

Rural & Regional Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Budget Estimates May 2014

Infrastructure and Regional Development

Question no.: 215

Program: n/a

Division/Agency: Policy and Research

Topic: Office of Northern Australia – Townsville Office

Proof Hansard Page: 47 (27 May 2014)

Senator McLucas, Jan asked:

Senator McLUCAS: Does the office still exist in Townsville?

Mr Collett: Yes, we have one staff member in Townsville who is co-located with some other members of staff from our department. Those members of staff carry out a number of different functions. Some are in our local government and territories division and they obviously support each other's roles in that, so a number of different staff are potentially involved in the Office of Northern Australia's activities in support of our one staff member who is based there.

Senator McLUCAS: How many did we used to have in Townsville?

Mr Collett: I am not sure. I would have to check that on notice. The function came across from the previous Department of Regional Australia.

Senator McLUCAS: That is right.

Mr Collett: I do not have that corporate history, but I am happy to take that on notice and come back to you.

Mr Mrdak: As Mr Collett said, we only picked this up in September, and I think at that stage there was one staff member. Previous to that I am not sure.

Answer:

The number of staff located in the Townsville regional office has remained unchanged over the past two years, at five. The number of staff assigned directly to activities in the Office of Northern Australia (ONA) has varied depending on priorities and workloads. Currently there is one officer based in Townsville specifically tasked with ONA activities.

Rural & Regional Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Budget Estimates May 2014
Infrastructure and Regional Development

Question no.: 216

Program: 3.1

Division/Agency: Policy and Research

Topic: Regional Development Projects in Northern Australia

Proof Hansard Pages: 48-49 (27 May 2014)

Senator McLucas, Jan asked:

Senator McLUCAS: Just for the record, would it be possible on notice for you to give me a list for that \$4,300,000 allocation?

Ms Power: The original funding under that heading related to 16 projects, which were commitments made by the former government but which had no funding contracts. Fifteen of those projects were taken as savings by the government. There is only one project that is still in negotiation. It was monies originally for Cairns City Council to undertake revitalisation of the city centre in the lead-up to G20. The council has completed those works.

...

Senator McLUCAS: That is very interesting. Could I though, Ms Power, have a list of those 16 proposed projects that were a part of the North Queensland plan, just for completeness?

Ms Power: Yes, we will take that on notice.

Answer:

REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS IN NORTHERN QUEENSLAND

The former Government identified the following 16 regional development projects in northern Queensland prior to, and during, the 2013 election caretaker period.

Rural & Regional Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Budget Estimates May 2014
Infrastructure and Regional Development

Question no.: 217

Program: n/a

Division/Agency: Policy and Research

Topic: Northern Australia Strategic Partnership

Proof Hansard Page: 49 (27 May 2014)

Senator McLucas, Jan asked:

Senator McLUCAS: Moving now to the Northern Australia Strategic Partnership, I have a newspaper report from February this year talking about the establishment of the partnership. How often has it met or will it meet and who is on in the partnership? I think I know the answer to the final bit.

Mr Collett: The strategic partnership is made up of the Prime Minister, the Deputy Prime Minister, the Chief Minister of the Northern Territory, and the Premiers of Queensland and Western Australia. My understanding is that the support to the partnership has been provided out of the Prime Minister's department. I understand that the partnership has met once. I am not in a position to provide you with detail today in terms of intended future meetings, but I am happy to discuss that with the Prime Minister's department and come back to you on notice.

Senator McLUCAS: Thank you.

Answer:

The Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet advise that the next meeting of the Northern Australia Strategic Partnership is being scheduled.

Rural & Regional Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Budget Estimates May 2014
Infrastructure and Regional Development

Question no.: 218

Program: n/a

Division/Agency: Policy and Research

Topic: Advisory Group on Northern Australia

Proof Hansard Page: 50 (27 May 2014)

Senator Heffernan, Bill asked:

CHAIR: Was the advisory council appointed with a list of skills? Or is it just some sort of bureaucratic nonsense?

Mr Collett: Certainly, when we were asked by the Prime Minister's department to provide some suggestions on who might be on the expert group, there was a clear indication that some expertise in a variety of northern industries and/or experience in northern Australia was something that—

CHAIR: Could you provide us with the list of expertise you suggested?

Mr Collett: Sorry, the names that we put forward?

CHAIR: Not necessarily the names, but the skillsets?

Mr Collett: Certainly. I am happy on notice to come back to you with advice on the skillsets of some of the people that we suggested.

...

