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FUNDS BOOST FOR ROAD & RAIL INFRASTRUCTURE IN THE WESTERN CORRIDOR

Queensland is set to benefit from \$2 billion that the Rudd Labor Government is investing in our national road and rail networks over the next 18 months, Federal Member for Oxley, Bernie Ripoll said today.

"The Government's investment in roads will allow projects to commence ahead of schedule and the investment in rail will fund projects that were previously unfunded.

"This nation-building package, is part of our comprehensive plan to support jobs, families and businesses during the global financial crisis" Mr Ripoll said.

With new funding for infrastructure, the Rudd Government is bringing construction forward on projects that are ready to go and creating an estimated 8 700 direct jobs across Australia.

The funding also includes \$1.2 billion to improve rail and is the biggest single investment by the Commonwealth in the national rail network.

"This package will be a win-win for the economy. The Government's decisive action to support the Australian economy will also help build the modern, well-planned infrastructure necessary for longer term prosperity" Mr Ripoll said.

The projects being funded locally in the Western Corridor are:

Acacia Ridge track upgrade: \$56 million in new funding to replace wooden sleepers with concrete sleepers on the rail line between Acacia Ridge and the New South Wales border and dual gauge the line from Acacia Ridge 52 kilometres south to Bromelton.

The project will create up to 120 jobs and is expected to commence in February 2009 with completion forecast for December 2009.

Once complete, the concrete sleepers will reduce transit times and remove speed restrictions which can occur with timber. The dual gauging means both narrow gauge Queensland trains and standard gauge national trains will be able to access the proposed industrial development at Bromelton.

This investment is subject to the Queensland Government agreeing to the Australian Rail Track Corporation taking control of this section of track.

Ipswich Motorway - Dinmore to Goodna: bring forward \$25 million in 2008-09 to continue fast tracking of the 8-kilometre upgrade of the Ipswich Motorway. The project will cut congestion and improve safety by widening from four to six lanes and adding a network of service roads.

This project will employ more than 300 people at the site office with about 1,000 construction staff on the Motorway over the next four years.

We have committed \$1.14 billion from 2009-10 for the Dinmore to Goodna upgrade. The \$25 million being brought forward in this announcement is on top of the \$5 million we had already committed in 2008-09.

The Ipswich Motorway is used by 80,000 vehicles every day.

Black Spots Program (for which Mr Ripoll is the Queensland Chair): More than double the national road Black Spots program to improve local road safety by providing an extra \$60 million in 2008-09. Queensland will benefit from this increased funding with successful projects to be determined in early 2009.

"Projects to be funded include new roundabouts, improvements at dangerous intersections, installation of speed advisory signs and upgrades to pedestrian crossings.

"This nation-building program is an immediate shot in the arm for the state and local economy, with construction expected to begin soon.

"The Rudd Government is serious about building Australia's critical infrastructure for the challenges of the future" Mr Ripoll said.

Further details:

http://www.infrastructure.gov.au/departments/publications/nation_building.aspx

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