

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

Question: BITRE 01

Division/Agency: Bureau of Infrastructure, Transport and Regional Economics
Topic: Regional Research Project Commencement and Completion Dates
Hansard Page: 11 (19/02/08)

Senator Nash asked:

Senator NASH—I am very happy for you to take this on notice: could you provide the Committee with the commencement dates and projected completion dates for those projects?

Dr Dolman—Yes, I would be happy to do that.

Answer:

An outline of projected 2007-08 completion dates for the regional research projects on BITRE's 2007-08 research program is provided below.

Of the projects on the 2007/08 research program, *Regional Economic Cycles* and *Sponge Cities* have not yet commenced.

The 2007 release of *Regional Economic Growth: 2007* has been completed and is available on the website – www.bitre.gov.au.

Regional Perspectives 2008, *About Australia's Regions 2008*, *Tasmanian Economic Development 1990-2005* and *Air Transport Services in Regional Australia* are expected to be completed and published on our website by mid-2008.

The following projects are expected to be completed by June 2009:

- ◆ Focus on Regions 5: Income Support Payments;
- ◆ Focus on Regions 6: Household Wealth;
- ◆ Industry Trends;
- ◆ Bass Strait Passenger Vehicle Equalisation Scheme;
- ◆ Tasmanian Freight Schemes Parameter Review; and
- ◆ Regional Economic Growth: 2008.

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Question: BITRE 02

Division/Agency: Bureau of Infrastructure Transport and Regional Economics

Topic: Waterline 43

Hansard Page: 11 (19/02/08)

Senator McGauran asked:

Mr Potterton—We have actually just released *Waterline*.

Senator McGAURAN—Could we have a copy of that?

Mr Potterton—Yes, if you will take a hard copy download of that because we are in the process of producing the final copies.

Senator NASH—Absolutely.

Answer:

Waterline 43 is available from the BITRE website at:

<http://www.bitre.gov.au/Info.aspx?ResourceId=614&NodeId=81>

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Question: BITRE 03

Division/Agency: Bureau of Infrastructure Transport and Regional Economics

Topic: Cost of Remoteness Project Survey

Hansard Pages: 14-15 (19/02/08)

Senator Hutchins asked:

Dr Dolman—That project involved an extensive survey involving officers from the Bureau travelling to, I think, 131 remote destinations across Australia, having a shopping list and essentially looking at methodologically that is similar to the CPI calculations—getting a basket of goods that can be purchased in remote locations and then analysing that. Some of the early findings indicate that, particularly when you are at very remote locations, it is very difficult to get some of those goods. The selection you have available to you in some of those remote locations becomes very narrow.

The study is really broken up into three different parts. One looks at retail purchases, including petrol and a whole range of furniture, as well as grocery items. The second part looks at costs relating to education and healthcare services. So, it is quite a different way of looking at it and that is probably a bit behind the rest of it.

The third part looks at housing—the cost of housing and the spatial distribution across regions, particularly in remote regions, and whether or not that is a reflection of costs or whether it is an indicator of confidence in the community. That is an interesting study as well. In terms of analysing—particularly the retail figures—what we do is look at indicators of prices. We come up with a basket of goods and look at whether or not the common goods are available. We look at the variations and analyse them against the costs of transport, the distance from regional centres—we have about 10 different variables that we analyse that information against—to try to understand what it is that drives the variations in prices.

Senator HUTCHINS—Is it available to the Committee to have a look at the questionnaire, or the model?

Dr Dolman—We could take that on notice to see what we can provide. As I said, it is a project that is in progress; it is not yet complete.

Answer:

A brief description of methods for collecting price data and the product pricing list used for Victoria is attached.

[BITRE 03 attachment]

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Question: BITRE 04

Division/Agency: Bureau of Infrastructure Transport and Regional Economics

Topic: Enquiry into Regional Trends

Hansard Page: 15 (19/02/08)

Senator Hutchins asked:

Senator HUTCHINS—I think either you or Mr Potterton said that you had completed an inquiry into regional trends. Is that correct?

Mr Potterton—I certainly mentioned we are completing a study of the non-urban AusLink corridors, which has a regional dimension. There is a previous study which is already available and there was a second one which will be available in a few months time. We would be happy to make that available.

Answer:

A copy of *BITRE Working Paper 66, Demand Projections for Auslink Non-Urban Corridors: Methodology and Projections* is available on the BITRE website at:
<http://www.bitre.gov.au/info.aspx?ResourceId=72>

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Question: BITRE 05

Division/Agency: Bureau of Infrastructure Transport and Regional Economics

Topic: Regional Income Statistics

Hansard Page: 15 (19/02/08)

Senator Sterle asked:

CHAIR—Dr Dolman, as part of the ongoing process that you have, would it be possible—take this on notice—to see the break-up of the regions? I think it would be very interesting to see the situation of a mining superintendent in Argyle compared to that of a State schoolteacher in Wyndham, just down the road, in terms of earnings. Could you take it on notice?

Dr Dolman—Yes, I think that is actually information that we have published and is available, but we will take it on notice and provide you the reference to that.

CHAIR—Thank you.

Answer:

As part of its *Focus on Regions* series, the Bureau routinely publishes a database of aggregate real taxable income and real income per taxpayer for Statistical Local Areas, Local Government Areas and BITRE Labour Market Regions. The database itself and interactive *pdf* documents are freely downloadable from the Bureau's website. These documents include a large number of maps and graphs showing current patterns and historic trends based on the data. This material can be found at: <http://www.bitre.gov.au/index.aspx> under the heading *Regional Economic Growth: BITRE's Taxable Income Database*.

The underlying data, which is drawn from published Australian Taxation Office statistics, does not allow further dissection to identify the detail of incomes by profession on a regional basis.