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MINISTER FOR URBAN INFRASTRUCTURE AND CITIES
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TRANSCRIPT - PRESS CONFERENCE – GOLD COAST

Topics: M1 Upgrades

PAUL FLETCHER:

Well, I'm very pleased to be here on the Gold Coast with Queensland Transport Minister Mark Bailey, with my LNP colleagues Karen Andrews and Bert van Manen, and other local parliamentarians, for the official commencement of the heavy works on these two very important projects here on the M1 Mudgeeraba to Varsity Lakes and the Gateway Merge. The M1 Corridor between Brisbane and the Gold Coast is obviously enormously important. It is absolutely a vital and extremely busy transport artery and I'm very pleased that work is now underway commencing today on these two projects. There's \$225 million in total of Commonwealth contributions, so the Turnbull Government backing Queensland, backing southeast Queensland with this very important funding contribution to these two critical projects.

I'm also very pleased that last week the Turnbull Government committed a further \$1 billion to two further upgrades on the M1 – Varsity Lakes to Tugun and Eight Mile Plains to Daisy Hill - and of course that funding is being provided that on the basis that when the projects that are commencing today are completed, which is expected to be in around 2020, that we would be ready to roll into the next two projects.

Now, I've had a constructive meeting with Minister Bailey this morning. We've discussed the work that the Queensland Government managed to do to prepare the business cases on those two projects and I certainly look forward to that work being done. But can I say how pleased I am to be here, and I particularly want to acknowledge Bert Van Manen and Karen Andrews because of their advocacy within the Turnbull Government, which was so key to securing the financial commitment which was announced by Prime Minister Turnbull in the 2016 Federal Election to these two projects. We then had some discussions between the Queensland Government and the Commonwealth Government and pleasingly, Mark, we've managed to get to a good outcome on that. And as a result of all that work we're now getting to the point where Queenslanders, the people of southeast Queensland, the people who use the M1 every day have been waiting to see, which is work getting underway on these two vital projects. So, look, I'm very, very pleased to be here and very pleased to see work commencing on these two projects.

MARK BAILEY:

Look, what an awesome day for M1 motorists, to see these two upgrades underway, heavy works straight after the Commonwealth Games. What we are seeing is more than \$1 billion in transport infrastructure being spent here on the Gold Coast. I think everybody would agree that the transport plan for the Commonwealth Games went very well and it was made possible because we built light rail stage two, because we duplicated

the heavy rail line between Coomera and Helensvale, they get eight trains per hour for the first time in Gold Coast history to move people for the Commonwealth Games. Light rail did a lot of heavy lifting with more than a million trips on the Gold Coast. And these two M1 upgrades mean the troika of infrastructure investment is happening: heavy rail, light rail, the M1 - you can hear the people beeping as they go by, they're absolutely ecstatic to see heavy work start here on this section from Mudgeeraba to Varsity Lakes. The Palaszczuk Government, we're very pleased to work with Paul Fletcher and the Federal Government to get these two upgrades underway that will be welcomed by Gold Coast residents where we'll see an extra lane on both ways all the way from Mudgeeraba to Varsity Lakes. After we saw - look, sadly, not a single new dollar was spent on the M1 under the previous LNP State Government. The Palaszczuk Government, well, we're not going to be making that mistake, that's for sure. That's why we've got two huge upgrades funded in conjunction with the Federal Government underway here today.

Can I pay also a special tribute to our new members down here, Meaghan Scanlon, Member for Gaven and Assistant Minister, and Mel McMahon, both of whom campaigned very hard for M1 upgrades as well, and I know it will be very well received by their constituents too. Can I also just make a comment about the upgrade at the merge - the Gateway Merge north of here. This will be very welcome by motorists going to Brisbane - and there are a substantial number of Gold Coast residents who do - but also all those people in Logan, in those communities who commute using the M1. 150,000 movements a day go through the Gateway Merge, and that upgrade will see up to five lanes, southbound lanes, much better bus connection through there, so the Gateway Merge will also be of tremendous interest to every M1 motorist going to Brisbane on a daily basis.

The final comment I'd make is that the light rail has been a spectacular success in the Commonwealth Games: 1.1 million trips on the light rail. We're averaging just under 100,000 trips a day and so we're getting on with the business case and we're working with the City Council to get that business case underway before stage three of the light rail to take it from Broadbeach all the way down there to Burleigh Heads. There'll be up to eight stations along there and the business case will be looking at the alignment, there will be community consultation about the specifics of the light rail stage three but we're getting the work done, straight away, straight after the Commonwealth Games. It's been a tremendous success, stage one and two. We want to get going with stage three as quickly as we can.

QUESTION:

Can I just ask a question about the M1. So, \$225 million federal funding, what's the Queensland State Government's input into those two projects?

MARK BAILEY:

We're kicking in a substantial amount. The final amount will depend - we'll know towards the end of the project. So, as we work our way through the contracts, the weather, a whole lot of variables in there, we'll get a final count at the end of the project.

PAUL FLETCHER:

Just before we go on, can I just ask, perhaps, Karen Andrews - we're in Karen's electorate, so perhaps, Karen, if you'd just like to comment on the significance of this project for your electorate.

