

## Question on Notice

No. 413

Asked on 22 April 2026

**MR B MELLISH** ASKED MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT AND MAIN ROADS (HON B MICKELBERG)—

### QUESTION:

Will the Minister advise, for the 2025 calendar year (with each reported separately by month) (a) the total number of reported incidents of copper (or other metal) theft or unauthorised removal that have occurred on transport infrastructure, (b) of the incidents in (a) (i) the number of streetlights that became faulty or inoperable as a result, (ii) the average timeline for repair and (iii) the total number yet to be repaired and (c) the total cost of repair works as a result of metal theft?

### ANSWER:

I thank the Member for the question.

- (a) Since formal recording of these incidents of copper (or other metal) theft started in 2022 there have been 451 incidents reported up to December 2025.

The following table details the incidents for 2025 by month.

Total number of reported incidents	
	2025
January	14
February	15
March	20
April	15
May	15
June	6
July	16
August	16
September	20
October	8
November	6
December	5
Total	156

- (b) (i) The Department of Transport and Main Roads (TMR) owns approximately 39,000 streetlights across Queensland, and these lights may be affected by loss of power, cable faults, faulty luminaires, or cable theft at any time. My department has estimated that approximately three per cent of these lights have been affected by cable theft in the 2025 calendar year. Typically, multiple streetlights are impacted in a single incident.
- (ii) Between 2022 and 2025, 190 incidents have been rectified, taking on average 1.5 years to repair, primarily due to the unbudgeted nature of the works, changing technology and additional theft protection measures.

All sites are checked and made electrically safe immediately. Rectification works are prioritised based on safety risk considering traffic volume, crash history, whether the site is a major intersection or motorway interchange, level of pedestrian use and whether there is ambient/overspill lighting from adjacent roads. Some lower risks sites, particularly where lighting was originally provided beyond the standard requirements, have been deprioritised.

(iii) The total number of reported incidents of copper (or other metal) theft, or unauthorised removal, that have yet to be repaired is 136.

- (c) My department has estimated rectification costs, including theft deterrent treatments for 2025 incidents, to be in the order of \$15 million. These costs will be finalised during the project design phase which may include new technologies such as hardened theft proof assets and the installation of aluminium cable in lieu of copper.

Existing electrical asset maintenance budgets have enabled rectification works at high-risk locations on the Gold Coast (primarily on the Pacific Motorway in the Logan area), on the Sunshine Coast (including Bruce Highway and D'Aguiar Highway), in Brisbane (including Ipswich Motorway), in Bundaberg and in Townsville.

In March 2026, the Crisafulli Government allocated an additional \$40 million from the Targeted Road Safety Program over four years to accelerate the delivery of rectification works to clear the backlog from 2022–2024 and reduce the average time for restoration.

TMR is applying all available skilled resources through RoadTek and external contractors to undertake these works.

The Crisafulli Government is also addressing the problem of copper theft through the introduction of legislation, which if passed, aims to disrupt the theft, sale and disposal of stolen metal as scrap metal.