

Question on Notice

No. 771

Asked on 15 June 2021

MS F SIMPSON ASKED MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT AND MAIN ROADS (HON M BAILEY)—

QUESTION:

Will the Minister advise (a) what the department estimates the annual cost of congestion is on the Sunshine Motorway (reported separately) between (i) the Bruce Highway and Maroochydore and (ii) Maroochydore to Coolum and (b) when will the Sunshine Motorway between Pacific Paradise and Coolum be duplicated and access to the Motorway upgraded?

ANSWER:

I thank the Member for Maroochydore for the question.

The Sunshine Coast, like many parts of South East Queensland, continues to experience population growth, with population expected to reach almost 500,000 people by 2041. This is an increase of more than 60 per cent of the population in 2016.

I am advised by the Department of Transport and Main Roads (TMR) that specific costs of congestion for these sections are not available.

The Palaszczuk Government is committed to tackling congestion and improving travel time on the Sunshine Coast. This year we announced our sixth record \$27.5 billion *Queensland Transport and Roads Investment Program 2021-22 to 2024-25*. As part of this investment, TMR's North Coast Region will deliver a \$2.927 billion program, estimated to support an average of 2640 direct jobs over the life of the program.

One of the key features of the program is the \$320 million jointly funded Mooloolah River Interchange (MRI) project which was announced last month. The MRI project includes the following upgrades to be delivered in the \$320 million first stage, which will be jointly funded by the Queensland and Australian governments:

- a new overpass to connect Nicklin Way northbound with Brisbane Road in Mooloolaba
- a new local connection between Karawatha Drive in Mountain Creek and Brisbane Road in Mooloolaba.

The following upgrades will be included in future stages:

- major upgrades to the Sunshine Motorway north–south and east–west connections
- a direct connection between the Sunshine Motorway and Kawana Way at Parrearra, including new bridges across the Mooloolah River
- duplication of the Sunshine Motorway, from two lanes to four lanes, between the MRI and the Kawana Way interchange
- an additional northbound lane on the Sunshine Motorway between the MRI and Buderim–Mooloolaba Interchange
- enhanced active transport facilities and connectivity.

In addition, the Palaszczuk Government has allocated \$1.75 million in funding to undertake planning to duplicate the Sunshine Motorway from Pacific Paradise to Coolum. Planning will commence early in the 2021–22 financial year and will investigate duplication of the motorway from two to four lanes from the David Low Way interchange to north of Yandina-Coolum Road, including consideration for active transport users.

The project will also investigate providing a grade separated interchange at Yandina–Coolum Road and necessary supporting upgrades, including the existing roundabout at School Road, east of the Sunshine Motorway. This planning is expected to be completed in early 2023 and will identify the cost of congestion within this study area.

Timelines for construction of the proposed upgrade have not yet been identified and will depend on availability of funding against competing infrastructure priorities across the state.

The Palaszczuk Government's record investment in roads and transport can relevantly be contrasted to that of the previous LNP Government that cut \$1.6 billion from roads and transport funding, making the state-wide allocation of funding for competing priorities, like upgrading the MRI, more challenging. It is also relevant to note that a business case for the MRI upgrade was not progressed under the previous LNP Government which could have accelerated this project.