

**Senate Select Committee on COVID-19**  
ANSWERS TO WRITTEN QUESTIONS ON NOTICE  
**Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Communications**

**Division/Agency:** Infrastructure Investment

**Inquiry:** Inquiry into the Australian Government's response to the COVID-19 pandemic

**Topic:** Announcement of \$1b in funding for shovel ready projects

**Question Type:** Written (21 August 2020)

**Senator Janet Rice asked:**

- In relation to the announcement of \$1b in funding for shovel ready projects ([https://investment.infrastructure.gov.au/infrastructure\\_investment/infrastructure\\_investment\\_response\\_covid-19/shovel\\_ready\\_projects.aspx](https://investment.infrastructure.gov.au/infrastructure_investment/infrastructure_investment_response_covid-19/shovel_ready_projects.aspx)):
  - How were potential projects for funding identified?
  - When did the Commonwealth first make contact with state governments in relation to this funding stream?
    - Was there a minimum allocation of funding or number of projects for each State and Territory, and how were these determined? Was there a maximum allocation for each State and Territory? How was this determined?
    - How many projects were nominated by each state or territory?
    - What are the electorates for each of the proposed projects?
    - Were any projects or programs rejected? How many?
  - How were projects selected by the Commonwealth? Please provide a list of the criteria used.
    - Please provide any cost-benefit analysis undertaken for each project.
    - What are the environmental benefits of each of the projects?
    - Who bears funding responsibility for any recurrent costs associated with the projects? Please provide any estimates available of recurrent costs after construction.
  - What input was sought from Infrastructure Australia? Please provide any analysis by Infrastructure Australia.
  - Did the Department undertake any public consultation in relation to these projects?
    - What plans have been made to communicate these projects to the public? Are other Depts involved in this process? Which ones?
  - Please provide any job creation figures available for individual projects, including:
    - Whether the job creation figures are provided by states and territories, or the Department.
    - Where no job creation figure is available, why an estimate has not been made.
    - How many of the 'expected supported' jobs for the projects will be new, ongoing positions in the delivery organisations, compared with existing employees moved from other projects?

**Answer:**

Potential projects for funding were identified in consultation with state and territory governments. This included correspondence on 4 March 2020 from the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Infrastructure, Transport and Regional Development, and the Minister for Population, Cities and Urban Infrastructure to state and territory transport infrastructure ministers seeking project nominations.

Advice on the selection of projects was provided as part of Cabinet processes. Consistent with long-standing practices, the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Communications does not release advice that could disclose the deliberations of Cabinet. In addition, disclosing communications from state and territory governments on projects put forward for funding would divulge information communicated in confidence and would reasonably be expected to damage relations between the Commonwealth and the States.

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All committed projects have been jointly announced by the Government with the relevant state and territory government.

Estimates of jobs supported by the projects, where available, are provided in the project fact sheets available at:

[https://investment.infrastructure.gov.au/infrastructure\\_investment/infrastructure\\_investment\\_response\\_covid-19/shovel\\_ready\\_projects.aspx](https://investment.infrastructure.gov.au/infrastructure_investment/infrastructure_investment_response_covid-19/shovel_ready_projects.aspx).

Estimates of jobs supported by the projects were provided by state and territory governments where available and, in some cases, include both direct and indirect jobs supported by the project. Estimates do not differentiate between new, ongoing positions and existing employees moved from other projects.

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**Topic:** Pinch Points

**Question Type:** Written (21 August 2020)

**Senator Janet Rice asked:**

- In relation to the NSW 'Pinch Points' project:
  - What are the individual costings and jobs creation of the 11 projects in the NSW 'Pinch Point Program'? What funding is allocated to each of the 11 projects?
  - When were these 11 sites selected?
    - Were other projects proposed as part of this program?

**Answer:**

In May 2020, Transport for New South Wales (TfNSW) submitted a number of priority projects, under the Pinch Point program, to the Australian Government for funding consideration.

The Government announced funding of \$120 million for 11 projects, with costs to be shared 50:50 between the Australian and New South Wales governments. The projects selected were determined on the basis of available funding and eligibility under the *National Land Transport Act 2014*.

