

BRIDGE MAINTENANCE

5538. Hon Barry House to the Parliamentary Secretary representing the Minister for Planning and Infrastructure

I refer to question without notice No. 596, asked on 22 August 2007, and I ask -

- (1) What is Main Roads Western Australia's budget for bridge maintenance?
- (2) What is Main Roads Western Australia's budget for research into better methods of strengthening bridge structures?
- (3) Has Main Roads Western Australia requested additional funding for bridge assessment and repair?
- (4) If yes to (3), what is the status of this request?
- (5) Have 45 or more bridges on major routes such as the Great Northern Highway and North West Coastal Highway been identified as failing to meet the requirements for shear capacity stated in the Australian Standards?

Hon ADELE FARINA replied:

- (1) \$13.6 million in 2007/08
- (2) Main Roads has a number of technical and engineering staff involved in a range of activities directly related to bridge design, inspection, assessment and maintenance, and liaising with other state road authorities and overseas authorities on an ongoing basis on bridge technologies and research. These activities are funded through various components of Main Roads' annual budget allocation. Specific recent and current activities include a number of projects to assist in the effective management of bridge assets; contract to assess the performance of a number of bridges in the Kimberley region and to purchase and trial new inspection equipment; and ongoing research and assessment of a new strengthening option for longitudinal shear in pre-cast beam and slab bridges. Based on the outcome of this project, it is planned to develop a special strengthening program for selected bridges of this type. One of Main Roads' larger recent research projects involved the test loading of a flat slab bridge near Baandee Lakes. The result of this testing enabled Main Roads to re-evaluate and increase the safe load rating capacities for punching shear and slab shear for flat slab bridges.
- (3) Funds have been made available for specific bridge assessment through the annual Budget process.
- (4) Refer to (3) above.
- (5) As outlined in response to Question Without Notice 669, bridges designed and built prior to 1999 would not conform to the current Australian Standard and that will be true of most bridges on Great Northern Highway and North West Coastal Highway. This does not mean they are deficient for their current usage and purpose. The system of vehicle permitting and, if necessary, load restrictions, provide an appropriate mechanism to limit the loads on the bridges to within their capacity. .