

Senate Standing Committee on Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Additional Budget Estimates February 2009
Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government

Question No. LGRD 01

Division/Agency: Local Government and Regional Development
Topic: Regional and Local Community and Infrastructure Program (RLCIP)
Compliance Requirements
Hansard Page: 88 (24/02/09)

Senator Payne asked:

Senator PAYNE—Of the 100 that have been approved and announced, are they projects or councils?

Ms Foster—That is councils, so that would comprise some hundreds of projects.

Senator PAYNE—Can you tell me how many?

Ms Foster—I do not have that detail with me. We can seek that for you.

Senator PAYNE—Could you take that on notice for me?

Ms Foster—Yes.

Answer

There are two components to the Regional and Local Community and Infrastructure Program (RLCIP):

- the first component, the RLCIP, a one-off funding of \$250 million to be allocated to all local councils, and
- the second component, the RLCIP – Strategic Projects, a \$550 million nationally-competitive program aimed at larger-scale community infrastructure projects for which a minimum Commonwealth contribution of \$2 million is sought.

At 24 February 2009, the RLCIP \$250 million program had approved and announced 233 projects from 104 councils.

Senate Standing Committee on Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Additional Budget Estimates February 2009
Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government

Question No. LGRD 02

Division/Agency: Local Government and Regional Development

**Topic: Regional and Local Community and Infrastructure Program (RLCIP)
Compliance Requirements**

Hansard Pages: 90-91 (24/02/09)

Senator Payne asked:

Senator PAYNE—I appreciate that, Minister, and that has been indicated by the officers. What sort of staffing numbers do those enhancements equate to?

Mr Pahlow—That depends on when, Senator. At the moment, we have a lot of staff on board.

Senator PAYNE—Let us go with now, while you are dealing with 3,605 projects minus the 100 councils you have already finished.

Mr Pahlow—We have in the order of 12 staff. There would be fewer full-time equivalents because that is a very compressed period of time. During the assessment process, that could pick up to 15.

Ms Foster—We are also making quite extensive use of contract support and are consciously reallocating resources across the broader division as we have peaks and troughs of activity in the programs.

Senator Conroy—To get the exact correct answers, we are happy to take that on notice.

Senator PAYNE—I appreciate that, but that does give me a helpful perspective. Thanks, Ms Foster and Mr Pahlow. As we get down to crunch point, the 30 September expenditure point—between the interim progress report and the final progress report—do you think it will be necessary to provide further additional staffing resources to meet those deadlines?

Mr Pahlow—We would provide the staffing resources as required, Senator.

Answer:

As at 24 February 2009, 14 staff were involved in the management of the RLCIP \$250 million program.

Senate Standing Committee on Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Additional Budget Estimates February 2009
Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government

Question No. LGRD 03

Division/Agency: Local Government and Regional Development

Topic: Regional and Local Community and Infrastructure Program (RLCIP)
Compliance Requirements

Hansard Pages: 91-92 (24/02/09)

Senator Payne asked:

Mr Angley—It is almost 344 councils. A few were invited to make joint applications. You could put in your own separate one, but you were also able to put in for joint projects as well.

Senator PAYNE—Do you know how many that would be, Mr Angley?

Mr Angley—No. We can take that on notice.

Senator PAYNE—Thank you very much

Answer:

At 3 April 2009, the Regional and Local Community and Infrastructure Program – Strategic Projects \$550 million had received 22 group applications.

Senate Standing Committee on Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Additional Budget Estimates February 2009
Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government

Question No. LGRD 04

Division/Agency: Local Government and Regional Development

Topic: Regional and Local Community and Infrastructure Program (RLCIP)
Compliance Requirements

Hansard Page: 92 (24/02/09)

Senator Payne asked:

Senator PAYNE—So, given the tight timeframe that was attached to that, had any applications that had been received by the Department been rejected as either not being compliant with the guidelines or having being received after the deadline before the extension was announced?

Ms Foster—I do not have that detail, sorry, Senator. I will have to take that on notice.

Senator PAYNE—Thank you. I would appreciate that.....

Answer:

No. The assessment phase had not been completed.

