

Rural & Regional Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Supplementary Budget Estimates November 2013

Infrastructure and Regional Development

Question no.: 217

Program: 2.2

Division/Agency: (STP) Surface Transport Policy

Topic: Economic Growth Plan for Tasmania

Proof Hansard Page/s: 96 (18/11/2013)

Senator Gallacher asked:

Senator GALLACHER: The other issue is the freight package to Tasmania. On the public record Labor committed \$40 million to the Bass Strait freight package, a fifty-fifty split between state and federal governments. What is the current status of those commitments?

Mr Mrdak: As far as I am aware that has not been committed to by the government.

Senator GALLACHER: It has not been committed to at all?

Mr Mrdak: Not that I am aware of. The government has put in place a range of measures, including a review of Tasmania's freight and shipping costs by the Productivity Commission; however, I am not aware of any commitment to that program.

Senator GALLACHER: Was there a recommendation from the freight logistics coordination team?

Mr Mrdak: There was advice provided to the former government of that coordination, but I am not aware that that has been provided the current government.

Senator GALLACHER: The \$25 million that Labor set aside to be made available before Christmas is in jeopardy or will not be honoured?

Mr Mrdak: I will take that on notice, but I am not aware that that is part of the government's economic growth plan for Tasmania, which includes a whole range of other industry assistance measures.

Answer:

The Coalition Government has not committed funding towards the former Government's election commitment and it is not part of the Government's Economic Growth Plan for Tasmania.

The Freight Logistics Coordination Team (FLCT) Chair's interim findings were released in late August 2013, just prior to the Federal election. The interim findings called for assistance to be provided to Tasmanian exporters; while the work of the FLCT continued (a final report is expected early December 2013). During the Federal election campaign the previous Australian Government agreed, in principle, to provide funding in conjunction with the Tasmanian Government in response to the recommendation.