DEPARTMENT OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

House of Representatives
Standing Committee on Regional Development, Infrastructure, and Transport

QUESTION ON NOTICE

Date of hearing: 4 July 2023

Witness: Queensland Government Department of Transport and Main Roads / Queensland Reconstruction Authority

Question

Mr Luke Gosling OAM MP (Chair), Proof Hansard pages 2-3

[Mr Gosling] In the first session of that seminar [8 February 2023] there was a graph indicating a significant increase in the state of road repair expenditure last year. I was wondering if you [could] give us any indication of how much of that expenditure was directed towards repairs and resilient infrastructure upgrades as a consequence of those weather events?

[Mr Bletchly] The short answer, as prepared by our natural disaster program team, is that all expenditure shown in the graph is a result of the severe weather events….I could provide on notice further details about the projects included in that betterment program to the committee staff if required.

[Mr Gosling] It would be excellent if you could send that through just to give us an idea of what the expenditure has been in response to which disasters.

Answer

2019 Betterment Program

Following the Monsoon Trough event in 2019, the Australian and Queensland Governments approved a jointly funded package of additional financial assistance measures under the DRFA. This included the 2019 Betterment Program, which provided Category D (Betterment) funding on a 50:50 basis for resilience projects in areas activated under the Monsoon Trough event, where sites had eligible scope under Category B (Restoration of Essential Public Assets) of the DRFA.

Key features of the program:

- Strengthening road surfaces to make them more flood resistant.
- Concreting slopes beside roads to improve run-off.
- Installing larger culverts to improve flood capacity.

- Sealing unsealed sections.

TMR improved the flood immunity and resilience of the state-controlled road network at 10 key sites.

Road	Betterment (Cat D) treatment	Betterment (Cat D) expenditure
Flinders Highway (14D) at Nelia	Pavement resilience	$2,033,056
Richmond–Winton Road (5803)	Concrete batters enhancing resilience	$2,913,783
Richmond–Winton Road (5803)	Pavement resilience	$784,235
Kennedy Developmental Road (99C) (Hughenden–Winton)	Concrete batters enhancing resilience	$676,932
Flinders Highway (14C)	Pavement resilience	$3,938,257
Burke Developmental Road (89B)	Pavement sealing and resilience works	$5,129,752
Kennedy Developmental Road (99C)	Pavement resilience	$2,466,991
Isabella Creek Bridge ID 7934 on Endeavour Valley Road (6601)	Bridge deck resurfacing	$962,138
Landsborough Highway (13G)	Foam bitumen stabilisation	$5,710,111
Richmond–Winton Road (5803)	Pavement sealing and resilience works	$4,870,605
Total		**$29,485,860**

2022 Betterment Program

The Australian and Queensland Governments are jointly funding a comprehensive package of resilience initiatives on a 50:50 basis under Category D (Exceptional Circumstances) of the Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements. This package includes a $150 million program of road resilience initiatives to be delivered by TMR and local government authorities in areas impacted by severe weather events in 2021–22.

TMR is progressively lodging resilience projects to the Queensland Reconstruction Authority for consideration through this 2021–22 Betterment Program. The focus of these projects will be in areas where building back better will minimise subsequent disaster damage and disruptions to the travelling public.

At 30 June 2023, submissions for 26 projects valued at approximately $50 million have been lodged to the Queensland Reconstruction Authority. Successful projects are expected to be delivered by June 2024 in conjunction with the 2021–22 natural disaster events repair program.

TMR funding submissions lodged for the following projects at 5/7/23. ***Note the cost estimates are based on initial scope, not market prices, and are subject to change. Project tenders will be called following formal QRA approval of projects.***

