

Rural Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Additional Estimates February 2011

Infrastructure and Transport

Question no.: 21

Program: 1.1

Division/Agency: (NB-II) Nation Building – Infrastructure Investment

Topic: Stimulus Plan Construction Projects – Slippage

Proof Hansard Page/s: 4 (22/02/11)

Senator Colbeck asked:

Senator COLBECK—In the context of that reporting process, what slippage is there? Is everything going to be finished by 30 June this year? What is running behind schedule; what particular projects or programs are running behind and will not be completed within that time frame?

Ms O’Connell—Certainly, as part of the overall stimulus plan, there are almost 50,000 major construction projects, and 97 per cent of those have commenced and are well underway; so there are very few, less than three per cent, of major construction projects that are yet to have commenced as part of the economic stimulus.

Senator NASH—Could we have a list of the three per cent put through? I am happy for you to take that on notice.

Ms O’Connell—Yes. We can certainly provide that on notice.

Answer:

Program	Projects yet to commence as a percentage of total projects
Social Housing Initiative	2.3%
Primary Schools for the 21 st Century	0.0005%
Trade Training Centres	0.0002%
Regional and Local Community Infrastructure Projects – Strategic	0.00006%
National School Pride	0.00004%
ARTC Rail Investment	0.00004%
Total	2.4%

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Question no.: 22

Program: 1.1

Division/Agency: (NB-II) Nation Building – Infrastructure Investment

Topic: Stimulus Plan Construction Projects –Value

Proof Hansard Page/s: 5 (22/02/11)

Senator Colbeck asked:

Senator COLBECK—What is the value of the projects not commenced as of your latest report?

Ms O’Connell—I have taken the earlier question on notice, which is to provide you the break-up of what is in that three per cent that had not commenced at the end of December. I can also provide you information on the value of that on notice, and I can provide a more up-to-date figure with an additional month’s data at that time.

Answer:

Based on the number of projects yet to commence and the average value of projects in each program, the approximate value of projects to commence after 31 January 2011 is \$330 million, of \$26.83 billion of construction projects or approximately 1.2%.

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Question no.: 23

Program: 1.1

Division/Agency: (NB-II) Nation Building – Infrastructure Investment

Topic: Stimulus Plan Construction Projects – Completion Timeframes

Proof Hansard Page/s: 5 (22/02/11)

Senator Colbeck asked:

Senator COLBECK—What is the likelihood of these projects being completed within the time frame of the program?

Ms O’Connell—The additional projects have been scheduled and I can certainly come back to you with information about when they are scheduled for.

Answer:

A small number of BER projects will be completed in the 2011-12 year consistent with the Government’s announcement in November 2009.

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Question no.: 24

Program: 1.1

Division/Agency: (NB-II) Nation Building – Infrastructure Investment

Topic: Stimulus Plan Construction Projects – Update

Proof Hansard Page/s: 6 (22/02/11)

Senator Colbeck asked:

Senator COLBECK—So the three per cent of the economic stimulus projects that are not commenced are primary school projects and social housing projects. There is nothing else? There is no other category of project?

Mr Jagers—I think we agreed to take on notice and to provide you the details of that three per cent.

Senator COLBECK—I am just trying to make the numbers add up. You have said that there is 97 per cent commenced; that leaves three per cent not commenced. You have mentioned to me that 99 per cent of primary schools are commenced, and social housing is in the high 90s—98 or 99 per cent. I am struggling to find three per cent of the overall—is that by number or is it by value?

Mr Jagers—That is by number.

Senator COLBECK—I am just trying to get a perspective on how 98 or 99 per cent of the two categories, if they are completed, relates to 97 per cent commenced under the broader picture.

Mr Jagers—In relation to social housing, I said I think the number is in the high 90s, but I will have to confirm that and get back to you.

Senator COLBECK—Can you tell me where those projects are?

Ms O’Connell—We don’t have that information with us. We can provide that information.

