



GLENN STERLE

**Shadow Assistant Minister for Road Safety
Chair, Senate Rural, Regional Affairs & Transport References Committee
Labor Senator for Western Australia**

4th May 2021

Mr Simon Atkinson
Secretary
Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Communications
GPO Box 594
CANBERRA ACT 2601

Via email: simon.atkinson@infrastructure.gov.au

Dear Mr Atkinson

I have previously written on behalf of Opposition Senators to request certain information ahead of forthcoming Budget Estimates hearings scheduled for late this month.

As per my request ahead of the March Additional Estimates hearings, I am requesting you provide the requested information but in a different format that I expect will be simpler for your officers to prepare, while still supporting meaningful discussions at Senate Estimates. At the last hearings in March 2021 you indicated you had not had the time to prepare all of the requested material, so I am writing earlier than usual on this occasion in the hope this will allow time to fully comply with my request.

For each of the programs set out below, I would appreciate if a table like the one you provided beginning on page 352 of Part 3 of the documents you tabled on 19 October 2020 could serve as a template for the information to be provided later this month. By way of example, the first page of that table is at Attachment A.

I request the following information be provided both in hard copy and in searchable PDF format at the hearings later this month.

In addition, please provide detail on the funding by program that has been contractually committed, committed but not yet contracted, and any funding that has not yet been allocated.

The tables should also make clear what changes have occurred since the last Estimates hearings, and a list of completed projects for each financial year should also be included, as well as projects scheduled for completion in the 2020-21 financial year.

I would also be grateful if you could provide detail of how funding is allocated by each program for each year over the Forward Estimates, how funding will be distributed (including whether any co-funding arrangements apply), and how recipients have been identified.

Programs of Interest

Infrastructure Investment

- Commuter Carparks Fund
- Urban Congestion Fund
- Roads of Strategic Importance
- \$2 billion road safety program announced through the 2020/21 Budget
- Improving Cattle Supply Chains
- Bridges Renewal Program
- Black Spots Projects
- Northern Australia Roads
- Heavy Vehicles Safety and Productivity Program
- Inland Rail, including allocation of funds to freight hubs connected to Inland Rail

Regional Development

- Community Development Grants Programme
- Building Better Regions Fund, by round
- Regional Recovery Partnerships
- Drought Communities Programme and Drought Communities Programme Extension
- National Stronger Regions Fund
- Regional Growth Fund
- Regional Jobs and Investment Packages
- Regional Deals, by region
- Murray Darling Basin Plan

Local Government

- Local Roads component of grants paid to each council
- Local Communities Infrastructure Fund

Cities

- City Deals, by city
- Smart Cities and Suburbs

COVID Response

- Regional Airlines Funding Assistance
- Regional Airline Network Support
- Australian Airline Financial Relief Package
- Regional Airports Screening Infrastructure
- Domestic Airlines Network Support
- Returning Australians Home
- Local Roads and Community Infrastructure Program
- Shovel Ready Projects Program
- Targeted Road Safety Projects
- Tourism Aviation Network Support and associated programs announced on 11 March 2021

COVID Relief and Recovery Fund

- Detail on each of the funded initiatives not already covered above

I also ask that Departmental officials come prepared to answer questions on the progress of individual projects delivered through each Program, including detail of when projects commenced, expenditure to date, reasons for any delays, and expected completion of all funded projects.

Officials should also be sufficiently briefed to expand on the payment of funds to individual groups or companies and the decision-making process surrounding allocation of all funds.

Answering questions by officials

Finally I wish to take this opportunity to again remind you of your obligation, and the obligation of senior officials from your Department, to directly answer questions asked by Senators during Estimates hearings.

Consistent with the resolution of the Senate on [25 June 2014](#):

- there are no areas in connection with the expenditure of public funds where a person has the discretion to withhold details or explanations from the Parliament or its committees unless the Parliament has expressly provided otherwise;
- any claim to withhold information must be on an established ground (noting the Senate Order of 13 May 2009 which sets out the proper process for raising public interest immunity claims);
- the statutory values which Australian Public Service agency heads and employees are required to uphold which include a requirement to be open and accountable; and

- the constitutional framework of checks and balances which places the Parliament in prime position as the agent of accountability.