KAREN ANDREWS:

Thank you very much, Paul. For all of the motorists who sit in Southern Gold Coast M1 carpark on a daily basis, today marks the beginning of the end of that, so it's great news for all of those motorists, many of whom have waited years for this upgrade to happen. So, I would like to give them the confidence now that they need, that the Federal Government has put \$1 billion additionally on the table to make sure that we continue the

upgrades through to Tugun, as well as doing work further north. This is an enormous amount of money, coupled with the money that we have already put on the table, to ensure that the upgrade that we are here for today, and that commences in earnest today, takes place. I am absolutely committed to making sure that Gold Coasters don't spend an additional second parked in the traffic on the M1 more than they need to.

So, it is good news. I'm committed to making sure that I work constructively and positively with the State Government to ensure that from here we have a continuous build south to Tugun to make sure that we are relieving the bottle necks on the southern end of the Gold Coast.

QUESTION:

Karen, how disappointed are you that the State hasn't come on board yet with that extra \$1 billion for those other upgrades?

KAREN ANDREWS:

Well, federally the Opposition has also supported the \$1 billion that has been put on the table. I think it's now up to the State Government to step up and make sure that they work constructively to ensure that this happens. I understand that there have been some discussions already this morning with Minister Fletcher. He's a fantastic negotiator and I'll back him in all the way to make sure that this happens.

QUESTION:

Are you able to elaborate on what the funding split is between Federal and State government on this project?

PAUL FLETCHER:

So, the position of the Turnbull Government has consistently been that the funding split on projects on the M1 corridor between Brisbane and the Gold Coast is 50/50. That's been the position for a long time, under this Government and under a previous Federal Labor Government. And of course, when Labor followed the lead of the Turnbull Government earlier this week in announcing that they would also commit \$1 billion to the two M1 projects - Eight Mile Plains to Daisy Hill and Varsity Lakes to Tugun - that was on a 50/50 basis. But look, can I make the point: we are today at the commencement of heavy works on these two vital projects - Mudgeeraba to Varsity Lakes and the Gateway Merge - and we secured a good constructive outcome between the two governments - the Turnbull Government and the Queensland Government - to get to this point. That's what the users of the M1 wanted to see and that's what we need to do in relation to the billion-dollar commitment that we announced last week for Eight Mile Plains to Daisy Hill and Varsity Lakes to Tugun.

Minister Bailey and I have had a constructive meeting this morning. The immediate next step is for the Queensland Government to prepare the business cases on those two projects and we look forward to that work being done and those business cases coming through.

QUESTION:

Minister, the 50/50 breakdown, where did that arbitrary number come from, given that in New South Wales apparently according to the State Government it's an 80/20 split?

PAUL FLETCHER:

Well, the position is pretty clear that in urban areas we generally go for a 50/50 breakdown. Indeed, if you look at the Pacific Highway, the upgrades being done between Sydney and the Queensland border, there's a number of projects there. Quite a number of them are also on a 50/50 basis, but the key point is that the M1

between Brisbane and the Gold Coast has been funded on a 50/50 basis, both under the Turnbull Government, under the Federal Coalition Government, and previously under Federal Labor.

But can I make the point that in relation to the two projects which we are here to see the commencement of heavy work on today, Mudgeeraba to Varsity Lakes and the Gateway Merge, we did have a bit of pushing and shoving. We got to an outcome consistent with the principles and approaches articulated and, as a result of that outcome, work is commencing today. What we need to do in relation to the billion-dollar commitment that the Turnbull Government made last week, on Eight Mile Plains to Daisy Hill and Varsity Lakes to Tugun, is the first thing that needs to happen is for the Queensland Government to now work forward to prepare the detailed business cases. Minister Bailey and I have had a constructive discussion this morning about the next steps for that to happen and we need to see that work go ahead. I look forward to that work going ahead and those business cases coming through.

QUESTION:

Minister Bailey how do you feel about it? Are you- is it all happy families with the State and Federal government?

MARK BAILEY:

Oh look, I think in terms of these two upgrades today, it's a great day for M1 motorists. This means less time in traffic, more time at home doing what you want to do if you're an M1 motorist. So, today should be a celebrated day of us working together. Let's be clear about a few things here: the first money put on the table to six lanes from Varsity Lakes to the border was done by the Palaszczuk Government; \$206 million has been on the table since last year. The Federal Government has since come in and made a good start and made their commitment. That's fantastic to see and of course this week we saw Bill Shorten make a \$2.2 billion commitment on top of that from the Federal Opposition to make a pool of \$3.2 billion from them in terms of transport infrastructure for southeast Queensland, and that really raises the bar, because that's what we want in Queensland. We want a fair deal for the M1 and for transport infrastructure. We're pragmatic about how we do that, but that commitment from Federal Labor and Bill Shorten is a much bigger pool of funds in which we can work together to get transport infrastructure fully funded.

