

Senate Standing Committee on Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Supplementary Budget Estimates October 2008
Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government

Question No. II 01

Division/Agency: Infrastructure Investment

Topic: Bridgewater Bridge

Hansard Page: 25 (21/10/08)

Senator ABETZ asked: Senator—Can we move to the Bridgewater Bridge. Last time around, on a question on notice, I was advised that the state government asked Mr Vaile for extra money to fix the lift operation on the existing Bridgewater Bridge. When was that letter received or when was it dated?

Mr Rokvic—I do not have that information.

Senator ABETZ—Could you take that on notice please. Is there any hope at all that the lift mechanism will be fixed this year, which is the bicentennial year of New Norfolk?

Answer:

On 1 June 2005, the then Tasmanian Minister for Infrastructure and Resources, the Hon Bryan Green MHA, wrote to the then Minister for Transport and Regional Development, the Hon John Anderson MP, seeking the re-allocation of some of the Bridgewater Bridge funds to alternative projects including the Bridgewater Bridge refurbishment. I refer you to response II 02 answer provided following May 2008 estimates hearing on the outcome of the request for re-allocation.

In relation to the timing of works on the lifting mechanism, I refer you to Mr Rokvic's response in the hearing (Hansard page 25 refers).

Answer provided following February 2008 estimates hearings.

Question: AUSL 06

Division/Agency: Infrastructure Investment

Topic: Bridgewater Project - Tasmania

Hansard Page: 24 (19/02/08)

Senator Abetz asked:

Senator ABETZ—That is all very interesting, but the question was: if the Tasmanian government were to say, ‘We want this money spent on the Bridgewater Bridge,’ would the new federal Labor government honour that agreement?

Ms Riggs—I will have to ask for the minister’s guidance on that, so I will take the question on notice.

Answer:

The Government has committed \$11 million towards the upgrading of the existing Bridgewater Bridge to extend its operational life. It has also committed \$5 million towards a planning study for a new Bridgewater Bridge and Pontville Bagdad bypass on the Midland Highway. These commitments were in response to the Tasmanian Government requirement that the Bridgewater Bridge be upgraded to extend its useful life and to allow planning to proceed for a new Bridgewater Bridge.

Answer provided following May 2008 estimates hearings.

Question: II 02

Division/Agency: Infrastructure Investment

Topic: Bridgewater Bridge Funding

Hansard Page: 112 (28/05/08)

Senator Abetz asked:

Senator ABETZ—In the past there was an agreement between the Commonwealth and the state that, if the state wanted to, the Commonwealth would fund \$100 million or 80 per cent of the bridge if the state were to

fund 20 per cent of it. Is that offer still on the table from the new government?

Senator Conroy—I would have to take that on notice.

Answer:

Clauses 16 to 18 of the AusLink bilateral agreement between the Australian and Tasmanian Governments relate to the Bridgewater Bridge. The agreement is available at: http://www.auslink.gov.au/publications/policies/pdf/TAS_Bilateral.pdf.

The bilateral was varied by the former government in September 2006 to reallocate some of the Bridgewater Bridge funding. The amendments are available at: http://www.auslink.gov.au/publications/policies/pdf/Tas_Amendment_ScheduleA_09_06.pdf.

These arrangements confirmed the former Australian Government's willingness "to consider a proposal for an alternative project on the northern approaches to Hobart". Consistent with these arrangements the Australian and Tasmanian Governments have recently agreed to an alternative project, the Brighton Bypass. The Australian and Tasmanian Governments have also committed funding to fix the lift operation and refurbish the current bridge and plan for a replacement bridge.

The Australian Government has provided \$10.8 million in 2008/09 towards the upgrade of the Bridgewater Bridge and \$3 million (\$0.5 million in 2008/09 and \$2.5 million 2009/10) for the Brighton Bypass Planning to enable an early start on these projects.

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Question No. II 02

Division/Agency: Infrastructure Investment

Topic: Brighton Bypass

Hansard Pages: 26-27 (21/10/08)

Senator BUSHBY asked: Yes, I do have some further questions. What consultation has taken place with the state government in respect of the planning for and the building of the Brighton bypass in southern Tasmania?

Mr Rokvic—The Tasmanian government has recently submitted a project proposal request in terms of the Brighton bypass. The Australian government has provided funding for an early start on that project of some \$3 million.

Senator BUSHBY—Did that project proposal have any indication of current costings?

Mr Rokvic—The project estimated costs are \$164 million.

Senator BUSHBY—That has not changed?

Mr Rokvic—That has not changed.

Senator BUSHBY—That is good. The Australian government is committed to delivering \$131 million of that total?

Mr Rokvic—Yes.

Senator BUSHBY—What about proposed time lines for the building of the bypass?

Mr Rokvic—In terms of indicative timelines at the present moment, we expect that the state will be undertaking some pre-construction soil works later in the first quarter of next year. At this stage I do not have a proposed completion date.

Senator BUSHBY—You have no further indication of time lines beyond that?

Mr Rokvic—I will take that on notice.

