

Question on Notice

No. 677

Asked on 24 May 2023

MR B MICKELBERG ASKED MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT AND MAIN ROADS AND MINISTER FOR DIGITAL SERVICES (HON M BAILEY)—

QUESTION:

With reference to State Government subsidised public bus services (excluding school bus transport) on the Sunshine Coast—

Will the Minister advise (a) seated capacity utilisation rate, (b) average patronage per service, (c) total fare revenue, (d) total subsidies paid to external operators, (e) any additional sources of funding used to deliver public bus services on the Sunshine Coast including any contributions from local government or developer contributions and (f) any other costs incurred by the State Government associated with delivering public bus services?

ANSWER:

I thank the Member for Buderim for the question.

The Department of Transport and Main Roads (TMR) is responsible for providing a single, integrated transport network, accessible to everyone. TMR works closely with delivery partners to plan and deliver passenger transport services across the state. All routes are operated under service contracts.

The Palaszczuk Government is making record investments into better transport on the Sunshine Coast. The Palaszczuk Government recently announced several Sunshine Coast bus improvements that were funded as part of a \$27.2 million uplift in bus services for high priority growth areas in the 2022–23 Queensland Budget. This package included several bus route extensions, increased frequency, and a new route 608, between Caloundra and Nirimba.

With reference to over 323,000 State Government subsidised public (urban) bus services (excluding school bus transport) on the Sunshine Coast for 2021–22 financial year:

- (a) the seated capacity utilisation rate averaged up to 30 per cent for some routes while the overall average across all routes was approximately 16 per cent
- (b) the average patronage per service was eight passengers per service
- (c) total fare revenue was approximately \$2.65 million (excluding GST)
- (d) total subsidies paid to external operators was approximately \$40.65 million (excluding GST)
- (e) Noosa Shire Council works collaboratively with TMR for the provision of public passenger transport in the Noosa area, with council contributions made under a confidential commercial arrangement
- (f) there were no other costs incurred by the State Government associated with the delivery of urban bus services.

Seating capacity utilisation when calculated over a period can be diluted by off-peak, weekends and seasonal variations, which typically have lower demand than peak services. Fare revenue and patronage have been impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. Patronage on all modes was impacted through COVID in all regions across Queensland, as well as other jurisdictions and around the world. Changes in work and study from home arrangements has also impacted travel patterns.

The Palaszczuk Government is also delivering major projects like the \$663 million Caboolture to Steve Irwin Way Bruce Highway upgrade, the \$301 million Mons and Maroochydore Roads interchange upgrade on the Bruce Highway, the \$550 million Beerburrum to Nambour rail upgrade, and the \$320 million Mooloolah River Interchange upgrade on the Sunshine Motorway.