

Question on Notice

No. 1516

Asked on Tuesday 30 October 2018

MR S KNUTH ASKED MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT AND MAIN ROADS (HON M BAILEY)—

QUESTION:

Will the Minister meet with local stakeholders to identify barriers and develop a policy to ensure locals, who know the conditions and weather, have equal opportunity to secure road maintenance contracts to help avoid dangerous incidents, such as on the Millaa Millaa-Malanda Highway Road?

ANSWER:

I thank the Member for Hill for the question.

The Department of Transport and Main Roads (TMR) awards contracts based on guidelines that provide local government and local businesses with equal opportunities to tender for projects.

Local government and contractors are delivering the majority of works in North Queensland under various programs including road maintenance performance contracts, Northern Australia Beef Roads Program (NABRP) and Northern Australia Roads Program (NARP).

All routine maintenance works in the Tablelands area are undertaken by local crews from Tablelands Regional Council and Mareeba Shire Council, on behalf TMR, under a routine maintenance performance contract.

The work on the Millaa Millaa—Malanda Highway was a reseal contract, not a road maintenance contract. For this reseal contract, TMR invited tenders, and any contractor with a TMR-registered sprayer was able to tender. TMR registers sprayers to ensure they are able to work effectively within calibration. There were no barriers for local spraying contractors with a registered sprayer from tendering. In fact, Koppen Bitumen, which is based in Cairns, has recently won a reseal contract at Milanda, and Boral, which has a base in Cairns, has recently won a local asphalt resurfacing contract. I am satisfied there is ample opportunity for local contractors with registered sprayers to compete for work throughout Queensland.

Since the problems with sealing in North Queensland occurred, TMR has issued a new 'advice note' and amended its spray seal specification to prevent—or lower—the risks of sealing in cold weather. This advice note specifies increased road temperatures and improved practices for winter seals. Where possible, sealing should be deferred until warm weather occurs.

The NARP—jointly funded by the Australian and Queensland Governments to grow the regional economy through job creation—will deliver a \$50 million upgrade through progressive sealing of the Kennedy Developmental Road between Hughenden and Mount Garnet. The Australian and Palaszczuk Governments have been working with both the Flinders and Etheridge Shire Councils to deliver these works under sole invitee status.

A \$5.95 million project to extend the bitumen seal between Ootann Road and Almaden will be undertaken by Mareeba Shire Council and RoadTek as part of the \$100 million NABRP.

Additionally, under the NABRP local councils, Richmond and Croydon Shire Councils are delivering \$5.2 million of works to widen and seal sections of the Richmond—Croydon Road under a sole invitee status. Richmond and Winton Shire Councils are also delivering another \$4.7 million of works to widen and seal sections of the Richmond—Winton Road under sole invitee contracts.

TMR is also progressing projects to seal priority sections of the Burke Developmental Road between Almaden and Chillagoe, with works to be delivered by RoadTek and Mareeba Shire Council.

Further, all maintenance works on state-controlled roads in the North West District are undertaken through a sole invitee process by local council, Indigenous contracting organisation, Myuma or RoadTek.

The Palaszczuk Government will continue to work closely with local government and local business to deliver projects that provide business and employment opportunities in North Queensland.

The Palaszczuk Government understands the importance of ensuring local contractors have access to government-led opportunities. The Buy Queensland Procurement Strategy came into effect on 1 September 2017 and encourages all government agencies to 'buy local'.

As part of the tender process for major projects, potential contractors will be required to demonstrate their commitment to engaging local employees and businesses. Tenderers will be required to include information about how they would deliver the project to include local participation and demonstrate their commitment to engage and monitor the participation of local resources including personnel, key suppliers and key subcontractors on a project.