

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF THE NORTHERN TERRITORY

WRITTEN QUESTION

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

Variable message signs on Territory roads

The Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Logistics (DIPL) web page shows that the NT Government is installing thirty (30) Variable Message Signs (VMS) across the Territory to provide timely and accurate information to travelers.

NT Government Tender T20-2350 was awarded 24 March 2021 to Aertex Group Pty Ltd for \$5,699,657 to design, supply and install 28 VMS across the Territory.

Questions:

1. How many of the VMS have been installed so far, and at which locations?
2. How were sites selected for the installation of the VMS?
 - One of the VMS on Tiger Brennan was installed behind a patch of vegetation and trees. Was this a mistake or will the trees be removed?
3. Are all the VMS the same or are there different styles and sizes subject to location?
4. The tender specified the VMS are to provide timely and accurate information to travelers. What is the purpose of providing this information to travelers?
5. How many more VMS are to be installed under the tender and at which locations? When will this tender be finalised?
6. The tender was for 28 VMS, but the DIPL web page specifies 30. What is the correct number of VMS being installed?
7. What is the breakdown of expenditure for the \$5,699,657 tender?
8. Have there been any variations? If so, for what and what is the breakdown of costs for these variations?
9. What is the cost to the NT Government of each VMS?
10. How often have the VMS been used and what have they been used for?
11. Will the VMS operate 24/7 or will they be turned off when not in use for a specified traffic purpose?

12. Will messages be displayed on the VMS 24/7? If not, what will signs be used for when messages are not being displayed?
13. Once in operation, who will be controlling the messages?
14. Can messages be updated to signs remotely or do they have to be updated onsite? If they are updated onsite, what will be the cost to Government to send someone to the site to update the messages?
15. How regularly will they be updated and with what information will they broadcast?
16. How often are VMS at remote locations such as Uluru or the WA border used to manage traffic flows due to road crashes and congestion? What are they actually being used for?
17. What is the ongoing annual maintenance cost for these VMS signs? If the ongoing maintenance costs are currently nil, what are the estimated costs going to be?
18. Has a tender been awarded for the ongoing maintenance? If not, how will this be treated and who will be responsible for the ongoing maintenance?
19. What is the cost split between the NT Government and the Australian Government? Under what specific program were these funded?

Response Questions 1 to 19

Installation of the variable message signs (VMS) will be staged across the Territory and works have commenced in the Darwin and Palmerston areas with 10 VMS commissioned.

The VMS locations were selected based on key decision points on the road network, to ensure motorists have time to consider the information being displayed, if necessary decide on an alternative route, and still have sufficient time to manoeuvre accordingly.

The VMS will enable efficient management of traffic flows in the event of road crashes and congestion with real-time information and notifications, including information about road closures, traffic detours and emergencies, as well as other road safety messages.

Where foliage obfuscates or blocks a VMS, there may be a need to remove or prune vegetation.

An additional 20 VMS will be installed - a map of locations is available at <https://dipl.nt.gov.au/projects/variable-message-signs-on-territory-roads>

Installation is being staged across the Territory and is anticipated to be completed by mid-2023.

VMS will not always be active. Messages will only appear when required to alert road users of changes to conditions and road safety or other messaging considered appropriate.

The Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Logistics will manage messaging with the VMS updated remotely.

The VMS are low maintenance, being completely solar powered with minimal 'serviceable' components. As such, ongoing maintenance costs are not expected to be significant. The contract also includes warranty periods ranging from 12 months up to 10 years for various hardware components.

Post commissioning of the VMS's, the contractor will be responsible for any repairs that may be required during the two years defects liability period. Within this time, the department will procure a dedicated period maintenance contract for undertaking routine maintenance works once the defects period has expired.

Project funding is from a range of programs targeting road and safety upgrades across the Northern Territory. The funding split for the broader program of works is approximately 81% funded by the Australian Government, with 19% funded by the Northern Territory Government.