Answer:

The percentage of projects commenced in the Social Housing Initiative in each jurisdiction is shown in the table below:

	Per cent commenced
NSW	100%
VIC	92%
QLD	85%
WA	100%
SA	91%
TAS	99%
ACT	96%
NT	100%
TOTAL	94.2%

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Question no.: 25

Program: 1.1

Division/Agency: (NB-II) Nation Building – Infrastructure Investment

Topic: Eden Port Feasibility Study – Project milestone dates

Proof Hansard Page/s: 11 (22/02/11)

Senator Colbeck asked:

Senator COLBECK—Does that have any relationship with the National Ports Strategy?

Ms O’Connell—In a sense, it forms part of Australia’s port network, so—

Senator COLBECK—I understand that.

Ms O’Connell—Broadly, it does.

Senator COLBECK—So it will be done with an eye to that?

Ms O’Connell—Yes.

Senator COLBECK—Fine. If you can give me the project milestone dates on that, I am happy to take that on notice.

Ms O’Connell—Okay.

Answer:

The Port of Eden Development Business Case is a feasibility study. The Australian Government’s contribution to it is \$60,000.

The project and funding was approved by the Minister for Infrastructure and Transport, the Hon Anthony Albanese MP, on 21 February 2011.

The Bega Valley Shire Council will use the report to inform its development of a possible future expansion of the Port of Eden.

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Question no.: 26

Program: 1.1

Division/Agency: Nation Building – Infrastructure Investment

Topic: Nation Building Program – Port of Townsville Project funding

Proof Hansard Page/s: 14 (22/02/11)

Senator Macdonald asked:

Senator IAN MACDONALD—Mr Pittar, are you sure of that, or should you take on notice whether the Commonwealth's contribution is conditional upon a certain amount by the Queensland Government and by the Townsville Port Authority and, if so, what are they? You may be sure—

Mr Pittar—I am happy to confirm that on notice, Senator.

Answer:

The Australian Government's additional funding commitment of \$4 million to the project is not conditional on a Queensland Government or Townsville Port Authority contribution.

The proponent, the Townsville Port Authority, advises that the Queensland Government transferred its full contribution of \$36.16 million to the Port Authority on 11 January 2011.

The Townsville Port Authority is expected to contribute \$10 million to the project, with a contribution from the Townsville City Council of \$4.84 million.

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Question no.: 27

Program: 1.1

Division/Agency: (NB-II) Nation Building – Infrastructure Investment

Topic: Major Cities Program – Project Slippages

Proof Hansard Page/s: 18-19 (22/02/11)

Senator Nash asked:

Senator NASH—Are you aware of any project slippages, cost overruns and project delivery issues surrounding the Major Cities Program, or do you want me to actually ask in Major Cities? I just did not want to ask it there and then have it come back to corporate.

Mr Mrdak—Certainly. As to the Major Cities Program, the government funded a number of initiatives in the 2009 budget. There has been one initiative which has been cancelled recently by the government. That is the O-Bahn project in Adelaide. Of the other projects that are proceeding, there is the Northbridge project in Perth and there is a third one—I will come back to you. The only change to the announced program at this stage that is not proceeding to schedule is the O-Bahn project in Adelaide. The government announced its cancellation as part of its response to the flood budget requirements.

Senator NASH—If you could just take it on notice for me and give me some further detail and background on reasons for any of the changes.

Mr Mrdak—Certainly.

Senator NASH—That would be very useful.

Answer:

- 1) Perth City Link (formerly known as the Northbridge Rail Link) project – Construction is scheduled to commence in late 2011 following awarding of the main alliance contract in March 2011. The project is on schedule to be completed by mid 2014. The Australian Government is contributing \$236.0 million (capped).
- 2) Brisbane Cross River Rail Study – The Feasibility Study is expected to be completed this year, as scheduled.
- 3) O-Bahn City Access project - The Prime Minister announced on 27 January 2011 that the Australian Government's funding for the O-Bahn project was being withdrawn, with the funding being used for flood recovery and reconstruction efforts.

