

**Rural & Regional Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee**  
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE  
Additional Estimates 2014 - 2015  
**Infrastructure and Regional Development**

**Question no.:** 110

**Program:** n/a

**Division/Agency:** Policy and Research

**Topic:** Savings to Industry within the Department or its portfolio agencies

**Proof Hansard Page:** 5 (24 February 2015)

**Senator Sterle, Glenn asked:**

**Senator STERLE:** ... Mr Mrdak, can you indicate whether any of the following acts have been accounted for as delivering savings to industry within the department or its portfolio agencies? I will go to the Omnibus Repeal Day (Spring 2014) Act 2014.

**Mr Mrdak:** No, I do not believe we had any portfolio acts in that omnibus bill.

**Senator STERLE:** What about the Amending Acts 1970 to 1979 Repeal Bill 2014?

**Mr Mrdak:** We will have to take that on notice. I do not believe so, but I will take that on notice for you.

**Senator STERLE:** No worries. While I am at it, what about the Statute Law Revision Bill (No. 2) 2014? I am looking for the nods behind.

**Mr Mrdak:** I will just get the responsible officer to the table.

**Senator STERLE:** Great, thank you.

**Ms Spencer:** Again, we would have to take that particular one on notice. They are all coordinated through the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet.

**Senator STERLE:** That is fine. If those bills were passed unamended, that would be helpful too. That was painless. I am finished. I am done.

**Answer:**

Sixty items were included in the Amending Acts 1970 to 1979 Repeal Bill 2014 and eight items to the Statute Law Revision Bill, but neither contributed to savings to industry for the Infrastructure portfolio.

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**Infrastructure and Regional Development**

**Question no.:** 111

**Program:** 3.1 Regional Development

**Division/Agency:** Policy and Research

**Topic:** Tasmanian Irrigation

**Proof Hansard Page:** 147 (24 February 2015)

**Senator Urquhart, Anne asked:**

**Senator URQUHART:** Given that some of these projects were shovel ready for funding 18 months ago, why was the funding delayed?

**Ms Power:** There was not a delay. The Commonwealth has responded to the request made by the Tasmanian government.

**Senator URQUHART:** When was that request made?

**Ms Power:** I am not aware of the exact date, but 18 months seems long to me. But I am not aware of the exact date.

**Senator URQUHART:** Are you suggesting that there is not a delay?

**Ms Power:** Certainly these projects were considered as part of the work of the Water Infrastructure Ministerial Working Group. But I am not aware of the exact date that it was first raised with the Commonwealth government.

**Senator URQUHART:** Are you happy to take that on notice and get back to me?

**Ms Power:** Yes.

**Answer:**

On 26 May 2014 the Tasmanian Government provided information about the Tranche 2 irrigation schemes to the Water Infrastructure Ministerial Working Group. The Water Infrastructure Options Paper (published 29 October 2014) and the Agricultural Competitiveness Green Paper (published 20 October 2014) both listed the schemes as 'likely to be sufficiently developed to allow consideration of possible capital investment within the next 12 months'.

In July 2014 Irrigation Australia provided the irrigation scheme business cases to Infrastructure Australia for cost benefit assessment.

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**Question no.:** 112

**Program:** n/a

**Division/Agency:** Policy and Research

**Topic: Budget 2014-15: Building Australia's Infrastructure**

**Proof Hansard Pages:** 149-150 (24 February 2015)

**Senator Sterle, Glenn asked:**

**Senator STERLE:** Okay. Can you indicate how much of the spending in this column—in the green—occurred? It says 35 down the bottom, but can you tell us how much you have spent?

**Ms O'Connell:** Senator, we will have to take that on notice. Obviously the green column is the forward estimates but, as that footnote says, it includes some 2013-14 investment expenditures. We will need to identify exactly which projects include 2013-14, and how much.

...

**Senator STERLE:** Yes. What I really want to know is what construction will occur after 2019-20. I am alluding to the fact that there are a lot of figures there and, on that glossy table there, it looks like there is a heck of a lot of spending being done. I really want to decipher how much has already been in the previous 2012-13 budget, because that—without any secrets—is not the Abbott government's spend; it is money that has already been allocated. And then we are talking about 10 billion years so, when you take out the asset recycling, I think that these figures have been blown up to look a lot better than what can actually be credited to the Abbott government. I do not think that is an unfair question.

