

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

Question no.: 209

Program: n/a

Division/Agency: (LGT) Local Government and Territories

Topic: **Etched in Stone Report**

Proof Hansard Pages: 82-83 (24/02/2014)

Senator Lundy asked:

Senator LUNDY: ...I would like to start with just asking some general questions about the National Capital Authority's work program and in particular the response to a number of reports that were done, including the report *Etched in stone*. Could you tell the committee about the response to that particular report? It was an inquiry into the administration of the National Memorial's ordinance and tabled back in November 2011.

Mr Wilson: The government is still considering a response to that report.

...

Senator LUNDY: Mr Wilson, are you able to shed any light on when we can expect a government response to that particular report?

Mr Wilson: I do not believe I can add to that, other than the government is considering it at the moment.

Mr Mrdak: We will take that on notice and come back to you hopefully this evening.

Answer:

Following the election the Government is now considering its response in line with the Government's deregulation agenda and intends to respond in the near future.

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Question no.: 210

Program: n/a

Division/Agency: (LGT) Local Government and Territories

Topic: **An Estate for the Future Report**

Proof Hansard Page: 83 (24/02/2014)

Senator Lundy asked:

Senator LUNDY: ... I would also like to ask about the report titled, *An estate for the future*. This particular report was tabled in March 2013 and there was a partial response provided on 17 April by the National Capital Authority. Could you update the committee on the status of that particular response and report and whether there will be a more fulsome response sometime soon?

Mr Wilson: There will be. The government is still considering a full response and, as Mr Mrdak has indicated, I will take it on notice in terms of the timeframe for when the government may be considering releasing a response.

Answer:

The previous Government's response was not tabled prior to the election. On the advice of the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet, consultation with the incoming Government is being undertaken and the Government intends to respond in the near future.

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Question no.: 211

Program: n/a

Division/Agency: (LGT) Local Government and Territories

Topic: **The Inquiry into the Provisions of Amenity within the Parliamentary Triangle Report**

Proof Hansard Page: 83 (24/02/2014)

Senator Lundy asked:

Senator LUNDY: I have one more, being *The inquiry into the provisions of amenity within the parliamentary triangle*, tabled in June 2013. What is the current status of the government response to that report?

Mr Wilson: The government is still considering the response to that report.

Senator LUNDY: Are you able to shed any light on when that could be?

Mr Wilson: I will take that on notice in terms of a timeframe for that consideration.

Answer:

The Government is carefully considering the response and intends to respond in the near future.

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Question no.: 212

Program: 1.1

Division/Agency: (LGT) Local Government and Territories

Topic: Betterment Fund

Proof Hansard Page: Written

Senator Ludwig asked:

Since the last report to this Senate Estimates Committee:-

1. How many projects have been approved for funding by the Queensland Government (jointly funded with the Commonwealth) for the Betterment Fund announced on 28 February 2013?
 - a. Please list those projects by type and cost.
 - b. What consultation did the Queensland Government make with the Federal Government on the decision of these projects?
2. Has the Government been requested to increase the size of the Commonwealth's contribution to the Betterment Fund?
 - a. If so, by whom?
 - b. If so, when?
 - c. If so, what action or actions has the Government taken to respond to this request? Please detail.
3. Has the Government considered increasing the size of the Commonwealth's contribution to the Betterment Fund?
 - a. If so, by whom is this being considered?
 - b. If so, when was this considered?
 - c. If so, who has been consulted?
 - d. If so, what Departments or Agencies are involved in the decision?
 - e. If so, what Ministers have been consulted in the decision?
 - f. If so, what action or actions has the Government taken to progress this consideration? Please detail.
 - g. If not, why not?
 - h. If not, who has been consulted on the decision not to adopt this as policy?
 - i. If not, when was this considered?
 - j. If not, who has been consulted?
 - k. If not, what Departments or Agencies were involved in the decision not to adopt the policy?
 - l. If not, what Ministers have been consulted in the decision not to adopt the policy?
 - m. If not, what action or actions has the Government taken in the decision not to progress this? Please detail.
4. Has the Deputy Prime Minister made any requests or consideration of request to the Minister, Prime Minister or any other Minister seeking to increase the size of the Betterment Fund?
 - a. If so, how has the Deputy Prime Minister made that request?
 - b. If so, when was this considered?
 - c. If so, who has been consulted?
 - d. If so, what Departments or Agencies are involved in the request?
 - e. If so, what Ministers have been consulted in the request?
 - f. If so, what action or actions has the Government taken to progress this?
 - g. If not, why not?
 - h. If not, who has been consulted on the decision not to adopt this as policy?
 - i. If not, when was this considered?