Answer:

Construction is expected to commence in mid-2009 and be completed by late 2012 as detailed on the Tasmanian Department of Infrastructure Energy and Resources website at:

<www.dier.tas.gov.au/major_projects/brighton_transport_projects/brighton_bypass#5>

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Question No. II 03

Division/Agency: Infrastructure Investment
Topic: Outback Way and Western Metro Line in Sydney
Hansard Page: 29 (21/10/08)

Senator Macdonald asked:

Senator IAN MACDONALD—Obviously you do not have much more on that, but if you could take it on notice that would be good. I am conscious of what has been committed by previous governments. There was some money provided this year—if you could just confirm that. What I am really looking at is what the government's long-term approach is towards this highway that is of strategic national—not to mention economic—for Australia.

Mr Maher—That would be a policy decision for the Minister.

Senator IAN MACDONALD—I still want you to take it on notice. Although the minister is not here, I would appreciate his answer. Perhaps there is something in the system that the government has already said that you could look for, and if not I would like the minister's response to that. Who is familiar with the western metro line in Sydney. It is the railway line through Minister Albanese's electorate. Is anyone familiar with that? Is it true that a feasibility study of this line was conducted at the Commonwealth's expense?

Answer:

The Australian Government is currently providing \$10 million to upgrade 11 priority sections on the Outback Way. The majority of the projects have been completed and a final section is expected to be opened to traffic in June 2009. To date, a total of \$7.7 million has been paid to the Shire of Laverton, proponent for the Outback Way, with the balance to be paid and expended by the end of June 2009.

With regard to the western metro line in Sydney, this question was answered during the hearing (see page RRA&T 29).

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Question No. II 04

Division/Agency: Infrastructure Investment
Topic: Sydney Public Transport Commuters
Hansard Page: 30 (21/10/08)

Senator Macdonald asked:

[Public Transport for North-West Sydney Commuters]

Senator IAN MACDONALD—Does the Commonwealth have a view on whether northwest Sydney is well served by public transport? Is that something anyone in your Department would have?

Mr Williams—I could not comment on that.

Senator IAN MACDONALD—You could comment on whether it is something your department would have a view on.

Mr Tongue—From discussions with colleagues in New South Wales, I know Sydney has a range of public transport challenges to cope with growth on the metropolitan fringe. There has been a modal shift from motor vehicles to public transport. The heavy rail network in Sydney is, if you like, like spokes.

Senator IAN MACDONALD—No. My question was: does the Department have a view on whether northwest Sydney is well served by public transport? You may not have it with you, but is that the sort of thing the Department would have a view on? I am sorry to cut you off but we are under time pressure and I would rather you answered my questions and did not run a line.

Mr Tongue—It has not traditionally been an area where we have done a lot of work.

Senator IAN MACDONALD—Could you get me some figures on how many people in north-west Sydney commute to work using public transport and how many people in Sydney's inner west commute to work using public transport, if those things are available?

Mr Tongue—I would have to seek that from the New South Wales Government.

Senator IAN MACDONALD—Could you do that?

Mr Tongue—I am happy to ask.

Answer:

NSW Ministry of Transport has provided the information contained in the attached table.

[II 04 – Attachment A]

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Work Travel to Sydney CBD*, 2006

Origin LGA	Method of Travel to Work				PT Mode Share	Wholly or Partially	Wholly or Partially	East (E) or West (W) of Parramatta
	Public Transport	Car	Other	Total		in NW Metro Catchment**	in West Metro Catchment**	
Ashfield	4,082	1,393	150	5,625	73%		W	E
Auburn	2,636	749	41	3,426	77%		W	E
Baulkham Hills	5,221	3,294	97	8,612	61%	NW		W
Blacktown	7,957	1,795	102	9,854	81%		W	W
Burwood	2,441	633	47	3,121	78%		W	E
Canada Bay	5,230	3,158	257	8,645	60%	NW	W	E
Hawkesbury	521	239	16	776	67%	NW		W
Holroyd	3,134	798	37	3,969	79%		W	W
Hornsby	9,053	3,310	231	12,594	72%	NW		na
Hunter's Hill	824	633	16	1,473	56%	NW		E
Leichhardt	6,148	3,850	878	10,876	57%	NW	W	E
Marrickville	7,992	3,145	1,089	12,226	65%		W	E
Parramatta	6,292	1,938	148	8,378	75%		W	na
Penrith	3,574	890	52	4,516	79%		W	W
Ryde	5,785	2,913	142	8,840	65%	NW		E
Strathfield	2,145	624	49	2,818	76%		W	E
Total	73,035	29,362	3,352	105,749	69%			

Notes:

* Sydney CBD = North Sydney SLA, Sydney Inner SLA, Sydney East SLA, Sydney West SLA

** Catchments are indicative only as no final alignment has been chosen, and the influence of a project on demand can extend well beyond the corridor on the project

Source: NSW Transport Data Centre, 2006 Journey to Work, Table 7

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Question No. II 05

Division/Agency: Infrastructure Investment

Topic: Burdekin Bridge Maintenance

Hansard Page/s: 32 (21/10/08)

Senator MacDonald asked:

Senator IAN MACDONALD—Let me ask the question anyhow—you do not really need the answer. The answer was blaming another government for not dealing with bypasses. Is anyone doing any work on the fact that between the rest of Australia and the north of Queensland and the north of Australia—which is where Australia's future will be in the next 10, 20, 30 years—on the coast there is one dual lane road bridge that is the only source of travel from there? Is anyone doing any work about a duplication of that quite critical road and rail bridge? It has national defence implications; it has a lot of economic implications. The reference is, if it helps, question looks like QII-12 or something.

