

Question on Notice

No. 1133

Asked on 1 December 2020

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

QUESTION:

With reference to Ootann Road being a north-south link between two state-controlled roads, the Burke Development and Kennedy Highway and this 91.4km unsealed stretch being a crucial link for the transport of general freight and building communities in Cape York and cattle to southern markets—

Will the Minister commit to funding assistance towards the sealing of this vital connection, to allow type 2 road trains to travel uninterrupted, thereby reducing the pressure on tablelands roads, the Bruce Highway and transport costs for the delivery of freight and cattle?

ANSWER:

I thank the Member for Hill for the question.

In 2019, the Department of Transport and Main Roads (TMR) completed a \$5.95 million package of works to progressively seal two sections of Ootann Road. The works were part of the jointly funded, \$100 million Northern Australia Beef Roads Program.

Under the Roads Of Strategic Importance initiative, the Australian and Queensland governments have allocated \$62.5 million, over the next ten years, to upgrade priority sections of the Cairns to Northern Territory border road corridor, based on an 80:20 federal:state and local government funding arrangement. Over the next six months, TMR will work with local governments, through the well-established Regional Roads and Transport Group (RRTG) framework and key industry stakeholders, to finalise the scope of the program and identify priorities for future funding consideration. Further progressive sealing of Ootann Road will be considered as part of this discussion.

TMR provides funding for upgrades on priority local government-controlled roads through the Transport Infrastructure Development Scheme (TIDS). If upgrades on Ootann Road are considered a strategic regional priority, the Far North Queensland RRTG could consider proposing funding for this, as part of its TIDS allocation.

The recently released *Queensland Transport and Roads Investment Program 2020–21 to 2023–24* represents a record investment in road and transport infrastructure for the fifth year in a row, with \$26.9 billion committed over the next four years, supporting an average of approximately 23,600 direct jobs over the life of the program. Approximately \$1.862 billion is committed across TMR's Far North District, which is estimated to support an average of approximately 1700 direct jobs over the life of the program.

As part of our COVID-19 economic recovery response, in partnership with the Australian Government, the Palaszczuk Government has announced \$1 billion in new and accelerated funding for road improvements right across Queensland. This funding injection will deliver freight efficiency benefits, improve road safety, sustain local jobs and lift the State's economy. Overall, this \$1 billion of investment in road network improvements is estimated to support approximately 1000 jobs.

This includes more than \$400 million funding in projects announced by the Palaszczuk Government for Queensland roads to supercharge the State's economy through the COVID-19 recovery. This was announced as part of Queensland's Economic Recovery Strategy: *Unite and Recover for Queensland Jobs*, to help the State recover from COVID-19 with a focus on backing Queensland jobs.