

Senate Standing Committee on Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Additional Budget Estimates February 2009
Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government

Question No.: NBII 01

Division: Nation Building – Infrastructure Investment

Topic: Maintenance Funding for Tasman and Brooker Highways

Hansard Page: 25 (24/02/09)

Senator Bushby asked:

Senator BUSHBY—During the campaign prior to the last election, the then opposition undertook to extend Tasmania's national network to include the Brooker Highway from Granton to the Port of Hobart and the Tasman Highway from Hobart to the Hobart airport. Has this been achieved yet?

Mr Rokvic—The government has formalised the arrangements to extend the Brooker Highway.

Senator BUSHBY—Does that mean that you have taken over control and responsibility?

Mr Rokvic—That enables the state to utilise maintenance funding in relation to maintenance on the highway.

Senator BUSHBY—Those sections of those two highways now have the same status as other national roads?

Mr Rokvic—Correct, Senator.

Senator BUSHBY—What date did that take effect?

Ms McNally—That was in February 2009.

Mr Rokvic—Early February 2009.

Senator BUSHBY—Just very recently.

Mr Rokvic—Correct.

Senator BUSHBY—Has the Department revised any of its estimates for costings as a result of the responsibility for taking over those two sections?

Mr Rokvic—The maintenance funding that has been provided provides for the Brooker Highway.

Senator BUSHBY—Has it increased as a result of taking on those two?

Mr Rokvic—The funding is as committed by the government. It was \$31 million for maintenance funding plus the additional \$1 million provided as part of the nation building.

Senator BUSHBY—That is not just for those two sections though.

Mr Rokvic—That is for the network as a whole.

Senator BUSHBY—The national network. And that has not changed as a result of taking over the responsibility for those two sections in February of this year.

Mr Rokvic—Correct.

Senator BUSHBY—There is currently work being undertaken on both those sections of highway. Have the funds to cover the cost of work on those two sections been accessed from federal funds under that maintenance program?

Mr Rokvic—I will have to take that on notice, Senator. The question is about timing as to when those works were undertaken.

Answer:

The Tasmanian Government entered into contracts for the current works on the Brooker and Tasman Highways prior to the addition of sections of these two roads to the National Land Transport Network. The Tasmanian Government has indicated they will honour the terms of these contracts, with all associated costs to be met by state funds. As the roads have been added to the National Network, Commonwealth maintenance funding can now be considered for any future work.

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Question No.: NBII 02

Division: Nation Building – Infrastructure Investment

Topic: COAG Agreement

Hansard Page: 26 (24/02/09)

Senator Bushby asked:

Senator Conroy—The COAG agreement, which has been signed off—and I think one of your colleagues may even have asked me a question about this in the chamber—is quite clear about the requirement that the state governments have signed up to. So the basic premise of your question is handled by and responded to by the COAG agreement, which is very black and white about the responsibilities.

Senator BUSHBY—And what does it say with respect to this?

Senator Conroy—I will happily get you a copy of it. As I said, I did read it out.

Senator BUSHBY—But the particular question I am asking—

Senator Conroy—You are trying to suggest that there is cost-shifting—

Senator BUSHBY—There quite clearly is.

Senator Conroy—The point that I am making is that the Prime Minister and the premiers signed up to a COAG agreement, which we will get for you and I will read out to you again. I think I read it out three times, from recollection, in the Senate in response to your questions. It is very clear about stopping the cost-shifting blame game. But I will get you a copy of it.

Answer:

The National Partnership Agreement signed by all States and Territories as part of the implementation of the Nation Building and Jobs Plan is available at <www.coag.gov.au>.

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Question No.: NBII 03

Division/Agency: Nation Building – Infrastructure Investment

Topic: Bolivia Hill

Hansard Page: 28 (24/02/09)

Senator Williams asked:

Senator WILLIAMS—Who is responsible for New South Wales infrastructure? I see some of the people on the list here are obviously not here today. Anyway, I want to raise one issue about a black spot on the New England Highway. The New England Highway, of course, is Highway 1, which is the total responsibility of the federal government. In general, the New England Highway is in pretty good shape. There has been a lot of work done at places like Black Mountain near Guyra and bridges near Tenterfield et cetera. There is an area known as Bolivia Hill. Would you be able to do some investigations on Bolivia Hill? How can we go through that process? There was a young fellow killed there about three weeks ago and it is a place that requires the most attention on the whole New England Highway, as I see it. I was wondering if your Department could perhaps have a look at that Bolivia Hill problem. No doubt it would be an expensive job to repair, but on the main highway, on one like this, it certainly needs attention and I would appreciate it if you, through the Department, could have a look at that area.

Ms O'Connell—Certainly. I will take that on notice and have a look.

Senator WILLIAMS—That would be wonderful. Thank you.

Answer:

The New South Wales Government.

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Question No.: NBII 04

Division/Agency: Nation Building – Infrastructure Investment

Topic: Australian Rail Track Corporation – Advanced Train Management System

Hansard Pages: 28-29 (24/02/09)

Senator Milne asked:

Senator MILNE—I am not sure if my question comes under Infrastructure Australia, in which case it has gone, or whether you can answer it, but one of the issues that the railway community raises with me quite often is the need for an national digital train control system for Australia. Can anybody tell me whether that is being progressed? It is part of the intelligent networks we need around the country. We are talking about broadband, we are talking about an intelligent electricity grid and it and it seems to me that a parallel project ought to be a national digital train control system. Could you tell me whether there is anything happening on that front?

Mr Williams—As part of the nation-building statement in December last year, part of the moneys being provided to the Australian Rail Track Corporation included \$45 million for the trial phase that is currently being undertaken by the ARTC. It is a \$90 million trial in South Australia looking at the advanced train management system, which is effectively a digital train management system. If the technology is proven and it is moved into the implementation phase it could see the removal of track-side signalling. It would effectively use satellite and other technology in the cabins. That has the potential to significantly increase the productivity of the rail system in terms of being able to have more trains on the track and the headway or distance between trains could be reduced allowing for more efficient use of the train tracks. I also note that it was on the Infrastructure Australia priority list as something that needs to be looked at.

Senator MILNE—You have just indicated that it is \$90 million pilot and that \$45 was allocated.

Mr Williams—The amount of \$45 million is coming from the Australian government through the equity injection into ARTC, and the other \$45 million is coming from internal reserves and revenues from ARTC.

Senator MILNE—When will the trial be completed and, assuming that it is successful and proves what the proponents say in that it is shown to lead to a much better outcome in terms of productivity, what is the projected cost of implementing the system nation-wide?

Mr Williams—I would have to take those questions on notice.

Senator MILNE—When do you expect the trial to be completed and evaluated? If I could have two separate dates for when you expect to have some recommendation for government?

Ms O'Connell—I will ask David Marchant to talk further after lunch specifically in relation to that trial. David is from ARTC. In terms of the advanced train management system and the trial, for reference it is outlined on page 49 in the nation-building booklet.

Answer:

The Chief Executive Officer of the Australian Rail Track Corporation (ARTC), Mr David Marchant, on page 45 of the Committee Hansard dated 24 February 2009, provided details of its Advanced Train Management System and the timing of the trial. A copy of the extract can be found on <www.aph.gov.au>.

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Question No.: NBII 05

Division/Agency: Nation Building – Infrastructure Investment

Topic: Education Campaign for Level Crossings

Hansard Page: 29 (24/02/09)

Senator Milne asked:

Senator MILNE—I look forward to that happening nationally at some point. I want to go on and ask about the boom gates and active controls at level crossings. Whilst I welcome that funding it has been put to me that, if it does not have an education program with it, it will not necessarily improve safety outcomes. It has been put to me that young women in particular—which surprised me again—actually race the boom gates. And in Queensland they had to engage in a program of education in infant schools to get children to say from the back seat, ‘Stop the car mummy.’ So it is counterintuitive because you would assume boom gates would make it much more safe, and I certainly hope it does and certainly support the initiative. I wonder whether there has been any consultation with safety authorities about the education program that might go with it?