Mr Crombie—Yes, that is correct, Senator. The answer provided to the question on notice is effectively a summary of the situation as it exists at the moment. We are not doing any work on this matter and I could not tell you whether the Queensland government is doing any additional works. If they are, it is not being funded under the AusLink program.

Senator IAN MACDONALD—It is part of the national highway. People do not understand that it is a crucial part of the highway. The current bridge is 50 years old and it really has become dangerous and it has become a bottleneck. If something happens on that, the economic cost to that part of the world is high. All the mineral processors are in Townsville, a lot of the wealth of the country comes from that area and it relies on one single road bridge on the coastal route. Does the minister appreciate the importance of the Burdekin road-rail bridge and are there any plans in place as part of the national highway to look at a duplication of it?

Mr Crombie—Senator, I cannot answer that question.

Senator Conroy—We are happy to take that on notice.

Answer:

Minister Conroy answered this question during the hearings (see Hansard pages 32 – 33). Senator Macdonald has not answered Minister Conroy's question about the Opposition's policy on this matter.

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Question: II 06

Division/Agency: Infrastructure Investment
Topic: Lynd Highway (Hann Highway Development)
Hansard Pages: 32-33 (21/10/08)

Senator IAN MACDONALD—The Lynd Highway, which for the uninitiated—I know Senator Conroy will know immediately where this is—runs down the back from Cairns to Melbourne if you went all the way, but it is really the area from Mount Surprise through to Hughenden and then on further south joining up with the main inland highway. Some money was provided in the budget before last. I think there might have been a little bit in this budget. Can you just confirm what has been made available and what the future holds for that project?

Mr Crombie—Yes, Senator. The total Australian government funding for that project is \$3.85 million. The total estimated cost on the project is \$7.7 million. Construction commenced on 18 August and is scheduled at this stage for completion in late 2009. That is for sealing of a 40-kilometre section north of Hughenden to the Lynd junction.

CHAIR—Senator Macdonald, there are still a couple more senators who wish to ask questions, me being one of them.

Senator IAN MACDONALD—Sure, as I indicated, I have another two issues I want to quickly raise. That is funding for one year only though, is it?

Mr Crombie—No, I do not believe that is the case.

Senator Conroy—Just while the official is looking for it, I have an update on the Burdekin bypass and the new Burdekin River bridge. I understand that the former government stopped work on the Burdekin bypass and the new Burdekin River bridge in 2001, Senator Macdonald. You may even have been a minister at that stage. Nothing was done on the project, because of the former government's decision, between 2001 and 2007. Minister Albanese recently wrote to, I think you, and also answered your question on notice and asked what the coalition's position is on the issue: has it changed? Are you now in favour of a bypass and a new bridge?

Senator IAN MACDONALD—Perhaps I would not have expected from Minister Albanese a little bit more sense on a very serious question. Minister, as I prefaced my question before, I have that answer from last time which was nothing about the issue but all about the blame game which I thought was supposed to stop. And, quite frankly, I am not interested in what former governments may or may not have done; I am interested in what is happening in the future and it is becoming more and more critical by the day. Obviously Mr Albanese with that stupid response to me, quite unbecoming a senior minister, is writing back to me asking what my proposal is. Well sorry, if I were in government and if I were the minister, yes, we would be doing something. But regrettably, he is the minister and I would expect a little bit more maturity from one of the senior ministers of government. I am not interested in a political argument; I am interested in what—

Senator Conroy—I appreciate your desire to not talk about the past. Yesterday, you agreed that after 11½ years in government you were not able to get Townsville a decent radio. Again today, you have acknowledged that, despite being a minister in the government, work on the Burdekin bridge ceased under your government. I can understand you do not want to actually acknowledge the past and airbrush it out of

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existence but unfortunately with the marvels of digital technology now it is not possible.

Senator IAN MACDONALD—I and the people of northern Australia are interested in addressing what is becoming day by day an increasingly critical transport issue.

Senator Conroy—That would have been good if you could have addressed it while you were in government.

Senator IAN MACDONALD—What I get from the senior minister and from his representative here are some games about politics. I am not interested in that, Senator; I am interested in getting a result.

CHAIR—Senator Macdonald, do you have one more question?

Senator IAN MACDONALD—The officers are looking up my question. The minister intervened to run the answer I had already received. So if you are talking about wasting time, perhaps you could direct your attention to the minister.

CHAIR—I was just alerting everyone to our tight timetable.

Senator IAN MACDONALD—Yes, I am very conscious of that, Mr Chairman, I am doing my best in a wider sense to make sure that everyone gets a fair go.

CHAIR—And that you are, thank you.

Mr Crombie—The answer is that I do not have over what financial years that money covers. I have to take that on notice.

Senator IAN MACDONALD—Please take that on notice. Is it going to be worth asking my next two questions if you do not have this material? I thought I might have indicated, but when is the work on the new southern section approach to Cairns going to start? I have a press release from the minister saying that it is going to start soon. I would like some more precision about that, like who has got the contract, who is doing it, when it is likely to start, when it is intended to be finished and if you do not have that information could you take that on notice?

