

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

Question: II 01

Division/Agency: Infrastructure Investment

Topic: Questions on Notice responses about South Australian Road Projects from the February 2008 Hearings

Hansard Page: 8 – 9, 111 (28/05/08)

Senator NASH—Okay. What I would like to go onto—and I take your response; there is not much more we can do about that. As I was trying to say—and sorry I interrupted you—there are a number of portfolio related issues that have been answered in this manner. If I can just give you a bit of an example, in the infrastructure investment section, we have some questions here from Senator Birmingham that were asked last estimates: What funds, if any, have been committed by the South Australian Government towards federally funded road projects, broken down by project? —a fairly straightforward question, and the answer is: Details of South Australian Government contributions to road projects are set out in full at www.auslink.gov.au. Start and completion dates for each South Australian road project—same answer: full details, www.auslink.gov.au. Again: At which intersections will grade separations occur? Full details of at www.auslink.gov.au, and it goes on. Now, we can easily go to a website before we even come in here and have a look at that. That is not the point. It is about asking officials questions and requiring an appropriate answer. I do not, and neither do my colleagues, think that it is anywhere near appropriate to refer us to a hyperlink. Can I also refer to a specific issue where the official undertook to actually provide the committee with a hard copy download, which was fine, because they had not actually produced the final copies, and yet we get another link. It is entirely inappropriate. Could I have your comment on that?

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Senator Conroy—that they wanted to do it as quick as possible, but I am genuinely happy to take this up with the minister to assist in the process of the Senate estimates. I do have some sympathy, having had it happen to me on a number of occasions, but as I said, I am sure it was just an enthusiasm to provide information as fast as possible.

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Senator Conroy—If I can just say, the Prime Minister has given what we believe is a satisfactory answer on the issue of election commitments. As to the other issues you raise around some answers not having as much information as you would have liked, I think I said this morning to Senator Nash, perhaps in the enthusiasm to answer your questions, the answers were prepared and perhaps some information was not readily available at the time, but I have undertaken to take it up with the minister to ensure that we are able to meet the requests of senators.

Answer:

Senator Conroy addressed this question during the May hearings as above.

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

Question: II 02

Division/Agency: Infrastructure Investment

Topic: Bridgewater Bridge Funding

Hansard Page: 112 (28/05/08)

Senator Abetz asked:

Senator ABETZ—In the past there was an agreement between the Commonwealth and the state that, if the state wanted to, the Commonwealth would fund \$100 million or 80 per cent of the bridge if the state were to fund 20 per cent of it. Is that offer still on the table from the new government?

Senator Conroy—I would have to take that on notice.

Answer:

Clauses 16 to 18 of the AusLink bilateral agreement between the Australian and Tasmanian Governments relate to the Bridgewater Bridge. The agreement is available at: http://www.auslink.gov.au/publications/policies/pdf/TAS_Bilateral.pdf. The bilateral was varied by the former government in September 2006 to reallocate some of the Bridgewater Bridge funding. The amendments are available at: http://www.auslink.gov.au/publications/policies/pdf/Tas_Amendment_ScheduleA_09_06.pdf.

These arrangements confirmed the former Australian Government's willingness "to consider a proposal for an alternative project on the northern approaches to Hobart". Consistent with these arrangements the Australian and Tasmanian Governments have agreed to an alternative project, the Brighton Bypass. The Australian and Tasmanian governments have also committed funding to fix the lift operation and refurbish the current bridge and plan for a replacement bridge.

The Australian Government has provided \$10.8 million in 2008/09 towards the upgrade of the Bridgewater Bridge and \$3 million (\$0.5 million in 2008/09 and \$2.5 million 2009/10) for the Brighton Bypass Planning to enable an early start on these projects.

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

Question: II 03

Division/Agency: Infrastructure Investment

Topic: Midland Highway / Lyell Highway Intersection

Hansard Page: 114 (28/5/08)

Senator Abetz asked:

Senator ABETZ—While you are in a jovial mood, would you check for me—or get one of your staff to check—as to whether this particular project was on the Labor Party website. I could not find it.

Senator Conroy—I will take that on notice and see whether there is any further information that Minister Albanese can provide you.

