

## Question on Notice

No. 948

Asked on 22 August 2024

**MR S MINNIKIN** ASKED MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT AND MAIN ROADS AND MINISTER FOR DIGITAL SERVICES (HON B MELLISH)—

### QUESTION:

With reference to the department's 'Assessment of Short-term Risks and Investigation Scope' report on the Barron River Bridge dated 30 November 2018—

Will the Minister advise (a) whether the report's recommendation to consider immediate replacement of the Macalloy bars was considered, (b) why this course of action was not adopted and (c) whether replacement of the bars in 2018 would have eliminated the need for the most recent bridge lane closures, which were to address issues with the Macalloy bars?

### ANSWER:

I thank the Member for Chatsworth for the question.

The Miles Government is delivering its ninth record transport and roads infrastructure program in a row, as detailed in the *Queensland Transport and Roads Investment Program 2024–25 to 2027–28*, which outlines \$37.4 billion in investment over the four financial years and is estimated to support an average of 28,000 direct jobs over the life of the program. Of this, \$1.637 billion is committed across the Department of Transport and Main Roads' (TMR) Far North District, investment which is estimated to support an average of 1280 direct jobs over the life of the program.

Additionally, the Miles Government has committed \$450 million to build a new bridge across the Barron River if re-elected.

The Macalloy post-tensioning bars were retrofitted in 1963 to provide extra strength after the Barron River bridge opened to traffic earlier that year.

- (a) I am advised that TMR's 'Assessment of Short-term Risks and Investigation Scope' report on the Barron River bridge dated 30 November 2018 was prepared to guide initial investigations to identify prudent maintenance and risk management strategies. The Macalloy bars were one element of the larger plan to keep the bridge and workers safe, maintain access, and minimise disruption. The report identified replacement of the Macalloy bars as a potential long-term option to be included in the risk management strategy.
- (b) As part of the initial investigation, two Macalloy bars were replaced. The removed bars were then tested at University of Queensland in 2019. This investigation concluded that the existing Macalloy bars could remain in service while further investigations continued, thus potentially avoiding disruption and cost. Following several wet seasons, including Tropical Cyclone Jasper and the associated monsoonal rainfall, an increase in the corrosion of the bars was observed and TMR took measures to prevent further corrosion. As a safety measure, the bridge is restricted to single-lane operation while investigations continue.
- (c) Replacing the Macalloy bars in 2018 would have restricted operation to one lane for several months at that time, with part-day full closures also potentially necessary.