Answer:

Funding of \$3.85 million (capped) was paid to Flinders Shire Council in June 2007 and under the Funding Agreement, the project must be completed by June 2010.

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Question No. II 07

Division/Agency: Infrastructure Investment

Topic: Flood Works on the Bruce Highway between Cairns and Townsville

Hansard Page: 34 (21/10/08)

Senator MacDonald asked:

Senator IAN MACDONALD—Is that the completion of the Tully floodplain area? Will that now provide the flood-proof road from Cairns to at least Ingham?

Mr Crombie—I do not think it will because you might be aware that there are a series of other projects under the \$220 million package of works signed under an MOU for other works between Cairns and Townsville. I think there are bits that are actually funded under that. The Tully project is specifically for the \$128 million—the 15-kilometre section between Corduroy Creek. I do not think it actually will provide all of the works between Cairns and Ingham; that is tied up with the broader package of works.

Senator IAN MACDONALD—Can you give me the details of all of those and where they are at, what their timing is, what the estimated completion is?

Mr Crombie—I can do that now.

Senator IAN MACDONALD—Well, I do not think—

CHAIR—We will just take it on notice. We really are running out of time. Senator Ludlam has some questions.

Answer:

The \$220 million package of works, scheduled for completion by December 2009, comprises the following:

Safety, Minor Flood and General Improvement Works – multiple projects at various stages of completion. Projects include overtaking lanes, intersection improvements, pavement strengthening and rehabilitation, culvert and bridge improvements, fatigue management measures and planning activities.

Tokalon to Lanacost Street Upgrade in Ingham – project complete.

Mulgrave River flood improvements near Gordonvale south of Cairns – project under construction.

Woodlands to Veales Road North of Townsville – project under construction.

Minor Flooding Projects – various projects at various stages of completion. Projects include the Penna Road Dip, August Moon Culvert, works North of Blundell Road and Victory Creek Culvert.

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Question No. II 08

Division/Agency: Infrastructure Investment

Topic: Split between Road and Rail Funding

Hansard Page: 34 (21/10/08)

Senator Ludlam asked:

Senator LUDLAM—I am just trying to get a sense, I suppose, of the budget allocations in your agency that is for road funding as opposed to rail funding, regional or metro.

Senator LUDLAM—I am not looking for too many decimal places, but just a rough idea. You mainly do road infrastructure or is there a lot of expertise and funding towards rail? What is the rough split? Is your work across the agency 80 per cent road, 20 per cent rail, 90-10, 50-50? How does it break down in terms of the funds that you administer?

Senator LUDLAM—I would appreciate that just to get a rough breakdown. Do you fund cycleways as part of your transport budget?

Answer:

In the 2008-09 Budget, \$2037.4 million was provided for work on the National Land Transport Network. On 12 December 2008, the Prime Minister announced the *Nation Building* package, which included accelerating project starts for the construction of 14 national road projects. This will increase the allocations by an additional \$711 million over 2008-09 and 2009-10.

\$1022.3 million was previously budgeted to be spent on the National Rail Network directly by the Government and by the wholly government owned Australian Rail Track Corporation (ARTC). The *Nation Building* package announcement also provided for a \$1.2 billion injection into the ARTC to finance investment in 17 rail construction and upgrade projects that will significantly increase Australia's rail network.

Cycleways are funded as part of projects and are considered as eligible project costs under national network projects. State governments consider the need for public cycleways in the design and delivery phase.

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Question No. II 09

Division: Infrastructure Investment
Topic: Metropolitan Public Transport
Hansard Page: 35 (21/10/08)

Senator Ludlam asked:

Senator LUDLAM—I wonder how much of your work is in metropolitan public transport?

Ms McNally—In terms of quantifying that I would have to take that on notice, but there has been a significant growth under this government.

Senator LUDLAM—Would it be possible perhaps just to break down some funding over the last two or three years?

Ms McNally—We could make an attempt. We will have a look at that, Senator.

Senator LUDLAM—Not to just be creating work for you, but I am just interested to see how that changing pattern of mobility around the country is being reflected in the work that your agency does.

Ms McNally—Yes, Senator.

Senator LUDLAM—I would appreciate that.

Answer:

The Government recognises that the Commonwealth has been absent from urban policy development, including public transport, over the last 12 years and that this has had an impact on the productivity and sustainability of our urban areas.

In this year's May Budget, the Government established a \$75 million program to address urban congestion and planning, with the funds provided in 2007-08. Of this amount, \$26 million is being applied to projects that specifically address metropolitan public transport issues.

This funding included \$20 million for a feasibility study into the proposed Western Metro project for Sydney, between Parramatta and the CBD; \$3 million for a transport sustainability study for Adelaide; and \$3 million to develop a strategic framework for transport networks servicing Perth Airport.

Australian Government funding provided for the improvement of freight rail infrastructure will also have positive impacts on metropolitan public transport by freeing up capacity for additional passenger rail services.

The Government will consider further funding for urban transport infrastructure projects on completion of the National Infrastructure Audit and Infrastructure Priority List by Infrastructure Australia.