Answer:

While not separately identified, the Midland Highway and Lyell Highway intersection is part of the Bridgewater Bridge upgrade, for which the website link is:

<http://www.alp.org.au/media/1107/mstran010.php>

Further detail is at II 04.

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

Question: II 04

Division/Agency: Infrastructure Investment

Topic: Midland Highway / Lyell Highway Intersection

Hansard Page: 114 (28/05/08)

Senator Abetz asked:

Senator ABETZ—That is what I was thinking. If at this stage we could commit ourselves only to the intersection, how much do you think that will cost? Do we have that broken up as yet?

Mr Rokvic—We would have to take that on notice. We do not have that information.

Answer:

The Australian Government has allocated \$10.75 million towards a total cost of \$14.0 million to upgrade the Bridgewater Bridge and for improvements to the Lyell Highway at Granton.

The Tasmanian Department of Infrastructure, Energy and Resources has advised that the total cost includes \$2.3 million for improvements for the Lyell Highway junction at Granton.

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

Question: II 05

Division/Agency: Infrastructure Investment
Topic: Brooker Highway and Eastern Outlet
Hansard Page: 116 (28/05/08)

Senator Abetz asked:

Senator ABETZ—When can we expect the government to tell us when, or what year, they intend to place the Brooker Highway and eastern outlet into the national network?

Ms Page—I would imagine that it would be done in the near future, but I cannot be specific about the date.

Senator Conroy—We will take that on notice.

Answer:

The Australian Government has committed to extend Tasmania's National Network to include the Brooker Highway from Granton to the Port of Hobart, and the Tasman Highway from Hobart to Hobart airport (Eastern outlet).

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

Question: II 06

Division/Agency: Infrastructure Investment

Topic: Bridgewater Bridge Lifting Mechanism

Hansard Page: 117-118 (28/05/08)

Senator Abetz asked:

Senator ABETZ—Was a state government request ever made to the minister or the department for this upgrade work?

Ms Page—I would have to take that on notice.

Senator ABETZ—If you could, please.

Ms Page—This is an election commitment. The government is committed to doing it.

Senator ABETZ—That is fully understood. I am just wondering whether, separate to that election commitment, the state government wrote to either—you will have to remind me: Mr Albanese or Mr Truss, wouldn't it have been?

Ms Page—Mr Vaile.

Senator ABETZ—Thank you, Mr Vaile—in relation to funding for this lifting mechanism?

Ms Page—We will take that on notice.

Senator ABETZ—If you could take that on notice I would be much obliged. That is all.

Answer:

Yes.

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

Question: II 07

Division/Agency: Infrastructure Investment

Topic: New Perth-Bunbury Highway

Hansard Page: 140 (28/05/08)

Senator Adams asked:

Senator ADAMS—We will leave that one. I will start with the Perth-Bunbury Highway. This is in regard to a bonus if this project is finished early. Motorists are supposed to be on that highway by December 2009. My question is: will those contractors that are constructing the Perth-Bunbury Highway be paid a bonus if it is finished early?

Ms Page—I will ask Mr Maher to address your question on the Bunbury Highway.

Mr Maher—I would have to take that on notice. I am not familiar with that.

Ms Page—That will probably refer to the particular contracting arrangements that the West Australian government has entered into on that road, which we are not party to.

Mr Maher—Correct.

Senator ADAMS—The reason I was asking the question is the fact that the project has blown out so much and the federal government has put in an additional \$160 million from the 2008-09 budget. My question is: will any of that be directed towards meeting any bonus?

Ms Page—We will have to take that on notice.

Answer:

Main Roads Western Australia has advised that the construction contract for the project contains appropriate incentives for the Southern Gateway Alliance to finish construction of the new Perth-Bunbury Highway project as early as possible, as there are for all contractors involved in road construction.

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

Question: II 09

Division/Agency: Infrastructure Investment

Topic: Expenditure on Local Roads

Hansard Page: 143 (28/05/08)

Senator Fielding asked:

Senator FIELDING—Would you then be able to break it up on what was allocated? I understand it may well not be spent.

Ms Page—We could provide you with advice on what allocations are made potentially for local road use, yes.