Mr Williams—The primary focus of the boom gates measure is on the infrastructure side of things in terms of the installation of boom gates and other active control measures at level crossings. I know that a number of the states have their own programs relating to level crossings. A number of those have elements of education campaigns. Also through the Australian Transport Council process, there is a rail level-crossings group, whose membership includes state and territory governments, the Commonwealth, local government and industry. That brings together all of the issues relating to level crossings. Through that process there is coordination of effort in relation to level crossings across the country.

Senator MILNE—Would you please take on notice a question to be put to that coordinating group as to whether there has been any consideration given to an education campaign to be rolled out across the country in conjunction with this infrastructure spend on level crossing boom gates.

Mr Williams—Yes.

Answer:

The Federal Government is not directly funding any education programs on driver behaviour related to level crossings.

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Question No.: NB11 06

Division/Agency: Nation Building – Infrastructure Investment

Topic: Nation Building – Land Transport Infrastructure Commitments

Hansard Pages: 29-30 (24/02/09)

Senator MacDonald asked:

Senator IAN MACDONALD—....Talking about the boom gates, this was part of the \$42 billion package, wasn't it? Has that been rolled into the nation building fund? You are in charge of the infrastructure in the \$42 billion package?

Mr Williams—I have responsibility for the boom gates program.

Senator IAN MACDONALD—But all of the infrastructure programs, the spending will come through your Department?

Mr Tongue—Those bits of infrastructure are associated with the transport system, but—

Ms O'Connell—That is right, but not the infrastructure related to, for example, schools. That is being managed by a different Department. But the four measures I outlined were the four measures of the \$42 billion nation building package: boom gates, maintenance, community infrastructure and black spots.

Senator IAN MACDONALD—What is the figure that your Department will have to spend?

Ms O'Connell—It is approximately \$890 million.

Senator IAN MACDONALD—I thought it was more than that.

Ms O'Connell—No, that is just from that particular measure, from that particular stimulus package. There are the December nation-building stimulus package components as well.

Senator IAN MACDONALD—So what did you say?

Ms O'Connell—\$890 from February.

Senator IAN MACDONALD—And how much from December?

Ms McNally—\$711 million on roads.

Ms O'Connell—And there was \$1.2 billion on rail.

Ms McNally—Of that, the boom gate level crossings is \$150 million.

Senator IAN MACDONALD—And that is additional to all of those other figures you have given?

Ms McNally—It is incorporated in the \$890 million.

Ms O'Connell—And that is on top of the existing commitments around road-building, rail et cetera.

Senator IAN MACDONALD—Do you have a global figure for what those existing commitments are?

Ms McNally—We will have to take that on notice.

Answer:

The Nation Building Program is a \$26.4 billion investment into the national road and rail network.

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Question No.: NBII 07

Division/Agency: Nation Building – Infrastructure Investment

Topic: Duplication of Burdekin River Bridge

Hansard Page: 32 (24/02/09)

Senator Macdonald asked:

Senator IAN MACDONALD—Is there any work being done on duplication of the Burdekin Bridge? I have raised issues with the minister on the absolute need for this, which was demonstrated again by the floods just recently.

Ms Goodspeed—Since your last question on notice, the Australian Government has committed \$25 million for maintenance and rehabilitation of the bridge.

Senator IAN MACDONALD—No, that was before the question on notice. That is annual maintenance that you have got to do on any bridge. I mean planning work on a duplication. It will be 10 years down the track. I have raised it with the minister and got the political reply that you would expect. I am just hopeful that perhaps he took some notice and that planning work might have been ordered to start. Has it?

Ms McNally—The Australian government is not contributing any funding to any particular planning work, but we can take that on notice and have a look at what the Queensland government is doing in that regard.

Answer:

Future planning for a duplication will be undertaken as appropriate.

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Question No.: NBII 08

Division/Agency: Nation Building – Infrastructure Investment

Topic: Rail Projects between Townsville and Mount Isa

Hansard Pages: 41-42 (24/02/09)

Senator Macdonald asked:

Senator MILNE—Can I—

Senator IAN MACDONALD—No, hang on—Mr Williams was just going to tell me about the railway line.

Mr Williams—Can you repeat the question, Senator?

Senator IAN MACDONALD—From Townsville to Mount Isa, are there any proposals or any submissions for upgrading, strengthening or duplicating anything?

Mr Williams—There is no specific funding allocated by the Australian Government to such a proposal. My understanding is that a private company entitled Australian Transport and Energy Corridor, ATEC, is a potential proponent of such a railway and may have put proposals up to Infrastructure Australia, but that is as much as—

Senator IAN MACDONALD—Is that from Townsville to Mount Isa or from Melbourne to Mount Isa?

Mr Williams—From Townsville to Mount Isa, I think, yes.

Senator IAN MACDONALD—Really? Can you just check that for me?

Mr Williams—Yes, I will.

Ms O’Connell—Can I just also mention again that, in the report to COAG that Infrastructure Australia made available in December, one of the 94 projects is the Mount Isa rail corridor upgrade, which is from Mount Isa to Townsville.

Senator IAN MACDONALD—Okay. Is that one of the 28 priority projects?

Ms O’Connell—It is one of the 94 projects.

Answer:

No.

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Question No.: NBII 09

Division/Agency: Nation Building – Infrastructure Investment

Topic: Opening Statement Made By David Marchant

Hansard Page: 46 (24/02/09)

Senator Macdonald asked:

Senator IAN MACDONALD—Is there any prospect of ARTC eventually taking over the line north of Brisbane, as it has done in the rest of Australia?

Mr Marchant—We have basically concentrated on doing our charter, which used to connect the Australian capital cities and major ports on the standard gauge interstate network. We have been concentrating on getting those connections put together and on facilitating improvements in their performance. Nobody has approached us to look at narrow gauge in the north of Queensland.

Senator IAN MACDONALD—But you are involved from Perth to Melbourne to Brisbane—so everywhere around the coast except north of Brisbane and north of Perth. No-one has ever approached you. Has it ever been raised?

Mr Marchant—No, it has not.

Senator IAN MACDONALD—Have you ever done any investigations about whether it would fit within your remit?

Mr Marchant—Absolutely not.

Senator IAN MACDONALD—Perhaps it needs the Queensland Government to approach you to have a look at it.

Mr Marchant—We would need to look at it on a commercial basis. The policies are made by government. We are a company operating on a commercial framework.

Senator IAN MACDONALD—Could you make that statement available to the Committee?

Mr Marchant—Sure.

Answer:

A copy of the opening statement from the Chief Executive Officer of the Australian Rail Track Corporation, Mr David Marchant, is at Attachment A.

[NBII 09 - Attachment]

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Question No.: NBII 10

Division/Agency: Nation Building – Infrastructure Investment

Topic: Brighton Bypass and East Derwent Highway

Hansard Pages: Written Question

Senator Bushby asked:

What date will the \$131 million to build the \$164 million Brighton Bypass and upgrade of the East Derwent Highway be delivered?

Answer:

The Australian Government's commitment of \$164 million to the Brighton Bypass will be delivered through the Nation Building Program. Payments will be made to Tasmania in accordance with their claims for payment, based on the progress of the project.

The East Derwent Highway and the Midland Highway will be upgraded as part of the Brighton Bypass project.

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Question No.: NBII 11

Division/Agency: Nation Building – Infrastructure Investment

Topic: East Derwent Highway

Hansard Pages: Written Question

Senator Bushby asked:

When will the East Derwent Highway project commence and the project finished?

Answer:

The East Derwent Highway does not form part of the National Land Transport Network, hence, projects on it are at the discretion of the state.

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Question No.: NBII 12

Division/Agency: Nation Building – Infrastructure Investment

Topic: Brighton Transport Hub

Hansard Pages: Written Question

Senator Bushby asked:

What date will the \$56 million to build the \$79 million new Brighton Transport Hub be delivered?

