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Northern suburbs fast lane to CBD timeline reveals a slow track

A GRIDLOCK waiting game still has years to play out before northern suburb motorists finally get the road they have been craving – a four-lane, smooth ride straight to the CBD.

The Federal Government's \$240 million budget pledge to duplicate the Cairns Western Arterial Rd is the final piece in the city ring road puzzle.

However, any hopes of a quick completion are misplaced with a Senate estimates hearing revealing the bulk of funds will not be spent until at least 2025-26.

It means there will be at least two more elections before commuters will have four lanes from Kamerunga to Smithfield, including a duplicated Redlynch overpass and bridge over the Barron River.

Infrastructure investment assistant secretary Shona Rosengren told the estimates hearing the plan was to spend the first \$5m next financial year, \$15m in 2022-23, \$20m in 2023-24 and \$26m in 2024-25 – with the \$174m remainder not spent until the "outer years". "I think it's reflecting the fact that planning works, environmental approvals and other regulatory checks need to be undertaken, which is why we're ramping up the funding in the next few years," she said

"The aim is for construction to commence in late-2022 or early-2023."

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