Senate Standing Committee on Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Additional Budget Estimates February 2009
Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government

Question No. LGRD 05

Division/Agency: Local Government and Regional Development

Topic: Regional and Local Community and Infrastructure Program (RLCIP)
Compliance Requirements

Hansard Pages: 92-93 (24/02/09)

Senator Payne asked:

Senator PAYNE—The announcement was made on 13 February; we are 10 days after that now, as it is 24 February. What sort of volume of inquiries or flow of applications have you received in those 10 days?

Ms Foster—I think we will have to take that on notice. We have a hotline, which was established for councils to call. I do not have details of how many calls we have received relating to this specific program.

Senator PAYNE—Or whether it is running hot or otherwise. If you follow that up for me that would be helpful.

Answer:

332 enquiries were logged via the RLCIP information line between 13 February and 24 February 2009.

Senate Standing Committee on Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Additional Budget Estimates February 2009
Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government

Question No. LGRD 06

Division/Agency: Local Government and Regional Development

Topic: Regional and Local Community and Infrastructure Program (RLCIP)

Compliance requirements

Hansard Pages: 94 (24/02/09)

Senator Payne asked:

Senator PAYNE—We have 344 projects or councils in the first iteration of this before the extension. You talk about this almost on an individual project management basis. How many staff do you have doing that? That is a fairly extraordinary volume of work that you are expecting to be dealt with.

Ms Foster—That is right, though I would make the point that with those 344 applications, of course, there is a cap of \$550 million if these projects are larger.

Senator PAYNE—I understand.

Ms Foster—So we might expect that there will be fewer than that number of projects that actually become part of this program. I do not have the exact staff numbers. [I will take that on notice](#) but, again, as we are running these programs, we will have periods of heightened activity on the various programs, which will allow us to move our staff across them.

Senator PAYNE—[Ms Foster, I ask you to take one other matter on notice.](#) If there is any more clarity that you can provide around the dates going forward when you expect to be able to move things along in terms of presentation of a final list to the minister, the consultation—I think you called it—with the Australian Council of Local Government and so on, I would be grateful if the Committee received those.

Ms Foster—Certainly, and we should be in a better position to do that as we get to the close of applications.

Answer:

1. The successful projects are expected to be announced shortly.
2. The Government will make an announcement when final decisions are made.

Senate Standing Committee on Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Additional Budget Estimates February 2009
Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government

Question No. LGRD 07

Division/Agency: Local Government and Regional Development

Topic: Australian Council of Local Government Steering Committee

Hansard Pages: 101-102 (24/02/09)

Senator Ian McDonald asked:

Senator IAN MACDONALD—Mr Chair, please stop me if Senator Payne covered some of these things while I was absent. I am interested in the Major Cities Unit.

Ms Foster—The Major Cities Unit is a component of Infrastructure Australia, Michael Deegan's outfit.

Senator IAN MACDONALD—Okay. I am really very late on that, aren't I, having sat through Infrastructure Australia. There is an Australian Council of Local Governments Steering Committee. Can you tell me about that?

Ms Foster—Yes. Let me just go to the press release. It was a steering committee set up after the inaugural Australian Council of Local Governments meeting last year and it has a number of members, a number of lord mayors, the President of ALGA, a number of councillors from around the country and the National President of the Local Government Managers Australia.

Senator IAN MACDONALD—Where would I find the list? Perhaps it is easy enough for you to give me the list of people on that steering committee?

Ms Foster—The list has been published. It went out as a media release.

Senator IAN MACDONALD—Can you get it for me as a question on notice?

Ms Foster—Certainly.

