

Question on Notice

No. 432

Asked on 11 May 2022

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

QUESTION:

With reference to the accident that occurred on 29 April 2022 at the Gairloch washaway section of the Bruce Highway, leaving at least two people suffering from minor injuries, one horse euthanised and numerous horses injured—

Will the Minister advise if DTMR will fast-track the Gairloch Flood Immunity Project business case, which is currently expected to be completed in mid-2023?

ANSWER:

I thank the Member for Hinchinbrook for the question.

Road Safety is one of the Palaszczuk Government's highest priorities and the Department of Transport and Main Roads (TMR) is committed to delivering safer roads for all Queenslanders. TMR is currently awaiting the outcome of the Queensland Police Service investigations from the crash, before completing its own review to determine whether any interim solutions can be adopted to improve safety on this section of the national network.

Regarding the Bruce Highway (Ingham to Innisfail) Gairloch safety improvements project, I refer the Member to my response to Question on Notice (QoN) 245, which was tabled on 19 April 2022. As advised in QoN 245, TMR has commenced planning and business case development to identify the most suitable treatment option to improve safety and reduce the time of highway closures due to flooding at the Gairloch floodway, located around five kilometres north of Ingham.

In late 2021, TMR commenced geotechnical investigations, surveying, environmental assessments, and stakeholder engagement. This helped to inform an options analysis and development of an initial concept design for the Gairloch safety improvements which is expected to be finalised in the coming months.

At this point, consultation will recommence with key stakeholders on this concept design, which will see the business case completed by mid-2023. While TMR will be looking to complete the business case stage as soon as possible, it is important to allow sufficient time to consult with landowners and other impacted stakeholders. Based on the business case, the Queensland Government will then work closely with the Australian Government to progress to design and construction of the recommended safety improvements. Timeframes for these activities will be determined as the business case is completed, and in consultation with the Australian Government.

The Gairloch safety improvements project is an interim measure and will complement the Queensland Government's long-term plans to address flooding closures and improve road safety between Ingham and Cardwell. Under the record road investment outlined in the *Queensland Transport and Roads Investment Program 2021–22 to 2024–25* (QTRIP), the Queensland and Australian governments will also invest \$48 million in the Bruce Highway Ingham to Cardwell Range Deviation (plan and preserve corridor) project, to revisit previous planning for a more flood resilient highway. As part of the Ingham to Cardwell Range Deviation project, TMR will be engaging with regional and local stakeholders and communities in Far North and North Queensland from mid 2022.

QTRIP includes continued delivery of the \$13 billion, 15-year jointly funded Bruce Highway Upgrade Program. In the Hinchinbrook Electorate, this includes the \$107.65 million Townsville Northern Access Intersection Upgrade (currently underway) and the recently completed \$29.17 million Bruce Highway (Townsville–Ingham) Hechts Road to Easter Creek Safety Upgrade Project.