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- j. If not, who has been consulted?
- k. If not, what Departments or Agencies were involved in the decision not to adopt the policy?
- l. If not, what Ministers have been consulted in the decision not to adopt the policy?
- m. If not, what action or actions has the government taken in the decision not to progress this? Please detail.

Answer:

1. As at 28 February 2014, the Queensland Reconstruction Authority (QRA) reports that it had approved betterment funding for 220 projects, at a cost of \$78.5 million from the Betterment Fund.
QRA manages the fund and prioritises projects; the Commonwealth receives notification when a submission has been approved for funding.
A list of 40 projects approved for a total of \$29.7 million of betterment funding since the last report to the senate estimate committee, including type and cost, is at **Attachment A**.
2. No formal requests have been made to the current government to increase the Betterment Fund.
3. See above.
4. The Deputy Prime Minister has not made any requests to increase the size of the Betterment Fund.

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Attachment A

Betterment fund projects approved 26 November 2013 to 17 March 2014

Local Government Authority	Description of works	Type of project	Approved NDRRA Category B value	Approved Betterment component
Palm Island Aboriginal Shire Council	Small Bay Road and Access to Reservoir Road	Road, drainage and floodway improvements	\$149,780.68	\$578,143.82
Somerset Regional Council	Kropps Bridge and Jones Bridge	Bridge improvements and protection works	\$242,352.91	\$1,479,498.81
Bundaberg Regional Council	Gaeta Road, Monduran Dam Road, and Wonbah Road	Floodway improvements	\$747,990.06	\$1,931,080.22
Somerset Regional Council	Wunulla Lane Bridge and Scrub Creek Road Bridge	Bridge improvements	\$646,001.63	\$1,520,397.43
Croydon Shire Council (two projects)	Richmond Road	Floodway improvements	\$1,917,315.89 (of which \$1,648,269.57 relates to Betterment project)	\$1,918,733.61
Somerset Regional Council	Glenhowden Road	Bridge protection works	\$71,530.54	\$145,189.32
Somerset Regional Council	Toogoolawah Bridge and Browns Bridge	Bridge improvements	\$286,145.01	\$867,872.81
Somerset Regional Council	Gerald Ryan Bridge	Bridge improvements	\$297,597.48	\$683,079.75
Somerset Regional Council	Mt Kilcoy Road	Floodway improvements and protection works	\$98,645.00	\$98,145.52
Bundaberg Regional Council	Kendalls Flat Levee	Establishment of a rock wall	\$283,965.75	\$442,340.30
Bundaberg Regional Council	Millbank Wastewater Treatment Plant	Asset protection works	\$1,677,176.00	\$634,719.65
Hinchinbrook Shire Council	Old Wharf Road	Drainage improvements	\$172,962.37	\$478,164.27

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Local Government Authority	Description of works	Type of project	Approved NDRRA Category B value	Approved Betterment component
Hinchinbrook Shire Council	Bosworths Road	Floodway improvements	\$228,283.84	\$146,371.64
Central Highlands Regional Council	Aroona Road	Floodway improvements	\$327,471.65	\$1,358,821.95
Hinchinbrook Shire Council	Michael Creek Crossing, Mount Fox Road	Drainage and floodway improvements	\$335,046.90	\$606,771.16
Bundaberg Regional Council	Kendalls Flat Weir	Weir protection works	\$166,271.40	\$1,870,774.80
Western Downs Regional Council	Mercy Pedestrian Bridge	Bridge improvements	\$47,223.00	\$538,372.00
Western Downs Regional Council	Jimbour Station Road	Road improvements	\$464,615.00	\$496,587.87
Central Highlands Regional Council	Bears Lagoon Road and Range Barranga Road	Floodway improvements	\$74,803.78	\$229,954.45
Etheridge Shire Council	O'Brian's Creek Road	Floodway improvements	\$136,641.00	\$270,627.59
Somerset Regional Council	Mt Stanley Road (two sites), Avoca Creek Road, Cedarvale Road, Mt Byron Road, Cowah Road, and Chaille Road.	Floodway improvements	\$358,985.19	\$416,911.91
Gladstone Regional Council	Round Hill Road Culvert (Bebo Arches)	Road improvements	\$2,399,876.71	\$133,731.00
Scenic Rim Regional Council	Old Beaudesert Road	Drainage and road improvements	\$109,178.55	\$249,672.51
Scenic Rim Regional Council	Tarome Road	Road and drainage improvements	\$223,210.20	\$666,278.04
Scenic Rim Regional Council	Peak Crossing Pedestrian Bridge	Bridge improvements	\$195,991.65	\$580,404.95
Scenic Rim Regional Council	Sarabah Road	Floodway improvements	\$273,842.26	\$423,294.19