Answer:

The Australian Council of Local Governments (ACLG) Steering Committee members are:

Cr Geoff Lake

Deputy Chair, ACLG

President, Australian Local Government Association

Councillor, City of Monash,

Cr Campbell Newman

Lord Mayor, Brisbane City Council,

Cr Robert Doyle

Lord Mayor, City of Melbourne,

Cr Clover Moore MP

Lord Mayor, City of Sydney

Chairperson, Council of Capital City Lord Mayors,

Cr Paul Bell

President, Local Government Association of Queensland

Councillor, Central Highlands Regional Council

Senate Standing Committee on Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Additional Budget Estimates February 2009
Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government

Cr Genia McCaffery

President, New South Wales Local Government Association
Mayor, North Sydney Council

Cr Ronald Lami Lami

Councillor, West Arnhem Shire Council
Former Chairperson of West Arnhem Shire Transition Committee

Cr Bruce Miller

President, Shires Association of New South Wales
Councillor, Cowra Shire Council

Cr Joy Baluch

President, Local Government Association of South Australia
Mayor, Port Augusta City Council

Cr Michael Gaffney

President, Local Government Association of Tasmania
Mayor of Latrobe Council

Cr Lisa Scaffidi

Lord Mayor, City of Perth

Ald. Kerry Moir

President, Local Government Association of Northern Territory
Councillor, Darwin City Council

Mr Troy Pickard

Deputy President, Western Australian Local Government Association
Mayor, City of Joondalup

Cr Mary-Lou Corcoran

Mayor, City of Victor Harbor

Ray Pincombe

National President, Local Government Managers Australia

Cr Barry Sammels

Chair National Sea Change Taskforce
Mayor, City of Rockingham

Mayor Jenny Dowell

Mayor, Lismore City Council

Cr Linton Reynolds

National Growth Areas Alliance
Mayor, City of Armadale

Cr Pam Macleod

President, Australian Local Government Women's Association (Victorian Branch)
Councillor, City of Whittlesea

Associate Professor Graham Sansom

Director, Centre for Local Government, University of Technology Sydney

Senate Standing Committee on Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Additional Budget Estimates February 2009
Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government

Cr Lisa Price
Mayor, La Trobe City Council

Mr Paul Slape
National Secretary, Australian Services Union

Cr Allan Sutherland
Mayor, Moreton Bay Regional Council

Cr Val Schier
Mayor, Cairns Regional Council

Cr Ron Hoenig
Mayor, City of Botany Bay

Cr Lynne Craigie
Shire President, Shire of East Pilbara

Senate Standing Committee on Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Additional Budget Estimates February 2009
Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government

Question No. LGRD 08

Division/Agency: Local Government and Regional Development

Topic: Australian Council of Local Government Steering Committee

Hansard Pages: 101-102 (24/02/09)

Senator Ian McDonald asked:

Senator IAN MACDONALD—Can you briefly run through them—read them out to me and perhaps tell me where they come from?

Ms Foster—There is Councillor Geoff Lake from Monash in Victoria; Campbell Newman from Queensland; Councillor Robert Doyle from Melbourne; Clover Moore from New South Wales; Paul Bell from Queensland; Genia McCaffery from New South Wales; Ronald Lami Lami from the Northern Territory; Bruce Miller from New South Wales; Joy Baluch from South Australia; Michael Gaffney from Tasmania; Lisa Scaffidi from Western Australia; Kerry Moir from Northern Territory; Troy Pickard from Western Australia; Mary-Lou Corcoran from South Australia; Ray Pincombe, who, as I said, is the National President of Local Government Managers Australia and is from South Australia; Barry Sammels from WA; Jenny Dowell from New South Wales; Linton Reynolds from WA; Pam Macleod from Victoria; Graham Sansom from New South Wales; Lisa Price from Victoria; Paul Slape, who is the National Secretary of the Australian Services Union; Allan Sutherland from Queensland; Val Schier from Queensland; Ron Hoenig from New South Wales; and Lynne Craigie from WA.

Senator IAN MACDONALD—Were they appointed on the recommendation of the Department?

Ms Foster—I do not know that. [Can I take that on notice?](#)

Senator IAN MACDONALD—If they had been appointed on the recommendation of the department, you would have done it, I assume.

Ms Foster—I have been looking after this area for the whole of a week.

Senator IAN MACDONALD—Then you would not have done it. All right. You had better find that out for me. What is the steering committee actually going to do?