**Senator Cash:** Albeit still a significant investment, Senator Sterle.

**Senator STERLE:** Senator Cash, at this late hour, I would be bitterly disappointed if you sat there and could even for one minute think, 'uh-oh, maybe we have been a little bit flippant with the figures'.

**Senator Cash:** It is a significant investment, and it is something that I have to say the government is very proud of.

**Senator STERLE:** But let us not let the truth get in the way of a really good story. Can you please find that out for me, Ms O'Connell, and take that on notice?

**Ms O'Connell:** We will take that on notice, Senator.

**Answer:**

Refer to Question 59.

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**ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**

Additional Estimates 2014 - 2015

**Infrastructure and Regional Development**

**Question no.:** 113

**Program:** 1.1 Infrastructure Investment

**Division/Agency:** Policy and Research

**Topic:** High Speed Rail (HSR)

**Proof Hansard Page:** 151 (24 February 2015)

**Senator Sterle, Glenn asked:**

**Senator STERLE:** ...On notice, how many meetings of the high-speed rail senior officials group have occurred to date, in 2014-15? You might even be able to tell us while we are waiting.

**Mr Mrdak:** I will take that on notice.

**Senator STERLE:** Okay—and the dates if you can, please, Mr Mrdak.

**Senator STERLE:** I want to refer to written answer 205, part 7, from October estimates, about changed station locations. Have these changes come about?

**Mr Mrdak:** Changed station locations for high-speed rail?

**Senator STERLE:** Yes.

**Mr Mrdak:** I will check those. Thank you.

**Answer:**

High Speed Rail Senior Officials Group Meetings

The High Speed Rail Senior Officials Group has met once in 2014-15, on 17 July 2014. At this meeting it was agreed that the jurisdictions (Queensland, New South Wales, Victoria and the Australian Capital Territory) would work bilaterally with the Commonwealth to progress the identification, preservation and protection of a corridor for a potential east coast HSR network. As at 20 March 2015, 11 bilateral meetings between the Commonwealth and individual jurisdictions have been held.

Station Locations

The 2013 HSR Phase 2 Report identified the preferred alignment for an east coast HSR network, including 20 potential station locations. The preferred alignment outlined in the Report remains the basis for discussions between the Commonwealth and jurisdictions on corridor matters. However, the impact of any potential changes to station locations on the corridor has also been discussed.

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**Question no.:** 114

**Program:** n/a

**Division/Agency:** Policy and Research

**Topic:** Office of Northern Australia

**Proof Hansard Page:** Written

**Senator McLucas, Jan asked:**

1. Activities:
  - a. Please provide information on what current programs ONA is working on.
  - b. What is the current budget of the Office of Northern Australia?
  - c. Do you have a forward workplan that can be provided to this Committee?
  - d. Has the Office been given directions from Government in terms of its future?
2. Does the Office know when the Northern Australia White Paper will be released? If so, when is it expected to be released?
3. Staffing:
  - a. What are the current staffing levels and locations of these staff?
  - b. Have staff levels changed in the past 12 months? If so, please find an explanation as to the changes.

**Answer:**

- 1.a The Office of Northern Australia (ONA) is working closely with the Taskforce in the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet to assist in preparing the White Paper on Developing Northern Australia. ONA is also supporting:
  - the development of the Agricultural Competitiveness White Paper;
  - identification and analysis of northern Australia water resource issues and the work of the Water Infrastructure Ministerial Working Group;
  - PM&C in preparing the Government's response to the recommendations of the Joint Select Committee on Northern Australia;
  - the Northern Australia Regional Development Australia Alliance;
  - the programme committee for the Developing Northern Australia Conference 2015, to be held in Townsville 20-22 July; and
  - relevant Commonwealth agencies, the three northern jurisdictions, stakeholders and experts on a range of policy issues relevant to the development of northern Australia, such as optimising livestock industry transport logistics; establishing new food and fibre industries in the north; the further expansion of the Ord irrigation scheme; and piloting high speed long distance wireless technology.
- 1.b The 2014-15 departmental budget for the ONA is \$1.6 million.
- 1.c The forward work plan for the ONA is linked to the outcomes of the White Paper on Developing Northern Australia.
- 1.d The future for the ONA is linked to the outcomes of the White Paper on developing Northern Australia.
- 2.a The Prime Minister advised the Australian Parliament on 5 March 2014 the White Paper on Developing Northern Australia will be released by mid-2015.
- 3.a As at 23 February 2015, ten (10) staff members were engaged in the Office of Northern Australia branch; Eight (8) located in Canberra, one in Darwin and one in Perth.
- 3.b Overall staff levels have not changed in the 12 months to end February.