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Local Government Authority	Description of works	Type of project	Approved NDRRA Category B value	Approved Betterment component
Carpentaria Shire Council	Dunbar-Kowanyama Road	Floodway improvements	\$14,342.40	\$1,948,115.60
Lockyer Valley Regional Council (three projects)	Left Hand Branch Road (two projects) and Black Duck Creek Road	Road, floodway and bridge improvements	\$2,227,743.00	\$1,980,095.50
Lockyer Valley Regional Council	Flagstone Creek Road and Winwill Connection Road	Floodway improvements	\$405,893.70	\$940,097.26
Lockyer Valley Regional Council	Murphys Bridge, Middletons Bridge, Litfin Bridge and Willows Bridge	Floodway and bridge improvements; protection works	\$747,048.72	\$812,516.70
Lockyer Valley Regional Council	Logan Bridge, Daveys Bridge, Steinkes Bridge, Belford Bridge	Bridge improvements	\$857,907.15	\$642,439.75
Lockyer Valley Regional Council	Lockrose Rose North and Woodlands Road	Floodway improvements	\$179,055.12	\$607,179.38
Tablelands Regional Council	Strathleven Road - Mitchell River Crossing at Gamboola	Floodway improvements	\$291,278.60	\$1,876,207.78
Moreton Bay Regional Council	Bongaree Seawall	Establishment of seawall	\$449,176.05	\$1,938,060.95
Brisbane City Council	Rafting Ground Road	Road improvements	\$51,298.65	\$216,926.50

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Question no.: 213

Program: 3.1 Regional Development

Division/Agency: (LGT) Local Government and Territories

Topic: Regional Development Australia

Proof Hansard Page: Written

Senator Sterle asked:

I refer to the Minister's speech to the Local Government Association of South Australia 2013 Conference in which he says 'we are considering the current arrangements (for RDAs) and how the RDA structure aligns with the RDA structure aligns with our vision for regional Australia'.

1. What issues are being considered in the review of RDAs?
2. Who is conducting this review?
3. Are the RDA Committee's being consulted as part of this consideration?
4. Are RDAs to continue being funded on 3-year terms?
5. Can you provide details of any appointments to RDA Committee boards in the last six months?
6. Can you outline the process for appointments to RDA Committee boards?
7. Is gender being considered as part of the selection of new RDA Committee members?

Answer:

1. The review of the Regional Development Australia programme is considering the current arrangements and how the structure aligns with the Government's vision for regional Australia and the State and Territory regional engagement arrangements.
2. The review is being undertaken by the Government.
3. The Ministers and the Department have met with a range of RDA Committees. The current RDA Committee arrangements and how regional economic development outcomes can best be achieved have been discussed at these meetings.
4. The Australian Government has funding agreements in place with RDA Committees which expire on 30 June 2016, except for Victoria, where a funding agreement is in place until 30 June 2014.
5. In the last six months, there have been 9 appointments to RDA Committees. 91 RDA Committee members in Queensland, South Australia and Western Australia have had their terms extended.
6. RDA Committee Chairs, Deputy Chairs and members are appointed by the Australian Government Minister responsible for regional development and by the state or territory Minister in some jurisdictions. In South Australia there are tripartite Australian and State Government Ministerial and Local Government Association appointments. Appointment terms vary but can be up to four years. Applications for committee membership are sought through a public Expression of Interest (EOI) process. The process includes working with RDA Committees to identify their work priorities and the skills required of future members, analysing and assessing applicants against criteria, coordinating probity checks on successful candidates and providing information to successful and unsuccessful candidates.
7. Yes.

