

**Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee**  
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE  
Additional Budget Estimates February 2010  
**Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government**

**Question No.:** IA 01

**Division/Agency:** Infrastructure Australia  
**Topic:** Major Cities Unit Focus Groups  
**Hansard Page/s:** 16 (09/02/10)

**Senator Williams asked:**

**Senator WILLIAMS**—Yes. The department's annual report states that focus group sessions were conducted across the major cities and a research roundtable was held in June 2009. Did the unit staff attend these events?

**Mr Deegan**—Yes, they did, Senator.

**Senator WILLIAMS**—What were the costs associated with these events? Example, travel, accommodation, catering, venue hire et cetera. Have you got any idea of that?

**Mr Deegan**—I will take that on notice, Senator.

**Answer:**

The total cost of the focus group sessions around the country and the research roundtable cost \$119,965.40 (including GST). Travel and accommodation costs were paid by participants.

One Major Cities Unit staff member, on a private visit to Perth, attended the focus group in Perth, with travel cost of \$20.70 and no accommodation cost. One Major Cities Unit staff member attended the focus group in Rouse Hill (Sydney), with no travel or accommodation costs associated with their attendance.

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**Question No.:** IA 02

**Division/Agency:** Infrastructure Australia

**Topic:** Major Cities Unit Locations

**Hansard Page/s:** 17 (09/02/10)

**Senator Williams asked:**

**Senator WILLIAMS** —Thank you. And what cities were visited?

**Mr Deegan**—Again, I will take that on notice. It certainly would have been all the major capital cities. There will be others. I will check that for you.

**Senator WILLIAMS** —Any regional cities?

**Mr Deegan**—I will check that for you, Senator.

**Answer:**

The Major Cities Unit visited a number of cities around Australia as part of a broad consultation process. This consultation process was separate to the Major Cities Unit Research Roundtable event.

All capital cities were visited by the Major Cities Unit over 2008/09. The regional cities of Wollongong, Newcastle, Gold Coast and Geelong were also visited.

The Major Cities Unit has also consulted key stakeholder groups including the National Growth Areas Alliance, industry and the capital cities lord mayors.

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**Question No.:** IA 03

**Division/Agency:** Infrastructure Australia  
**Topic:** Overview of National Freight Network  
**Hansard Page/s:** 30 (09/02/10)

**Senator Nash asked:**

**Senator NASH**—So what is the cost of actually doing the overview? I am assuming that, if people are shifting around and business is being done, there has to be some sort of price tag attached to that. So do you have a general idea annually or of how long the actual process is going to run for from the beginning to the time it is finalised?

**Mr Deegan**—All up, we have been going for a solid six or seven months on it. It will be another five months or so. It is within our budget.

**Senator NASH**—Just for the committee, just so we have a bit of a ball park figure, do you have any idea of—

**Mr Deegan**—I will come back to you on that. I just do not have that off the top of my head. I do not want to mislead you.

**Answer:**

A total of \$200,992 was expended or committed up to and including February 2010.

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**Question No.:** IA 04

**Division/Agency:** Infrastructure Australia

**Topic:** Infrastructure Australia decision making process

**Hansard Page/s:** Written Question

**Senator Nash asked:**

There is a growing body of evidence to support the view that Infrastructure Australia is being systematically sidelined. Privately, IA members are saying that they are being excluded from the decision making process.

1. Why has this situation been allowed to arise?
2. Will the Minister clearly reaffirm his confidence in IA and his support for its continuation in accordance with the terms of its charter?

**Answer:**

1. IA members have not been excluded from the decision making processes.
2. Yes.

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**Question No.:** IA 05

**Division/Agency:** Infrastructure Australia

**Topic:** Transparency

**Hansard Page/s:** Written Question

**Senator Nash asked:**

There is no transparency in the processes employed by this government in determining which infrastructure projects are to be funded. This situation is totally at odds with the promises this government made when in opposition and in the 2007 election campaign.

1. Why has this situation been allowed to arise?
2. Will the Minister formally undertake to honour (subject only to the reasonable requirements of commercial confidentiality) the government's pledges on transparency as they apply to infrastructure funding decisions?

**Answer:**

The methodology of the Infrastructure Australia process has been on the website in a transparent manner for a considerable time already.

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**Question No.:** IA 06

**Division/Agency:** Infrastructure Australia

**Topic:** National Ports Strategy

**Hansard Page/s:** Written Question

**Senator Nash asked:**

I refer to the Coastal Shipping Inquiry conducted by the Infrastructure Committee and Infrastructure Australia's recent National Infrastructure Priorities Report which both discuss the development of a National Ports Strategy.

1. What is the current status of the development of the National Ports Strategy?
2. When will it be finalised and made public?
3. Which agencies will be involved in the creation of the National Ports Strategy?
4. What consultation is being undertaken in the formulation of this plan?

**Answer:**

Broad consultation on the national ports strategy is underway – the first time our nation will have such a strategy.

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**Question No.:** IA 07

**Division/Agency:** Infrastructure Australia

**Topic:** Update on projects

**Hansard Page/s:** Written Question

**Senator Nash asked:**

1. Is there any update on when the remaining projects listed in Infrastructure Australia's National Infrastructure Priorities Report (released May 2009) will be funded?
2. In which financial year?
3. What percentage of the total project cost will be funded?

**Answer:**

The advice of Infrastructure Australia will be considered in the budgetary context.