Section two – the \$102m, 7.5km Eastern Access Corridor (EAC), including a bridge over Ross River is currently underway and on track for completion in 2012, weather permitting.

Another major regional project is the \$110m Douglas Arterial Duplication, funded 50/50 by the state and federal governments. This project, scheduled for completion in 2012, will increase the current two-lane, 5.6km Douglas Arterial section of the Townsville Ring Road to four lanes, supporting population growth and road infrastructure demands in the region.

In addition, the \$115m, federally-funded Cardwell Range Realignment, scheduled for completion in 2012, will realign a 4km section of the Bruce Highway through the Cardwell Range and will include climbing lanes for heavy vehicles and an overpass of the Rungoo railway crossing. The new flatter, straighter alignment will be great news in particular for freight companies, who will benefit from shorter journey times.

While the projects I have mentioned are already well underway, the Department of Transport and Main Roads is always looking to the future. For example, the recently announced \$200m Townsville Ring Road Section four project will complete the Townsville Ring Road, by delivering a further eight kilometres of two-lane motorway standard highway. The project is being jointly funded by the federal and state governments, with a \$160m federal funding commitment and a \$40m state government commitment. Planning work for the project will be carried out in 2011-12.

The state government is also planning to invest significantly in port infrastructure in North Queensland. In 2011-12, Port of Townsville Limited has allocated \$87m for plant acquisition, infrastructure development and port improvements for the ports of Townsville and Lucinda.

The department has a number of projects in North Queensland on its Boating Infrastructure Capital and Maintenance Program. Two key projects have reached completion this financial year:

- a new ferry and dinghy commuter pontoon at Thursday Island
- a new two-lane boat ramp and floating walkway at Barnicle Street, Railway Estate in Townsville.

Due to the long-standing shortage of all-tide boating facilities in the Townsville area, the department has acquired 6.8 hectares of industrial land at 5th to 7th Avenues, South Townsville for the development of four, four-lane boat ramps, each with a floating walkway. This is a partnership project with Townsville City Council, which will construct the associated car parking.

In conjunction with the Australian Maritime Safety Authority, the department provides a vessel tracking service, known as "REEFVTS", in the Great Barrier Reef that tracks the position of ships in the reef and provides navigational assistance. The department is working with the Australian Maritime Safety Authority to extend the area covered by REEFVTS to include the southern entrance to the Great Barrier Reef, where the 'Shen Neng 1' ran aground last year. This extension will be in place by July 2011.

The department is also working with industry in the Port of Gladstone, to ensure an appropriate vessel monitoring capacity is available to support the on-water activities associated with the construction of LNG export facilities, the safe navigation of LNG tankers and also to ensure the efficient use of port resources, such as tugs and lines boats.

The Honourable Anna Bligh MP, Premier announced in May 2011 that a new vessel traffic service centre will be constructed in Gladstone to cater for the growth in ship traffic in the port and in the abutting waters of the Great Barrier Reef.