

Question on Notice

No. 692

Asked on 26 May 2021

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

QUESTION:

With reference to the recent Federal Budget allocation of \$4m (with a contribution of \$1m by the State Government) for the scoping phase, between late 2021 and late 2022, of the proposed Mt Crosby Road Warrego Highway Interchange upgrade project, via the Federal Government's Infrastructure Investment Program—

Will the Minister outline (a) the purpose of and work to be undertaken by the Department of Transport and Main Roads during the 12-month scoping phase, (b) if the State Government can seek further funding from the Federal Government after the scoping phase to complete the upgrade of the interchange and (c) when will construction of the upgrade of the interchange commence?

ANSWER:

I thank the Member for Ipswich West for the question.

Last year, the Department of Transport and Main Roads (TMR) undertook community consultation for a potential \$22 million option for upgrading the Warrego Highway—Mount Crosby Road interchange, a result of a 2017 planning study. I am pleased to now provide an update on the work being undertaken to progress the upgrade of this interchange.

Since the study was undertaken, there has been significant traffic growth at this location, both with respect to the traffic using Mount Crosby Road and the traffic volumes on the Warrego Highway. This traffic growth is greater than predicted by the 2017 planning study and is adversely affecting both roundabouts controlling the interchange, exceeding capacity during peak periods and causing vehicles to queue back on the Warrego Highway as well as on Mount Crosby Road.

Community feedback on TMR's 2017 proposal has been collated and analysed. Over 600 individuals, businesses and organisations provided feedback on the proposed option with the great majority of respondents indicating they did not consider the proposal to be an adequate solution. I would like to sincerely thank members of the community for their valuable feedback and can assure the Member the Palaszczuk Government has listened.

As a result of traffic condition changes, reinforced by community feedback, it has become clear a much more substantive upgrade is required to address safety and congestion problems at the Mount Crosby Road interchange. Consequently, earlier this year I wrote to the Honourable Michael McCormack MP, the then Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Infrastructure, Transport and Regional Development, advising him of the need for additional funding to undertake a major upgrade to the interchange—an upgrade that will meet the needs of the community and the transport system for many years to come.

In my letter to the then Deputy Prime Minister, I also confirmed that Mount Crosby Road interchange remains a very high priority for the Palaszczuk Government and that TMR would be requesting funding to undertake the necessary planning. On 12 April 2021, TMR submitted a formal application for the planning funding to the Australian Government and I was pleased the recent Federal Budget included \$4 million to undertake this urgent work.

I acknowledge that the delay to upgrading the interchange is disappointing for the thousands of motorists who use it every day, however it would be wrong to progress a project we now know will not solve the problem and is not supported by the community. Therefore, I have directed TMR to work with the Australian Government to release the funding, fast track the planning and design phases, and progress to construction as soon as possible.

TMR will soon release more detailed information about the results of community engagement activities and next steps to progress the project. Following the release of the Australian Government funding, a consultant will be engaged to develop a business case which will include a preferred option and a robust cost estimate. Further engagement with the community will be undertaken during the options development process to ensure the preferred option has broad community support.

When the business case is complete, the Palaszczuk Government will work with the Australian Government to fund the construction of the interchange upgrade, based on an 80:20 federal-state shared funding arrangement. Subject to funding approvals by the Australian Government, the Palaszczuk Government expects to commence construction of the new interchange in 2024.