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Question no.: 28

Program: 1.1

Division/Agency: (NB-II) Nation Building – Infrastructure Investment

Topic: Effect of Floods on Nation Building Projects

Proof Hansard Page/s: 33-34 (22/02/11)

Senator Macdonald asked:

Senator IAN MACDONALD—Mr Mrdak, bearing in mind that a couple of those projects, at least, were intended to mitigate future flood damage, can you indicate, or is this perhaps a question for the minister, the rationale for the cutting of those solemn promises?

Mr Mrdak—No promises have been cut. The government has deferred expenditure in the program to out years. All of the projects remain as commitments by the government, both the Australian and the Queensland government. Obviously, the flood situation in Queensland, as the Prime Minister has outlined, has been an unprecedented natural disaster. The Commonwealth and the Queensland government took decisions to look at the existing Nation Building Program in Queensland, to identify those projects that were at the early stages of planning and that were not scheduled for starts of construction for another year or two, to see whether those projects could be deferred for a period, to allow those funds to be reallocated. That is the process we have been undertaking. To identify those savings, we looked at the existing Nation Building Program, we identified—with the Queensland government—projects that were at that stage and agreed with them that these six projects that you have outlined were able to be deferred for a period, given the scheduling of them, and that the commitment would be—

Senator IAN MACDONALD—You are starting to repeat yourself. Thank you, Mr Mrdak. Can you give me, perhaps on notice, when they are deferred to, the extent of the deferment? If you could, on notice, give me a schedule showing when they were going to be done and when it is now anticipated they will?

Mr Mrdak—Certainly.

Answer:

Information on the timing and extent of deferment of Bruce Highway projects will be contained in the 2011 Budget papers.

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ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

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Question no.: 29

Program: 1.1

Division/Agency: (NB-II) Nation Building – Infrastructure Investment

Topic: The Mackay Ring Road

Proof Hansard Page/s: 34-35 (22/02/11)

Senator Macdonald asked:

Would they? All right. Could I just refer the secretary or the minister to an answer given by the minister for regional Australia, question 128, to the Member for Dawson, Mr Christensen, on a date—looks like 16 February—where Mr Christensen asked on notice where the funding for various projects in the Mackay area, or in the Dawson electorate, was to come from, and he also asked: ‘When will funding for the above election commitments become available and how will recipients access it as soon as possible?’ The answer has been:

Funding is available from the financial year 2010-11 and the department is working with proponents to finalise necessary details.

I appreciate this is a different department but it is related to the grants that I think would be in this section that we are dealing with. Can anyone tell me in relation to—perhaps on notice—the Mackay ring road, the Mackay Basketball Stadium, the Airlie Beach main street proposal, the Mackay junior soccer grounds and the water park on the Bowen foreshore, what funds are being expended during 2010-11 and what funds will be spent in the subsequent year?

Mr Mrdak—The only one of those projects that falls within this portfolio is the Mackay ring road study. That is a commitment of \$10 million under the Regional Infrastructure Fund.

Arrangements for that fund are yet to be settled by the government. That is being considered as part of the current budget process, and, obviously, the Regional Infrastructure Fund is also contingent on the resource tax.

Sorry, we have one other project, I am advised: the Mackay Stadium project, which is under the Infrastructure Employment program, which is with this portfolio. I am happy to get you some details on that.

Senator IAN MACDONALD—According to the answer in writing given by the Minister for Regional Australia, Regional Development and Local Government, (b) is the community cultural development grants program. But the point is that he has answered them and I assume he therefore had some input from your department. I am wondering if you could take on notice those that are relative to this department as to what funding is being spent in the year 2010-11, which the minister indicated it was—I am just interested in the detail—

Mr Mrdak—Certainly, Senator.

Answer:

The Mackay Ring Road Study is to be funded from the Regional Infrastructure Fund (RIF).

\$10.5 million has been allocated to the Mackay Multi-Use Stadium.

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The Mackay Basketball Stadium (Candlestick Park Redevelopment), the Airlie Beach main street proposal, the Mackay junior soccer grounds and the water park on the Bowen foreshore are funded through the Community Infrastructure Grants (CIG) program administered by the Department of Regional Australia, Regional Development and Local Government.

