

Question on Notice

No. 812

Asked on 16 June 2021

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

QUESTION:

With reference to the investigations that TMR engineers have been undertaking over the past 12 months on the structural integrity of the Bli Bli bridge on David Low Way—

Will the Minister advise (a) the initial findings of the investigation to date, (b) when the investigation is due to be complete and (c) total funding allocated to date in relation to addressing any structural or other safety issues that have been identified?

ANSWER:

I thank the Member for Ninderry for the question.

Safety is a main priority for the Department of Transport and Main Roads (TMR) and all structures on state-controlled roads (SCR) are regularly inspected.

Queensland has the longest SCR network of any Australian state or territory. As at 30 June 2020, the SCR network comprised 33,367 kilometres of roads, including 397 kilometres of motorways, 3837 kilometres of unsealed roads, 3108 bridges, 4848 major culverts and 32 tunnel sections. The National Land Transport Network component of the SCR network comprises 4996 kilometres for which the Australian Government has primary funding responsibility.

TMR—through the *Queensland Transport and Roads Investment Program (QTRIP) 2021–22 to 2024–25*—is strengthening, rehabilitating, and replacing bridges on a priority basis. That program represents a record investment in road and transport infrastructure for the sixth year in a row, with \$27.5 billion in works committed over the next four years, supporting an average of approximately 24,000 direct jobs over the life of the program.

Recently, the Palaszczuk Government announced that it has committed \$800,000 towards future planning for the upgrade of the Bli Bli Bridge as part of QTRIP 2021–22 to 2024–25. The planning process will commence in the 2022–23 financial year and examine future upgrade options for the bridge over the longer term. In June 2019, TMR undertook a routine inspection of the Maroochy River David Low Way Bridge (known locally as Bli Bli Bridge) on Maroochydore–Noosa Road (David Low Way) at Bli Bli.

With reference to the questions asked, I can advise the following.

- (a) In June 2019, routine inspection identified some deterioration on one section of the bridge structure. TMR undertook immediate action to address this finding, including the placement of a 20-tonne load restriction on heavy vehicles using the bridge. This was a precautionary measure to ensure ongoing safe operation of the bridge.
- (b) I am pleased to advise the required engineering investigations for the Bli Bli Bridge on David Low Way have been completed. The investigations confirmed the existing 20-tonne load limit is appropriate and must remain in place. Maintenance works on the structure have been recommended and will be programmed as part of routine maintenance works for the bridge.

- (c) To date, approximately \$150,000 has been spent on comprehensive investigations for the Bli Bli Bridge to ensure the safety of the travelling public. These investigations included underwater inspections of the substructure, testing of materials, and structural analysis. The completion of maintenance works will not affect the requirement for the existing 20-tonne load limit. Buses are not affected by this load limit. Signage advising impacted heavy vehicles of the load limit will remain in place at key decision-making points on the nearby road network.

It is of relevance to note that, while the Palaszczuk Government has been steadily increasing its commitment to roads and transport investment, with its sixth record investment in QTRIP, the Australian Government has refused to properly fund maintenance of Queensland's National Network by only contributing some 50 per cent towards related maintenance costs. Not only did the former Newman LNP Government fail to increase investment in maintenance, but it also cut \$1.6 billion from the roads and transport budget and there was a reduction in the maintenance, preservation and operation budget in the first QTRIP delivered by that government.