Answer:

The Tasmanian Government is still finalising timelines for delivery of this project.

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Question No.: NBII 13

Division/Agency: Nation Building – Infrastructure Investment

Topic: Brighton Transport Hub

Hansard Pages: Written Question

Senator Bushby asked:

When will the Brighton Transport Hub project be commenced and when will it be finished?

Answer:

See answer to NBII 12.

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Question No.: NBII 14

Division/Agency: Nation Building – Infrastructure Investment

Topic: Delivery of Funds for Rail Capacity Improvements at Rhyndaston (Tasmania)

Hansard Pages: Written Question

Senator BUSHBY asked:

What date will the \$24 million for rail capacity improvements at Rhyndaston on the main north-south rail line be delivered?

Answer:

The Australian Government's funding for rail capacity improvements at Rhyndaston on the main north-south rail line will be delivered through the Nation Building Program. Payments will be made to Tasmania in accordance with their claims for payment, based on the progress of the project.

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Question No.: NBII 15

Division/Agency: Nation Building – Infrastructure Investment

Topic: Finalisation of Rail Capacity Improvements at Rhyndaston (Tasmania)

Hansard Pages: Written Question

Senator BUSHBY asked:

When will the rail capacity improvements at Rhyndaston on the main north-south rail line the project finished?

Answer:

The Australian Government's funding at Rhyndaston on the main north-south rail line will be delivered through the Nation Building Program. Payments will be made to the Tasmanian Government in accordance with their claims for payment, based on progress of the project.

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Question No.: NBII 16

Division/Agency: Nation Building – Infrastructure Investment

Topic: Delivery of Funds for the Upgrade of Derwent Valley Rail Line

Hansard Pages: Written Question

Senator Bushby asked:

What date will the \$30 million to upgrade the Derwent Valley rail line from Boyer to Karanja be commenced and the project finished?

Answer:

The Australian Government's funding to upgrade the Derwent Valley rail line from Boyer to Karanja will be delivered through the Nation Building Program. Payments will be made to the Tasmanian Government in accordance with their claims for payment, based on progress of the project.

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Question No.: NBII 17

Division/Agency: Nation Building – Infrastructure Investment

Topic: Commencement and Finalisation of Work on the Derwent Valley Rail Line

Hansard Pages: Written Question

Senator Bushby asked:

When will the Derwent Valley rail line from Boyer to Karanja be commenced and the project finished?

Answer:

The Australian Government's funding for the the Derwent Valley rail line from Boyer to Karanja will be finished within the period 2008-09 to 2013-14 in accordance with the National Partnership Agreement between the Australian and Tasmanian governments. Payments will be made to the Tasmanian Government in accordance with their claims for payment, based on progress of the project.

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Question No.: NBII 18

Division/Agency: Nation Building – Infrastructure Investment

Topic: Bridgewater Bridge Refurbishment

Hansard Pages: Written Question

Senator Bushby asked:

When date will the \$11 million towards a \$14 million repair of the Bridgewater Bridge be delivered?

Answer:

The Australian Government's funding for repair of the Bridgewater Bridge will be delivered within the period 2008-09 to 2013-14. Payments will be made to Tasmania in accordance with their claims for payment, based on the progress of the project.

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Question No.: NBII 19

Division/Agency: Nation Building – Infrastructure Investment

Topic: Bridgewater Bridge Refurbishment

Hansard Pages: Written Question

Senator Bushby asked:

When will the repair of the Bridgewater Bridge commence and the project finished?

Answer:

Refurbishment of Bridgewater Bridge is expected to commence in late 2009. Works are expected to be completed by late 2010.

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Question No.: NBII 20

Division/Agency: Nation Building – Infrastructure Investment
Topic: Bagdad Bypass and Bridgewater Bridge Replacement
Hansard Pages: Written Question

Senator Bushby asked:

What date will the \$5 million towards a \$6.2 million investment to start planning the Pontville-Bagdad Bypass and new Bridgewater Bridge be delivered?

Answer:

The Australian Government's funding for the Bagdad Bypass and Bridgewater Bridge replacement planning will be delivered through the Nation Building Program. Payments will be made to Tasmania in accordance with their claims for payment, based on the progress of the project.

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Question No.: NBII 21

Division/Agency: Nation Building – Infrastructure Investment
Topic: Bagdad Bypass and Bridgewater Bridge Replacement
Hansard Pages: Written Question

Senator Bushby asked:

When will construction start on the Pontville-Bagdad Bypass and new Bridgewater Bridge and when will they be completed?

Answer:

Planning for the Bagdad Bypass and Bridgewater Bridge Replacement has commenced. A timeline for construction for each of these projects will be determined at the completion of planning.

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Question No.: NBII 22

Division/Agency: Nation Building – Infrastructure Investment

Topic: Kingston Bypass

Hansard Pages: Written Question

Senator Bushby asked:

When will the \$15 million towards the \$33.5 million Kingston Bypass under the Strategic Regional Program (previously announced 8 July 2007) be delivered?

Answer:

The Australian Government's funding for the Kingston Bypass will be delivered through the Nation Building Program. Payments will be made to Tasmania in accordance with their claims for payment, based on the progress of the project.

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Question No.: NBII 23

Division/Agency: Nation Building – Infrastructure Investment

Topic: Kingston Bypass

Hansard Pages: Written Question

Senator Bushby asked:

Will the Federal government increase its Kingston Bypass contribution from \$15 million?

Answer:

No.

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Question No.: NBII 24

Division/Agency: Nation Building – Infrastructure Investment

Topic: Kingston Bypass

Hansard Pages: Written Question

Senator Bushby asked:

What date will construction of the Kingston Bypass commence and when will it be completed?

Answer:

Construction is expected to commence in late 2009 and be completed by mid 2012 as detailed on the Nation Building Program website at:

<http://www.nationbuildingprogram.gov.au/projects/ProjectDetails.aspx?Project_id=TAS002>

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Question No.: NBII 25

Division/Agency: Nation Building – Infrastructure Investment

Topic: Roads – Southern Tasmania

Hansard Pages: Written Question

Senator Bushby asked:

When will the Federal government have delivered its full \$272 million to southern Tasmanian roads?

Answer:

The Australian Government's funding for land transport projects in southern Tasmania will be delivered through the Nation Building Program. Payments will be made to Tasmania in accordance with their claims for payment, based on the progress of the projects.

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Question No.: NBII 26

Division/Agency: Nation Building – Infrastructure Investment

Topic: Midland Highway

Hansard Pages: Written Question

Senator Bushby asked:

What date will the \$4.5 million towards a \$5.6 million upgrade of the Midland Highway be delivered?

Answer:

The Australian Government's funding for the Midland Highway will be delivered through the Nation Building Program. Payments will be made to Tasmania in accordance with their claims for payment, based on the progress of the project.

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Question No.: NBII 27

Division/Agency: Nation Building – Infrastructure Investment

Topic: Midland Highway

Hansard Pages: Written Question

Senator Bushby asked:

When will work commence on the upgrade of the Midland Highway and when will it be completed?

Answer:

Construction of the Midland Highway upgrade commenced in late 2008 and is expected to be completed by mid 2009 as detailed on the Nation Building Program website at:
<http://www.nationbuildingprogram.gov.au/projects/ProjectDetails.aspx?Project_id=031100-08TAS-NP>

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Question No.: NBII 28

Division/Agency: Nation Building – Infrastructure Investment

Topic: North East Freight Roads

Hansard Pages: Written Question

Senator Bushby asked:

What date will the \$34 million towards a \$42.5 million investment in North East Freight Roads to cater for higher mass limits (HML) – includes Tebrakunna Bridge, Branxholm to Tebrakunna Road, Camden Road, the Tasman Highway and Prossers Forest Road, and Bridport Main Road between Bell Bay and Scottsdale be delivered?

