

**Senate Finance and Public Administration Standing Committee**  
**ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**  
**SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES HEARINGS**

**PRIME MINISTER AND CABINET PORTFOLIO**

**Department/Agency:** Department of Regional Australia, Regional Development and Local Government

**Outcome:** 1

**Topic:** Election commitments

**Senator:** ABETZ

**Question reference number:** 49

**Type of question:** Written, Tuesday 19 October 2010

**Date set by the committee for the return of answer:** 3 December 2010

- a) What is the status of each election commitment from the 2007 election within the portfolio?
- b) Which 2007 election commitments are experiencing slippages? Why? Where relevant, what are the revised implementation dates? What are the implications of this slippage?
- c) Are there any 2007 election commitments that will not be implemented? If yes, please provide details. Were departmental resources provided to implement these commitments? How much? What will happen to the funding now?

**Number of pages:** 1

**Answer:**

- a)
  - Regional Development Australia – 55 Regional Development Australia Committees have been established.
  - Office of Northern Australia (ONA) – was established in 2008 and has offices in Darwin and Townsville.
  - Australian Council of Local Government – the Government has held three meetings with Australia's mayors and shire presidents in November 2008, June 2009 and June 2010.
  - Better Regions Program – The Government is delivering regional infrastructure projects committed to in the 2007 election campaign through the Better Regions Program, a commitment of over \$176 million.
  - Repair and restoration of Albert Hall – The Treasury paid \$500,000 to the ACT Government on 7 June 2010 following certification by the ACT Auditor General that funds to that amount had been expended on the repair and restoration of Albert Hall and upon receipt of that advice.
- b) Some delays have been experienced in projects funded under the Better Regions program resulting in the movement of \$19.389 million from 2009-10 to 2010-11. This is due to factors such as weather, contractor availability, delays in planning approval and changes to project details.

- c) The Riverina Highlands Rail Trail - Tumbarumba to Rosewood Project \$200,000 has been unable to commence due to a requirement for state legislation to enable the Council to access the disused rail corridor and the offer of funding has been withdrawn. The commitment will be delivered if the legislation is passed or an alternative can be found.

Three other Better Regions projects (Ipswich Lagoon Pool; Braidwood Regional Arts Centre; and Tweed River Regional Museum) have been unable to commence and options are being considered for the delivery of those election commitments.

No departmental resources had been provided against the Better Regions program.