Senator Conroy—We did have a little bit of a discussion with Senator Payne, [but I am sure we can](#)—

Answer:

1. The Department recommended individuals based on their merits, taking into account their experience, expertise, gender and geographical location.
2. The ACLG is an advisory body providing a forum to facilitate a new partnership between the two levels of government. The ACLG will:
 - provide a forum for the Australian Government and local government, including the Australian Local Government Association (ALGA), to consider policies and initiatives in areas of mutual interest;

Senate Standing Committee on Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Additional Budget Estimates February 2009

Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government

- provide advice to the Australian Government on matters relevant to local government and local communities;
- contribute to dialogue on issues of national significance that affect local government and local communities;
- promote collaboration between the Australian Government and local government, as well as between local governments themselves to address emerging economic, social and environmental challenges;
- encourage innovation and best practice in local government; and
- improve the provision of information and data to support the long-term development of local government.

Senate Standing Committee on Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Additional Budget Estimates February 2009
Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government

Question No. LGRD 09

Division/Agency: Local Government and Regional Development

Topic: Barcaldine Tree of Knowledge - Election Commitment Project

Hansard Page: 106 (24/02/09)

Senator McGauran asked:

Senator McGAURAN—Anyway we had better not get bogged down. Due to time constraints, I will not pursue that.

As Senators Macdonald and Heffernan know, the ACCs have just been hung out to dry. There is still no action on that front. One more point—and I have the *Hansard* here in case you think it is farcical, because I want to be able to quote you, Senator Conroy—you said in the last Committee meeting that the Labor Party's stump of knowledge was on holidays in Brisbane. It went to Brisbane for some resuscitation and, no doubt, some varnishing and polishing up. [Where is the stump? Is the stump back in its rightful place?](#)

Senator Conroy—We are willing to plant you there in the interim.

CHAIR—Sorry, Senator McGauran, but, as much as this Committee does everything it can to work together, we do have an arrangement—

Senator Conroy—We have serious questions to pursue, Senator McGauran.

CHAIR—Senators Macdonald and Heffernan do have some pertinent questions for the Office of Northern Australia.

Senator McGAURAN—This is a \$6 million project. I know it is farcical. Indeed, it is farcical. It is a farcical \$6 million waste of money, and I will not pursue it more than another minute.

Senator Conroy—I am afraid the officers at the table do not have that information readily to hand. We will happily take that on notice and let you know if it has returned from its holiday.

Senator McGAURAN—[Could you also take on notice](#) whether any work has started on the project and has any consideration been given to combining the two projects of the Dinosaur Museum and the Tree of Knowledge because they are within close range of each other.

Yes, I admit, Mr Chairman, this is a farcical issue which I raise, but it is farcical to the degree that \$6 million is going to be spent on this dead stump.

Senator Conroy—Thank you, Senator McGauran. We will come back to you on that.

Answer:

1. The Tree of Knowledge will be installed into the new memorial prior to completion.
2. Work commenced on construction of the Barcaldine Tree of Knowledge memorial in October 2008 and is scheduled for completion in May 2009.

Senate Standing Committee on Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Additional Budget Estimates February 2009
Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government

Question No.: LGRD 10

Division/Agency: Local Government and Regional Development

Topic: Dysart Sports Centre

Hansard Page: 106 (24/02/09)

Senator McDonald asked:

If I could ask some quick questions following on from Senator McGauran's comments. I refer to the Dysart Sports Centre, which I asked about at a previous estimates. I was told it was a Better Regions election commitment, which I already knew. What I actually asked, and have not yet received an answer to, is: isn't this a project which was submitted under the Regional Solutions Program but was rejected by the Department at the time and was subsequently processed because it was an election commitment? Could I put that on notice?

Answer:

There has never been a Regional Solutions Program in Government.

Senate Standing Committee on Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Additional Budget Estimates February 2009
Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government

Question No. LGRD 11

Division/Agency: Local Government and Regional Development

Topic: Australian Government Regional Information Directory (AGRID)

Hansard Page: 106 (24/02/09)

Senator McGauran asked:

Senator McGAURAN—There used to be a great publication, when we were in government, from your Department: it was just a bound book of not just the grants but all the projects. It was a regional publication.

Senator Conroy—We still produce it.

Senator McGAURAN—You still produce that?

Ms Foster—I am afraid I cannot identify it from that.