Answer:

The Australian Government's funding for the North East Freight Roads will be delivered through the Nation Building Program. Payments will be made to Tasmania in accordance with their claims for payment, based on the progress of the project.

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Question No.: NBII 29

Division/Agency: Nation Building – Infrastructure Investment

Topic: North East Freight Roads

Hansard Pages: Written Question

Senator Bushby asked:

When will the North East Freight Roads to cater for higher mass limits (HML) – includes Tebrakunna Bridge, Branxholm to Tebrakunna Road, Camden Road, the Tasman Highway and Prossers Forest Road, and Bridport Main Road between Bell Bay and Scottsdale commence and the project completed?

Answer:

Construction has commenced and is expected to be completed by 2012 as detailed on the Nation Building Program website at:

<http://www.nationbuildingprogram.gov.au/projects/ProjectDetails.aspx?Project_id=00006-08TAS-SR>

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Question No.: NBII 30

Division/Agency: Nation Building – Infrastructure Investment

Topic: Delivery of Funds for the Bell Bay Intermodal (Tasmania)

Hansard Pages: Written Question

Senator Bushby asked:

What date will the \$5.2 million towards a \$6.5 million improvement of the Bell Bay Intermodal be delivered?

Answer:

The Australian Government's funding for the improvement of the Bell Bay Intermodal will be delivered through the Nation Building Program. Payments will be made to the Tasmanian Government in accordance with their claims for payment, based on the progress of the project.

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Question No.: NBII 31

Division/Agency: Nation Building – Infrastructure Investment

Topic: Commencement and Finalisation of Improvements to the Bell Bay Intermodal

Hansard Pages: Written Question

Senator Bushby asked:

When will the improvement of the Bell Bay Intermodal commence and when will it be completed?

Answer:

The Australian Government's funding for the improvement of the Bell Bay Intermodal will be delivered through the Nation Building Program. Payments will be made to the Tasmanian Government in accordance with their claims for payment, based on progress of the project.

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Question No.: NBII 32

Division/Agency: Nation Building – Infrastructure Investment

Topic: Delivery of Funds for the Main North-South Rail Line Capacity Improvements

Hansard Pages: Written Question

Senator Bushby asked:

What date will the \$31.6 million for Main North-South Line rail capacity improvements be delivered?

Answer:

The Australian Government's funding for the improvements to the Main North-South Line will be delivered through the Nation Building Program. Payments will be made to the Tasmanian Government in accordance with their claims for payment, based on progress of the project.

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Question No.: NBII 33

Division/Agency: Nation Building – Infrastructure Investment

Topic: Commencement and Finalisation of the Main North-South Rail Line
Capacity Improvements (Tasmania)

Hansard Pages: Written Question

Senator Bushby asked:

When will the Main North-South Line rail capacity improvements be commenced and when will they be delivered?

Answer:

The Australian Government's funding for the improvements to the Main North-South Line will be delivered through the Nation Building Program. Payments will be made to the Tasmanian Government in accordance with their claims for payment, based on progress of the project.

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Question No.: NBII 34

Division/Agency: Nation Building – Infrastructure Investment

Topic: Delivery of Funds for the Upgrade to the Wiltshire Rail Line (Tasmania)

Hansard Pages: Written Question

Senator Bushby asked:

What date will the \$30 million to upgrade the Wiltshire Rail Line be delivered?

Answer:

The Australian Government's funding to upgrade the Wiltshire Rail line will be delivered through the Nation Building Program. Payments will be made to the Tasmanian Government in accordance with their claims for payment, based on progress of the project.

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Question No.: NBII 35

Division/Agency: Nation Building – Infrastructure Investment

Topic: Commencement and Finalisation of the Upgrade to the Wiltshire
Rail Line (Tasmania)

Hansard Pages: Written Question

Senator Bushby asked:

When will the upgrade the Wiltshire Rail Line be commenced and when will it be completed?

Answer:

See answer to NBII 34.

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Question No.: NBII 36

Division/Agency: Nation Building – Infrastructure Investment

Topic: Delivery of Funds for the Upgrade to the West Coast Rail Spurs to Hellyer Mine
and from Melba Flats to Zeehan (Tasmania)

Hansard Pages: Written Question

Senator Bushby asked:

What date will the \$11.7 million to upgrade West Coast Rail spurs to Hellyer Mine and from Melba Flats to Zeehan be delivered?

Answer:

The implementation and timing for the upgrade of the West Coast Rail spurs to Hellyer Mine and from Melba Flats to Zeehan are still the subject of negotiations between the Australian Government and the Tasmanian Government, noting that Pacific National Tasmania own the section of the line from Melba Flats to Burnie.

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Question No.: NBII 37

Division/Agency: Nation Building – Infrastructure Investment

Topic: Commencement and Finalisation of the Upgrade to the West Coast Rail Spurs
to Hellyer Mine and from Melba Flats to Zeehan (Tasmania)

Hansard Pages: Written Question

Senator Bushby asked:

What date will the upgraded West Coast Rail spurs to Hellyer Mine and from Melba Flats to Zeehan commence and when will it be completed?

Answer:

See answer to NBII 36.

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Question No.: NBII 38

Division/Agency: Nation Building – Infrastructure Investment

Topic: Formby Road

Hansard Pages: Written Question

Senator Bushby asked:

What date will the \$2 million towards a \$4 million upgrade of Formby Road at Devonport be delivered?

Answer:

The Australian Government's funding for the upgrade of Formby Road will be delivered through the Nation Building Program. Payments will be made to Davenport City Council in accordance with their claims for payment, based on the progress of the project.

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Question No.: NBII 39

Division/Agency: Nation Building – Infrastructure Investment

Topic: Formby Road

Hansard Pages: Written Question

Senator Bushby asked:

When will construction commence on the upgrade of Formby Road at Devonport and when will it be completed?

Answer:

Construction of the upgrade of Formby Road is expected to commence in late 2009 and be completed in mid 2010.

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Question No.: NBII 40

Division/Agency: Nation Building – Infrastructure Investment

Topic: Port Sorell Road

Hansard Pages: Written Question

Senator Bushby asked:

What date will the \$1 million towards a \$4 million upgrade of Port Sorell Road be delivered?

Answer:

The Australian Government's funding for Port Sorell Road will be delivered through the Nation Building Program. Payments will be made to Tasmania in accordance with their claims for payment, based on the progress of the project.

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Question No.: NBII 41

Division/Agency: Nation Building – Infrastructure Investment

Topic: Port Sorell Road

Hansard Pages: Written Question

Senator Bushby asked:

When will the upgrade of Port Sorell Road be commenced and when will it be completed?

Answer:

A timeline for the delivery of this project is yet to be established by the Tasmanian Government.

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Question No.: NBII 42

Division/Agency: Nation Building – Infrastructure Investment

Topic: Illawarra Main Road

Hansard Pages: Written Question

Senator Bushby asked:

What date will the \$3.1 million towards a \$6.2 million upgrade of the Illawarra Link Road be delivered?

Answer:

Australian Government funding for the Illawarra Road will be delivered through the Nation Building Program. Payments will be made to Tasmania in accordance with their claims for payment, based on the progress of the project.

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Question No.: NBII 43

Division/Agency: Nation Building – Infrastructure Investment

Topic: Illawarra Main Road

Hansard Pages: Written Question

Senator Bushby asked:

When will the upgrade of the Illawarra Link Road commence and when will it be delivered?

Answer:

Construction of the Illawarra Road upgrade is expected to commence in late 2009 and be completed in 2010.

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Question No.: NBII 44

Division/Agency: Nation Building – Infrastructure Investment

Topic: Westbury Road/Mt. Leslie Road Intersection

Hansard Pages: Written Question

Senator Bushby asked:

What date will the \$350,000 for traffic lights or a roundabout at the Westbury Road/Mt. Leslie Road intersection in Launceston (previously announced 6 September 2007) be delivered?

