

Question on Notice

No. 1309

Asked on 25 October 2023

MS F SIMPSON ASKED MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT AND MAIN ROADS AND MINISTER FOR DIGITAL SERVICES (HON M BAILEY)—

QUESTION:

With reference to it being more than 180 days since the 90 day Federal Infrastructure Funding review was announced, freezing \$1.3b in funding for the Beerwah to Maroochydore (Direct Sunshine Coast Line) rail passenger line—

Will the Minister advise what the State Government has done (a) to advocate to their Federal colleagues to release the funding for this project and (b) to match it with State Funds to ensure everything is done to build this passenger rail infrastructure to the new Sunshine Coast CBD in Maroochydore?

ANSWER:

I thank the Member for Maroochydore for the question.

A railway cannot be built without a fully costed proposal and a detailed business case. Albanese Government funding for the Direct Sunshine Coast Line would not be available in the current or next financial year because there is no detailed business case for the project.

It is therefore not clear what the Member is referring to in the question when the Member refers to freezing funding.

The Albanese Government position, as stated during the federal election campaign, is to hold funding for the project pending consideration of a detailed business case. There is no change to this position based on any recent communications in the context of that government's review of its Infrastructure Investment Program.

That is why the best advocacy the State Government can provide in support of the Direct Sunshine Coast Line is to prepare a robust business case that meets the standard required for assessment by both State and Federal governments in order to establish firm costings and scope to inform an investment decision.

That is why the Palaszczuk Government's 2023–24 budget provided \$14 million toward the finalisation of a detailed business case for the 37 kilometre corridor between Beerwah and Maroochydore. That business case is expected to be finalised in the coming months.

On 9 November 2023, I stated on *ABC Radio Sunshine Coast* that we have made it very clear that we do not believe there should be any cuts to infrastructure in Queensland. The Premier, Deputy Premier, Treasurer and I continue to advocate on behalf of Queensland's important infrastructure priorities.

The Queensland Government is delivering its eighth record transport and roads infrastructure program in a row, as detailed in *Queensland Transport and Roads Infrastructure Program 2023–24 to 2026–27*, which outlines \$32.1 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, \$3.147 billion is committed across the Department of Transport and Main Roads' North Coast Region, estimated to support an average of 2460 direct jobs over the life of the program.