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Question No. II 10

Division/Agency: Infrastructure Investment

Topic: Black Spot Program Announcements Port Macquarie 18 August 2008

Hansard Page: 38 (21/10/08)

Senator Williams asked:

I have a question for Minister Conroy. On 18 August this year, Minister Albanese announced a \$1.3 million program to fix dangerous black spots and local roads in the Port Macquarie area. The announcement included \$230,000 to fix a dangerous black spot at Rawdon Island, but just three days later his media release had not mentioned anything of the \$1.3 million as to Port Macquarie except for that Rawdon Island black spot. Why did the minister choose to announce this expenditure in Port Macquarie and Taree in person during a federal by-election? Is that normal procedure?

Senator Conroy—Sorry, but were you asking whether it was normal procedure to release funding during a by-election?

Senator WILLIAMS—The minister went to Port Macquarie to announce the special funding for the Black Spots Program and some funding for the Roads to Recovery program in Port Macquarie during the time of the by-election. Is that normal procedure?

Senator Conroy—I would have to take that on notice and ask the minister about that timing subject to the constraints of his diary, I am sure. But I will happily take that on notice and seek further information from the minister.

Senator WILLIAMS—Because three days later he put his media release out announcing all these black spot funding programs and only \$230,000 of that announcement at Port Macquarie is in the program three days later. So I am just a bit curious on that one, Minister. Can you confirm that, while Minister Albanese was up at Port Macquarie announcing these, he met with Robert Oakeshott, the then independent candidate for the seat of Lyne?

Senator Conroy—I am happy to take that on notice and get you the information.

Senator WILLIAMS—Yes, if you could you get me the information on that. I was wondering if the minister met with any of the other local representatives such as John Turner, the MP for Myall Lakes, while he was there. Would you have to take that on notice as well?

Senator Conroy—I will take that on notice.

Senator WILLIAMS—Yes. And, did the minister personally announce any black spot funding in any of the other electorates? For example, just down the road at South West Rocks there was a \$465,000 program. I wonder if you would take on notice whether he went and announced that personally.

Senator Conroy—I am happy to get that information for you, Senator Williams.

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Answer:

The Australian Government is committed to improving road safety. That's why we are more than doubling Black Spot funding in 2008-09 from \$50 million to \$110 million. As part of this commitment to making our roads safer, the Minister personally announced *Black Spot* projects to be funded in Tasmania, New South Wales and Queensland.

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Question No. II 11

Division/Agency: Infrastructure Investment

Topic: Kingston Bypass

Hansard Page: Written Question

Senator Bushby asked:

1. What consultation has taken place between officers of the Tasmanian Government and the Australian Government on the planning for and building of the Kingston By-pass in southern Tasmania?
2. Is the Aust Govt aware of current costings for the by-pass?
3. What are the current estimates for the total cost of the bypass?
4. Has the Aust Govt been asked to contribute anything over and above the \$25m promised as an election commitment?
5. Has the Aust Govt been advised of proposed timelines for the building of the Kingston by-pass?
6. What are those timelines?
7. Will the Aust Govt place any performance conditions on the payment of the funds towards the cost of the by-pass?

Answer:

1. The Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government consults extensively with officers of the Tasmanian Department of Infrastructure, Energy and Resources on the Infrastructure Investment Program.
2. Yes.
3. The total cost is estimated at \$41.5 million.
4. We do not have a \$25 million election commitment to this project.
5. Yes.
6. Construction is expected to start in late 2009 and completed by early 2012.
7. Conditions that apply to the approval of land transport infrastructure projects under the *AusLink (National Land Transport) Act 2005* will apply to this project.

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Question No. II 12

Division/Agency: Infrastructure Investment
Topic: Bridgewater Bridge/Granton Junction
Hansard Page: Written Question

Senator Bushby asked:

\$14m allocated – to cover refurbish of bridge and upgrade of intersection:

1. What consultation has taken place between officers of the Tasmanian Government and the Australian Government on the planning for and implementation of the upgrade of the Bridgewater Bridge in Tasmania?
2. Is the Aust Govt aware of current costings for the upgrade?
3. What are the current estimates for the total cost of the upgrade?
4. Has the Aust Govt been asked to contribute anything over and above the \$11m promised as an election commitment?
5. Has the Aust Govt been advised of proposed timelines for the construction of the upgrade?
6. What are those timelines?
7. Will the Aust Govt place any performance conditions on the payment of the funds towards the cost of the upgrade?

Answer:

1. The Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government consults extensively with officers of the Tasmanian Department of Infrastructure, Energy and Resources on the Infrastructure Investment Program.
2. Yes.
3. The total cost is estimated at \$14 million.
4. No.
5. Yes.
6. Construction of the junction upgrade is expected to commence in early 2009 and be completed by mid 2009.
The bridge refurbishment works are expected to commence in mid 2009 and be completed by late 2010.
7. Conditions that apply to the approval of land transport infrastructure projects under the *AusLink (National Land Transport) Act 2005* will apply to this project.

