Question on Notice

No. 317

Asked on Tuesday 26 March 2019

MR C BOYCE ASKED MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT AND MAIN ROADS (HON M BAILEY)—

QUESTION:

Will the Minister advise what the Minister is doing about the problem of the projected $9b shortfall in road maintenance funding through the Queensland road network?

ANSWER:

I thank the Member for Callide for the question.

The Palaszczuk Government is not only building the transport infrastructure Queensland needs right now—we are also planning to make sure we can continue to meet those needs into the future.

Queensland has the longest state-controlled road network (SCRN) of any Australian state or territory, comprising 33,367 kilometres of constructed roads including 397 kilometres of motorways, 4009 kilometres of unsealed roads, 3113 bridges, 4757 major culverts and 32 tunnel segments (as at 30 June 2018). Additionally, the length of the busway network is 29 kilometres.

The Department of Transport and Main Roads (TMR) has well-developed asset management processes to address the highest priority needs and maintain the safety of the state's road network. TMR's 'run-maintain-build' philosophy supports the prioritisation of investment in maintenance, preservation and operations to get as much as possible out of the existing network.

The Palaszczuk Government allocated an additional $60 million per annum over five years from 2017–18 to commence repayment to TMR's Maintenance Preservation and Operations budget for funds previously diverted to partially cover the state's required 25 per cent contribution to disaster relief restoration works, following the 2010, 2011 and 2012 flood events.

The Palaszczuk Government's record $21.7 billion, four-year Queensland Transport and Roads Investment Program (QTRIP) provides $4.1 billion for maintenance, preservation and operation of the SCRN over the next four years (2018–19 to 2021–22). This amounts to $1.02 billion per annum on average.

Considering the injection of an extra $100 million into maintenance, preservation and operation activities by the Palaszczuk Government in the 2018–19 to 2021–22 QTRIP, this reflects an increase of $340 million (or nine per cent) over the previous four-year QTRIP.

Further, by comparison, the current four-year QTRIP 2018–19 to 2021–22 also represents an increase of $1.3 billion (or 47 per cent) over that approved by the Newman LNP Government for maintenance, preservation and operation activities, which totalled $2.77 billion in its last four-year QTRIP published in 2014–15.

While the Palaszczuk Government has been steadily increasing its commitment to maintenance, preservation and operation of the SCRN, the Australian Government has refused to properly fund maintenance on the National Land Transport Network (NLTN), for which it has primary funding responsibility. For instance, in the 2015–16 Federal Budget, the Federal LNP Government cut $16.7 million from Queensland's share of maintenance funding.

The Palaszczuk Government has consistently asked the Federal LNP Government to reinstate money which it had cut from road maintenance funding and to properly fund Queensland's fair share. However, despite those multiple requests, it has refused to do so.

I would welcome any representations the Member would be willing to make to his federal colleagues, to stand up for a fair share of maintenance funding for Queensland, and for cuts to maintenance funding to be restored.

The Palaszczuk Government's commitment to maintenance, as part of its record QTRIP investment, can be contrasted with the approach of the state LNP under the Newman Government which not only did not seek to increase its investment in maintenance of the SCRN during its term of office, but also cut more than $600 million from QTRIP during its term of office.