

Question on Notice

No. 1212

Asked on 3 December 2020

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

QUESTION:

With reference to the proposed Coomera Connector and the proposed location of on and off ramps delivering traffic on to Helensvale Road - an already congested local government road network and home to a major public school—

Will the Minister (a) direct the department to re-evaluate this location, (b) take into consideration how dumping this traffic into an already strained local government road network will affect the area, (c) give residents a platform to share their local knowledge and raise their concerns and (d) look for a more suitable location, other than Helensvale Road, to build an interchange?

ANSWER:

I thank the Member for Theodore for the question.

I note the Member's previous interest in the proposed Coomera Connector, namely his public statements, reported by media, calling for the road to be an 80 km/h regional arterial road.

I further note that the proposed Coomera Connector was cut from planning documents by the LNP Newman Government after not one new dollar was invested in light rail, the M1 or heavy rail on the Gold Coast.

Upon reviving its Coomera Connector policy, the LNP proposed a puny six-kilometre stage one for the second M1 that would have only run between Coomera and the Gold Coast Highway. That plan did not include the southern section from the Gold Coast Highway to Smith Street and Nerang–Broadbeach Road at Carrara like the Palaszczuk Labor Government's 16-kilometre plan for stage one.

The LNP plan prevented the option of direct access from the second M1 to multiple routes south and would have dumped 60,000 vehicles on to the Gold Coast Highway.

I provide this information to illustrate the multiple and inconsistent positions the Member and the LNP has previously advocated in relation to the Coomera Connector.

In contrast, and to demonstrate the thorough level of planning and advocacy to secure funding for construction of stage one of the Coomera Connector completed by the Palaszczuk Labor Government, answers to the Member's questions are provided below:

- (a) The Coomera Connector corridor, between Stapylton and Nerang (previously known as the Intra Regional Transport Corridor), has been identified in public documents including street directories for many years, with the corridor progressively confirmed in the *Queensland Government Gazette* between 2016 and 2019. As part of the preliminary evaluation phase of the project, interchange locations were assessed from both engineering and design, and traffic modelling points of view. An interchange at Helensvale Road was accounted for when the project corridor from Coomera to Nerang was formally confirmed in the *Queensland Government Gazette* in March 2016. Based on community feedback about the desire for

an interchange to be provided at Hope Island Road, the Department of Transport and Main Roads (TMR) has since undertaken investigations to determine the feasibility of the connection. Analysis confirmed Helensvale Road as the most suitable location, avoiding in excess of 100 property resumptions at Hope Island and Monterey Keys.

- (b) Traffic analysis shows motorists from Sanctuary Cove, Paradise Point and Hope Island currently use Helensvale Road and Hope Island Road to access the M1. When the Coomera Connector Stage 1 is built, traffic volumes on Helensvale Road to the west of the Coomera Connector are not expected to change significantly. TMR is working closely with City of Gold Coast (CoGC) on the planning of the Coomera Connector and associated upgrades which may be required to the local road network, including Helensvale Road. Under its local government infrastructure planning program, CoGC has planned for future upgrades of Helensvale Road, to the east of the Coomera Connector, to cater for the anticipated increase in traffic on this council road link.
- (c) TMR undertook community consultation in late 2019, where more than 2000 people visited a series of community drop-in sessions to talk to the project team, share their local knowledge and raise concerns. In September and October 2020, a second round of consultation was undertaken to gain community input into the key negotiable urban design-related aspects of the project. TMR has also established a Community Reference Group (CRG) for Stage 1 of the Coomera Connector, to ensure community members and businesses close to the project corridor can provide input to influence key project negotiables. TMR is working with CRG during the business case phase of the project to enable sustainable and well-supported project outcomes. There are six CRG members who reside in Helensvale, including two at River Cove, one in Monterey Keys, two in The Surrounds estate and one in The Shores estate. These members have provided TMR with valuable feedback on the Helensvale area.
- (d) In consultation with CGC, TMR has undertaken considerable planning to confirm the most appropriate and feasible interchange locations for the Coomera Connector Stage 1, including the Helensvale Road interchange. Relocating the Helensvale Road interchange to Hope Island Road would involve more than 100 properties to be acquired at Hope Island and Monterey Keys and cause flooding issues for other properties. This would not be an acceptable outcome for the residents of the northern Gold Coast.