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Question No. II 13

Division/Agency: Infrastructure Investment

Topic: Brighton Bypass

Hansard Page: Written Question

Senator Bushby asked:

Estimated cost \$164m (promised \$131m) – status: not started

1. What consultation has taken place between officers of the Tasmanian Government and the Australian Government on the planning for and building of the Brighton By-pass in southern Tasmania?
2. Is the Aust Govt aware of current costings for the by-pass?
3. What are the current estimates for the total cost of the bypass?
4. Has the Aust Govt been asked to contribute anything over and above the \$131m promised as an election commitment?
5. Has the Aust Government been advised of proposed timelines for the building of the Brighton by-pass?
6. What are those timelines?
7. Will the Aust Govt place any performance conditions on the payment of the funds towards the cost of the by-pass?

Answer:

1. The Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government consults extensively with officers of the Tasmanian Department of Infrastructure, Energy and Resources on the Infrastructure Investment Program.
2. Yes.
3. The total cost is estimated at \$164 million.
4. No.
5. Yes.
6. Construction is expected to commence in mid 2009 and be completed by mid-2012.
7. Conditions that apply to the approval of land transport infrastructure projects under the *AusLink (National Land Transport) Act 2005* will apply to this project.

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Question No. II 14

Division/Agency: Infrastructure Investment

Topic: Brighton Transport Hub

Hansard Page: Written Question

Senator Bushby asked:

\$56m towards \$79m cost

1. What consultation has taken place between officers of the Tasmanian Government and the Australian Government on the planning for and building of the Brighton transport hub in southern Tasmania?
2. Is the Aust Govt aware of current costings for the matters promised to be funded last year?
3. What are the current estimates for the total cost of the Transport hub?
4. Has the Aust Govt been asked to contribute anything over and above the \$56m promised as an election commitment?
5. Has the Aust Govt been advised of proposed timelines for the building of the Brighton transport hub?
6. What are those timelines?
7. Will the Aust Govt place any performance conditions on the payment of the funds towards the cost of the transport hub?

Answer:

1. The Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government consults extensively with officers of the Tasmanian Department of Infrastructure, Energy and Resources on the Infrastructure Investment Program.
2. Yes.
3. The total cost estimate is \$79 million.
4. No.
5. No.
6. N/A.
7. Conditions that apply to the approval of land transport infrastructure projects under the *AusLink (National Land Transport) Act 2005* will apply to this project.

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Question No. II 15

Division/Agency: Infrastructure Investment
Topic: Rhyndaston Rail Capacity Improvements
Hansard Page: Written Question

Senator Bushby asked:

Rhyndaston rail capacity improvements:

1. What consultation has taken place between officers of the Tasmanian Government and the Australian Government on the planning for and implementation of the rail capacity improvements at Rhyndaston in Tasmania?
2. Is the Australian Government aware of current costings for the improvements?
3. What are the current estimates for the total cost of the improvements?
4. Has the Australian Government been asked to contribute anything over and above the \$24m promised as an election commitment?
5. Has the Australian Government been advised of proposed timelines for the construction of the improvements?
6. What are those timelines?
7. Will the Australian Government place any performance conditions on the payment of the funds towards the cost of the improvements?

Answer:

1. Officials from the Department visited various sites along the north-south rail line in June 2008, including Rhyndaston.
2. Yes.
3. \$55.6 million.
4. No.
5. The Tasmanian Government has indicated that the project would be completed over a period of up to four years.
6. Refer to the answer to Question 5.
7. Conditions that apply to the approval of land transport infrastructure projects under the *AusLink (National Land Transport) Act 2005* will apply to this project.

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Question No. II 16

Division/Agency: Infrastructure Investment

Topic: Derwent Valley Rail Line

Hansard Page: Written Question

Senator Bushby asked:

1. What consultation has taken place between officers of the Tasmanian Government and the Australian Government on the planning for and implementation of the Derwent Valley railway upgrade in Tasmania?
2. Is the Australian Government aware of current costings for the upgrade?
3. What are the current estimates for the total cost of the upgrade?
4. Has the Australian Government been asked to contribute anything over and above the \$30m promised as an election commitment?
5. Has the Australian Government been advised of proposed timelines for the construction of the upgrade?
6. What are those timelines?
7. Will the Australian Government place any performance conditions on the payment of the funds towards the cost of the upgrade?

Answer:

1. Officials from the Department visited various sites along the north-south rail line in June 2008 and had discussions with officials from the Tasmanian Department of Infrastructure, Energy and Resources including the upgrade of the Derwent Valley rail line.
2. No. The Tasmanian Government is yet to finalise detailed costings for this project.
3. See answer to Question 2 above.
4. No.
5. No.
6. Refer to the answer to Question 5.
7. Conditions that apply to the approval of land transport infrastructure projects under the *AusLink (National Land Transport) Act 2005* will apply to this project.

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Question No. II 17

Division/Agency: Infrastructure Investment

Topic: Pontville-Bagdad Bypass & Bridgewater Bridge Planning

Hansard Page: Written Question

Senator Bushby asked:

1. What consultation has taken place between officers of the Tasmanian Government and the Australian Government on the planning for the Pontville-Bagdad Bypass and the new Bridgewater Bridge in southern Tasmania?
2. Is the Aust Govt aware of current costings for the bypass?
3. What are the current estimates for the total cost of the bypass?
4. Has the Aust Govt been asked to contribute anything over and above the \$5m promised as an election commitment?

