

Question on Notice

No. 1012

Asked on 12 October 2022

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

QUESTION:

Will the Minister detail what plans Main Roads has to protect and facilitate movement of wildlife through the Coomera Connector road corridor, specifically in relation to Helensvale?

ANSWER:

I thank the Member for Theodore for the question.

Protecting the environment is an important part of planning for new infrastructure projects. To ensure the Coomera Connector is designed and delivered in an environmentally sensitive manner, the Department of Transport and Main Roads (TMR) has, over the past three years, completed extensive environmental investigations along the Stage 1 corridor including koala and wildlife surveys to determine habitat values for native fauna including koalas.

The information and data collected from these surveys has been used to determine what measures will be taken to meet legislative requirements and investigate opportunities to enhance important environmental corridors.

The Coomera Connector Stage 1 design includes new and upgraded fauna passages to assist wildlife in moving around their natural habitats, and fauna fencing will be installed to reduce the risk of vehicle strikes on the new motorway.

Adopting innovations from other TMR projects, fauna exclusion shields will be installed to deter wildlife from climbing noise barriers. Installing artificial tree hollows prior to vegetation clearing is also being investigated to provide habitat for displaced fauna.

Environmental offsets compensate for impacts on valuable species and ecosystems that cannot be avoided, mitigated and/or managed. TMR was able to recently purchase a property in Pimpama that is within the Gold Coast's Koala Priority Area. This 407-hectare property is one of the largest private land holdings close to Stage 1, and future stages of the Coomera Connector corridor. This property, immediately adjacent to the koala translocation site at Pimpama River Conservation Area, will help protect the local koala population and improve its home range and connectivity well into the future.

The Pimpama property will also complement another 390-hectare property already secured in Tabooba, south of Beaudesert, for environmental offsets where thermal drone and on-ground surveys have shown koalas present.

More detailed information, including measures to avoid, mitigate and minimise environmental impacts is outlined in the Coomera Connector Stage 1 draft Public Environment Report, which is available to download from the TMR website.

The Palaszczuk Government is delivering its seventh record transport and roads infrastructure program in a row, as detailed in the *Queensland Transport and Roads Investment Program 2022–23 to 2025–26*, which outlines \$29.7 billion in investment over the next four years and is estimated to support an average of 25,200 direct jobs over the life of the program. Of this, \$5.194 billion is committed across TMR's South Coast Region, estimated to support an average of 4300 direct jobs over the life of the program.