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Question no.: 30

Program: 1.1

Division/Agency: (NB-II) Nation Building – Infrastructure Investment

Topic: Building the Education Revolution – Building Codes

Proof Hansard Page/s: 35 (22/02/11)

Senator Macdonald asked:

Senator IAN MACDONALD—in your department, and what the projections are for future funding. Can I move on now to the electorate of Leichhardt, and Cairns, regarding evacuation centres built to category 5 standard. As I understand it, in all of the cyclone areas—that is, putting it in representative terms, the electorates of Dawson, Herbert, Kennedy and Leichhardt—none of the projects under the Building the Education Revolution or any other program through this department have been built to category 5 level. Is that right, do you know?

Ms O'Connell—Senator, I am not aware off the top of my head. Obviously, we comply with all the requirements in terms of building codes, but we would need to take that on notice and ask the department of education.

Answer:

All projects under the Building the Education Revolution program have been built to conform to the standards which apply to school buildings in each state and territory.

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Question no.: 31

Program: 1.1

Division/Agency: (NB-II) Nation Building – Infrastructure Investment

Topic: Black Spot Funding Requests

Proof Hansard Page/s: 53 (22/02/11)

Senator Williams asked:

Senator WILLIAMS—Just moving on to black spot funding, Mr Mrdak, what percentage of applications for black spot funding comes from authorities in regional areas? Have you any idea?

Mr Foulds—I believe it is of the order of half. There is no specific rule in the notes on administration for it, but it is roughly that.

Senator WILLIAMS—Roughly what percent?

Mr Foulds—Roughly 50 per cent.

Senator WILLIAMS—About 50?

Mr Foulds—Yes.

Senator WILLIAMS—And what percentage of projects are approved for funding in regional New South Wales? Have you any idea of that percentage?

Mr Foulds—No, I do not have that information with me, but I could—

Senator WILLIAMS—Take it on notice and perhaps file it?

Mr Foulds—Yes.

Answer:

- 1) The Black Spot Program Notes on Administration state that “approximately 50 per cent of Black Spot funds in each state (other than Tasmania, the Australian Capital Territory and the Northern Territory) will be reserved for projects in non-metropolitan areas. Funding in each state will be allocated approximately 50:50 between rural and urban areas in each year on the basis that the split would be monitored to meet this measure over the five year life of the program from 2009-10 to 2013-14.”
- 2) The provision in the Notes on Administration is not legislative and the actual split between urban and rural funding differs from year to year depending on the number and value of urban and rural projects submitted for the Minister’s consideration and approval by each state and territory Black Spot Consultative Panel.
- 3) For example, figures for the 2010-11 program year for New South Wales, Victoria, Queensland, Western Australia and South Australia are:

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	URBAN			RURAL		
	NOMINATED	APPROVED	FUNDING APPROVED	NOMINATED	APPROVED	FUNDING APPROVED
NSW	129	68	\$9,373,350	94	47	\$10,149,218
VIC	25	23	\$5,731,000	44	42	\$8,230,600
QLD	40	21	\$2,573,000	66	17	\$10,987,000
WA	59	27	\$3,958,915	47	22	\$3,825,350
SA	32	18	\$2,702,300	36	9	\$2,426,840
TOTAL	285	157	\$24,338,565	287	137	\$35,619,008

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Question no.: 32

Program: 1.1

Division/Agency: (NB-II) Nation Building - Infrastructure Investment

Topic: Fitzgerald River National Park Road Upgrade and Walk Trail

Proof Hansard Page/s: Written

Senator Siewert asked:

With reference to the \$20 million allocated (from federal stimulus funds) to match \$20million WA Premier Colin Barnett earmarked for road works in Fitzgerald River National Park:

- 1) Has the \$20 million allocated to this project by the Federal Government been expended?
- 2) If not, how much longer will the Federal funding be available?
- 3) Was there an economic analysis undertaken that indicated if this expenditure would stimulate the economy, find jobs for displaced mine workers, or be the most economically efficient way to improve tourism?
- 4) Why has this federally funded project in one of the most ecologically sensitive parts of Australia not been assessed under EPBC Act?
- 5) What does the Department do to ensure that federally funded projects such as this do not damage the environment?