Senator FIELDING—Would you be able to do that going out for the next budget period plus the next couple of years or whatever is known? We certainly want one year's worth and a couple of years would be good.

Ms Page—We can do it where there is money allocated in the forward estimates that does not relate to discretionary expenditure, if you like.

Answer:

In 2008-09, \$355.6 million from the Roads to Recovery Program and \$576.6 million from the Financial Assistance Grants Scheme (Local Roads Component) will be provided for local roads.

In addition, \$50.5 million from the Black Spot Program and \$189.6 million from the Strategic Regional and Strategic Regional Supplementary Programs will be provided in 2008-09. However, it is difficult to break down the specific program funds that will be spent on local roads from these programs.

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

Question: II 10

Division/Agency: Infrastructure Investment

Topic: Huon Valley Council

Hansard Page: 12 (29/05/08)

Senator Milne asked:

Senator MILNE—That is right. Surely there is some analysis of applications from councils. Four million dollars for a road on which there are 185 vehicles a day is an interesting decision, so I would like to know also: were reports on the planning process sent to the government as part of the acquittal process? And were all the required planning processes carried out by the Huon Valley Council during the planning period and before work started?

Ms Page—We will take that on notice.

Answer:

Huon Valley Council is responsible for planning procedures under all statutes, regulations, by-laws and requirements of any Commonwealth, State, Territory or Local Authority under section 25.1 of the funding agreement between the Australian Government and the Council.

The Strategic Regional Program guidelines require that proponents provide the Department with a final acquittal of expenditure against the approved amount of funds, on completion of a project. There is no program condition that requires the proponent to provide the Department with specific reports on the planning processes followed.

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

Question: II 11

Division/Agency: Infrastructure Investment
Topic: Commonwealth Infrastructure Funding
Hansard Page: 14-15 (29/05/08)

Senator I. Macdonald asked:

Senator IAN MACDONALD—As a question on notice, could I ask the minister to consider looking outside the square and investigating other ways that, once Commonwealth money is budgeted, we can actually get some action on it? That may mean tendering to private contractors, which will then require the Queensland government to allow private contractors independently of the Queensland government to deal with ‘their roads’, even though ‘their roads’ are really roads that are almost entirely funded by the Commonwealth or local government. As a question on notice, can the minister consider looking outside the square? It needs a better brain than mine to work out a way to do it, but the problem needs to be addressed.

Answer:

The Australian Government has no constitutional powers to directly plan or coordinate the construction of a road within Queensland. Road construction is the responsibility of the state and local governments.

The Australian Government recognises that legal requirements (including those relating to planning) must be observed and will work with states and territories to ensure that planning and delivery processes on projects which it is funding occur on a timely basis.

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

Question: II 12

Division/Agency: Infrastructure Investment

Topic: Burdekin River Bridge

Hansard Page: 15 (29/05/08)

Senator IAN MACDONALD—Perhaps you could refer this to the relevant minister: could he let me know what the government’s view is on a possible duplication of the bridge over the Burdekin River between Ayr and Home Hill?

Ms Page—I will take that on notice.

Answer:

The Australian Government is fully aware of the importance of the bridge over the Burdekin River in maintaining access to northern Queensland.

Any new bridge is necessarily linked to a Burdekin bypass, which would remove highway traffic from the main streets of Ayr, Home Hill and Brandon, dramatically improving safety, amenity, reliability and efficiency. A study of a second bridge and bypass was first announced in October 1996 by the former government. Following this announcement:

- In April 1999 the former government re-affirmed its commitment to proceed with the Burdekin Bypass planning study;
- In November 2000 the Queensland Government announced the preferred option, Option 5, and wrote to the former government proposing it be adopted and an Impact Management Plan be developed; and
- In February 2001, the former government announced that “the Burdekin bypass will not be proceeding in the foreseeable future” and instructed the Queensland Government to undertake a safety audit instead.

That’s why we committed \$25 million during the recent election towards structural rehabilitation of the current bridge. An initial allocation of \$4 million was provided in the 2008 Budget to get these works underway as soon as possible.

