

Question on Notice

No. 1211

Asked on 3 December 2020

MR N DAMETTO ASKED MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT AND MAIN ROADS (HON M BAILEY)—

QUESTION:

With reference to another major crash involving a heavy vehicle having occurred on the very narrow section of the Bruce Highway near the Seymour River just south of the Cardwell Range—

Will the Minister acknowledge this is a high crash zone area and commit to revising the road design and in the interim reduce the speed limit down to 80kms/hr, and install double lines and appropriate signage to alert motorists and improve safety?

ANSWER:

I thank the Member for Hinchinbrook for the question.

I am pleased to advise the Department of Transport and Main Roads (TMR) is currently undertaking planning for the delivery of safety upgrades on the Bruce Highway, north of Ingham to Cardwell Range. The project length is approximately 13 kilometres, starting around Halifax Road and finishing around Mount Cudmore Road. As part of the project planning, crash data was investigated which showed a total of 13 crashes between 2014 and 2018. None of the crashes resulted in fatalities.

For road signage, it is important that signs are applied where they are required. For 'high crash zone area' signs to be used, consideration is given to factors such as traffic volumes and crash rates in comparison to adjacent sections of a road. For the section of Bruce Highway between Ingham and the Cardwell Range, the crash data is comparable to the adjacent sections of the Bruce Highway and not considered a 'high crash zone area'.

This section of the Bruce Highway consists of two, 3.5-metre-wide traffic lanes and a sealed shoulder, in accordance with the Road Planning and Design Manual.

The 100 km/h speed limit at this location has been set in accordance with the *Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices Part 4: Speed Controls*, which outlines requirements for speed zones and associated signage. The basis of these guidelines recognises that regulatory speeds must be appropriate to the general environment of the road, otherwise motorists will largely disregard the imposition of unreasonable limits. Realistic and credible speed limits will be observed by most road users and can be effective in regulating traffic flow, reducing crashes and maximising safety. By following this process, road users can be confident that speed limits are being set in a consistent manner across the state. TMR has no plans to reduce the speed limit at this location currently.

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 \$1.432 billion is committed across TMR's Northern District, which is estimated to support an average of approximately 1270 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. Projects to receive new funding in TMR's Northern District as part of the roads stimulus package include:

- \$25 million Gregory Developmental Road (Charters Towers to The Lynd), Marble Creek to Christmas Creek pavement widening – estimated to support an average of 27 direct jobs over the life of the project
- \$6.95 million North Townsville Road (Townsville) pavement strengthening – estimated to support an average of 11 direct jobs over the life of the project.