Answer:

- 1-2) \$12 million has been allocated towards this project.
- 3) The imperatives driving the project were:
 - i. Consultation with the local community as to their wishes for tourism investment in the region to provide an attraction;
 - ii. Providing low environmental impact, year round access to the park for visitors. Furthermore, road construction improves the ability to manage the key threat to the park's biodiversity – dieback disease; and
 - iii. Ensuring that the maximum number of local construction and engineering contractors were provided employment as quickly as possible, to prevent the loss of these workers after the closure of the BHP Billiton Ravensthorpe Nickel Mine.
- 4) The project was referred in June 2009 under the Commonwealth's *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation (EPBC) Act*, and it was determined that the project did not warrant further assessment under the EPBC Act.
- 5) All Federal Government funded projects must comply with all relevant state, territory and Commonwealth legislative requirements.

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Additional Estimates February 2011

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Question no.: 33

Program: 1.1

Division/Agency: (NB-II) Nation Building - Infrastructure Investment

Topic: North-east Rail Corridor between Melbourne and Albury/Wodonga

Proof Hansard Page/s: Written

Senator Heffernan asked:

North-east Rail Corridor between Melbourne and Albury/Wodonga:

I refer to the North East Rail Revitalisation Project. I understand this is a \$501 million project, being run by the ARTC to upgrade the rail corridor between Melbourne and Albury. Specifically, the project involves replacing old timber sleepers with concrete sleepers and converting the 208 kilometres of broad gauge rail line to standard gauge between Seymour and Albury. The ARTC is also upgrading the standard gauge line between Melbourne and Seymour by building four new passing loops. The ARTC will take up the ongoing operation of track between Seymour and Albury on a 45 year lease.

- 1) I understand the project is being jointly funded. The Commonwealth is contributing \$45 million via the Nation Building Program, the Victorian Government \$171 million and the Australian Rail Track Corporation \$285 million. Is this correct?
- 2) Can you please provide this Committee with an update of this project?
- 3) Has the project been completed? When will it be completed?
- 4) Has the ARTC taken up the lease over the standard gauge between Seymour to Albury? When will that occur?
- 5) What will be the savings in terms of passenger and freight commute times between Melbourne to Sydney, as a result of this project? Will it be able to carry more freight rail traffic?
- 6) Are all Sydney to Melbourne XPT services running as normal now? Is CountryLink now running trains between the two cities?
- 7) Are there any speed restrictions in force between Albury and Melbourne?
- 8) There have been various media reports that mud holes continue to degrade the track and present safety issues. I understand the problem is mud holes under the sleepers that breaks up the ballast and leaves the rail tracker and sleepers exposed. Is that correct?
- 9) How many mud holes have appeared on the track?
- 10) How many kilometres of track have been affected by this problem?
- 11) How is the repair program going?
- 12) Have all the mud holes been filled in?
- 13) When will this matter be resolved?

Answer:

- 1) No. The total project cost for the North East Rail Revitalisation Program is \$612.8 million. It is jointly funded by the Australian Government (\$156.5 million),

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- the Victorian Government (\$171.3 million) and the Australian Rail Track Corporation (\$285 million).
- 2-3) The main elements of the program are now complete. There remains some minor work on train stabling facilities at Dynon. This is being undertaken by the Victorian Government and is expected to be completed by April 2011.
 - 4) Yes, on 30 May 2008.
 - 5) ARTC's full program of works between Sydney and Melbourne is expected to reduce transit times by about 4 hours and improve reliability to encourage the transport of more freight by rail.
 - 6) Timetabling of XPT and CountryLink services is a matter for the NSW Government.
 - 7) Yes.
 - 8) No. Mud holes exist where water, trapped in the soil under rail line foundations, is pumped upwards by the pressure of passing trains. Mud holes cause the foundations to sink, leading to bumps or dips in the track.
 - 9-10) Following a survey in July 2010, ARTC identified approximately 650 priority one mud holes on 65km of track between Albury and Melbourne.
 - 11-12) ARTC advises that repair works on the majority of the mud holes between Albury and Melbourne have now been completed, over 45km of track.
 - 13) ARTC advises that all problem areas between Albury and Melbourne will be addressed by 30 June 2011 following completion of ARTC's ongoing maintenance and prevention works and the appearance of any new mud holes will be rectified through ARTC's ongoing maintenance program.