Answer:

The Australian Government's funding for the Westbury Road/Mt. Leslie Road intersection will be delivered through the Nation Building Program. Payments will be made to Meander Valley Council in accordance with their claims for payment, based on the progress of the project.

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Question No.: NBII 45

Division/Agency: Nation Building – Infrastructure Investment

Topic: Westbury Road/Mount Leslie Road Intersection

Hansard Pages: Written Question

Senator Bushby asked:

When will the traffic lights or a roundabout at the Westbury Road/Mt. Leslie Road intersection in Launceston be commenced and when will it be completed?

Answer:

Construction of the Westbury Road/Mount Leslie Road intersection is expected to begin in mid-2009. Works are expected to be completed in late 2009.

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Question No.: NBII 46

Division/Agency: Nation Building – Infrastructure Investment

Topic: Tasmania Roads Funding

Hansard Pages: Written Question

Senator Bushby asked:

What date will all of the \$445.45 million the Labor Party promised for Tasmanian transport infrastructure be delivered by the Federal Government?

Answer:

The Australian Government's funding for land transport projects in Tasmania will be delivered through the Nation Building Program. Payments will be made to Tasmania in accordance with their claims for payment, based on the progress of the projects, and in accordance with timeframes to be agreed with the Tasmanian Government.

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Question No.: NBII 47

Division/Agency: Nation Building – Infrastructure Investment

Topic: Melbourne-Brisbane Inland Rail Link

Hansard Pages: Written Question

Senator Williams asked:

What is the Government's current position on this important rail link and why is the CEO of the ARTC saying it is no longer a priority?

Answer:

The Government has engaged the Australian Rail Track Corporation (ARTC) to undertake the Inland Rail Alignment Study which when completed will establish the viability and potential timing of construction of a Melbourne – Brisbane Inland Rail Link.

The statement attributed to the CEO of ARTC is not correct and I refer the Senator to the comments made by the CEO of ARTC at his National Press Club Address on Wednesday, 3 December 2008.

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Question No.: NBII 48

Division/Agency: Nation Building – Infrastructure Investment

Topic: Model National Rail Safety Legislation

Hansard Pages: Written Question

Senator Williams asked:

Model National Rail Safety legislation was approved by ATC to be implemented by end 2008, most jurisdictions having missed the earlier target of 1 July 2007. Only Victoria, South Australia and New South Wales have so far implemented this very important legislation. This has taken far too long. When is the legislation going to be implemented and what is the government doing to hasten this?

Answer:

The Prime Minister, Premiers and Chief Ministers have entered into a National Partnership Agreement for a Seamless National Economy. In this context, they have reaffirmed their commitment that all jurisdictions would proceed with the model rail safety legislation previously agreed by COAG with all remaining states and the Northern Territory being required to enact legislation and regulation by end 2009. Progress is being monitored by the COAG Reform Council.

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Question No.: NBII 49

Division/Agency: Nation Building – Infrastructure Investment

Topic: Cooroy to Curra Section of the Bruce Highway

Hansard Pages: Written Question

Senators Williams and Heffernan asked:

I refer to the Cooroy to Curra section of the Bruce Highway. This project involves a four-lane duplicated road on a 64 kilometre stretch of the Bruce Highway from Cooroy to Curra bypassing Gympie. It would replace a manifestly inadequate two-lane road that caters for about 16,000 vehicles per day. This road has been the scene of 52 fatalities since 2000. The estimated cost of this project has been two to three billion, although the Royal Automobile Club of Queensland, in its October 2008 submission to Infrastructure Australia, estimated this project to cost \$4 billion.

1. I note that Infrastructure Australia in its 5 December 2008 report to the Council of Australian Governments lists the cost of the Cooroy to Curra upgrade as \$6.3 billion. Can the Government explain this extra-ordinary blow-out in cost?
2. I also note that the Queensland Government in its press release of 5 September 2008 stated that the most difficult section of the upgrade, the 11 km stretch of road around the eastern buffer area of the proposed Traveston Crossing dam, would cost \$500 million. How can the cost of the balance be over \$5.5 billion, or 100 million per kilometre in what is open country?

Answer:

- 1 & 2. \$6.3 billion is the cost estimated in the Infrastructure Australia report to the Council of Australian Governments published in December 2008.

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Question No.: NBII 50

Division/Agency: Nation Building – Infrastructure Investment

Topic: Cooroy to Curra Section of the Bruce Highway

Hansard Pages: Written Question

Senators Williams and Heffernan asked:

In Infrastructure Australia's report to the Council of Australian Government, there is a table of projects (pages 68 to 71) that will, according to page 67 of the report, *be subjected to further analysis*. I note that the Cooroy to Curra upgrade is on this list.

1. Has the Cooroy to Curra project been subjected to this further analysis?

Answer:

Infrastructure Australia is undertaking further analysis of projects on the table at pages 68-71.

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Question No.: NBII 51

Division/Agency: Nation Building – Infrastructure Investment

Topic: Cooroy to Curra Section of the Bruce Highway

Hansard Pages: Written Question

Senators Williams and Heffernan asked:

I refer to the section of the Bruce Highway from Cooroy to Curra that could be affected by the construction of the proposed Traveston Dam.

The Queensland Minister of Main Roads, Warren Pitt, was reported recently saying that the Federal Government has now accepted the eastern route for the Bruce Highway between Federal and Traveston Road – that is, to build the Bruce Highway around the dam's potential inundation area. Is this correct?

Answer:

Yes.

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Question No.: NBII 52

Division/Agency: Nation Building – Infrastructure Investment

Topic: Cooroy to Curra Section of the Bruce Highway

Hansard Pages: Written Question

Senators Williams and Heffernan asked:

The final version of the Federal Government's *Bruce Highway (Cooroy to Curra) Strategic Planning Study* was released to the public in November 2008. That report acknowledged that the favoured community option was to four-lane the highway close to the existing Bruce Highway. Given that Queensland Premier Anna Bligh has shelved the Traveston Crossing dam for many years, why has the Queensland and Federal Government ignored two years of community consultation and community wishes in approving the eastern route?

Answer:

The confirmed alignment was one that was supported by the community. It also provides certainty for the local community as it is not affected by a decision on the Traveston Dam.

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Question No.: NBII 53

Division/Agency: Nation Building – Infrastructure Investment

Topic: Cooroy to Curra Section of the Bruce Highway

Hansard Pages: Written Question

Senators Williams and Heffernan asked:

Why has the Government chosen a route that is both longer and more expensive?

Answer:

The confirmed alignment was one that was supported by the community. It also provides certainty for the local community as it is not affected by a decision on the Traveston Dam.

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Question No.: NBII 54

Division/Agency: Nation Building – Infrastructure Investment

Topic: Cooroy to Curra Section of the Bruce Highway

Hansard Pages: Written Question

Senators Williams and Heffernan asked:

Has the Federal Minister for Environment, Heritage and the Arts, the Hon Peter Garrett been consulted about this decision?

Answer:

No.

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Question No.: NBII 55

Division/Agency: Nation Building – Infrastructure Investment

Topic: Cooroy to Curra Section of the Bruce Highway

Hansard Pages: Written Question

Senators Williams and Heffernan asked:

I note that the Queensland Main Roads Minister Warren Pitt was quoted by the media last week that the Federal Government had now “fortuitously” accepted the route around the dam footprint as the final route.

Does this mean that the Federal Government thinks that the longer eastern route is the best option?

Answer:

The confirmed alignment was one that was supported by the community. It also provides certainty for the local community as it is not affected by a decision on the Traveston Dam.

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Question No.: NBII 56

Division/Agency: Nation Building – Infrastructure Investment

Topic: Cooroy to Curra Section of the Bruce Highway

Hansard Pages: Written Question

Senators Williams and Heffernan asked:

What advice did the Federal Minister for Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government receive from his Department in approving the unpopular eastern route?