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

Question: II 13

Division/Agency: Infrastructure Investment

Topic: Kingston Bypass route

Hansard Page: 16 (29/05/08)

Senator Milne asked:

Senator MILNE—The issue that I have is not with the bypass but in the planning for the bypass route and future infrastructure planning. The Southern Expressway from Kingston to Hobart is becoming congested at the Hobart end at the top of Macquarie Street. There is a growing population base as would be acknowledged by the application for funding for the bypass. It is very clear that there is an option now to extend the bicycle route, but more particularly a rapid transit option, presumably by bus, onto the Southern Expressway. What I would like to put on notice is: when the Commonwealth is discussing this project with Tasmania, can we make sure the route is designed in such a way as it could complement a connection to a rapid transit option on the Southern Expressway, particularly because the Kingston High School is moving and there is an opportunity to make the Kingston High School site a nodal point for park and ride? It would be a logical way of linking that bypass to the Kingston High School site as the nodal point and then going for rapid transit to Hobart. If that has not been considered and all that has been considered to date is how to channel more cars—or the same cars, if you like—out of Kingston onto the Southern Expressway, who in this department looks at the forward planning or is that left to the Tasmanian authorities and you just look at what they come up with?

Ms Page—It is primarily a responsibility for the Tasmanian government. However, we are certainly concerned to ensure that planning takes adequate account of growth, provides good value for money and takes into account the future transport needs of the area which has been planned for.

Senator MILNE—On that basis, can I ask that you go back to the Tasmanian government and ask them about future planning options in relation to rapid transit—

Ms Page—We can ask them about that.

Senator MILNE—and whether they can make sure it is taken into account so that the bypass does not come out somewhere well away from where public transport is. It could all be done so easily and so well if it is thought out now. There is a one-off opportunity with the high school moving.

Ms Page—Yes, we will take that on notice.

Answer:

The Tasmanian Department of Infrastructure, Energy and Resources (DIER) has advised that rapid transit was considered in the planning of the Kingston Bypass, and that the Bypass design is sufficient to meet a range of infrastructure options to address future transport demands.

Senate Standing Committee on Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Budget Estimates May 2008

Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government

DIER has also advised that consideration has been given to the existing and future provision of buses and car parking, along with options of a Park and Ride (PAR) facility. DIER and Kingborough Council are continuing to discuss the feasibility of a PAR facility in the vicinity of the new Kingston High School site.

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

Question: II 14

Division/Agency: Infrastructure Investment

Topic: Rail Funding under AusLink II

Hansard Page: 20 (29/05/08)

Senator MILNE asked:

Ms Page—The total funding to be made available under AusLink II is \$22.6 billion. In relation to rail, I would like to take that on notice because it will involve us adding up particular rail projects, some of which are continuing.

Senator MILNE—Okay. If you could identify the rail project separately, with a total, that is fine.

Answer:

Following is a list of rail projects that are already underway and are expected to continue into the period 2009-10 to 2013-14 and their indicative funding allocation in that period:

- Australian Rail Track Corporation 3G project - \$7.3 million;
- Inland Rail (Alignment) Study - \$5.0 million;
- Wodonga rail bypass - \$8.4 million;
- Adelaide Hills Study - \$2.0 million; and
- Tasmanian Rail Rescue package - \$43.1 million

Regarding other rail projects to be funded in the period 2009-10 to 2013-14, election commitments made by federal Labor, the great majority of which were accompanied by an estimate of costs, are on the public record.

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

Question: II 15

Division/Agency: Infrastructure Investment

Topic: Pacific Highway – Banora Point

Hansard Page: 29 (29/05/08)

Senator NASH asked:

Senator NASH—Has there been any kind of determination yet on whether option B or option C should be the way to go?

Mr Hogan—I would have to take that on notice.

Senator NASH—I completely understand it is very difficult to be across every piece of asphalt around the country. Could you take on notice to give the committee a very clear briefing of what is the status of that project, what deliberations have been taken to date on the different options and currently which option is preferred by government? I would appreciate if you could give the committee a very clear understanding of the role of the state government in the development of this particular piece of road. Within the \$1.4 billion to duplicate the highway in that section of the state, are there any clear indications under the AusLink II and could you provide some dates and timings of when building would commence?

Ms Page—We can do that.

Senator NASH—Thank you.