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Question no.: 34

Program: 1.1

Division/Agency: Nation Building – Infrastructure Investment

Topic: Northern Sydney Rail Freight Corridor

Proof Hansard Page/s: Written

Senator Heffernan asked:

Northern Sydney Rail Freight Corridor:

The Labor Party promised during the 2007 election campaign and press release dated 19 November 2007 that Labor will provide \$840 million towards a dedicated freight rail track from North Strathfield to Gosford (Media Release ALP Website 19 November 2007). Now I notice on the department's website that this \$840 million commitment has turned into a \$15 million study:

The Australian Government is providing \$15 million to undertake planning for the Northern Sydney Rail Freight Corridor. The planning involves developing a concept design, environmental assessment and development approval for infrastructure improvements along the rail corridor between North Strathfield and Broadmeadow (a suburb of Newcastle). The focus of the planning work is to provide additional capacity for freight rail services, segregate passenger and freight services and to reduce peak-period restrictions on freight services. The planning work is being undertaken by the Transport Infrastructure Development Corporation (TIDC), a NSW Government corporation.

- 1) I refer to the answer the department provided to this Committee in response to a Question on Notice (NB-II 19 dated February 2010). You stated that the study was due to be finished in 2010. I further note that according to the Minister's website, the study is now scheduled to be finished in early 2011.
 - (a) So, has the study slipped?
 - (b) When will it be finished?
 - (c) It is now late 2010. Is the study finished?
- 2) In terms of the Northern Sydney Freight Line, the NSW Transport Construction Authority (TCA) website states that:

TCA has commenced feasibility studies for the program, including options development and assessment. These studies will identify the scope of works for the concept design and environmental assessment for the program. Further information on the options development and environmental assessment will be placed on this site as it becomes available.

The website was last updated 20 July 2010. Do you have the details of the feasibility studies? What progress has been made?
- 3) Has the \$15 million been spent? What are its conclusions?
- 4) I notice that according to media reports dated 29 January 2011, the NSW Premier Kristina Keneally has claimed that the Federal Government is planning to delay spending \$100 million on the Northern Sydney Rail Freight Line, as part of its attempts

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to find \$675 million in savings to pay for the flood levy. Is it correct that the Northern Sydney Freight Line is on the Federal Government's hit list?

- 5) Is \$100 million being ripped out of this project?
- 6) When will the Federal Government honour its 2007 election promise and build the Northern Sydney Freight Line?
- 7) When will the \$840 million be spent?
- 8) What is the expected date of completion?
- 9) How many years will pass before the Federal Government meets its 2007 promise?

Answer:

- 1) (a), (b) and (c). The work on the study is ongoing and is expected to be completed by mid-2011.
- 2) The feasibility study referred to is the \$15 million scoping study. Work completed to date has identified a suite of projects for delivery under the \$840 million funding commitment.
- 3) To date, \$12.6 million of the approved \$15 million has been spent on the study.
- 4) The Australian Government commitment to the project stands.
- 5) No.
- 6&8) The project is expected to be completed by mid 2016.
- 7) Over the timeline identified in previous answer.
- 9) Refer to answers 6 and 8 above.

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Question no.: 35

Program: 1.1

Division/Agency: (NB-II) Nation Building - Infrastructure Investment

Topic: Projects deferred due to Floods

Proof Hansard Page/s: Written

Senator Nash asked:

Can the agency provide a list of projects that have been deferred to aid flood reconstruction?

