

Question on Notice
No. 587
Asked on 26 May 2022

Mr B Mickelberg asked Premier and Minister for the Olympics (Hon. A Palaszczuk)—

QUESTION:

With reference to the Federal Government's allocation of \$1.6b detailed in the 2022-23 Federal Budget, to build a new heavy passenger rail line between Beerwah and the Maroochydore CBD—

Will the Premier advise when the State Government will commit the remaining \$1.6b required to commence work on this critical Sunshine Coast infrastructure project?

ANSWER:

My Government's rail revolution is on track with the budget delivering a \$3.5 billion pipeline of rail projects.

This includes \$4.8 million towards the \$6 million commitment to Beerwah and Maroochydore rail extension planning.

My Government is committed to investing in the Sunshine Coast rail network and to improving travel times, frequency, and reliability across the South East Queensland public transport network to meet demand. This is demonstrated by our commitment to the \$5.4 billion Cross River Rail project, the \$2.6 billion Logan and Gold Coast Faster Rail project, and the \$550.8 million Beerburrum to Nambour Upgrade (Stage 1).

A future public transport corridor from Beerwah to Maroochydore was preserved over a decade ago by the previous Labor Government. My Government supports the concept of heavy rail through this corridor.

It is important that major project investment decisions are made with the benefit of a detailed and robust business case that complies with the investment frameworks agreed and adopted by all State governments and the Commonwealth.

As part of the former Federal Government's May 2022 pre-election budget, the Commonwealth announced it had allocated \$1.6 billion in funding for a rail connection between Beerwah and Maroochydore, of which only \$250 million was in the forward estimates, \$50 million of that would be available in 2024-25.

During the federal election campaign, the former Federal Government announced that it had costed a rail connection between Beerwah and Maroochydore based on the North Coast Connect Business Case. The North Coast Connect Business Case was not recommended for further consideration by the Commonwealth's Infrastructure Australia in December 2020, on the basis that a stronger analysis was required.

Therefore, my Government sought matching \$3 million funding from the Commonwealth to complete a properly costed proposal for this project to support an appropriate investment decision. In December 2021, the Commonwealth agreed to that request and work has already commenced.

My Government will work collaboratively with the new Albanese Federal Government to deliver detailed planning, analysis and a properly costed proposal for Beerwah to Maroochydore heavy passenger rail line.