CHAIR: Could I just take you back. You said you would provide the committee with the skillsets of the people to be appointed or the skillsets of the advice that you gave. I want to know what skillsets advice you gave to the government as much as what are the skills of the people that have been appointed.

Mr Collett: I am happy to take both of those things on notice and provide you detail on both.

Answer:

The Office of Northern Australia (ONA) was consulted in the establishment of the Strategic Partnership Advisory Group for advice on stakeholders with pre-eminent expertise on northern Australian issues and suggested individuals with strong knowledge of northern Australian industries and issues including in the areas of Economic Development; Indigenous Affairs; Agriculture (including pastoral); Education and Mining. The Advisory Group was announced on 10 June 2014 and details of the group are available at <https://www.northernaustralia.dpmc.gov.au/media/>

Rural & Regional Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Budget Estimates May 2014

Infrastructure and Regional Development

Question no.: 219

Program: n/a

Division/Agency: Policy and Research

Topic: BITRE Project – Improving Road Safety Outcomes

Proof Hansard Page: 54 (27 May 2014)

Senator Sterle, Glenn asked:

Senator STERLE: Have you taken on any new projects since September?

Dr Dolman: Yes.

Senator STERLE: Would you like to tell us what they are? ...

Dr Dolman: I think the major one that we have taken on is the government made an election commitment for the bureau to undertake a review of road trauma. We have now commenced that work. The request was really for us, from an economic perspective, to have a look at the things that could be done to improve road safety outcomes, both in terms of reducing fatalities and reducing serious injury. The approach we are taking is looking at what could be done that will have the biggest difference potentially for the least amount of dollars as well. That is a factor that we are considering. So far with that work we have commissioned a survey to be undertaken of road safety experts. They have identified a list of 400 things that we could do. Last week we held a workshop that looked to narrow that list of things down to about 25 or 30 things which we will then do the detailed economic analysis of.

Senator STERLE: Firstly, who was at the workshop?

Dr Dolman: I can give you a list. It was essentially a list of road safety experts. We tried to go very broad in terms of coverage. There were representatives of motorcycle groups, pedal cycle groups, police as well as academic road safety experts and some state government departments. It was a very broad range. I think there were about 30-odd people.

Answer:

The following organisations and representatives participated in the National Road Trauma Workshop held in Canberra on 16 May 2014.

Organisation	Representative
Australia New Zealand Policing Advisory Agency	Melanie Atlee
ARRB	Gerald Waldron
ARRB	Blair Turner
Australasian College of Road Safety	Lauchlan McIntosh
Australian Trucking Association*	Ro Mueller*
Australian Automobile Association	Craig Newland
Australian Driver Trainers Association	Allan Porter
Australian Motorcycle Council (Motorcycle Riders Association)	Nicky Hussey
Bicycle Network Victoria	Garry Brennan
BITRE	Gary Dolman
BITRE	David Gargett
BITRE	Tim Risbey
Centre for Accident Research and Road Safety	Narelle Haworth
Centre for Road Safety, Transport for NSW	Bernard Carlon

Rural & Regional Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Budget Estimates May 2014

Infrastructure and Regional Development

Department of Infrastructure and Regional Development	Marcus James
Department of Infrastructure and Regional Development	John Goldsworthy
Department of Infrastructure and Regional Development	Olivia Sherwood
Department of Transport and Main Roads Queensland	Mike Stapleton
Federal Chamber of Automotive Industries (FCAI)	Tony Weber
Institute of Public Works Engineering Australasia	Mick Savage
Main Roads Western Australia	David Moyses
Martin Small Consulting	Martin Small
Monash University Accident Research Centre	Professor Mark Stevenson
Motor Accident Commission of South Australia*	Michael Cornish*
NRMA-ACT Road Safety Trust	Professor Don Aitkin for Linda Cooke
Queensland Police	Lisa-Marie O'Donnell
Queensland Police	Dale Pointon
St John Ambulance	Belinda Ding
VicRoads	Peter Schofield

* Accepted invitation but unable to attend on the day.

Rural & Regional Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Budget Estimates May 2014
Infrastructure and Regional Development

Question no.: 220

Program: n/a

Division/Agency: Policy and Research

Topic: Urban Policy

Proof Hansard Page: 56 (27 May 2014)

Senator Gallacher, Alex asked:

Senator GALLACHER: Why has urban policy been abandoned in the budget portfolio statement? Why is it no longer mentioned in there?

Mr Mrdak: I will just check that. I will come back to you on the Urban Policy Forum's formal status, as to whether it has been abolished. We certainly continue to look at urban infrastructure issues, and we certainly continue to look at particularly urban planning issues in the context of the government's investment program.