Answer:

The following six projects on the Bruce Highway have been deferred to aid flood reconstruction:

- 1) Duplication from Vantassel Street to Flinders Highway;
- 2) Improved flood immunity at Gairloch Floodway Realign and raise Highway from Sandy Corner to Collinsons Lagoon;
- 3) Burdekin Road Safety Audit project;
- 4) Cabbage Tree Creek to Carman Road and Back Creek Range section upgrade; and
- 5) Upgrade of Caboolture to Caloundra.

In addition, funding has been deferred on the following projects in other states:

- 6) Regional Rail Link in Victoria;
- 7) Princes Highway East - Traralgon to Sale duplication in Victoria; and
- 8) Northern Sydney Freight Corridor in NSW.

The O-Bahn project in South Australia has been cancelled.

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ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

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Question no.: 36

Program: 1.1

Division/Agency: (NB-II) Nation Building - Infrastructure Investment

Topic: Projects deferred due to Floods

Proof Hansard Page/s: Written

Senator Nash asked:

Is the agency considering any other projects for deferral to aid flood reconstruction?

Answer:

No.

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Question no.: 37

Program: 1.1

Division/Agency: (NB-II) Nation Building - Infrastructure Investment

Topic: Projects deferred due to Floods

Proof Hansard Page/s: Written

Senator Nash asked:

Given that the Treasurer has indicated that the \$5.6 billion cost of the floods is only a first estimate, likely to rise; does the agency expect that more infrastructure projects will be deferred to find savings for flood reconstruction?

Answer:

No.

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Question no.: 38

Program: 1.1

Division/Agency: (NB-II) Nation Building - Infrastructure Investment

Topic: Nation Building projects deferred due to Floods

Proof Hansard Page/s: Written

Senator Nash asked:

With respect to the following projects in North Queensland:

- Duplication of the highway from Vantassel Street to Flinders Highway
- Alternate project arising from Herbert River floodplain study
- Realign the highway from sandy corner to Colinsons Lagoon

When are these projects due to be completed and what is their adjusted completion date following the deferrals in spending?

Answer:

Planning on all projects is progressing.

Construction has been deferred by 12 – 36 months.

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Question no.: 39

Program: 1.1

Division/Agency: (NB-II) Nation Building - Infrastructure Investment

Topic: Nation Building projects deferred due to Floods

Proof Hansard Page/s: Written

Senator Nash asked:

With respect to the following projects in North Queensland:

- Duplication of the highway from Vantassel Street to Flinders Highway
- Alternate project arising from Herbert River floodplain study
- Realign the highway from sandy corner to Colinsons Lagoon

Can the agency briefly describe the works involved and the expected benefits to North Queensland?

Answer:

See: <www.nationbuildingprogram.gov.au>.

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Question no.: 40

Program: 1.1

Division/Agency: (NB-II) Nation Building - Infrastructure Investment

Topic: Nation Building projects deferred due to Floods

Proof Hansard Page/s: Written

Senator Nash asked:

Has the agency performed any risk assessment on whether deferring projects at flood mitigation posed a risk in the next few years, given that it would appear that Australia is entering into a La Nina phase which is likely to bring with it increased risk of cyclonic activity in North Queensland?

Answer:

The decision on deferring projects was made in consultation with Queensland to identify those projects which were not under construction and could be deferred.

Rural Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Additional Estimates February 2011

Infrastructure and Transport

Question no.: 41

Program: 1.1

Division/Agency: (NB-II) Nation Building - Infrastructure Investment

Topic: O-Bahn Expenditure

Proof Hansard Page/s: Written

Senator Nash asked:

- 1) Had the Australian government spent any money on the O-Bahn project before the decision was made to stop it?
- 2) Is there any other money due to be paid to this project?

Answer:

- 1) Yes. The Australian Government had provided \$5 million for this project to the South Australian Government.
- 2) No.