Answer:

The confirmed alignment was one that was supported by the community. It also provides certainty for the local community as it is not affected by a decision on the Traveston Dam.

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Question No.: NBII 57

Division/Agency: Nation Building – Infrastructure Investment

Topic: Cooroy to Curra Section of the Bruce Highway

Hansard Pages: Written Question

Senators Williams and Heffernan asked:

Does this decision to go ahead with the unpopular eastern route around the potential area of flooding mean that the Traveston Crossing Dam has already received de-facto Federal Government approval?

Answer:

No.

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Question No.: NBII 58

Division/Agency: Nation Building – Infrastructure Investment

Topic: Cooroy to Curra Section of the Bruce Highway

Hansard Pages: Written Question

Senators Williams and Heffernan asked:

What is the extra cost of building the longer four-lane eastern route of the Bruce Highway around the area of potential inundation?

Answer:

Indicative comparative estimates provided by the Queensland Department of Main Roads show that the costs would be similar, subject to delivery and construction timelines.

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Question No.: NBII 59

Division/Agency: Nation Building – Infrastructure Investment

Topic: Cooroy to Curra Section of the Bruce Highway

Hansard Pages: Written Question

Senators Williams and Heffernan asked:

What is the cost of simply proceeding with the route preferred by the community- that is the route that closely follows the existing Bruce Highway?

Answer:

See answer to NBII 58.

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Question No.: NBII 60

Division/Agency: Nation Building – Infrastructure Investment

Topic: Cooroy to Curra Section of the Bruce Highway

Hansard Pages: Written Question

Senators Williams and Heffernan asked:

1. Does this ‘fortuitous’ decision mean that the Federal Government will pay for the longer four-lane eastern route of the Bruce Highway around the area affected by the Traveston Crossing dam after the Queensland State Government had announced it would build and fund the road?
2. What financial deal has been made?
3. When will its details be released?

Answer:

- 1, 2 & 3. The Australian Government has committed \$200 million towards this project through the Nation Building Program.

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Question No.: NBII 61

Division/Agency: Nation Building – Infrastructure Investment

Topic: Cooroy to Curra Section of the Bruce Highway

Hansard Pages: Written Question

Senators Williams and Heffernan asked:

So what is the correct cost to upgrade the Cooroy to Curra section of the Bruce Highway to a four-lane duplicated road that includes the Gympie Bypass?

Answer:

The cost estimate is identified in the Infrastructure Australia report to the Council Of Australian Governments published in December 2008.

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Question No.: NBII 62

Division/Agency: Nation Building – Infrastructure Investment

Topic: Cooroy to Curra Section of the Bruce Highway

Hansard Pages: Written Question

Senators Williams and Heffernan asked:

I refer to the answer to the Question on notice asked by Senator Nash in this Committee during the May 2008 Budget Estimates. This question noted that Labor only promised \$200 million during the last election to upgrade the Cooroy to Curra section of the Bruce Highway, compared to the \$700 million promised by the Coalition to do the same. The answer provided – Question II22 - states in part:

The works programme and finding arrangements for the project will be agreed with the Queensland Government during 2008-09 as part of the development of the Australian Government's land transport investment program for 2009-10 to 2013-14.

1. How are negotiations with the Queensland Government regarding this project proceeding?
2. Have negotiations started?
3. What funding agreements regarding the upgrade of the Bruce Highway have been established between the Commonwealth and the Queensland Government?

Answer:

- 1, 2, & 3. The Australian Government has committed \$200 million towards this project through the Nation Building Program.

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Question No.: NBII 63

Division/Agency: Nation Building – Infrastructure Investment

Topic: Cooroy to Curra section of the Bruce Highway

Hansard Pages: Written Question

Senator Heffernan asked:

In terms of the Cooroy to Curra section of the Bruce Highway, what is the expected completion date of:

1. the four-laning around the expected site of the Traveston Crossing dam;
2. the four laning of the existing section of the Bruce Highway from Cooroy to Curra;
3. the new corridor of the Bruce Highway from Cooroy to Curra.

Answer:

- 1, 2 & 3. To be determined.

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Question No.: NBII 64

Division/Agency: Nation Building – Infrastructure Investment

Topic: Cooroy to Curra Section of the Bruce Highway

Hansard Pages: Written Question

Senators Williams and Heffernan asked:

In November last year, the speed limit along the 65 km stretch of the Bruce Highway between Curra and Cooroy was lowered to 90 kmh. When this decision was announced by the Queensland Main Roads Minister, the implication was that this speed limit reduction was to be temporary.

1. How long will there be a 90kmh speed limit on this long section of the national highway?
2. In view of the fact that there have been three fatal accidents since the 90 kmh limit was imposed, does the Government consider the lower speed limit a success?

Answer:

- 1 & 2. Speed limit decisions are a matter for the Queensland Government.

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Question No.: NBII 65

Division/Agency: Nation Building – Infrastructure Investment

Topic: Cooroy to Curra Section of the Bruce Highway

Hansard Pages: Written Question

Senators Williams and Heffernan asked:

Minister Albanese and the Queensland State Minister announced early last year that electronic variable message signs worth \$2.8 million were to be installed on the Bruce Highway between Cooroy and Curra. This system will warn about wet road conditions, traffic congestion, crash sites and other potential driving hazards.

This intelligent signage was promised to be installed before Christmas last year. Well, it is now early 2009. When will this signage, on what is one of the most dangerous stretches of highway in Australia, be installed?

Answer:

Installation of the variable message signs on the Bruce Highway between Cooroy and Curra commenced on 4 February 2009.

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Question No.: NBII 66

Division/Agency: Nation Building – Infrastructure Investment

Topic: Pacific Highway Commitment

Hansard Pages: Written Question

Senator Heffernan asked:

Does the Government stand by its election commitment to complete a dual carriageway on the Pacific Highway between Sydney and Brisbane by 2016?

Answer:

The Australian Government has committed \$2.45 billion towards the upgrade of the Pacific Highway through the Nation Building Program.

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Question No.: NBII 67

Division/Agency: Nation Building – Infrastructure Investment

Topic: Pacific Highway Commitment

Hansard Pages: Written Question

Senator Heffernan asked:

The Government has allocated \$2.5 billion under AusLink 2 for the duplication of the Pacific Highway.

1. Is the Government aware that according to the National Roads and Motorists Association in its January 2009 budget submission to the Australian Government, that it estimates the cost of the Pacific Highway duplication to be \$6.67 billion?
2. Where will the remaining four billion plus dollars come from?

Answer:

Future road funding including further works on the Pacific Highway will be considered in the next five-year Nation Building Program.

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Question No.: NBII 68

Division/Agency: Nation Building – Infrastructure Investment

Topic: Pacific Highway Commitment

Hansard Pages: Written Question

Senator Heffernan asked:

Given the financial wreck that is NSW under its incompetent Labor Government, what confidence does the Government have that NSW will be able to provide its share of the funds to upgrade the Pacific Highway by 2016?

Answer:

See answer to NBII 66.

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Question No.: NBII 69

Division/Agency: Nation Building – Infrastructure Investment

Topic: Pacific Highway Commitment

Hansard Pages: Written Question

Senator Heffernan asked:

The Government is no doubt aware that the NSW Government delivered its mini-budget in November last year. In that budget, the bankrupt NSW Labor Government slashed its contribution to AusLink 2. The NSW Government's contribution was to be \$860 million but now it has been slashed to \$500 million.

1. Is that correct?
2. Is that correct that the NSW Government's contribution to the Pacific Highway upgrade has been cut by \$360 million?
3. Will the Australian Government make up the difference?
4. Where does that leave the Government in meeting its election promise of completing the duplication of the Pacific Highway by 2016?

Answer:

1. The NSW Government has committed \$500 million to the Pacific Highway through the Nation Building Program.
2. As above.
3. The Australian Government has committed \$2.45 billion to deliver the upgrade of the Pacific Highway.
4. As above (answer to Question 3).