In relation to Cabinet matters, [Odgers Australian Senate Practice](#) provides the following:

It is accepted that deliberations of the Executive Council and of the cabinet should be able to be conducted in secrecy so as to preserve the freedom of deliberation of those bodies. This ground, however, relates only to disclosure of deliberations. There has been a tendency for governments to claim that anything with a connection to cabinet is confidential. A claim that a document is a cabinet document should not be accepted; as has been made clear in relation to such claims in court proceedings, it has to be established that disclosure of the document would reveal cabinet deliberations. The claim cannot be made simply because a document has the word "cabinet" in or on it.

[Government guidelines for official witnesses before Parliamentary Committees and related matters](#) provide further guidance on the making of public interest immunity related to advice to Government:

4.6.2. The Senate Order of 13 May 2009 made it clear that committees will not accept a claim for public interest immunity based only on the ground that the document in question has not been published, is confidential, or is advice to or internal deliberations of government; a minister must also specify the harm to the public interest that may result from the disclosure of the information or document that has been requested.

I thank you in advance for your cooperation with this request and look forward to your attendance before the committee.

Yours sincerely

GLENN STERLE
SHADOW ASSISTANT MINISTER FOR ROAD SAFETY
CHAIR – SENATE RURAL, REGIONAL AFFAIRS & TRANSPORT REFERENCES COMMITTEE
LABOR SENATOR FOR WESTERN AUSTRALIA

Attachment A

Infrastructure Investment Program - Projects announced since 2018-19 Budget

Figures correct as at 2020-21 Budget

All figures are in \$ million and prepared on a cash basis. Funding profiles represent the current estimate of project start and end date, which is subject to further consultation with states, territories and local governments.

Table does not list projects in the Roads to Recovery, Black Spot, Heavy Vehicles Safety and Productivity, and Bridges Renewal Programs, Maintenance projects, or unallocated lines (with the exception of Roads of Strategic Importance corridor funding).

Project planning can commence before a project is announced or otherwise commences as soon as a project is announced. This includes discussions with state transport agencies.

Some project commitments are being delivered by two different entities. These projects have been split into individual lines. Other projects may have been amended since Budget. These changes will be reflected in the next Budget update.

Funding profiles may not equate to the total Australian Government funding, the difference is due to funding being expensed in earlier financial years.