Rural Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Additional Estimates February 2011

Infrastructure and Transport

Question no.: 42

Program: 1.1

Division/Agency: (NB-II) Nation Building - Infrastructure Investment

Topic: O-Bahn expenditure and use of funds

Proof Hansard Page/s: Written

Senator Nash asked:

Given that the government initially announced that the Adelaide O-Bahn project would receive \$61 million in funding, and the announcement of its cancellation would net a saving of \$56 million; what explains the difference, and what was the money spent on?

Answer:

The Australian Government provided \$5 million for this project to the South Australian Government in 2009. The funding has been utilised for project planning and detailed traffic studies that can be utilised at a later stage if funding becomes available.

Rural Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Additional Estimates February 2011

Infrastructure and Transport

Question no.: 43

Program: 1.1

Division/Agency: (NB-II) Nation Building - Infrastructure Investment

Topic: Road investment between Townsville and Cairns

Proof Hansard Page/s: Written

Senator Nash asked:

At the last estimates Mr Pittar referred to \$220 million of road investment between Townsville and Cairns that was going to deal with some 'flood issues'.

- 1) What part of these works have been delayed and how long will it be before the road improvements are delivered?
- 2) What is the practical effect of not making these investments, and how often and for what duration are towns likely to be cut off during a flooding event?

Answer:

- 1-2) The committed investment has been fully delivered.

Rural Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Additional Estimates February 2011

Infrastructure and Transport

Question no.: 44

Program: 1.1

Division/Agency: (NB-II) Nation Building - Infrastructure Investment

Topic: Queensland Flood and Cyclone Damage

Proof Hansard Page/s: Written

Senator Nash asked:

Has the agency any information on the total damage that has occurred to main roads and railway lines in Queensland as a result of the recent floods and cyclones?

Answer:

Main Roads

A total of 9,170 km (27.5 per cent) of the 33,383 km of state controlled roads in Queensland were damaged and in need of recovery as a result of the recent floods and cyclones, according to information provided by the Queensland Department of Transport and Main Roads (QDTMR).

Of 7000 road bridges and culverts in Queensland, 89 experienced major damage, with 53 of these in the Brisbane metropolitan region.

Railway Lines

The impact of the recent floods and cyclones resulted in 4748 km of the Queensland rail network being closed for various periods, according to QDTMR. Rail line closures peaked at 29 per cent of the state's total rail network (on 3 January 2011).

Rural Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Additional Estimates February 2011

Infrastructure and Transport

Question no.: 45

Program: 1.1

Division/Agency: (NB-II) Nation Building - Infrastructure Investment

Topic: WA Grain Freight Haulage

Proof Hansard Page/s: Written

Senator Ludlam asked:

WA Grain Freight Haulage:

This question relates to the recent decision by CBH to award the WA grain freight haulage by rail in all areas by American company *Watco*. They have advised all that they are investing \$175 million in rolling stock.

- 1) Can you confirm that under the current arrangement with ARG they did not need to invest in the rolling stock but could have spent the money on improving current loading facilities instead which would speed up process of loading on trains and negating the need to use excessive road transport, or use some of that money to invest in line maintenance?
- 2) Can you provide further information on the terms of the arrangement being reached?

Answer:

- 1) Cooperative Bulk Handling Ltd's (CBH) recent decision to invest in rolling stock is a commercial matter for CBH. Inquiries on the rationale behind this decision should be addressed to CBH.
- 2) This is a commercial arrangement between CBH and Watco. The Australian Government is not a party to the agreement and inquiries on the detail of the arrangement should be addressed to CBH or Watco.

Rural Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Additional Estimates February 2011

Infrastructure and Transport

Question no.: 46

Program: 1.1

Division/Agency: (NB-II) Nation Building - Infrastructure Investment

Topic: Grain Rail Lines in Wheat Belt Areas

Proof Hansard Page/s: Written

Senator Ludlam asked:

These questions relate to the recent decision by the WA government to mothball certain lines in the Wheat belt areas, regardless of certain Federal funding being provided:

- 1) What effect will this have if next year's harvest – as forecasts will be significant?
- 2) Will roads will be the only option for cartage?

Answer:

- 1) There is no expected impact for next year's harvest.
- 2) No.