The table below outlines the 11 projects. It is estimated that together these projects will support up to 1,000 jobs.

Project	Location		
Intersection improvements to (A3) Devlin St & Blaxland Rd & Parkes St.	(A3) Devlin St & Blaxland Rd & Parkes St, Ryde		
Intersection upgrades to Showground Road to improve bus priority and access.	Showground Road & Carrington Road, Castle Hill		
Intersection improvements to (A3) King Georges Road & Canterbury Road.	King Georges Road & Canterbury Road, Wiley Park		\
Intersection improvements to Pacific Hwy at Finlay St	Pacific Hwy & Finlay St, Warrawee		
Intersection Improvement Georges River Road and Milton Road	Georges River Road and Milton Road, Ashfield		
Macquarie Park Bus Priority Improvements (Package 1A - Lane Cove Rd / Waterloo Rd and Package 1B - Epping Rd / Herring Road)* and Macquarie University bus interchange* <small>*These two projects have been combined</small>	Macquarie Park		
Install traffic signals at Wentworth Ave & Baker St	Banksmeadow		
Intersection improvements to Woodville Road at Parramatta Rd & The Crescent	Parramatta Rd and Woodville Rd, Granville		
Centennial Park to Kingsford via Doncaster Ave – corridor optimisation and cycleway	Randwick		
Oxford Street (Bondi Junction)	Waverley		

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**Topic:** Fixing Local Roads program

**Question Type:** Written (21 August 2020)

**Senator Janet Rice asked:**

- In relation to the 'Fixing Local Roads' program:
  - Is the Commonwealth's funding additional to NSW's funding commitments to the program to date, or reimbursing NSW funding that is already committed?
  - What information did the Commonwealth receive in considering the project?
  - Will the Commonwealth have any role in allocating the funding to specific sites within NSW, or is it entirely undertaken by the NSW Government?
  - Are Local Govts involved in the allocation and delivery of these projects?

**Answer:**

The Australian Government has committed \$191 million, to the Fixing Local Roads program. This commitment is designed to accelerate the existing NSW Government program for the 2020-21 financial year, so that more projects can start sooner.

The Australian Government received details of the scope and objectives of the program, and confirmed with the NSW Government that a funding injection would boost jobs in regional Australia by facilitating delivery of shovel ready projects.

Under the program, councils apply to Transport for NSW (TfNSW) for project-specific grants to repair priority local roads. An assessment panel established by TfNSW then undertakes a multi-criteria assessment of each application and makes recommendations to the NSW Government for final approval.

The Australian Government retains visibility of the projects funded under the program and will administer the projects as part of the Infrastructure Investment Program consistent with the *National Land Transport Act 2014*, the National Partnership Agreement on Land Transport Infrastructure Projects and the supporting Notes on Administration.

Local Councils submit projects for assessment, and are responsible for the delivery of the approved projects.

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**Topic:** Regional Rail Revival additional funding

**Question Type:** Written (21 August 2020)

**Senator Janet Rice asked:**

- In relation to the 'Regional Rail Revival' project:
  - What will the Commonwealth's additional funding contribute to?
  - What is the expected increase in uptake of rail services from within regional communities?
  - What is the expected increase in uptake by commuters to and from Melbourne to regional communities?
  - What is the forecast economic growth in regional employment markets?

**Answer:**

The Australian Government has agreed to contribute around \$1.8 billion to the Regional Rail Revival Package. The projects are designed to improve the resilience and reliability of the Victorian regional rail network that connects Victorian regional cities and towns with Melbourne.

Project works include track upgrades and replacement, new bridges, additional passing loops and improved network communications.

The additional Australian Government funding for the Regional Rail Revival Package will enable projects to meet passenger and freight rail outcomes, provide employment continuity, and create new employment and business activity opportunities in regional Victoria. Regional Rail Revival Package projects are expected to support more than 1000 direct and indirect jobs during the construction phase.

Increases in rail patronage and related economic growth will vary between each project.