

CARNARVON-GASCOYNE JUNCTION ROAD

142. Hon KEN BASTON to the parliamentary secretary representing the Minister for Planning and Infrastructure:

I refer to funding for the sealing of the Carnarvon-Gascoyne Junction road.

- (1) Is the minister aware that -
 - (a) funding for this road has been allocated until only 2008 and that this is insufficient for completion; and
 - (b) this will leave 20 kilometres of unsealed road halfway between Carnarvon and Gascoyne Junction?
- (2) Will the minister prioritise funding so that the road can be completed by 2008, as originally intended; and, if not, why not?

Hon KATE DOUST replied:

On behalf of the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Planning and Infrastructure, I thank the honourable member for some notice of this question.

- (1) The section of the Carnarvon-Mullewa road between Carnarvon and Gascoyne Junction is a local government road under the care and management of the Shires of Carnarvon and Upper Gascoyne. Funding for the upgrading of this section of road is allocated under a financing agreement between the Commissioner of Main Roads and the Shires of Carnarvon and Upper Gascoyne that was entered into in 1998. Under this agreement, the state government is committed to a funding contribution not exceeding \$20 million, with additional provision for consumer price index adjustments, up to 2007-08. It is estimated that by the end of the agreement some \$23.6 million in state funds will have been contributed to this project. The government is therefore meeting its commitment. In light of cost increases since the introduction of the agreement, it is evident that there will be insufficient funding to complete the sealing of the road. Main Roads is working closely with the two councils to prioritise works on the remaining section to ensure the greatest benefit to road users.
- (2) The allocation of additional funds to meet any shortfall on this project would need to be considered together with many other high-priority works on local government roads across the state. Many other local authorities would like the state to spend the allocations under the state-local government road agreement for state initiatives on local roads. It is important that there be equity in the distribution of funds across the state.