

## **ESTIMATES – JUNE 2017**

### **ROADS**

#### **Monday 19 June 2017 – Mr Guyula – Question to the Minister for Infrastructure, Planning and Logistics - Roads**

**Mr GUYULA:** Yes, Madam Chair. Firstly I want to say, I support the action of the members who have chosen not to be here today because I agree that 30 **hours** is not enough. As a first time member of this parliament I made the decision to be part of the estimates hearing because I want to learn the process. As an ESL speaker it is easier for me to be part of the spoken process that will be transcribed rather than simply a written process. Also, I acknowledge the hard work of the public servants.

Minister, could you advise what output to ask questions about road works?

**Ms MANISON:** Number 11 is the output for roads questions. We look forward to taking those question from you to answer.

#### **Monday 19 June 2017 – Mr Guyula – Question to the Minister for Infrastructure, Planning and Logistics – Ramingining & Central Arnhem Road**

**Mr GUYULA:** Can you please advise when work is scheduled to begin to implement the revoted \$4.96m that has been budgeted to lift and seal the section of road between Ramingining and the Central Arnhem Road?

**Ms MANISON:** I will hand over to Louise McCormick to answer that question.

**Ms McCORMICK:** Thank you, minister. Member for Nhulunbuy, that work is still in consultation with the Northern Land Council. The lifting and sealing of that was requested by traditional owners in the area because there are sacred sites located beneath the road. We identified that with them about 12 months ago, so we are now consulting with them on the actual scope of work.

That is very close to being finalised. The Northern Land Council's anthropologists have had issues gaining access to traditional owners during the Wet Season, but hopefully we get a report back from the Northern Land Council in the coming weeks and are able to undertake that work.

**Mr GUYULA:** Can you advise what contractors have been used for this work and where they are based? This follows on regarding that same road.

**Ms MANISON:** We are still undertaking consultation there. Have there been any other roads tenders in that region that we can discuss?

**Mr KIRKMAN:** Member for Nhulunbuy, the projects I have just discussed are for the next financial year, the budget year, so they have not been awarded to contractors, but our preference is to go to locally-based contractors. There are some very capable contractors in the East Arnhem region, so that is our preference.

Some of the major contracts that have been released in recent times, particularly the road projects on the Central Arnhem—some significant bridge works have been built. I will get Louise McCormick to talk specifically about those contractors and the work they have done over the last 12 to 18 months.

**Ms McCORMICK:** Projects that have just been finished on the Central Arnhem include Rocky Bottom Creek; that was one of the last bridge crossings to occur on the Central Arnhem Road, and we have now finished all those major crossings. The contractor on that project was Sitzler, who are a well-known Territory local contractor, but some of the local employment opportunities there were for the gravel pusher, which was done through local people. Some of the accommodation for construction camp was also part of the local content. Water and some other services—which I cannot think of off the top of my head—as part of that contract were actually encouraged to employ local Indigenous people in particular because of the region that it is in.

**Mr GUYULA:** You have answered part of my question but I will ask the rest of the question. The Central Arnhem Road is very important as a connecting road between the hub service town Nhulunbuy and homelands as well as its importance of connecting the entire region to Darwin. I know that I have mentioned this road before—I am interested to know scheduled works for the 10-year plan as well as the current financial year. Could you please advise of these plans?

**Ms MANISON:** I acknowledge that it is a very important road, particularly for your region. Otherwise people have very limited options to get in and out of the region. Only air services are there and that can be quite costly, particularly for a large family. There has been a great deal of work done over the years at looking at some of the particular crossings that have been prone to flooding over time. There is always a regular schedule for upgrading and basically ensuring that maintenance work is conducted.

The next big level of work that we need to do is continue sealing parts of that road. It will take significant investment. I am going to be handing it over for a bit more detail to the department, but certainly over the years it is going to be one of those roads that we look at sealing, making it more accessible to more people from the region and clearly opening up the area to more people as well. I will hand it over to the department to go into a bit more about the works that are done and what we have got on the books for the next financial year.

**Ms McCORMICK:** We have had a long term strategic plan for Central Arnhem Road, and we

acknowledge it is very important for Arnhem Land and all the communities as it is a major connection for them back to services. Over the years we have targeted the major river crossings first because they are generally what closes the road, so if one crossing went out, for example, on (inaudible) or Goyder it would close the whole road. We have been targeting bridge crossings first. We have now finished all those major crossings and our next target for rolling out upgrades on the road is the sealing contract, particularly Bulman. We have had a lot of feedback about past Bulman that the road is quite bumpy there.

**Mr GUYULA:** I know it is very bad there.

**Ms McCORMICK:** I can speak from experience. I drove it late last year and we did actually note that it is probably one to prioritise. Other sections that have been brought to us from the community and I have also looked at myself is the jump up sections that go up through the hilly areas. There are some quite blind corners that would benefit from a seal and widening project. Our next stage is to look at what priority sections are on the road. The whole road is very long and it is still going to take us some time. I think it is estimated \$600m to seal all the way to Nhulunbuy, so we have to prioritise on the worse sections first.

**Mr GUYULA:** Some roads have suffered greatly after this Wet Season. Could you advise whether there is any extra funding that has been made available due to the extent of damage to roads after so much rain?

**Ms MANISON:** We have had significant rainfalls right across the Northern Territory. It has not just been the Top End but we have certainly seen in Central Australia record falls in areas like the Tanami and so forth, so the department has had to do significant work at looking at road rectifications works and work around there. I will hand over to the department to go into the detail about some of that post-wet weather work and work that has occurred and is scheduled to happen.

**Mr KIRKMAN:** Yes, there was considerable work that was required, particularly in the centre, as the minister mentioned. The Tanami was taken out for a number of weeks. Millions of dollars' worth of work has been done to that road over the last few months since it has been able to be worked on. That caused quite a disruption to the services along that road, particularly for the mining companies that work along the Tanami and for those communities that rely on that road for access. Given the extension of the Wet Season this year, a number of roads across the Territory were taken out of action. We are applying for specific funding for some of that where there might have been a flooding emergency, but effectively we have had to rely on the funding that is available to us to deal with those works. Something we are looking forward to next year is our considerable repairs and maintenance budget. We have an extra, I think, \$14m, Louise?

**Ms McCormick:** It is \$11.5m.

**Mr KIRKMAN:** There is \$11.5m for roads alone. That money can go towards targeting some of those

washout areas that have made it difficult for people to get access through some of those roads over the Wet Season. That will be a real boon for us next financial year to deal with some of the future Wet Seasons.

**Wednesday 21 June 2017 – Mr Guyula – Question to the Minister for Tourism, Sport and Culture – Roads and Tourism on Homelands**

**Mr GUYULA:** Could you advise of any support for small tourism businesses in homelands that are struggling due to poor road access following the extent of this Wet Season.

**Ms MOSS:** In terms of road infrastructure, we have input at a whole-of-government level when providing feedback to Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Logistics. Road infrastructure sits with Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Logistics, but if there are concerns from operators in your region I am to connect with them to make sure we get that feedback through that channel. I know you have asked a number of road infrastructure questions of the Minister for Infrastructure, Planning and Logistics. Please let us know if there are specific roads you want us to look at in terms of tourism-related impact

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