Answer:

The former government approved funding of \$2 million towards planning of the Banora Point upgrade on 18 June 2007 on the basis of modified Option B. This government is continuing to work with the NSW Government on the same basis.

The Australian Government has committed funding for this project from 2009-10 to 2013-14. The works program and funding arrangements for the project will be agreed with the New South Wales Government during 2008-09.

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

Question: II 16

Division/Agency: Infrastructure Investment

Topic: Realignment of the Western Highway at Bacchus Marsh

Hansard Page: 38 (29/5/08)

Senator McGauran asked:

Senator McGAURAN— So, to be clear, there is not even funding allocated for—

Senator Conroy— That is not the case.

Senator McGAURAN— For planning. So it is not a priority project?

Ms Page—I cannot comment on what is a priority and what is not.

Senator McGAURAN— There has been funding allocated for planning for other projects.

Senator Conroy— We are happy to come back to you. If you want to ask us what all the priority projects are, we are happy to come back and give you some information.

Answer:

The Australian Government has committed \$160 million towards the realignment of the Western Highway between Melton and Bacchus Marsh at Anthony's Cutting. As with all of our election commitments, and the Coalition's election commitments, this commitment was made from the AusLink 2 program which covers the period from 2009-10 to 2013-14. However, to demonstrate the priority of the Western Highway, the Government allocated \$5m for planning in 2008-09. The works program and funding arrangements for this project will be negotiated with the Victorian Government during 2008-09.

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

Question: II 17

Division/Agency: Infrastructure Investment

Topic: Hyland Highway Duplication

Hansard Page: 39 (29/5/08)

Senator McGauran asked:

Senator McGAURAN—I am getting near the end. I return to the seat of Gippsland. Is there any proposal for the duplication of what they call the Hyland Highway? That is between Traralgon and Yarram.

Ms McNally—Between Traralgon and where?

Senator McGAURAN—Yarram.

Ms Page—I think we will take that one on notice, Senator.

Answer:

No, and it is not part of the AusLink National Network.

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

Question: II 18

Division/Agency: Infrastructure Investment

Topic: Huon Highway

Hansard Page: Written question

Senator Bushby asked:

Huon Highway

Has the Department received any requests from either State or Local Government levels to provide funding towards overtaking lanes or other works on the Huon Highway south of Huonville in Tasmania?

Answer:

No.

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

Question: II 19

Division/Agency: Infrastructure Investment

Topic: Huon Highway

Hansard Page: Written question

Senator Bushby asked:

Huon Highway

Is the Department in possession of any information that demonstrates the need for overtaking lanes or other works on the Huon Highway south of Huonville?

Answer:

No.

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

Question: II 20

Division/Agency: Infrastructure Investment

Topic: Huon Highway

Hansard Page: Written question

Senator Bushby asked:

Huon Highway

In view of any information before it, does the Department consider there is a need, on safety or any other grounds, for overtaking lanes or other works on the Huon Highway south of Huonville?

Answer:

The Department is not in possession of any such information.

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

Question: II 21

Division/Agency: Infrastructure Investment

Topic: Huon Highway

Hansard Page: Written question

Senator Bushby asked:

Huon Highway

Does the Government intend to provide any funding towards overtaking lanes or other works on the Huon Highway south of Huonville?

Answer:

The Australian Government has made no funding allocation towards overtaking lanes or other works on the Huon Highway south of Huonville.

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

Question: II 22

Division/Agency: Infrastructure Investment

Topic: Bruce Highway

Hansard Page: Written question

Senator Nash asked:

The Coalition promised \$700 million by 2014 towards its contribution of the upgrade of the Cooroy to Curra section of the Bruce Highway in Queensland. This included the Gympie Bypass which was to widen the highway to four lanes. Labor in its election only promised \$200 million to start work on a bypass of the worst section of the Bruce Highway from Cooroy to Curra. This is a \$500 million reduction of commitment.

Answer:

During the 2007 election campaign the Government committed \$200 million to start work on a 65km bypass of Gympie from Cooroy to Curra as part of its \$2.2 billion commitment to upgrade the Bruce Highway. The Government has made clear its intention to honour its election commitments.