Answer:

Efficiencies within the Department saw the resources of the former Major Cities Unit amalgamated into the Policy and Research Division. The Department continues to work on urban policy through its regular engagement with States and Territories on key infrastructure projects, and through ongoing production of the annual State of Australian Cities Report. This work is delivered under Outcome 1 of the Infrastructure and Regional Development Portfolio Budget Statement.

Rural & Regional Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Budget Estimates May 2014
Infrastructure and Regional Development

Question no.: 221

Program: n/a

Division/Agency: Policy and Research

Topic: Analysis of Budget and Impacts on Regional Australia

Proof Hansard Page: 14 (27 May 2014)

Senator Conroy, Stephen asked:

Senator CONROY: The government took a range of decisions in the budget that will impact negatively on regional Australia. What analysis was carried out, to pick an example, by the department of the GP co-payment and other increases in health payments on a regional basis?

Mr Mrdak: I am not aware that we undertook an analysis of that.

Senator CONROY: So the department was not consulted at all?

Mr Mrdak: Not to my knowledge. I will take that on notice. I do not believe we were.

Answer:

The Department of Infrastructure and Regional Development was not consulted by the Department of Health on the 2014-15 Budget health measures.

All Cabinet Submissions that have an impact on regional Australia are required to include a Regional Australia Impact Statement; these are prepared by portfolios leading the development of a Cabinet Submission. Further detail on Regional Australia Impact Statements is at <http://www.regional.gov.au/regional/information/rais/>.

Rural & Regional Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Budget Estimates May 2014
Infrastructure and Regional Development

Question no.: 222

Program: n/a

Division/Agency: Policy and Research

Topic: Advisory Group on Northern Australia

Proof Hansard Pages: 49-50 (27 May 2014)

Senator McLucas, Jan asked:

Senator McLUCAS: Were you consulted in terms of the membership of this advisory group?

Mr Collett: We were asked if there were particular parties that we would think would be worthy of nomination. As I understand it, nominations were also sought from the three northern jurisdictions, and I think that further detail on that is probably something the Prime Minister and Cabinet department could give you. I am conscious that we were consulted in terms of some suggestions, but not necessarily more detail in terms of giving advice on specific people beyond that.

Senator McLUCAS: Do you recall when that was?

Mr Collett: I would have to go back and check on the specific dates for you.

Senator McLUCAS: I do not need specific dates. Was it three months ago or six months ago?

Mr Collett: I think it is probably around three months ago, but I would need to go back and check on that for you.

Senator McLUCAS: If it is not three months you can come back to me on that.

Mr Collett: Certainly.

Answer:

The Office of Northern Australia (ONA) was consulted in February 2014 by the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet on the composition of the Northern Australia Expert Advisory Group.

Rural & Regional Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Budget Estimates May 2014

Infrastructure and Regional Development

Question no.: 223

Program: n/a

Division/Agency: Policy and Research

Topic: Impact on Regional Australia

Proof Hansard Page: Written

Senator Sterle, Glenn asked:

1. In the Government's Budget there are a number of measures that will impact on regional Australia. Why didn't the Government carry out any analysis or regional impact study prior to developing the Budget measures?
2. Did the Minister decide that no regional impact study was necessary?
3. Was there any correspondence or discussions between the Minister's office, the Prime Minister's office and relevant departments to determine if a regional impact study was necessary either prior to the Budget or after the Budget?
4. Can the Department explain what impact will be felt across regional Australia due to the broader Budget measures but more specifically the \$7 GP co-payment, increasing the fuel excise and the changes to tertiary education?

Answer:

All Cabinet Submissions that have an impact on regional Australia are required to include a Regional Australia Impact Statement; these are prepared by portfolios leading the development of a Cabinet Submission. Relevant portfolios should be contacted in relation to the impact on regions of budget measures prepared by them. Further detail on Regional Australia Impact Statements is at <http://www.regional.gov.au/regional/information/rais/>.

Rural & Regional Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Budget Estimates May 2014
Infrastructure and Regional Development

Question no.: 224

Program: n/a

Division/Agency: Policy and Research

Topic: Paid Parental Leave – Regional Australia

Proof Hansard Page: Written

Senator Sterle, Glenn asked:

1. Can the Department explain how the Government's Paid Parental Leave Scheme will work across regional Australia?
2. Can the Department explain how the Government's Paid Parental Leave Scheme will impact on regional Australia?

Answer:

This is a question for the Department of Social Services.