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Question No.: NBII 70

Division/Agency: Nation Building – Infrastructure Investment

Topic: Pacific Highway – Banora Point Upgrade

Hansard Pages: Written Question

Senator Heffernan asked:

I consider now an important project to upgrade the Pacific Highway at Sexton's Hill, Banora Point.

This project is a 2.5 kilometres long, six lane motorway standard link between Chindera Bypass at the northern end of Barney's Point Bridge and the southern end of the Tweed Heads Bypass. The key feature of this project is the controversial plan to include a viaduct approximately 330 metres long across the deep valley south of Sextons Hill, and a land bridge approximately 100 metres wide to provide connection over the new road between east and west Banora Point at Wilsons Park.

At present, the Pacific Highway at Sextons Hill, Banora Point is an urban arterial road. It has a high crash rate and through traffic conflicts with local traffic. By providing a 2.5 kilometre realignment outside the urban area, the upgrade will improve travel times on the Pacific Highway and reduce the number and severity of road accidents.

I note the commitment by the Government in its so-called Nation Building stimulus package in December last year to invest \$210 million to fund this project. Just to be clear about this money, the relevant paragraph on page 59 of the December 2008 Nation Building paper reads:

The Australian Government has committed \$210 million to upgrade the works at Banora Point, with \$2 million being accelerated in 2008-09. Additional funding to complete the project is currently being discussed with NSW.

1. So does that mean that between now and 30 June this year the Government is providing the sum of just \$2 million for this much needed project?
2. So the balance of this amount, \$208 million is to be provided in the time frame of Auslink 2, ie from 2009-10 to 2013-14. Is that correct?
3. How much is the project estimated to cost?
4. How much additional funding is to be provided by NSW?

Answer:

1. \$2 million for the Banora Point upgrade is being accelerated in 2008-09 to enable work to commence including progress on planning and pre-construction activities.
2. The funding will be provided through the Nation Building Program.
3. The cost estimate is currently being refined as part of the planning and pre-construction activities for the project.

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4. Funding contributions for the project are being discussed with NSW in the context of the overall Pacific Highway upgrade program.

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Additional Budget Estimates February 2009
Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government

Question No.: NBII 71

Division/Agency: Nation Building – Infrastructure Investment

Topic: Pacific Highway – Banora Point Upgrade

Hansard Pages: Written Question

Senator Heffernan asked:

Is it correct that the Government in its mini-budget axed its counterpart funding to the Pacific Highway projects, including Banora Point?

Answer:

The Australian Government has not undertaken a mini-budget.

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Question No.: NBII 72

Division/Agency: Nation Building – Infrastructure Investment

Topic: Pacific Highway – Banora Point Upgrade

Hansard Pages: Written Question

Senator Heffernan asked:

How are the discussions with the NSW Government proceeding to secure their side of their funds for this project?

Answer:

NSW Government contribution to the Pacific Highway upgrade is \$500 million.

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Question No.: NBII 73

Division/Agency: Nation Building – Infrastructure Investment

Topic: Pacific Highway – Banora Point Upgrade

Hansard Pages: Written Question

Senator Heffernan asked:

1. Is the Government aware that a 2007 NRMA audit of the Pacific Highway identified Banora Point as one of the most dangerous sections of the highway – the site of 127 crashes, two fatalities and 61 injuries between 2003 and 2007?
2. Given its appalling safety record, will the Commonwealth pick up the whole tab?

Answer:

1. The Australian Government has committed \$210 million to the upgrade at Banora Point. This is a Nation Building 1 project and will start six months ahead of schedule.

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Question No.: NBII 74

Division/Agency: Nation Building – Infrastructure Investment

Topic: Pacific Highway – Banora Point Upgrade

Hansard Pages: Written Question

Senator Heffernan asked:

1. In view of the funding delays and since no tangible works have yet been done on the Banora Point upgrade, will the Government re-consider the preferred community option of a tunnel being built under Sexton's Hill rather than the visually intrusive viaduct?
2. When will the project be completed?

Answer:

1. Planning approval for the project has been secured and construction is on track to commence later this year.
2. The project is estimated to be completed in mid 2012.

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Question No.: NBII 75

Division/Agency: Nation Building – Infrastructure Investment

Topic: Pacific Highway

Hansard Pages: Written Question

Senator Heffernan asked:

What is the status of the AusLink agreements with the NSW Government, given its decision to slash its contribution to this program?

Answer:

The NSW Government contribution to the Pacific Highway upgrade will be agreed through the Memorandum of Understanding between the Australian and NSW governments, as part of the Nation Building Program.

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Question No.: NBII 76

Division/Agency: Nation Building – Infrastructure Investment

Topic: Heavy Vehicle Safety and Productivity Program

Hansard Pages: Written Question

Senator Heffernan asked:

1. The Heavy Vehicle Safety and Productivity Program is a \$70 million four-year fund that will provide for the trials of technologies that will electronically monitor a truck driver's work hours and vehicle speed – in effect a trial of 'black boxes' or electronic logs for truckies. Is that correct?
2. It will also support the construction of additional heavy vehicle rest stops and parking areas along our highways and assist in road capacity improvements (including bridges) to allow access to high productivity vehicles to more of the road network. Is that correct?

Answer:

The Australian Government's new four-year Heavy Vehicle Safety and Productivity Program is available to fund:

- (a) The construction of more heavy vehicle rest stops and parking areas along our highways and on the outskirts of our major cities;
- (b) Upgrades to freight routes so they can carry bigger loads; and
- (c) Trials of technologies that electronically monitor a truck driver's work hours and vehicle speed – for example using on-board 'black box' or electronic logging technology.

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Question No.: NBII 77

Division/Agency: Nation Building – Infrastructure Investment

Topic: Heavy Vehicle Safety and Productivity Program

Hansard Pages: Written Question

Senator Heffernan asked:

I understand that in November 2005, the National Transport Commission conducted a study of the state of Australia's road-side rest facilities and at that time issued its National Guidelines for the Provision of Rest Area Facilities. This reports sets out where rest areas should be built in order to comply with various road agency guidelines and cater for the needs of heavy vehicle drivers. According to those guidelines, there should be:

- A major rest area every 100 kilometres, with sufficient parking for at least 20 trucks;
- A minor rest area every 50 kilometres, with parking for up to 10 trucks;
- A truck parking bay every 30 kilometres, with enough space for four or five trucks so their drivers can do safety checks.

Further, an independent government research agency, Austroads, recently audited Australia's major highways against those guidelines. The report, released in March 2008, showed that none of the audited routes met the national guidelines and 60 per cent of the audited routes had substantial deficiencies. There were particular problems in Queensland and the Northern Territory. The list of highways with the worst deficiencies include:

- *the New England, Mitchell, Great Western, Barrier and Princes highways in New South Wales;*
- *the Calder, Princes, and Sturt highways in Victoria;*
- *the Bruce, Cunningham, New England and Gore highways in Queensland*
- *the Barrier, Dukes, Eyre and Sturt highways in South Australia;*
- *the Great Eastern, Coolgardie –Esperance and Eyre highways in Western Australia;*
- *the Bass Highway in Tasmania; and*
- *the Stuart Highway in the Northern Territory.*

So to clarify, our national highway system is basically non-compliant with the National Transport Commission's own guidelines in the provision of rest areas? Is that correct?

Answer:

The NTC study into the provision of rest areas provides guidelines only.

In February 2008, the Australian Government committed \$70 million to a specific Heavy Vehicle Safety and Productivity Program that will contribute to the construction of more rest stops and parking areas along our highways and on the outskirts of our major cities.