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Question no.: 214

Program: 1.1

Division/Agency: (LGT) Local Government and Territories

Topic: Brisbane Ferry Terminals

Proof Hansard Page: Written

Senator Ludwig asked:

1. Please provide an update on the reconstruction of the Brisbane Ferry Terminal platforms?
2. What is the total amount allocated to the project for the reconstruction of the Brisbane Ferry Terminals by the Commonwealth, State and Local Governments?
3. What is the status of the Dutton Park ferry terminal?
4. What is the current completion date of the project?
5. When is funding required to have been expended by the State and Local Governments for this project?
6. Have the State or Local Governments sought to extend the project completion date at all?

Answer:

1. The reconstruction of the Brisbane Ferry Terminals will commence once the contract is awarded at the end of March 2014.
2. Brisbane City Council has indicated that it will allocate \$73 million to reconstruct the Ferry Terminals. The Commonwealth and Queensland governments will contribute funding on a 75:25 cost share basis.
3. The Dutton Park mooring is expected to be completed by 30 June 2015.
4. The Ferry Terminals are due for completion by 30 June 2015.
5. On 20 October 2012, the Commonwealth Government approved an extension to 30 June 2015 to complete the ferry terminals.
6. The Queensland Government has not requested any further extensions.

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Question no.: 215

Program: 1.1

Division/Agency: (LGT) Local Government and Territories

Topic: Riverwalk

Proof Hansard Page: Written

Senator Ludwig asked:

1. Please provide an update on the reconstruction of the Brisbane riverwalk?
2. What is the total amount allocated to the project for the reconstruction of the Brisbane riverwalk by the Commonwealth, State and Local Governments?
3. What is the current completion date of the project?
4. When is funding required to have been expended by the State and Local Governments for this project?
5. Have the State or Local Governments sought to extend the project completion date at all?

Answer:

1. Construction of the Brisbane riverwalk commenced in July 2013 and is on track for a mid-2014 completion.
2. Brisbane City Council has indicated that it will allocate \$72 million for the reconstruction of the Brisbane riverwalk. The Commonwealth and Queensland governments will contribute funding on a 75:25 cost share basis.
3. See 1.
4. Funding is required to be expended by the Queensland Government by 30 June 2014.
5. The Queensland Government has not sought an extension for the project.

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Question no.: 216

Program: 3.1 Regional Development

Division/Agency: (LGT) Local Government and Territories

Topic: Regional Development Australia Boards

Proof Hansard Page: Written

Senator Sterle asked:

1. Can you explain the change in the role of RDAs following the change of Government?
2. Has the Minister/s written to or visited the RDAs?
3. Will the RDAs be asked to review their regional development plans in light of the change of Government?
4. Has the Department been asked to provide advice to the Government on RDAs?
5. What advice was provided to the Government on RDAs?
6. Will the RDA National Forums continue?
7. Has the Government or the Department flagged any changes to the RDA national charter or purpose?
8. Will the RDA's be consulted or asked for advice on funding from the 'National Stronger Regions Fund' in their community?
9. Will the RDA develop a 'Regional Development Plan' for a specific area act as a guide to allocating funding from the 'National Stronger Regions Fund'? Will the Regional Development Plan be disregarded?
10. How many vacancies in RDA committees are there?
11. How many of these vacancies are Chairperson roles?
12. Have there been any resignations from RDA committees since the change of Government?
13. Has the Government asked any RDA committee members to tender their resignations?

Answer:

1. No change has been made to the role of RDA Committees following the change of Government.
2. The Minister for Infrastructure and Regional Development and the Assistant Minister for Infrastructure and Regional Development have written to and met with a range of RDA Committees.
3. RDA regional plans are reviewed regularly as required by the funding agreements in place between each RDA Committee and the Australian Government.
4. Yes.
5. The Department has provided advice to the Government in regards the operation of the RDA programme.
6. Decisions on whether an RDA Forum will be held in the future have not been made.
7. No
8. The Government is finalising the design and operational parameters of the National Stronger Regions Fund, including the role of RDA committees.
9. The Government is finalising the design and operational parameters of the National Stronger Regions Fund.
10. As at 21 March 2014, there are 94 casual vacancies across the RDA Committees, however, all RDA Committees have sufficient members to operate under their constitutions.
11. Three.
12. Yes. There have been a total of 18 resignations since 7 September 2013.
13. The Department has not asked any RDA Committee members to tender resignations and is not aware of any such directives from the Australian Government.