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**Question no.:** 115

**Program:** n/a

**Division/Agency:** Policy and Research

**Topic:** Australia's contribution towards G20 growth target

**Proof Hansard Page:** Written

**Senator Sterle, Glenn asked:**

1. Is BITRE involved in measuring all or part of Australia's G20 contribution to 2.1% additional global growth?
2. If not, which agency is?
3. If yes, what is being measured? Is the period of measurement from October 2013 baseline to October 2018?

**Answer:**

1. No.
2. Treasury.
3. N/A.

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**Question no.:** 116

**Program:** n/a

**Division/Agency:** Policy and Research

**Topic:** State of Australian Cities

**Proof Hansard Page:** Written

**Senator Sterle, Glenn asked:**

1. When will it be released?
2. Why is there no linkage to the National Urban Policy?
3. How does the report therefore link to Federal Government policy and decision processes?
4. Has the report been tabled or discussed at COAG? If so, when?

**Answer:**

1. The Department envisages that the government will release the State of Australian Cities Report (SOAC) and a companion publication on the state of Australian regions in the first half of 2015.
2. The *Progress in Australian Regions – Yearbook 2014*, and its companion publications *Progress in Australian Regions – State of Australian Cities* and the state of Australian regions collectively form a discrete suite of evidence-based documents to inform a range of portfolio policy issues.
3. The *Progress in Australian Regions* suite of documents provide evidentiary-based insights into the vital roles that Australian cities, regional areas and broader communities play in the growth of our economy and track changes over time. Collectively, they provide a more complete picture of the Australian community enabling policy makers within the Department and at all levels of government to consider challenges and opportunities in policy development.
4. SOAC 2014 has not been tabled or discussed by the Council of Australian Governments.

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**Question no.:** 117

**Program:** n/a

**Division/Agency:** Policy and Research

**Topic:** Labour demand projections

**Proof Hansard Page:** Written

**Senator Sterle, Glenn asked:**

1. What work has BITRE commenced with the Department on Industry in labour market projections for public infrastructure projects? [PC recommendation 14.1, supported by the Govt in its response]
2. What data is being collected and how will it be published?

**Answer:**

1. The response to this recommendation is being led by the Department of Industry. BITRE has discussed the issue with the Departments of Industry and Employment.
2. BITRE published “National profile of transport, postal and warehousing workers” (Information Sheet 54) and “Major transport employment hubs” (Information Sheet 58) in November 2014. Each year the Department of Employment publishes five yearly projections of employment by industry. Current projections are to November 2019.



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**Question no.:** 118

**Program:** n/a

**Division/Agency:** Policy and Research

**Topic:** Transport Infrastructure Project Benchmarking

**Proof Hansard Page:** Written

**Senator Sterle, Glenn asked:**

1. Is BITRE involved in transport project benchmarking?
2. If yes, what work is currently being undertaken in this area?
3. What metrics are being developed to compare transport systems in cities and regions?
4. Have all States and Territories agreed to provide data to the Federal Government? [see PC Govt response to recommendation 9.2 – “governments have agreed to the systematic collection of project information for land transport infrastructure” p5]

**Answer:**

1. Yes.
2. BITRE is currently undertaking a pilot study that will develop procurement benchmarking measures covering timeliness and quality outcomes of procurement processes for major infrastructure projects using data procurement performance data supplied by all states and territories.
3. The purpose of the benchmarking work is to help jurisdictions drive value for money through improved project development and assessment and to identify meaningful project cost factors. It is not intended that the benchmarking work will be used to compare or rank transport systems between different cities or jurisdictions.
4. Yes, all states and territories have agreed to provide infrastructure procurement performance data and road infrastructure project cost data to the Federal Government for the pilot benchmarking study.