Answer:

1. The Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government consults extensively with officers of the Tasmanian Department of Infrastructure, Energy and Resources (DIER) on the Infrastructure Investment Program.
2. No.
3. DIER is yet to prepare cost estimates for the bypass.
4. No.

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Question No. II 18

Division/Agency: Infrastructure Investment

Topic: AusLink II Road Maintenance

Hansard Page: Written Question

Senator Bushby asked:

Increased commitment of \$31m to national network road maintenance over AusLink II period:

1. What consultation has taken place between officers of the Tasmanian Government and the Australian Government on maintenance requirements for that part of the national road network in Tasmania?
2. How much of the \$31m has been requested?
3. How much committed?
4. What sections of the network do these commitments apply to?

Answer:

1. It is not clear what this question refers to.
2. As per question 1.
3. As per question 1.
4. As per question 1.

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Question No. II 19

Division/Agency: Infrastructure Investment

Topic: Building Australia Fund

Hansard Page: Written Question

Senator Ludlum asked:

1. Can you provide a characterisation of the cost benefit model used to assess the various proposals made in the first round of bids for Commonwealth contributions from the BAF?
2. Can you describe how you've incorporated 'agglomeration economies' into your cost-benefit model?

Answer:

1. Proposals for expenditure from the BAF will be subject to rigorous evaluation by Infrastructure Australia (IA). IA's prioritisation methodology is available at: http://www.infrastructureaustralia.gov.au/files/Prioritisation_Guidelines_v5.pdf
2. I refer you to IA's prioritisation methodology.

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Question No. II 20

Division/Agency: Infrastructure Investment

Topic: AusLink Funding

Hansard Page: Written Question

Senator Ludlum asked:

I refer to the criteria by which Commonwealth funding under the AusLink program is made available for road projects.

Recognising that proposed road projects are subject to compliance with local, state and Commonwealth heritage, indigenous heritage, environmental and planning legislation, I ask:

1. Does the Government ever place additional heritage, Aboriginal heritage, environmental or other conditions on road projects to which it has made a contribution under the AusLink scheme or any other road funding scheme?
2. Can the Minister detail the form in which such conditions appear?
3. Do such conditions take the form of standard conditions and/or conditions specific to the project in question?
4. If standard conditions apply to all road projects funded, can the Minister provide a copy of such conditions?
5. Is AusLink funding for road transport conditional on the project in question complying with all relevant heritage, Aboriginal heritage, environmental and planning legislation?
6. If such conditions exist and are breached by state and local governments, what course of action is taken by the Commonwealth government?

Answer:

1. No, under the *AusLink (National Land Transport) Act 2005* the Government does not currently place additional heritage, Aboriginal heritage, environmental or other conditions on road projects funded by the AusLink Program.
2. Not applicable.
3. Not applicable.
4. Not applicable.
5. AusLink funding for road and rail projects is provided in accordance with the *AusLink (National Land Transport) Act 2005*. Project proponents are responsible for complying with relevant heritage, Aboriginal heritage, environmental and planning legislation.
6. Responsibility for pursuing breaches of heritage, Aboriginal heritage, environmental and planning legislation rests with the government agencies that administer the relevant legislation and those agencies would act in accordance with their legislative requirements, compliance policies and procedures.

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Question No. II 21

Division/Agency: Infrastructure Investment

Topic: Moree Bypass

Hansard Page: Written Question

Senator Williams asked:

1. Is the funding for the Newell Highway bypass at Moree fully committed for the entire project?
2. Is there a fuel contamination issue in the Gosport Street area?
3. If so, how much is this adding to the cost and delay in construction?
4. Will a temporary by-pass be installed during construction of the main bypass?
5. Will Moree Plains Shire Council be asked to pay for any associated drainage works?
6. When is the completion date for the project?
7. What is the estimated total cost of the project?

Answer:

1. The Australian Government has committed a total of \$56.2 million to the Moree bypass project.
2. Yes. On 1 August 2008, the Department of Environment and Climate Change declared two parcels of land on Gosport Street as sites requiring remediation.
3. The impact of the contamination on the project timetable and cost is currently being assessed.
4. It is proposed that the northern section of the bypass, on completion, will be connected to the Gwydir Highway to allow for that section of the bypass to be opened to traffic. This interim connection will be in place until the contamination issues are resolved and the southern section is constructed.
5. No. Drainage works associated with the project construction will be considered part of the project cost.
6. The northern section of works is expected to be completed by mid 2009. In respect to the southern section of works, this is currently being assessed.
7. As the cost impact of contamination is currently being assessed, no total estimate is available.

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Question No. II 22

Division/Agency: Infrastructure Investment

Topic: Princes Highway East

Hansard Page: Written Question

Senator Williams asked:

On 24 Oct 2007, the Prime Minister announced an election promise of \$140 million to upgrade the Princes Highway east from Traralgon to Sale, yet in the May Budget a figure of only \$500,000 was allocated. What is the current status of this project or was it in fact an example of the-would-be- Prime Minister lying to the Australian people in the lead-up to the election?

Answer:

The Australian Government has committed \$140 million towards the duplication of the Princes Highway east from Traralgon to Sale.