The works program and funding arrangements for the project will be agreed with the Queensland Government during 2008-09 as part of the development of the Australian Government's land transport investment program for 2009-10 to 2013-14.

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

Question: II 23

Division/Agency: Infrastructure Investment

Topic: Compensation for Land Owners

Hansard Page: Written question

Senator Nash asked:

Is funding available to buy affected landowners now?

Answer:

During the 2007 election campaign the Government committed \$200 million to start work on a 65km bypass of Gympie from Cooroy to Curra as part of its \$2.2 billion commitment to upgrade the Bruce Highway. The Government has made clear its intention to honour its election commitments.

The works program and funding arrangements for the project will be agreed with the Queensland Government during 2008-09 as part of the development of the Australian Government's land transport investment program for 2009-10 to 2013-14.

Queensland Government is addressing any hardship matters with affected landowners.

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

Question: II 24

Division/Agency: Infrastructure Investment

Topic: Gympie Bypass

Hansard Page: Written question

Senator Nash asked:

What does the Rudd Government expect to do with the \$200M committed to this road section till 2014 given that it is small amount considering the total \$3 billion cost estimate of the road upgrade.

Answer:

See answer to II 22.

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

Question: II 25

Division/Agency: Infrastructure Investment

Topic: Fatalities on the Bruce Highway

Hansard Page: Written question

Senator Nash asked:

Is the Rudd Government aware that there have been 30 fatalities on this stretch of highway in the past seven years?

Answer:

The Government is aware that this section of road has a poor safety record. That's why we have committed \$200 million towards the Cooroy to Curra project. I note that the Coalition was in government for the past seven years and did not allocate construction funding for this project.

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

Question: II 26

Division/Agency: Infrastructure Investment

Topic: Bruce Highway Funding

Hansard Page: Written question

Senator Nash asked:

Why did the Rudd Government fail to match the Coalition commitment to repair this dangerous and narrow stretch of road?

Answer:

See answer to II 22.

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

Question: II 27

Division/Agency: Infrastructure Investment

Topic: Funding for Local Roads Programs

Hansard Page: Written question

Senator Nash asked:

Can the Minister confirm that there is funding in this year's budget for Roads to Recovery, the Black Spots programme and Strategic Roads?

Answer:

Yes. This is set out at table 2.2 (p30) of the Portfolio Budget Statements 2008–09.

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

Question: II 28

Division/Agency: Infrastructure Investment

Topic: Funding for Roads to Recovery, the Black Spots programme and Strategic Roads

Hansard Page: Written question

Senator NASH asked:

Is this funding guaranteed into the future or will it be subject to the considerations of Infrastructure Australia?

Answer:

See answer to II 27.

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

Question: II 29

Division/Agency: Infrastructure Investment

Topic: Study into the transport needs of the Lower Hunter Region

Hansard Page: Written question

Senator Nash asked:

With regard to the budget commitment of Labor to provide \$0.8 million for a comprehensive study into the transport needs of the Lower Hunter Region, in conjunction with NSW;

- Why is it necessary to do another (the 28th) study, on traffic in the Hunter Valley? What will happen to the corridor already purchased for the F3 to Branxton link?
- In terms of this study, can you inform the Senate Committee about what the study will investigate?
- Is the centrepiece of this study an investigation into the F3 to Branxton road link?

Answer:

In the last five years the estimated cost of the F3 to Branxton project has increased from \$382 million (2003 dollars) to \$765 million (2005 dollars) to \$1.2 billion (2007 dollars). The estimate of \$1.2 billion potentially translates to an outturn cost of \$1.7 billion even if construction were to commence in 2009.

Besides this major cost increase, there are other issues impacting the project. These include population growth and changing travel patterns and the increased use of the Pacific Highway, rather than the New England Highway, for freight movements between Sydney and Brisbane.

Given these issues the Australian and New South Wales Governments believe that the only responsible course is to undertake a comprehensive study of the transport needs of the Lower Hunter and identify all potential solutions.

Land acquisitions undertaken by the NSW Roads and Traffic Authority to preserve the corridor for the proposed F3 to Branxton link will be held until decisions regarding the future of the project have been made following the conduct of the study.