Senator McGAURAN—Every Department came into it. It was regional projects and—

Senator Conroy—We will take that on notice, Senator McGauran, and seek that information for you.

Answer:

Information on Australian Government programs and services is available electronically via the Internet from the Regional Entry Point and GrantsLINK websites maintained by the Department and via the Freecall number 1800 026 222.

Senate Standing Committee on Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Additional Budget Estimates February 2009
Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government

Question No. LGRD 12

Division/Agency: Local Government and Regional Development

Topic: Department's Regional Office Network

Hansard Page: Written Question

Senator Heffernan asked:

1. What is the status of the Department's Regional Office network?
2. Specifically, how many Regional Offices were there in November 2007 and how many are there now?
3. How many offices have been closed and what are their locations?

Answer:

The Department has 7 Regional Offices within the Regional Development Programs Branch. The offices are located in Darwin, Townsville, Newcastle, Orange, Bendigo, Wollongong and Hobart.

The Regional Offices located in the capital cities of Brisbane, Melbourne, Adelaide and Perth are now closed.

Senate Standing Committee on Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Additional Budget Estimates February 2009
Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government

Question No.: LGRD 13

Division/Agency: Local Government and Regional Development

Topic: Regional Office Network

Hansard Pages: Written Question

Senator Heffernan asked:

1. How many staff were employed in each office in November 2007 and how many are employed now?
2. How much has the department paid out in redundancy payments?
3. Has any person who was made redundant been re-employed or engaged as a consultant or contractor?

Answer:

The Department has not closed any offices in regional areas.

Senate Standing Committee on Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Additional Budget Estimates February 2009
Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government

Question No.: LGRD 14

Division/Agency: Local Government and Regional Development

Topic: Regional Office Network

Hansard Pages: Written Question

Senator Heffernan asked:

What savings were forecast by the closure of those offices and staff redundancies and what savings were actually achieved?

Answer:

The savings measure is detailed in the 2008-09 Portfolio Budget Statements.

Senate Standing Committee on Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Additional Budget Estimates February 2009
Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government

Question No. LGRD 15

Division/Agency: Local Government and Regional Development

Topic: Department's Regional Office Network

Hansard Pages: Written Question

Senator Heffernan asked:

What is the role of the remaining Regional Offices and what territory does each cover?

Answer:

The role of the Regional Offices located in Darwin and Townsville includes:

- Providing assistance to the Office of Northern Australia
- Contract management of Regional Partnerships projects
- Negotiation of Funding Agreements and contract management of Better Regions projects, and
- Liaison with Area Consultative Committees/Regional Development Australia.

The role of the Regional Offices located in Newcastle, Orange, Bendigo, Wollongong and Hobart includes:

- Contract management of Regional Partnerships projects
- Negotiation of Funding Agreements and contract management of Better Regions projects, and
- Liaison with Area Consultative Committees/Regional Development Australia.

Senate Standing Committee on Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Additional Budget Estimates February 2009
Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government

Question No. LGRD 16

Division/Agency: Local Government and Regional Development

Topic: ACC/RDA Network

Hansard Pages: Written Question

Senator Heffernan asked:

1. I refer to Hon Gary Gray's press release dated 3 December last year outlining a proposal to merge the Federal Government's Area Consultative Committees/Regional Development Australia (ACC/RDA) network with State Government Regional Development Boards. What progress is being made and which States have agreed to the proposal?
2. Will any ACC/RDA office close as a consequence of the plan?
3. Will any ACC/RDA network staff be made redundant?

Answer:

1. On 23 February 2009, the first Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was signed with the New South Wales Government. Finalisation of agreements with other states and territories is expected to follow shortly. Regional Development Australia (RDA) will commence on 1 July 2009. The Australian Government is currently finalising an MOU or other form of overarching agreement with each state and territory government to establish RDA and define operating parameters. Each state and territory government continues to work with the Australian Government to finalise this process, in accord with the Regional Development Council's Communiqué of 30 July 2008.
2. The number and locations of RDA offices will reflect the number of regions, and coverage needs within those regions, as agreed with state and territory governments in the Memoranda of Understanding. Area Consultative Committee (ACC) offices will be folded into the new RDA network as appropriate.
3. ACC/RDA committees, as not-for-profit incorporated associations, are responsible for their own staffing.

