

Question on Notice

No. 826

Asked on 11 August 2020

MR R KATTER ASKED MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT AND MAIN ROADS (HON M BAILEY)—

QUESTION:

With reference to the approximately 100 km stretch of road on the Flinders Highway between Charters Towers and Townsville (north of Mingela) which has no passing lanes and has seen increased use by road trains, often resulting in light vehicles making ostensibly dangerous overtaking moves so they may travel at 110 km/h without hindrance—

Will the Minister commit to the Department of Transport and Main Roads urgently assessing the overtaking issues on this stretch of road and provide the necessary funding to make sure upgrades occur as soon as possible?

ANSWER:

I thank the Member for Traeger for the question.

Safety is one of the Queensland Government's highest priorities, and I am concerned to hear from the Member that motorists are undertaking dangerous overtaking manoeuvres.

I am pleased to confirm that the Department of Transport and Main Roads (TMR) is finalising the plans for the installation of three overtaking lanes on the Flinders Highway between Townsville and Mingela, which will contribute to reducing these occurrences.

This important project will deliver three overtaking lanes, with a dual direction lane (both northbound and southbound) planned about 27 kilometres south of Townsville, and a single northbound overtaking lane about 67 kilometres south of Townsville.

The overtaking lanes are jointly funded by the Australian and Queensland governments under the Roads of Strategic Importance early works package. While the timeframe for delivering these important upgrades is subject to further discussions with the Australian Government, the North Queensland community can be assured these will be under construction as soon as detailed design and procurement are completed.

During the period from 1 July 2015 to 30 June 2019 (financial years 2015–16 to 2018–19), the Palaszczuk Government delivered approximately \$790.4 million of transport and roads infrastructure investment specifically in TMR's Northern district. This includes investment in key projects such as:

- Bruce Highway (Townsville–Ingham), Cattle Creek and Frances Creek upgrade, completed in 2018 (jointly funded by the Australian and Queensland governments)
- Garbutt–Upper Ross Road, Thuringowa Central, Riverway Drive duplicate to four lanes, completed in 2018
- Gregory Development Road (Belyando Crossing–Charters Towers), Cape River Bridge, completed in 2018.

The current four-year *Queensland Transport and Roads Investment Program 2019–20 to 2022–23* (QTRIP) represents a record investment in road and transport infrastructure for the fourth year in a row, with \$23 billion committed over the next four years, supporting an average of approximately 21,500 direct jobs over the life of the program. Approximately \$1.5 billion is committed across TMR's Northern district, supporting an estimated average of 1200 direct jobs over the life of the program. Some key projects for TMR's Northern district in QTRIP include:

- Haughton River Floodplain, total cost of \$514.3 million (jointly funded by the Australian and Queensland governments)
- Bruce Highway (Townsville–Ingham), Townsville Ring Road (Stage 5), duplication to four lanes at a total cost \$230 million (jointly funded by the Australian and Queensland governments).

As part of our COVID-19 economic recovery response, in partnership with the Australian Government, the Palaszczuk Government has announced \$1 billion in new and accelerated funding for road improvements right across Queensland. This funding injection will deliver freight efficiency benefits, improve road safety, sustain local jobs and lift the state's economy. Overall, this \$1 billion of investment in road network improvements is estimated to support approximately 1000 jobs.

This includes more than \$400 million funding in projects announced by the Palaszczuk Government for Queensland roads to supercharge the State's economy through the COVID-19 recovery. This was announced as part of *Queensland's Economic Recovery Strategy: Unite and Recover for Queensland Jobs*, to help the State recover from COVID-19 with a focus on backing Queensland jobs.

Projects to receive new roads stimulus package funding in TMR's Northern district include:

- \$25 million for Gregory Development Road (Charters Towers to The Lynd), Marble Creek to Christmas Creek pavement widening – estimated to support an average of 27 direct jobs over the life of the project
- \$6.95 million for North Townsville Road (Townsville) pavement strengthening – estimated to support an average of 11 direct jobs over the life of the project.