



Minister for Transport and Main Roads Minister for Digital Services

Our ref: PET55052
Your ref: A1335321

18 September 2024

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Mr Neil Laurie
The Clerk of the Parliament
Parliament House
George Street
BRISBANE QLD 4000

Dear Mr Laurie

I refer to petition 4120-24, lodged with the Legislative Assembly by Mr Robert Katter MP, Member for Traeger on 20 August 2024 about the condition of the Flinders Highway and required upgrades.

The 766-kilometre Flinders Highway is an integral part of the National Land Transport Network, connecting Townsville and Cloncurry. The route is vital for linking Queensland western regional communities, supporting tourism, and facilitating the connection between the north-west minerals province and essential services and ports.

Since 2019, natural disasters have recurrently impacted the Flinders Highway, necessitating significant emergency repairs and reconstruction. Specifically, the highway received emergency works totalling \$6.56 million following Tropical Cyclone Kirrily in early 2024 and approximately \$13.87 million for reconstruction works since 2019. Current reconstruction efforts address the damage from the 2023 monsoon and flooding event, with completion anticipated by March 2025, weather and construction conditions permitting.

Following damage assessments for Tropical Cyclone Kirrily, additional recovery works are being planned, with funding support through the Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements by the Australian and Queensland governments.

The Department of Transport and Main Roads (TMR) is executing a long-term strategy for the Flinders Highway through the development of the Flinders and Barkly Highways Planning Study. In parallel, significant investments in upgrades continue to improve the highways resilience and safety. Recent and ongoing projects by TMR include:

- completion of the \$42.65 million Scrubby Creek pavement upgrades and widen floodway located 72 kilometres west of Julia Creek between Julia Creek and Cloncurry in December 2023. While the works were underway, the Condition State 4, Scrubby Creek Bridge was completed and replaced through Queensland Government funding of \$4.5 million
- a total of \$33.39 million was jointly committed to construct overtaking lanes along the Flinders Highway from Townsville to Mingela Range. Construction was completed in 2023 and provides three new dual lane overtaking opportunities to improve safety for motorists
- completion of the \$9.7 million Flinders Highway (Townsville – Charters Towers), Mingela Road to Kookaburra Creek, Wide Centre Line Treatment project to deliver wide centre line treatments along the highway in 2022
- a total of \$52.5 million is committed between Richmond and Julia Creek to upgrade floodways, improve pavement, and install a major culvert at Alick Creek, located 104.9 kilometres from Richmond, between Richmond to Julia Creek
- a total of \$10 million is committed to replace the bridge at Canal Creek, located 91.5-94.5 kilometres from Julia Creek, between Julia Creek and Cloncurry

- ongoing safety enhancements, including stopping bays, intersection upgrades, and rest stops to improve the travel experience for all road users
- secured funding for strengthening and widening highway sections between Richmond and Julia Creek
- an allocation of \$22.225 million to improve pavement and culverts on the Hughenden to Richmond link.

In addition to these crucial works along the Flinders Highway, planning is also underway or scheduled for:

- Flinders Highway (Townsville – Charters Towers) and Townsville Port Road, Booth Road to Port of Townsville, link planning. This planning project is currently underway and due for completion in late 2025
- North Queensland Region green energy and critical minerals network facilitation strategy planning. This planning project is currently underway and due for completion in late 2025
- Charters Towers, various locations, assess and upgrade heavy vehicle route, planning—this is a future planning project anticipated to commence in 2025–26
- Flinders Highway (Townsville – Charters Towers), overtaking lane strategy, planning—this is a future planning project anticipated to commence in 2025–26
- Flinders Highway (Townsville – Charters Towers), various locations, upgrade intersections, planning—this is a future planning project anticipated to commence in 2025–26.

To enhance driver safety on narrow structures along the Flinders Highway, traffic management measures, including Call Point Signage, have been implemented.

The Miles Government recently engaged a third party to investigate and identify opportunities for freight networks along the Mount Isa Line, with an aim to move freight off the Flinders Highway and onto rail to provide safer connections for motorists.

The Miles Government is delivering its ninth record transport and roads infrastructure program in a row, as detailed in the *Queensland Transport and Roads Investment Program 2024–25 to 2027–28*, which outlines \$37.4 billion in investment over the four financial years and is estimated to support an average of 28,000 direct jobs over the life of the program. Of this, \$1.376 billion is committed across TMR's Northern and North West District, estimated to support an average of 1180 direct jobs over the life of the program.

I trust this information is of assistance.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Bart Mellish', with a stylized, flowing script.

BART MELLISH MP
Minister for Transport and Main Roads
Minister for Digital Services