Senate Standing Committee on Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Additional Budget Estimates February 2009
Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government

Question No. LGRD 17

Division/Agency: Local Government and Regional Development

Topic: ACC/RDA Network

Hansard Pages: Written Question

Senator Heffernan asked:

How will the Government ensure that State funding levels are maintained so the Commonwealth isn't left to subsidise the States' regional development activities?

Answer:

State and territory funding levels will be maintained through commitments set out in Memoranda of Understanding and proposed funding agreements currently being negotiated with each state and territory government.

Senate Standing Committee on Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Additional Budget Estimates February 2009
Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government

Question No. LGRD 18

Division/Agency: Local Government and Regional Development

Topic: ACC/RDA Network

Hansard Pages: Written Question

Senator Heffernan asked:

1. Will the members of the new amalgamated boards be paid?
2. If so, how much?

Answer:

Regional Development Australia Committee members may be reimbursed for expenses incurred through conducting committee duties, including, for example, travel costs. The Commonwealth will not be paying sitting fees.

Senate Standing Committee on Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Additional Budget Estimates February 2009
Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government

Question No. LGRD 19

Division/Agency: Local Government and Regional Development

Topic: ACC/RDA Network

Hansard Pages: Written Question

Senator Heffernan asked:

What has been the role of Area Consultative Committees (ACCs) which have been re-badged as the local network of Regional Development Australia (RDA) offices since the Regional Partnerships program was cancelled?

Answer:

Area Consultative Committees (ACCs) have been undertaking their charter responsibilities, including consultation with their communities. They work in partnership with the Commonwealth and other levels of government to support the growth of the local community through building business, creating jobs and fostering sustainable social and economic development. RDAs support, promote and disseminate information on Australian Government policy initiatives for the benefit of their communities. RDAs also provide feedback to the Government to enable effective review and informed refinement of policies and programmes.

In the transition period, ACCs continue to provide advice to government on issues affecting regional Australia and deliver some services on a contract basis. ACCs have also been providing advice to government on the transition to RDA.

Senate Standing Committee on Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Additional Budget Estimates February 2009
Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government

Question No. LGRD 20

Division/Agency: Local Government and Regional Development

Topic: ACC/RDA Network

Hansard Pages: Written Question

Senator Heffernan asked:

1. What Federal Government funding programs have been available to the ACC/RDA network to assist them in their core function of facilitating regional and community development?
2. Have they been able to make formal funding recommendations to Ministers on other Federal Government programs since the *Regional Partnerships* program was cancelled?
3. If so, is there a project list citing the project, the ACC/RDA recommendation, a project description or summary, the Department and program from where the funding was sought, the amount sought and the total project value?
4. How many of ACC/RDA recommendations were accepted and how many were rejected?
5. In what electorates are the projects?

Answer:

1. Funding to the Area Consultative Committee (ACC)/Regional Development Australia (RDA) network has been provided through the Regional Development Australia program. The ACC/RDA network also enters into third party contracts with other organisations, including government, to deliver services, such as the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations' Indigenous Employment programs, and the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry's Sugar Reform program.
2. No.
3. Not applicable.
4. Not applicable.
5. Not applicable.

Senate Standing Committee on Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Additional Budget Estimates February 2009
Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government

Question No. LGRD 21

Division/Agency: Local Government and Regional Development

Topic: ACC/RDA Network

Hansard Pages: Written Question

Senator Heffernan asked:

How has the ACC/RDA network been able to achieve the portfolio's objective (from the Department's website) of *assisting regions to realise their potential and manage their own futures?*

Answer:

The Area Consultative Committee (ACC)/Regional Development Australia (RDA) network has fulfilled its role through a range of activities, including:

- presenting regional communities' views to the Australian Government through a range of forums, particularly on emerging issues;
- advising their communities' of Australian Government programs;
- disseminating relevant Australian Government information to their communities, and
- delivering contracted regional development services.

