

Question on Notice

No. 598

Asked on 21 June 2022

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

QUESTION:

With reference to the Cairns Ring Road (Cairns CBD to Smithfield) project—

Will the Minister advise (a) when the Department of Transport and Main Roads became aware of PFAS contamination on the construction site, (b) the levels of contamination detected and (c) the date that the department made the decision to reduce the scope of the project?

ANSWER:

I thank the Member for Gregory for the question.

Per and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) contamination is predominately present in the ground in proximity to airports. PFAS is managed nationally via the National PFAS Management Program. The Department of Transport and Main Roads (TMR) is aware of several publicly available Air Services Australia reports about Cairns Airport: the Cairns Airport Preliminary Site Investigation report, the Preliminary Sampling report and the Post Preliminary Site Investigation report. The extent of any potential contamination adjacent to the road corridor is not yet fully known. TMR will work with the appropriate authorities to ensure any potentially contaminated area is investigated and managed appropriately.

I reject the imputation in part (c) of the question. As per my response to Question on Notice 600, the upgrades to the Captain Cook Highway (referred to locally and in the media as Cairns Ring Road (Cairns central business district (CBD) to Smithfield)) project's scope has not altered.

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, \$3.157 billion is committed across TMR's North Queensland Region, estimated to support an average of 2910 direct jobs over the life of the program.