**No. 735**

**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF THE NORTHERN TERRITORY**

**WRITTEN QUESTION**

Mr Guyula to the Minister for Infrastructure, Planning and Logistics:

**Condition of the Central Arnhem Highway**

**1. Please advise of what works have been completed on the first 100km (when departing Nhulunbuy) of the Central Arnhem Highway, in the past 6 months.**

Within the first 100km from Nhulunbuy, a total of $417 000 has been spent or is underway, which includes the following:

- Culvert installations to eliminate ongoing perennial wet crossings at locations chainages 622.59km, 616.59km, 580.3km, 543.38km and 542.2km. Works are complete and cost $223 000.
- Protection works to existing culvert. Works are underway and cost $25 000.
- Maintenance grade for the full 100km is complete and cost $31 000.
- Safety improvements near Telstra Jump-up (about 25km from Dhupuma) to eliminate steep batters and narrow pavement and improved alignment. Works underway and nearing completion - $120 000.
- Pothole repairs preventative maintenance to eliminate wet season pavement defects. Works underway $18 000.

**2. Community members have outlined many concerns about unfinished road work on the Central Arnhem Highway, including exposed edges to the box culverts, cracked under road drainage pipes not covered with the recommended 300mm of spoil and incomplete and seemingly abandoned excavations. There are other works without warning signs and in several places posts marking the edge of the formed road such as beside steep gradients, river crossings and culverts are missing. Please advise what works will be completed by the end of this year and early 2020.**

Exposed culvert crossings have been identified and form part of the region's maintenance forward works. The reported cracking relates to the actual joints between individual culvert cells, not degradation cracking as such. The majority of the visible concrete structures are box culverts which have a specified depth of cover requirement of 100mm for construction loadings for a nine tonne axle load. All work sites are, or have been, signed in accordance with the approved traffic control plans. Missing road furniture (signs) were identified on the finished works in the vicinity of Wandawuy and these are now confirmed as being installed.

Works that are currently scheduled for the period to early 2020 are:

- protection works to culverts on the currently incomplete works;
- safety improvements near Telstra jump-up, which is currently in progress;
- further repairs to culverts;
- repairs to signage, guide posts and warning signs;
- dealing with the effects of the wet season as required; and
- maintenance grading.

**3. Please advise what the $45 million of NTG expenditure recently announced for the Central Arnhem Highway will provide. Please advise of a timeline for these works.**

The $45 million of NT Government funding combined with $180 million of Australian Government funding will deliver a range of road and crossings upgrades to the Central Arnhem Road. These will improve flood immunity, reduce freight costs, increase connectivity between communities, increase road safety and provide improved employment outcomes during the construction phase.

The first two early works packages of work to be funded under the Central Arnhem Road upgrade are currently awaiting Australian Government approval. These works include the sealing of sections of road either side of the Goyder River Bridges and an upgrade and seal of the road for 6km leading into Beswick, from Nhulunbuy. It is anticipated that these works will be released for tender in March/April 2020. These projects were chosen as early works due to the simple technical nature and anticipated ease of early approvals.

During 2020, an investment strategy will be developed to guide the delivery of the remainder of the current funding and any future funding allocations for Central Arnhem Road. This investment strategy will involve an assessment of the condition of the current road and extensive stakeholder engagement to identify and prioritise sections of road for upgrade.