



Minister for Transport and Main Roads

Our ref: 3253-19

Your ref: A527774

5 March 2020

Mr Neil Laurie
The Clerk of the Parliament
Parliament House
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Dear Mr Laurie

I refer to petition 3253-19 lodged with the Legislative Assembly on 5 February 2020 about the Coomera Connector and Oakey Creek Road.

The Coomera Connector, also known as the 'second M1', is a 45-kilometre, north-south corridor between Loganholme and Nerang, located to the east of the Pacific Motorway (M1). The corridor is wide enough for up to six traffic lanes and is expected to include provision for public transport and paths for walking and cycling. It will provide more transport capacity to support the rapidly growing communities in the northern Gold Coast and neighbouring Logan areas.

The corridor for the Coomera Connector has been identified as the Intra Regional Transport Corridor in various public planning documents, including published street directories since the 1990s. The Coomera to Nerang section of the corridor was formally confirmed in the *Queensland Government Gazette* on 18 March 2016.

The Palaszczuk Government has committed to progressing the southern section between Coomera and Nerang as Stage 1 of the project, with community consultation undertaken in late-2019 and business case development currently underway.

Stage 1 of the Coomera Connector will improve transport capacity and accessibility, while also reducing trips on the M1 by:

- providing more reliable travel times between Brisbane and the Gold Coast
- delivering an alternative north–south route between Coomera and Nerang, including additional crossings of the Coomera and Nerang rivers.

The Palaszczuk Government has funded \$10 million towards the necessary planning work in the 2019–20 Budget, which has been matched by the Australian Government. The Department of Transport and Main Roads (TMR) is undertaking this work which will include extensive environmental studies.

Protecting the environment forms an important part of planning for all new road and infrastructure projects, and TMR has a strong track record of protecting flora and fauna, including endangered species. On the Bruce Highway, in Far North Queensland for example, TMR is currently working to protect the Southern Cassowary, a critically endangered, flightless bird. The construction of a cassowary land bridge over the Bruce Highway will link critical corridors of known habitat in the Smiths Gap Cassowary Corridor.

For the Coomera Connector, TMR is currently undertaking comprehensive field investigations, including terrestrial and aquatic ecological surveys, in the project corridor. Findings from the field studies will help determine what mitigation strategies may be required to protect important environmental areas in the vicinity of the corridor. Planning for the Coomera Connector will comply with all relevant environmental protection legislation, including in relation to noise and air pollution.

The design of the Coomera Connector will be fully integrated with the existing road network and surrounding environment, ensuring that existing vehicular and pedestrian access will be maintained for local communities.

I am advised that, in addition to submitting this petition, the principal petitioner has spoken with TMR's Coomera Connector project team to share her concerns and has also provided a submission on behalf of the residents of the Foreshore Coomera estate, as part of the formal community consultation process during November 2019. All feedback provided by the community during the consultation period will be considered by TMR and inform future planning for the project.

While TMR is mindful of the impacts of transport infrastructure projects and does everything that can be reasonably expected to minimise inconvenience to residents, commuters and adjacent businesses, the Palaszczuk Government is committed to delivering the roads and transport infrastructure needed on the Gold Coast.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Mark Bailey', with a long, sweeping underline that extends to the right.

MARK BAILEY MP
Minister for Transport and Main Roads