

Question on Notice

No.589

Asked on 26 May 2022

MRS L GERBER ASKED MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT AND MAIN ROADS (HON M BAILEY)—

QUESTION:

With reference to the impacts of the congested M1 commute between the Gold Coast and Brisbane on businesses, the environment, and people's mental health—

Will the Minister explain (a) why he has cut the second M1 ('Coomera Connector') from six lanes to four lanes and (b) why it will not be ready until 2026?

ANSWER:

I thank the Member for Currumbin for the question.

We need a Second M1.

That's why the Palaszczuk Government has backed it and locked in \$2.16 billion in joint-funding to build a full 16-kilometre-long Stage 1 of the Coomera Connector — the single largest road project in Queensland.

Our plan will take 60,000 cars a day off the M1 and provide for additional capacity from Coomera to Carrara.

In contrast, the shorter six-kilometre version the Opposition took to the last election would have funnelled those 60,000 cars straight onto the Gold Coast Highway and provided no new lanes for the majority of the corridor.

I reject the imputation in part (a) of the Member's question. The Stage 1 corridor secured by the Palaszczuk Government is wide enough for six lanes and, as part of this stage, key major structures over roads, waterways and wetlands will be built to six lanes, so that minimal construction work is required to widen to the ultimate six lanes when greater volumes require it. We will be guided by the technical experts on this. Traffic projections have indicated that only four lanes are required in the medium-term.

Future-proofing the Coomera Connector in this way will help to minimise further construction impacts to adjacent residents and the travelling public. Stage 1 of the Coomera Connector will progressively open to traffic from late 2024, providing four more traffic lanes than are available now.

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 the Department of Transport and Main Roads' South Coast region, estimated to support an average of 4300 direct jobs over the life of the program.

Queensland's world-leading pandemic response has made it the place to be and, to support the State's population boom, significant road upgrades are being delivered as part of *Queensland's COVID-19 Economic Recovery Plan*. With the Brisbane 2032 Olympics and Paralympics on the horizon, these upgrades provide immediate economic benefits, support more jobs and deliver ongoing benefits of vital infrastructure for years to come.