Road	**Betterment (Cat D) treatment**	**Betterment (Cat D) cost estimate**
Lamington Bridge (Maryborough – Hervey Bay Road)	Handrails	$0.5M
Gold Coast–Springbrook Road	Drainage improvements	$0.8M
Beechmont Road	Drainage improvements	$0.1M
Moonie Highway	Floodway improvements	$1.1M
Currumbin Creek Road	Pavement resilience works	$0.5M
Currumbin Creek–Tomewin Road	Drainage improvements and concrete margins	$1.2M
Nerang-Murwillumbah Road	Culvert improvements	$0.03M
Beaudesert-Nerang Road	Pavement resilience works	$0.3M
Tamborine-Oxenford Road	Pavement resilience works and concrete batter protection	$0.2M
Mt Sylvia Road	Floodway improvements and batter protection	$2.0M
Mt Lindesay Highway	Drainage improvements	$6.9M
Castlereagh Highway (Noondoo–Hebel)	Flood immunity improvements and pavement resilience	$9.6M
Isis Highway (Bundaberg–Childers)	Culvert improvements	$1.0M
Burnett Highway (Nanango–Goomeri)	Concrete batter protection	$1.2M

Lamington National Park Road	Drainage improvements and catch fencing	$5.0M
Leichhardt Highway (Miles–Goondiwindi)	Pavement improvements, concrete margins and batter slope protection	$0.3M
Toowoomba–Cecil Plains Road	Stabilising pavement to greater depth	$6.0M
Dalby–Cecil Plains Road	Stabilised pavement, concrete batters and floodways	$2.9M
Barwon Highway (Goondiwindi–Talwood)	Pavement and drainage improvements and concrete floodways	$1.0M
Moonie Highway	Pavement stabilisation	$0.6M
Booyal–Dallarnil Road	Pavement strengthening with foamed bitumen and concrete margins	$0.5M
Murgon–Gayndah Road	Concrete batter protection	$1.0M
Burnett Highway (Goomeri–Gayndah)	Foamed bitumen stabilisation	$3.8M
Wide Bay Highway (Gympie–Goomeri)	Additional batter protection upstream of abutment to protect from high-velocity flows from the Mary River	$0.5M
Cunningham Arterial Road	Floodproof covers for ITS equipment	$0.9M
Bauple–Woolooga Road	Additional abutment and batter protection at Wide Bay Creek	$0.6M
TOTAL		**$48.7M**

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Date of hearing: 4 July 2023

Witness: Queensland Government Department of Transport and Main Roads

Hon Scott Buchholz MP, Proof Hansard page 9

[Mr Buchholz] Just before we close, while Queensland Transport are putting together their questions on notice, could they come back to us with what the maintenance cost looks like? You're not using my figure of $5.78 billion, so could you come back with what you think it is, please?

Answer

The estimated value of Maintenance, Preservation and Operations (MPO) capital renewal investment needs on the Queensland State-controlled (SCR) road network is $6.098 billion as at 30 June 2022. This represents about six per cent of the gross replacement cost of the SCR network $96.1 billion (30 June 2022).

The value of capital renewal investment needs is estimated through an assessment of all road sections to identify candidates for maintenance and preservation activities. It also includes a broad network-level estimate of maintenance and rehabilitation needs for bridge and major culvert asset types.

This analysis informs the distribution of available funds for maintenance, preservation, and rehabilitation investment, from which projects are generated and prioritised. The optimal renewal timeframe for the road network is the point in time to renew, replace or rehabilitate the asset from a whole-of-life cost perspective. Highest priorities are addressed first, and available funding is balanced to meet multiple competing objectives.

TMR has a strong focus on improving the performance of the SCR network through innovation and technology and is continuing to explore innovative materials and construction methods, identified through a structured asset research program, which aims to reduce the initial cost of construction, increase the resilience of the pavement to extreme weather events and extend the service life of the road. Such examples include our use of foamed bitumen stabilisation and utilising crumbed rubber in bitumen sealing works.

A recent key initiative has allowed TMR to improve the management of the performance of the SCR network by including strength data in the pavement rehabilitation needs assessment process.

Pavement strength data is collected by the Australian Road Research Board using the state-of-the-art iPAVE (intelligent Pavement Assessment Vehicle) which uses Doppler lasers to measure the strength of the layers of the road. The use of pavement strength data has enabled TMR to plan for more efficient treatments at locations where the underlying pavement is structurally sound.

The key output of the change in treatment selection is a more refined assessment of network capital renewal needs, built upon a fit-for-purpose treatment selection process, reducing the overall cost of the identified needs, and allowing engineers to confidently extend the life of some road pavement sections.