Senate Standing Committee on Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Additional Budget Estimates February 2009
Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government

Question No. LGRD 22

Division/Agency: Local Government and Regional Development

Topic: ACC/RDA Network

Hansard Pages: Written Question

Senator Heffernan asked:

1. The www.acc.gov.au website states that the RDA network has 3 initial tasks. These tasks are:
 - a. advise on the role and functions of RDA and improving the engagement of regional communities, regional development organisations and local governments with the Australian Government (by 31 August 2008);
 - b. advise on principles and priorities for the new *Regional and Local Community Infrastructure Program* (by 31 October 2008), and
 - c. advise on priorities for the types of local community infrastructure that could encourage economic development (by 31 October 2008).

What advice did the ACC/RDA network provide in relation to these three tasks?

2. What advice was accepted by the Government and what was rejected?
3. What were the reasons for the Government not supporting each of the recommendations made by the ACC it rejected?

Answer:

1. On 30 May 2008, the Parliamentary Secretary asked the 54 members of the Area Consultative Committee (ACC)/Regional Development Australia (RDA) network to provide advice to the Government on three tasks. The ACCs undertook an extensive program of stakeholder engagement and presented a comprehensive range of views to government. Advice ranged from highlighting particular local and regional development and infrastructure issues to overarching, high-level suggestions about the nature of RDA and the work that it can undertake.
2. The views expressed in the advice received from the ACC/RDA network informed the Government's consideration on the future of RDA and the Regional and Local Community Infrastructure Program. The Government continues to consult with the ACCs as they transition to RDA.
3. The purpose of the ACC/RDA advice was to further inform policy for the development of the national Regional Development Australia network and create an enhanced vehicle (RDA) to assist regional development.

Senate Standing Committee on Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Additional Budget Estimates February 2009
Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government

Question No.: LGRD 23

Division/Agency: Local Government and Regional Development

Topic: ACC/RDA Network

Hansard Pages: Written Question

Senator Heffernan asked:

How many staff were employed by ACCs nationally as of November 2007 and how many staff are now employed by the ACC / RDA network, and from which specific office locations have jobs been lost?

Answer:

The ACCs are not-for-profit incorporated associations and ensure that resources are sufficient to deliver services to the Australian Government and other parties. ACCs are responsible for their own staffing levels and do not report this information to the Australian Government.

Senate Standing Committee on Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Additional Budget Estimates February 2009
Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government

Question No.: LGRD 24

Division/Agency: Local Government and Regional Development

Topic: Barcaldine Tree of Knowledge Project (Stage 1)

Hansard Pages: Written Question

Senator Heffernan asked:

1. I refer to Labor's election commitment to provide \$2.6 million to fund the Tree of Knowledge project at Barcaldine in Western Queensland.
2. How much of the \$2.6 million has been paid?
3. What did it pay for?
4. How much is outstanding and why is it outstanding?
5. When does the government expect to pay the remaining amount?
6. Will any project funds be used to acquire any land or buildings to complete any stage of the project?
7. If so who owns the land or buildings and what is their value?
8. Have any land or buildings already been transferred?
9. If so who owned them, what was their value, how were they valued and how much were they paid for them?

Answer:

- 1.-5. The Department is currently negotiating the funding agreement with Barcaldine Shire Council. Proponents receive funding from the Government in accordance with agreed milestones under the Better Regions Program.
6. No.
- 7.-9. Not applicable.

Senate Standing Committee on Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Additional Budget Estimates February 2009
Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government

Question No. LGRD 25

Division/Agency: Local Government and Regional Development

Topic: Oakleigh Park Pedestrian Overpass

Hansard Pages: Written Question

Senator Bushby asked:

What date will the \$500,000 for the Oakleigh Park pedestrian overpass in Burnie (previously announced 6 September 2007) be delivered?

Answer:

The project is being funded under the Better Regions program.

Senate Standing Committee on Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Additional Budget Estimates February 2009
Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government

Question No. LGRD 26

Division/Agency: Local Government and Regional Development

Topic: Oakleigh Park Pedestrian Overpass

Hansard Pages: Written Question

Senator Bushby asked:

When will the Oakleigh Park pedestrian overpass in Burnie be commenced and when will it be completed?

Answer:

The project is being funded under the Better Regions program.