State	Project Name	Sub Program	Package Identifier	Commitment	Total Project Cost	Total Aus Gov Funding	Australian Government share (per cent or capped amount)	20-21 Forecast	21-22 Forecast	22-23 Forecast	23-24 Forecast	FEs total	24-25 Forecast	25-26 Forecast	26-27 Forecast	27-28 Forecast	28-29 Forecast	29-30 Forecast	Beyond FEs total	Status	Description	Electorate
ACT	ACT Intersection Upgrade Package	Investment Roads	Shovel Ready Projects	2020-21 JEFU	10.0	5.0	50	3.0	2.0	0.0	0.0	5.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	In Planning	The package will provide intersection upgrades across the Australian Capital Territory at various identified locations to improve road user and pedestrian safety, and improve traffic management. The intersections being upgraded are: •Belconnen Way/ Springvale Drive, Hawker •Luncheon Street/ Irving Street, Phillip •Southern Cross Drive/ Starke Street, Holt •Kuringa Drive/ Owen Dixon Drive, Evatt.	Bean, Canberra, Fenner
ACT	Canberra - South West Corridor upgrade package	Investment Roads		2020-21 Budget	100.0	50.0	50	0.0	2.0	5.0	5.0	12.0	7.5	7.5	7.5	5.5	5.0	5.0	38.0	In Planning	This long-term project will fund a package of works to support the growth of the Australian Capital Territory's (ACT) South West Corridor, promote efficient east west freight connections, ease congestion and improve safety and productivity. The package is expected to include the development of a corridor plan, and individual projects consistent with this plan that are prioritised and agreed between the Australian and ACT governments. Subject to planning outcomes, projects could include upgrades to the Tuggeranong Parkway (including between the Cotter Rd and Glenloch Interchange), improvements to intersections and feeder roads along the corridor (such as the Athlton Drive), or pavement rehabilitation along the Parkway. It will help address congestion areas identified by Infrastructure Australia, with parts of the Tuggeranong Parkway some of the busiest sections of road in the ACT (transporting about 40,000 vehicles a day).	Bean, Canberra
ACT	Canberra Light Rail – new Mitchell Light Rail Stop	Investment Roads	Shovel Ready Projects	2020-21 JEFU	12.0	6.0	50	6.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	6.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	In Planning	This project involves the modification of the existing Canberra Light Rail Stage 1 Project for the design and construction of an additional light rail stop. The Mitchell Stop will be located at the intersection of Sandford Street-Morrisset Road and Flemington Road.	Fenner
ACT	Kings Highway Corridor (ACT-NSW)	Investment Roads		2019-20 BUDGET	TBD	30.0	Capped at \$30m	0.0	5.0	10.0	15.0	30.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	In Planning	This project will deliver targeted upgrades along the Kings Highway corridor east of Queanbeyan to the Canberra International Airport, improving the east-west connectivity between NSW and the ACT.	Canberra, Eden-Monaro
ACT	Molonglo River Bridge	Investment Roads		2020-21 Budget	175.0	87.5	50	0.0	10.0	20.0	30.0	60.0	27.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	27.5	In Planning	This project involves the completion of John Gorton Drive and the construction of a new bridge crossing over the Molonglo River. It will support significant growth in Molonglo, including the full development of Denman Prospect, Whitlam and the Molonglo Commercial Centre. It will also improve traffic safety and accessibility for west Canberra.	Bean
ACT	Monaro Highway Upgrade	Investment Roads	November 2019 Boost	2018-19 Budget	230.5	115.3	50	18.3	50.0	30.0	0.0	98.3	0.0	7.8	7.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	15.3	Under Construction	This project will deliver targeted upgrades on the Monaro Highway in the ACT. It includes a package of safety works, and intersection upgrades at the intersections of the Monaro Highway and Lanyon Drive; and Monaro Highway and Isabella Drive as separate projects within the package.	Bean, Canberra
ACT	Northbourne Avenue Pavement Rehabilitation Package	Investment Roads	Shovel Ready Projects	2020-21 JEFU	10.0	5.0	50	5.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	5.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	Under Construction	This project involves the restoration of road pavement along Northbourne Avenue between Condomine Street to MacArthur Avenue, northbound, and Anhill Street to MacArthur Avenue, southbound.	Canberra
ACT	Parkes Way Upgrade - Planning and Design	Investment Roads		2020-21 Budget	5.0	2.5	50	2.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	In Planning	This project involves planning for proposed upgrades to Parkes Way to improve accessibility and connectivity, and safety for all road users. Parkes Way is a major East-West road in Canberra that connects with William Hovel Drive, the Tuggeranong Parkway and Caswell Drive. It also intersects with Anzac Parade. Funding will provide for a feasibility study and design work to be undertaken. This will facilitate commencement of a phased project to address pressure points, storm water and utilities issues.	Canberra
ACT	Road Safety Barriers	Investment Roads	Targeted Road Safety Works	2020-21 JEFU	1.7	0.9	50	0.8	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.9	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	In Planning	The project involves installing road safety barriers on 35 sites on 6 arterial roads to comply with current standards and reduce the likelihood of fatal crashes caused by run off collisions.	Bean, Canberra, Fenner
ACT	Traffic Signal Uninterrupted Power Supply (UPS)	Investment Roads	Targeted Road Safety Works	2020-21 JEFU	0.8	0.4	50	0.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	In Planning	The project involves upgrading 20 traffic signals with be Uninterrupted Power Supply for when the power goes down.	Bean, Canberra, Fenner
ACT	Variable Speed Limit System	Investment Roads	Targeted Road Safety Works	2020-21 JEFU	0.7	0.4	50	0.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	In Planning	The project involves installing a variable speed limit system on the Tuggeranong Parkway between Cotter Road and the Glenloch Interchange to allow Transport Canberra City Services to vary speeds to manage congestion. This includes VMS signs, communication connections, CCTV cameras and speed and volume detectors.	Bean, Canberra
ACT	William Slim Drive Duplication	Investment Roads		2019-20 BUDGET	44.5	20.0	Capped at \$20m	0.0	10.0	10.0	0.0	20.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	In Planning	The project will deliver a dual carriageway on William Slim Drive between Gimminderra Drive and the Barton Highway. It will also include intersection upgrades at Dumas Street, Owen Dixon Drive and Chucuba Crescent.	Canberra, Fenner