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**Question no.:** 119

**Program:** n/a

**Division/Agency:** Policy and Research

**Topic:** Active Transport

**Proof Hansard Page:** Written

**Senator Rice, Janet asked:**

The below questions are made with reference to the statement on Walking, Riding and Access to Public Transport — supporting active travel in Australian communities

[www.infrastructure.gov.au/infrastructure/pab/active\\_transport/files/infra1874\\_mcu\\_active\\_travel\\_report\\_final.pdf](http://www.infrastructure.gov.au/infrastructure/pab/active_transport/files/infra1874_mcu_active_travel_report_final.pdf)

1. The statement notes that the Australian Government's evaluation of proposed transport infrastructure will take appropriate account of the needs and benefits of walking, riding and access to public transport.  
What steps is the Department taking to achieve this?
2. The Australian Government will work with states and territories to review the National Guidelines for Transport System Management, and supporting documents, to incorporate improved methodology for assessing the costs and benefits of walking, riding and public transport.  
How is the NGTSM progressing?  
Stage 2 will include active and public transport specifically. How can the government be helping to progress this?
3. The Australian Government will work with states and territories to ensure that infrastructure projects funded through Nation Building and other relevant investment programs:
  - protect routes for walking, riding and accessing public transport so that existing connections are not severed;
  - reflect consideration of all transport modes – for example , where a project corridor follows, or intersects with, an identified walking or riding route, the project scope should include walking and riding infrastructure as part of the works; and
  - ensure that the relevant infrastructure is appropriate for the speed and volume of traffic.How is this being communicated to states and territories? How is this being reported?
4. The Australian Government will work with states and territories to ensure all pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure funded through Nation Building and other relevant investment programs meets appropriate technical standards and best practice approaches.  
How is this being communicated to states and territories?  
What proportion of transport projects requests from state/territory governments include pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure?
5. The Australian Government will partner with states and territories, including through the Australian National Preventive Health Agency, to encourage behaviour change in support of increased walking, riding and use of public transport, as part of healthy lifestyle choices.  
Without ANPHA how is this being progressed to ensure a whole-of-government approach, particularly given health benefits are 80% of the economic benefits of walking/cycling infrastructure?
6. The Australian Government will work with stakeholders to provide resources that support communities, businesses and local governments to plan for active travel in their local areas including:
  - creating Places for People: an urban design protocol for Australian cities ([www.urbandesign.gov.au](http://www.urbandesign.gov.au)) which includes principles for creating more connected, walkable and vibrant communities; and

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- healthy Spaces and Places ([www.healthyplaces.org.au](http://www.healthyplaces.org.au)) which provides guidance and training to local governments in partnership with the Australian Local Governments Association, National Heart Foundation, Planning Institute of Australia and Department of Health and Ageing.

What actions/ steps is the Government currently undertaking to progress this?

7. The Australian Government will work with states and territories to consider establishing a new Walking, Riding and Access to Public Transport council, reporting to the COAG Standing Council on Transport and Infrastructure. Priority actions could include broader adoption of the principles of this statement; and agreement on a national approach to walking, riding and access to public transport. What actions/steps is the Government currently undertaking to progress this with the Council on Transport and Infrastructure?
8. The Australian Government will work with states, territories and other stakeholders to collect relevant data, and undertake research and analysis, to support walking, riding and access to public transport. How is this being reported?
9. The Australian Government will continue to work with states and territories to support the implementation of the National Cycling Strategy. What is the status of this?  
What is the government doing to support implementation?

