

Economics Legislation Committee
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Industry, Innovation and Science Portfolio
2017 - 2018 Budget Estimates
31 May – 1 June 2017

AGENCY/DEPARTMENT: DEPARTMENT OF INDUSTRY, INNOVATION AND SCIENCE

TOPIC: Start date for the Croydon to Richmond Road

REFERENCE: Questions on Notice (Hansard, 1 June 2017, page 141)

QUESTION No.: BI-69

Senator IAN MACDONALD: Yes, I do. Again, I direct these to Mr Coffey, and thank you again for being brief and concise in your answers. As to the money that flows to road construction, particularly to the beef roads under the northern Australian development white paper: what is the arrangement for who actually does the work, who actually allocates the money and who actually spends it—and I am particularly referring to the beef road from Croydon to Richmond. The decision has been made. The money has been allocated by the federal government. I am just wondering what the process now is to actually get that money spent and the work done. Perhaps I can confine it to just that Croydon to Richmond road.

Mr Coffey: At the moment, the process is that there are announcements made by the government. Then the department of infrastructure negotiates with the state governments around the scope of the project and the contribution from the states. It is usually an 80:20 split. A lot of those negotiations are ongoing at the moment. There have been four projects approved and agreed by the minister. They are in Queensland.

Senator IAN MACDONALD: Which minister?

Mr Coffey: Minister Chester. Those projects are the Flinders Highway, \$13.6 million on the Townsville to Torrens Creek road, the Charters Towers to Richmond road, the Kennedy Developmental Road, Mount Garnet to The Lynd, and the The Lynd to Hughenden. Those four projects, over \$70 million worth, have been formally approved and agreed. Construction on those should commence mid year. It is now up to the Queensland government to procure that work through their mechanisms through the state.

Senator IAN MACDONALD: So if the Queensland government, for whatever reason, are going very slow, there is nothing the federal government can do, having made the money available, to make sure that work starts?

Mr Coffey: I am sure there would be key performance indicators in the agreement, but the specifics of that we would have to talk to the department of infrastructure about. I should also say that with all these projects there need to be Indigenous employment targets negotiated. There have been on those projects. That was agreed at five per cent. It is generally done in relation to the Indigenous population of that area.

Senator IAN MACDONALD: You did not mention the Croydon to Richmond road, which I specifically mentioned. I was out speaking to the Croydon Shire Council just a couple of weeks back, and I know that the approval has been given and the decision has been made, but they do not know about the start date and I am finding it difficult to find out when it is starting. Is that something that I should ask you about or the infrastructure department?

Mr Coffey: We do not have that detail, but we could take that on notice.

ANSWER

The Department of Infrastructure and Regional Development (DIRD) has advised that as of 23 June 2017, a Project Proposal Report for the Richmond - Croydon Road - Progressive Sealing project (Packages One and Two) has not been submitted by Queensland and is therefore yet to be formally approved by the Australian Government. However, based on the latest correspondence with the Queensland Department of Transport and Main Roads, DIRD understands that construction is expected to start on both packages of works in mid-2018.

For further information on the status of all projects committed to under both the \$600 million Northern Australia Roads Programme and the \$100 million Northern Australia Beef Roads Programme please refer to the following web pages:

<http://investment.infrastructure.gov.au/funding/NorthernAus/index.aspx>

<http://investment.infrastructure.gov.au/funding/NABeef/index.aspx>