The Australian Government has allocated \$1.2 million (\$0.5 million in 2008-09 and \$0.7 million in 2009-10) to allow initial planning for the 45 kilometre duplication to commence. The remaining \$138.8 million will be available between 2009-10 and 2013-14, as per the election commitment.

Planning along with a review of the alignment is currently underway.

In twelve months, we have achieved more on this issue than the former Government did in twelve years.

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Question No. II 23

Division/Agency: Infrastructure Investment
Topic: Upgrading the Nation's Rail Network
Hansard Page: Written Question

Senator Williams asked:

What plans does the Government/Department have to build on the work of former Deputy Prime Minister John Anderson in relation to upgrading the nation's faltering rail network and assisting and encouraging States in relation to upgrading and recommissioning branch lines?

Answer:

The Rudd Government will not be following the failed example of the former Government.

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Question No. II 24

Division/Agency: Infrastructure Investment
Topic: NSW Grain Freight Review
Hansard Page: Written Question

Senators Heffernan and Williams asked:

I refer to the Budget announcement by the Rudd Government regarding the \$3 million for a Grain Rail Task Force that will (and I quote from the media release from the Minister for Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government, dated Tuesday 13 May 2008):see industry and governments work together to develop viable long-term solutions to grain transport in NSW.

From what programme will this [NSW Grain Rail Task Force] be funded?

Answer:

The NSW Grain Freight Review will be funded under part 4 of the *Auslink (National Land Transport) Act 2005*.

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Question No. II 25

Division/Agency: Infrastructure Investment

Topic: NSW Grain Rail Task force

Hansard Page: Written Question

Senators Heffernan and Williams asked:

1. Who will make up the task force?
2. What organisations will be represented?
3. What are the Review's terms of reference?
4. Will the National Farmers Federation be on the task force?
5. Why or why not?
6. What about the Australian Rail Track Corporation?
7. Will representatives from the NSW Government be on the task force?

Answer:

1. The Review will be undertaken by Mr Des Powell, with support from a task force comprising of; grower groups (NSW Farmers Association and Grain Growers Association), grain handling groups (Graincorp, Australian Bulk Alliance), grain marketing groups (AWB, ABB), rail operators (Pacific National and El Zorro as a potential operator), Local Government of NSW, Australian Rail Track Corporation, Rail, Tram and Bus Union and the Australian Government Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry.
2. See answer to question 1.
3. Refer to website:
<http://www.auslink.gov.au/projects/ProjectDetails.aspx?Project_id=rail001>
4. No.
5. Grain growers in NSW are represented on the task force by the NSW Farmers Association and the Grain Growers Association.
6. Yes.
7. The Review is supported by a secretariat from the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government and the NSW Ministry of Transport.

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Question No. II 26

Division/Agency: Infrastructure Investment
Topic: NSW Grain Rail Task Force
Hansard Page: Written Question

Senators Heffernan and Williams asked:

The Taskforce will complete its review by May 2009:

1. Is that correct?
2. Will that report be publicly available?
3. Will it be tabled?
4. Will it go to the Federal Minister first?
5. Will the Review be making recommendations regarding the viability of grain rail routes?
6. What are the funding implications upon the Commonwealth and the State of NSW arising from this review?
7. Will the review provide its conclusions to Infrastructure Australia?
8. Will its findings inform the considerations of the Building Australia Fund?
9. Is the Federal Government considering assuming funding responsibility for the upkeep of the thousands of kilometres of grain rail infrastructure in rural NSW?
10. What is the model of management and maintenance being considered by the Rudd Government when it comes to the grain carrying rail system of NSW?
11. What plans does the Government have to provide support to the grain carrying rail infrastructure in other states?

Answer:

1. Yes.
2. The release of the final report is a matter for the Government to consider.
3. That will be a decision for the Government.
4. The Review Chair has been asked to report to the Australian Government Minister for Infrastructure, the Hon Anthony Albanese MP, and the NSW Minister for Transport, the Hon David Campbell MP.
5. See Terms of Reference.
6. See Terms of Reference.
7. The Minister will consider this when the Review is complete.
8. The Minister will consider this when the Review is complete.
9. No.
10. See terms of reference.
11. The Australian Government has made a commitment to undertake a similar review in Western Australia.

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Question No. II 27

Division/Agency: Infrastructure Investment

Topic: NSW Grain Rail Services

Hansard Page: Written Question

Senator Heffernan asked:

I refer to media reports earlier this year that Pacific National, the main grain rail operator in NSW, had decided to suspend its rail operations. I also notice that according to more recent media reports; that Pacific National has decided, after all, to cart grain on NSW branch lines until 30 June 2009.

1. Is this correct?
2. What contractual arrangements are now underway to secure the transport of grain into the future?
3. Obviously grain producers need to have long-term planning horizons in order to conduct their business. What arrangements will be in place to ensure that an operator is available after 30 June next year, to provide grain rail services in NSW?
4. Under this deal, what arrangements are in place to ensure that growers have fair and equitable access to rail, up-country storages and port facilities?

Answer:

1. Yes.
2. The NSW Government is currently seeking 'expressions of interest' for the operation of branch line train services.
3. The NSW Government is currently seeking 'expressions of interest' for the operation of branch line train services.
4. This is a matter for the NSW Government.