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Question No.: NBII 78

Division/Agency: Nation Building – Infrastructure Investment

Topic: Heavy Vehicle Safety and Productivity Program

Hansard Pages: Written Question

Senator Heffernan asked:

I understand that according to the Australian Trucking Association in their submission to this Committee's inquiry into the *Interstate Road Transport Charge Amendment Bill (No.2) 2008* and associated legislation held in November last year, there needs to be another 900 rest areas on the 22,500 kilometres of the AusLink National Network to bring it into line with the national rest area guidelines.

Even if we accept that 900 rest areas is a generous number, how many rest areas would be required to bring Australia's highway system into compliance with the national rest area guidelines?

Answer

See answer to NBII 77.

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Question No.: NBII 79

Division/Agency: Nation Building – Infrastructure Investment

Topic: Heavy Vehicle Safety and Productivity Program

Hansard Pages: Written Question

Senator Heffernan asked:

1. How much of the Government's \$70 million four year Heavy Vehicle Safety and Productivity Program will be spent on the other components of the Program, that is, the improvements to road capacity and the trial of "black box" technologies?
2. So how much of the \$70 million will be spent on heavy vehicle rest areas?

Answer:

1. No funding was allocated to a trial of black box technologies in the first \$30 million round of the HVSSP.

I plan to invite submissions for the second round of funding (\$40 million over 2 years) later this year.

2. I wrote to state and territory Ministers on 9 January 2009 and offered funding for the first round of projects (Refer to answer for Question No. NBII 90).

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Question No.: NBII 80

Division/Agency: Nation Building – Infrastructure Investment

Topic: Heavy Vehicle Safety and Productivity Program

Hansard Pages: Written Question

Senator Heffernan asked:

Will the money from this Program go to State and Territory road authorities only?

Answer:

Yes.

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Question No.: NBII 81

Division/Agency: Nation Building – Infrastructure Investment

Topic: Heavy Vehicle Safety and Productivity Program

Hansard Pages: Written Question

Senator Heffernan asked:

What arrangements will the Commonwealth make to ensure that the States and Territories actually spend the money on heavy vehicle rest areas?

Answer:

The states and territories are required to comply with the requirements of the *AusLink (National Land Transport) Act 2005* and the Heavy Vehicle Safety and Productivity Program Guidelines – this includes a need to report on project progress and acquit expenditure on funds as projects are completed. The Department actively monitors compliance with these requirements and progress of individual projects.

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Question No.: NBII 82

Division/Agency: Nation Building – Infrastructure Investment

Topic: Heavy Vehicle Safety and Productivity Program

Hansard Pages: Written Question

Senator Heffernan asked:

1. What is the average cost of rest areas?
2. Do you accept the figure of \$545,000? This, I understand, is the number used by the Queensland Government under its own rest area program – a number quoted by the Australian Trucking Association in its submission to the inquiry I mentioned earlier.
3. So if that is true, in an ideal world, the \$70 million could provide less than 130 rest areas. But of course it will be much less, since the \$70 million must fund other commitments too. So how many rest areas will be built under the year Heavy Vehicle Safety and Productivity Program?
4. What are the assumptions behind that number?

Answer:

1. Typical costs for newly constructed rest areas under the Heavy Vehicle Safety and Productivity Program range from \$600,000 to \$1,200,000, and for rest area upgrades from \$120,000 to \$600,000. Larger amounts may be required for the construction of major parking/decoupling bays or sites that include a combination of rest areas/decoupling bays.
2. See answer 1.above.
3. To be determined in further consultation with the states and territories.
4. The figures in 1.above are based on the cost estimates provided directly by the state and territory Governments.

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Question No.: NBII 83

Division/Agency: Nation Building – Infrastructure Investment

Topic: Heavy Vehicle Safety and Productivity Program

Hansard Pages: Written Question

Senator Heffernan asked:

1. What is the stage of the Program?
2. Have the rest areas been built yet?
3. Where?

Answer:

1. Projects are currently in the process of being approved for payment under the program.
2. The first rest areas are expected to start construction from 1 July 2009, following completion of the necessary design and pre-construction work (for example, land acquisition).
3. Not applicable.

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Question No.: NBII 84

Division/Agency: Nation Building Infrastructure Investment
Topic: Boom Gates for Rail Crossings program – Queensland
Hansard Pages: 40-41 (24/02/09)

Senator MacDonald asked:

Following up, could I just ask, on notice, for someone to get back to me – I appreciate that this would be on notice – about just which projects the Queensland government was committed for and which, therefore, federal money might be available for.

Answer:

A full list of projects funded under the Boom Gates for Rail Crossings Program can be found on <www.nationbuildingprogram.gov.au>.

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Question No.: NBII 85

Division/Agency: Nation Building – Infrastructure Investment

Topic: Heavy Vehicle Safety and Productivity Program

Hansard Pages: Written Question

Senator Heffernan asked:

Are there enough rest areas for truckies to be compliant with the mandated rest area times?

Answer:

The Australian Government has committed \$70 million specifically to heavy vehicle road safety and productivity works including funds for the construction of additional heavy vehicle rest stops and parking areas in priority areas along our highways and on the outskirts of our major cities.

Jurisdictions have primary responsibility for the placement of rest stops and heavy vehicle operators also have a responsibility to plan trips, including where stops are required.

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Question No.: NBII 86

Division/Agency: Nation Building – Infrastructure Investment

Topic: Upgrading of Einasleigh River Bridge

Hansard Pages: 41 (24/02/09)

Senator Macdonald asked:

The road from, effectively, Cairns to Burketown and Normanton but more specifically around Georgetown has been badly damaged by floods. They have been cut off for three or four weeks. There is a debate going on about whether the existing bridge over the Einasleigh River should be repaired—the approaches that have been washed away—or whether there should be a whole new bridge built over the top of it. Has anyone made approaches to you about that or is that more likely to come through a disaster relief program?

Answer:

The Department has received an application for funding towards the upgrade of the Einasleigh River Bridge. This application is currently being processed.

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Question No.: NBII 87

Division/Agency: Nation Building – Infrastructure Investment

Topic: Heavy Vehicle Safety and Productivity Program

Hansard Pages: Written Question

Senator Heffernan asked:

When will there be enough heavy vehicle rest areas on our national highways?

Answer:

See answer to NBII 77.

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Question No.: NBII 88

Division/Agency: Nation Building – Infrastructure Investment

Topic: Heavy Vehicle Safety and Productivity Program

Hansard Pages: Written Question

Senator Heffernan asked:

1. Have any submissions regarding rest areas or road improvements been received?
2. From whom?

Answer:

1. Yes.
2. All state and territory governments made submissions as well as the following organisations:
 - Australian Livestock Transporters Association;
 - Australian Logistics Council;
 - Australian Trucking Association;
 - LinFox;
 - NatRoad Ltd;
 - National Transport Commission;
 - Queensland Transport Association; and
 - Toll Group.

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Question No.: NBII 89

Division/Agency: Nation Building – Infrastructure Investment

Topic: Heavy Vehicle Safety and Productivity Program

Hansard Pages: Written Question

Senator Heffernan asked:

What roads will be improved in terms of capacity? Which bridges?

Answer:

Information regarding projects funded under the Program will be announced as projects are approved.

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Question No.: NBII 90

Division/Agency Nation Building – Infrastructure Investment

Topic: Heavy Vehicle Safety and Productivity Program

Hansard Pages: Written Question

Senator Heffernan asked:

1. What is the state and territory breakdown of the construction of the rest areas and the improvement to roads?
2. What criteria will be used by the Department to make these decisions?

Answer:

1. As I wrote to the states and territories in January 2009, a breakdown of the funding for each state and territory for 2008-09 and 2009-10 is as follows:

State/Territory	Total (\$m)
NSW	8.045
Vic	5.7
Qld	6.4
WA	2.705
SA	4.5
Tas	1.1
NT	1.0
ACT	0.55
Total	30.0

2. Funding allocations between jurisdictions are a policy decision for the Government made according the Heavy Vehicle Safety and Productivity Program Guidelines, which have been published on the Department's website.