

Question on Notice

No. 65

Asked on 24 February 2021

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

QUESTION:

Will the Minister advise the start date of public consultation for the next stage of light rail south and outline the intended calendar for each consultation item the government committed to in October 2020 including when the Palm Beach shop front will commence?

ANSWER:

I thank the Member for Burleigh for the question.

I refer to correspondence sent to the Member dated 11 September 2020. As stated in my letter, comprehensive community consultation was undertaken for the Gold Coast Highway (Burleigh Heads to Tugun) Multi-modal Corridor Study via:

- the release of a media statement and media briefing with the Honourable Anastacia Palaszczuk MP, Premier and Minister for Trade and myself on Saturday 7 March 2020 at the Gold Coast Airport
- a project newsletter delivered to 38,000 residents and businesses in the suburbs of Burleigh, Elanora, Palm Beach, Currumbin, Currumbin Waters and Tugun
- an executive summary of the corridor study findings, which was released and made available on the Department of Transport and Main Roads' (TMR) website encouraging email and telephone feedback. There were more than 9100 webpage visits during the consultation period
- independent community and social media sentiment market research, which included undertaking 500 x 15-minute telephone interviews (450 residents and 50 businesses) in the suburbs of Burleigh Heads, Palm Beach, Elanora, Currumbin, Currumbin Waters and Tugun.

As previously advised, the consultation outcomes showed that overall support for the Gold Coast Highway Multi-modal Corridor Study as a potential solution to help improve the liveability and connectivity in and around the local communities between Burleigh Heads and Tugun is strong, with 68 per cent of residents and business operators indicating a level of positive support. There was also a clear preference for light rail services over dedicated bus lanes (58 per cent light rail, 24 per cent bus lanes).

It is also clear by looking at the October 2020 State Election results that public sentiment for this project remains firm.

Given the LNP's poor history with light rail on the Gold Coast—for example refusing to progress Stage 2 despite knowing the Gold Coast 2018 Commonwealth Games was approaching and, more recently, LNP members holding an array of conflicting positions on heavy and light rail—it is no surprise that the Member for Burleigh experienced a negative primary vote swing of around eight–nine per cent in three Palm Beach booths.

On 6 August 2020, the Premier and Councillor Tom Tate, Mayor, City of Gold Coast announced that the Queensland Government and City of Gold Coast have committed to funding a joint business case for a light rail extension between Burleigh Heads and Coolangatta, via Gold Coast Airport. As part of the business case, TMR will be consulting on the Gold Coast Light Rail Stage 4 planning from mid-2021 to mid-2022.

Comprehensive community engagement will take place across this 12-month period to coincide with the progress of the Gold Coast Highway (Tugun to Coolangatta) Multi-modal Corridor Study and focus on the entire corridor alignment from Burleigh Heads to Coolangatta.

I can further advise that TMR will be holding community drop-in sessions to enable the public to ask questions and provide face-to-face feedback directly to the project team on Gold Coast Light Rail Stage 4 planning. Additionally, TMR will provide a dedicated consultation hotline and email enabling the community to communicate directly with the project team. TMR will also be providing an interactive community consultation website for the community to give feedback. Specific details regarding the timing and location of community consultation is still being determined. The community will be notified of the consultation activities and opportunities for involvement in due course.

Only the Palaszczuk Labor Government can be trusted to deliver future stages of light rail while preserving the option of heavy rail to the airport.