

Question on Notice

No. 222

Asked on Thursday, 20 March 2014

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

QUESTION:

As the level of funding to western councils, already stressed due to the rural crisis, has been decreased with some capital works being nil going forward for up to four years and as this road funding underpins the viability of these councils—

Will the Minister reconsider the funding commitments towards the proposed traffic tunnel in Brisbane and recommit these funds to capital works for these western councils?

ANSWER:

I thank the Member for Mount Isa for the question.

The Newman Government is committed to improving roads right across this great state.

On 11 March 2014, in Boulia, the Honourable Warren Truss MP, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Infrastructure and Regional Development and I announced a \$24.5 million outback roads funding partnership between federal, state and local governments. The funding will go towards improving some of Queensland's most remote, western roads and support local jobs.

This funding partnership includes \$13.75 million to be spent on the Outback Way between Winton and the Northern Territory border over the next three years. A further \$10.75 million will be spent on priority road upgrades within the Barcaldine, Barcoo, Blackall, Diamantina and Longreach Council boundaries.

In addition, my department is currently finalising the details on major Australian Government election commitments for the Bruce and Warrego Highways worth well over \$10 billion. This significant level of investment will deliver major economic benefits and support job creation in regional Queensland.

Under these commitments, the Australian and Queensland Governments will deliver \$8.5 billion of works over 10 years on the Bruce Highway, between Brisbane and Cairns, to improve safety, capacity and flood immunity along this nationally-significant link.

On the Warrego Highway, the Australian and Queensland Governments will deliver the \$1.7 billion Toowoomba Second Range Crossing, which will open up further development of the Surat Basin and the Darling Downs. The Australian and Queensland Governments will also deliver \$635 million of Warrego Highway upgrades between Toowoomba and Miles over the next five years.

The Department of Transport and Main Roads is also progressively undertaking consultation with local government and key industry stakeholders on draft investment strategies for key regional routes, including the Flinders and Barkly Highways, the Peak Downs and Gregory Highways and the Capricorn Highway. These strategies set investment priorities for the highways over the next 10 years to support economic and regional development in Queensland's resource and agricultural sectors.

In terms of your proposal to redirect Bus and Train Tunnel funding commitments to fund capital works in western areas, I wish to highlight that the Bus and Train Tunnel project will deliver a critical new link in South East Queensland's public transport network, by creating new major transport hubs across our capital city of Brisbane and inner city suburbs.

Please be assured, the contribution that regional and rural areas make to Queensland's economic well-being is fully recognised by this government and, consistent with other competing community priorities for available public funds, committed to ensuring improved transport outcomes right across the State.