

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

Question Without Notice

Wednesday, 19 October 2022


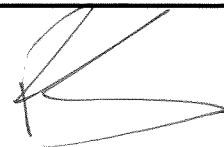
C1079. Hon Neil Thomson to the Leader of the House representing the Minister for Transport

I refer to the news article in The Australian (17 October 2022) which indicates funding for the Outback Way might be removed in the upcoming Federal budget, and I ask;

1. Is the Minister aware of the article?
2. Has the Minister or representative spoken to the Federal Government to ensure there is no risk that the article could be correct?
 - a. If yes to 2, is there any substance to the article?
 - b. If no 2, why not?
3. What is the Minister doing to ensure funding will be maintained for the Outback Way?
4. Will the Minister please confirm the status of State and Federal funding commitments to seal the Tanami Road?

Answer

- 1-3. I refer the Member to the article on page 3 of today's Kalgoorlie Miner which confirms the Federal Government's commitment to the Outback Way.
I table the article.
 4. The State and Federal Governments remains committed to the sealing of the Tanami Road.
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Reassurance on Fed funding

ELENA MORABITO

The Albanese Government has committed to funding the Outback Way after hosing down reports this week it might withdraw support in the upcoming Federal Budget.

A spokesperson for Federal Infrastructure Minister Catherine King told the Kalgoorlie Miner a report in The Australian newspaper stating the Government would cut the \$678 million funding was incorrect.

"We are committed to the project and are working through delivery with the WA and NT governments," the spokesperson said.

The Morrison government in February announced the Outback Way had been successful in securing \$678m to seal the remainder of the road that spans 2700km between Laverton in WA and Winton, Queensland.

On top of the Federal Government's commitment, a further \$100m was pledged by the State Government to help seal the WA section.

At a media conference outside his Kalgoorlie-Boulder electorate office on Tuesday morning, the Liberal's Federal Member for O'Connor Rick Wilson said the media report had given him "great concern". "If this funding is scuttled, then... (the) hope that those communities have finally received something to look for-



The Outback Way is a 2700km route from WA's Laverton to Winton, Queensland. Picture: Carwyn Monck

ward to, something to hope for, the carpet would be dragged out from underneath them," he said.

However, when informed of Minister King's commitment to the project, Mr Wilson said he was reassured.

"That's fantastic news. I'm very pleased to hear that," he said.

"If the Government does follow through and they fund the project, then no one will be happier than me because those commun-

ities really need this economic opportunity, this work and training opportunity."

But Mr Wilson also said: "Until I see it as a line item in this year's Budget, I'll remain sceptical and I'll be continuing to keep the pressure on the Government."

Shire of Laverton president Pat Hill has been the driving force behind the project, dubbed "Australia's longest shortcut", since the mid-1980s.



Catherine King Picture: Mick Tsikas



Rick Wilson