

Question on Notice

No. 698

Asked on Tuesday, 15 October 2013

MR JOHNSON asked the Minister for Transport and Main Roads (MR EMERSON)—

QUESTION:

With reference to the unsatisfactory treatment that local businesses and local conveyors of freight are receiving in western Queensland who are and always have been loyal users of Queensland Rail (Aurizon) Freight Services and as these CSO services are failing these communities—

What measures, if any, are being investigated to reverse this unfortunate trend in these centres?

ANSWER:

I thank the Member for Gregory for the question.

As the Member would be aware the previous Labor Government sold off Aurizon, without public consultation, and established freight transport service contracts without any specific key performance indicators to ensure an appropriate level of service.

Through the Regional Freight Transport Services Contract (RFTSC) the state (through the Department of Transport and Main Roads) purchases general freight services from Aurizon.

Since January 2013 the Newman Government, within the contract constraints, amended the service schedule and the state now purchases a minimum of 3224 rail freight and 2756 road freight services per annum. Rail services target the east coast and the central west with road services supporting regional communities in the north west, central west and south west.

Throughout 2013-14 (July to September), I can advise that Aurizon has provided additional road and rail freight services in the Central West in comparison to the current RFTSC service schedule. Actual road and rail services were 58 and 27 in the Central West (locations include Rockhampton, Emerald, Alpha and Longreach) versus 48 and 24 in the service schedule respectively.

Nevertheless, I can advise that the Department of Transport and Main Roads is in the process of reviewing potential Regional Freight Transport Services Contract arrangements post 2015. Currently, the department is seeking expressions of interest from rail freight providers about possible future service offerings. This review process will also seek to enhance the contestability of potential future RFTSC arrangements, and endeavour to support the government's priorities of getting more freight on rail and supporting the agricultural sector.

Further, I have asked the Transport, Housing and Local Government Parliamentary Committee to investigate and report on options and incentives that ensure the agricultural and livestock industry makes better use of rail. This committee will report to Parliament in mid-2014.