#### Answer:

1. The Government strongly supports safe road environments for all road users, including cyclists. This is reflected in the *National Road Safety Strategy 2011–2020*, which aims to reduce serious road casualties by at least 30 per cent by 2020; and the *National Cycling Strategy 2011–2016*, which aims to double the number of people cycling by 2016.  
As part of the 2014-15 Budget, the Government announced a \$50 billion investment in infrastructure. While the designing, building and funding of cycling and pedestrian infrastructure is primarily a matter for state, territory and local governments, this \$50 billion investment will include, in relevant projects, the building of new cycling and pedestrian infrastructure as part of the overall project.
2. A review of the National Guidelines for Transport System Management in Australia is underway. The project is being overseen by a Steering Committee of representatives from Australian transport bodies, including Commonwealth, state and territory governments. The work has been divided into five streams. Work Stream 3: Cost benefit analysis is currently focused on active travel, public transport, wider economic benefits (WEBs) and productivity metrics. The Bureau of Infrastructure, Transport and Regional Economics (BITRE) is overseeing the review of this Work Stream. Work is progressing and updates are provided through the website at [www.austroads.com.au](http://www.austroads.com.au)
3. The Nation Building programme no longer exists and has been replaced by the Infrastructure Investment Programme.
4. See the answers to questions 1 and 3.
5. As announced in the 2014-15 Budget, essential functions of the Australian National Preventative Health Agency have been transferred to the Department of Health, and the agency closed on 30 June 2014. The Australian Government is a member of the Australian Bicycle Council (ABC). The Department of Health is part of the Australian Government representation on the ABC. Promoting cycling as both a viable and safe mode of transport and as a healthy lifestyle choice is part of the ABC's role.
6. *Creating Places for People: an urban design protocol* is a web-based planning tool that is available to community and professional organisations, businesses and others who are interested in best practice in urban design in Australia. The Australian Government played a key role in overseeing the design and establishment of the Urban Design Protocol for Australian cities, which is now being managed by the private sector. It is available at [www.urbandesign.org.au](http://www.urbandesign.org.au).

*Healthy Spaces and Places* is also web-based planning tool that is directed to planning and design practitioners seeking to incorporate active living principles into the built environment.

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7. The ABC oversees the coordination and implementation of the *National Cycling Strategy 2011-2016* and provides reports to Austroads, the Transport and Infrastructure Senior Official's Committee and the Transport and Infrastructure Council of COAG.
8. As noted in Question 7, the Australian Government is a member of the ABC. The ABC collects metrics on cycling, including as part of the biennial National Participation Survey and the annual National Cycling Strategy Implementation Report, and it undertakes research on standards and other matters which are published through their website at <http://www.bicyclecouncil.com.au/>
9. See the answer to Question 7. The Australian Government and state and territory governments are continuing to monitor the Queensland Government's two-year trial of a rule for a minimum overtaking distance of one metre for drivers overtaking cyclists, which commenced on 1 January 2014. There have been positive outcomes for both cyclists and drivers, which have been supported by research undertaken by the Amy Gillett Foundation. These results, and the strong advocacy of cycling organisations, have led to the South Australian Government and the ACT Government both committing to legislating a minimum overtaking distance in 2015.

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**Question no.:** 120

**Program:** n/a

**Division/Agency:** Policy and Research

**Topic:** Active Transport

**Proof Hansard Page:** Written

**Senator Sterle, Glenn asked:**

1. Does the current Government have an explicit policy supporting active travel?; and
2. How is it implemented by the Department?; and
3. Which Departmental guidelines reflect this?

**Answer:**

1. The Government continues to support the National Cycling Strategy 2011-2016.
2. The Government supports active transport through membership and funding of the Australian Bicycle Council.
3. Under the Infrastructure Investment Programme, where appropriate, relevant projects will include the building of new cycling and pedestrian infrastructure as part of the overall project.

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**Question no.:** 121

**Program:** n/a

**Division/Agency:** Policy and Research

**Topic:** Post-built assessments

**Proof Hansard Page:** Written

**Senator Sterle, Glenn asked:**

1. What projects is the Department currently conducting post-build assessments on? [Dept indicates will do this under Govt response to PC Inquiry p5]
2. Will the Department publish its assessments?

**Answer:**

1.
  - Bulahdelah Bypass in NSW;
  - Nagambie Bypass in VIC;
  - Bruce Highway – Cooroy to Curra (Section B) in QLD;
  - Northern Expressway and Port Wakefield Road Upgrade in SA; and
  - Dampier Highway Duplication – Broadhurst to Dampier in WA.
2. Yes, subject to agreement from relevant State Governments.