So, look, I said earlier this week that it's a good start from the Federal Government. I welcome it. Absolutely, we'll work with them and we've already met today to discuss it. And just like last time, we will work our way through this to make sure that we get that third and fourth M1 upgrade fully funded and underway. But let's be also clear about the timing here. We both agree and we covered this in the meeting today, the best way to do the third and fourth M1 upgrades will be straight after we finish the first and second upgrades, which we see the heavy works starting today. That way, you have the minimum disruption to M1 motorists, we've got a pipeline of jobs coming through; that is the logical way of doing it and there's a little bit more work to do in terms of the business cases, detailed design and tendering process. So, that's how it would happen. There's no issue of anything being held up by anybody. This is the normal process of negotiation between two levels of government. We were successful today in getting those two upgrades going and I'm confident we'll get those other two fully funded.

QUESTION:

Do you think it's a success even though it's 50/50, it's not the 80/20 split?

MARK BAILEY:

Yeah, look, I absolutely think today is a sign of absolute success for M1 motorists. Neither one of us got exactly what we wanted, but we both recognised that we've got to get on with it. We weren't going to make the same mistake that Campbell Newman did, and that was ignore the M1 for three years. It was absolutely not an option and we've worked together. You know, Paul Fletcher is an honourable minister, we've worked together

Paul Fletcher, Minister for Urban Infrastructure and Cities, Sydney

well. We've had differences in our points of view but we've got things done and that's what M1 motorists want to see.

QUESTION:

Minister, last week you were pretty adamant about the 80-20 split. Are you willing to budge on that or will you stay adamant on that point?

MARK BAILEY:

Look, we want a fair deal for Queensland. That's what we want to see. And at the moment, for every dollar that gets spent on the M1 in New South Wales, we get equivalent of 20 cents. So we want to see a better deal. We're very unashamed about that. We want a fair deal for Queensland and we'll fight for that, and I'll always fight for that. That's my job and that's the job of any Queensland Government worth their salt, we'll always stand up for the Maroon state and the fair deal, and we'll keep doing that.

QUESTION:

What time frame is the business case likely to entail?

MARK BAILEY:

Yeah. So, with the business cases, both underway for the third and fourth upgrades from Varsity Lakes at the border and up on the northbound lanes near the Gateway. End of the year, they should be completed, and then we've some real detailed work [indistinct].

QUESTION:

Can you talk us through some of the disruptions motorists might see day to day with these upgrades?

MARK BAILEY:

Look, as these M1 upgrades, the heavy work, progresses, there'll be obviously- there'll be some reduced speed zones, [indistinct] for safety reasons, so I want to thank motorists for their patience when it comes to the work zones. There'll be different restrictions at different times. You're just going to have to look out for it. We'll also be doing all of our communications there around social media, and so keep your eye out. But look, we'll be keeping the traffic flowing. We obviously kept the full capacity there for the Commonwealth Games and here we are, within days of the Commonwealth Games, getting on doing the heavy work.

QUESTION:

Minister, the speed limits have returned to normal on the M1 now. Can you run us through the review that will be conducted into, I guess, whether they need to come back or stay where they are?

MARK BAILEY:

Look, I think everybody was pretty surprised to see how well the M1 flowed during the Commonwealth Games, after- there were a lot of dooms-dayers out there, saying it was going to be absolutely traffic gridlock. Including, I might add, Deb Frecklington and the LNP did a lot of scaremongering on this, and yet it flowed freely. Why? Because we made the tough choices on the M1. We brought down the speeds, which reduced the number of crashes, which increased safety. The truck ban has been very successful in reducing crashes as well, a bit of ramp metering as well. We had a lot of rapid response teams. Of course, what we want to do is to have a full evaluation of all those measures that we had in place during the Commonwealth Games to see

what kind of improvements we might make, what did we learn from that process, and obviously any responsible government would do that.

QUESTION:

Do you think that the flow perhaps had more to do with the fact there was less cars on the road than the speed limit changes?

MARK BAILEY:

Look, I think there are a whole lot of different factors, and one of the things – successes – was obviously people using public transport, which – and I want to give Queenslanders a gold medal for their use of public transport, it was a very high level – made very smooth, the transport plan. But we also had a business program where various businesses voluntarily did deliveries late at night rather than during the peak periods. That strips some traffic off the road as well. But what we also saw was the crashes, we saw a reduction, and we saw a reduction in severity of crashes. So that meant our clearance rates were a lot faster as well. That helped keep things flowing. So you've got to attack the problem from a whole lot of different fronts, and what we wanted to do was get a clear evaluation on what are the learnings, what are the improvements we can do in terms of managing the motorway and benefit M1 motorists in the future.

QUESTION:

Will that review also include other major roads like the Bruce, or is it just for the M1?

MARK BAILEY:

Look, it is just the M1 because there were specific measures in place there for the Commonwealth Games and we want to have a look at it in detail. Anecdotally, we know it worked very, very well. I think everyone was surprised at just how good the M1 was throughout all of the Commonwealth Games. It flowed freely. I was watching it every day - I can assure you, as the Minister of Transport – on our live feeds. And look, any responsible government is going to look at it in detail, see what learnings we can make.

Thank you very much.