The Terms of Reference and Consultancy Brief for the study are at http://www.auslink.gov.au/projects/ProjectDetails.aspx?Project_id=NSW04

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

Question: II 30

Division/Agency: Infrastructure Investment

Topic: Study into the transport needs of the Lower Hunter Region

Hansard Page: Written question

Senator Nash asked:

What other transport issues in the Lower Hunter are being investigated?

Answer:

See the Terms of Reference and Consultancy Brief at

http://www.auslink.gov.au/projects/ProjectDetails.aspx?Project_id=NSW04

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

Question: II 31

Division/Agency: Infrastructure Investment

Topic: Study into the transport needs of the Lower Hunter Region

Hansard Page: Written question

Senator Nash asked:

For example, is a second Sydney Airport in the Hunter region a matter that could be considered?

Answer:

See answer to II 30.

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

Question: II 32

Division/Agency: Infrastructure Investment

Topic: Study into the transport needs of the Lower Hunter Region

Hansard Page: Written question

Senator Nash asked:

Is this a joint study with the NSW Government? How much money is the State Government contributing?

Answer:

The Study is jointly funded with the NSW Government, which is contributing \$200,000.

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

Question: II 33

Division/Agency: Infrastructure Investment

Topic: Study into the transport needs of the Lower Hunter Region

Hansard Page: Written question

Senator Nash asked:

Why was such a study needed? Local historians have counted 27 previous studies of a similar nature. Is this true?

Answer:

See answer to II 29.

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

Question: II 34

Division/Agency: Infrastructure Investment

Topic: Study into the transport needs of the Lower Hunter Region

Hansard Page: Written question

Senator Nash asked:

Was this study an election promise of the Government's?

Answer:

No.

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

Question: II 35

Division/Agency: Infrastructure Investment

Topic: Study into the transport needs of the Lower Hunter Region

Hansard Page: Written question

Senator Nash asked:

When will the study be completed?

Answer:

November 2008.

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

Question: II 36

Division/Agency: Infrastructure Investment

Topic: Study into the transport needs of the Lower Hunter Region

Hansard Page: Written question

Senator Nash asked:

Is the Rudd Government aware of comments by the Member for Hunter and now Minister for Defence, Joel Fitzgibbon, who said on 27 September 2007 in relation to the F3 to Branxton that 'we've waited far too long, it's past time the bulldozers rolled in'?

Answer:

See answer to II 29.

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

Question: II 37

Division/Agency: Infrastructure Investment

Topic: Study into the transport needs of the Lower Hunter Region

Hansard Page: Written question

Senator Nash asked:

In the same release, Mr Fitzgibbon speaks of a study prepared for the Hunter Economic Development Corporation by the Hunter Valley Research Foundation. Is the Government aware of this report?

Answer:

Yes.

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

Question: II 38

Division/Agency: Infrastructure Investment

Topic: Study into the transport needs of the Lower Hunter Region

Hansard Page: Written question

Senator Nash asked:

Can the Government confirm the findings of the report – such as \$740 million being invested in the project returning community benefits of \$1.5 billion?

Answer:

No. The latest cost estimate for the F3 to Branxton project is \$1.2 billion (2007 dollars), which potentially translates to an outturn cost of \$1.7 billion even if construction were to commence in 2009.

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

Question: II 39

Division/Agency: Infrastructure Investment

Topic: Study into the transport needs of the Lower Hunter Region

Hansard Page: Written question

Senator Nash asked:

What is the benefit to cost ratio for the F3 to Branxton link road?

Answer:

The Lower Hunter Transport Needs Study will provide an updated costing for the project, including a new benefit to cost ratio.

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

Questions: II 40

Division/Agency: Infrastructure Investment

Topic: Study into the transport needs of the Lower Hunter Region

Hansard Page: Written question

Senator Nash asked:

When was the alignment for the link road determined?

Answer:

A proposed route for an external bypass of Maitland was announced by the then Federal Minister for Transport, the Hon P Morris, in 1983 as part of the National Highway between Sydney and Brisbane.

Extensive work was undertaken on the proposal, resulting in a recommendation for further investigation into significant changes to the overall concept of the project, due to constraints such as the requirement for long crossings of flood-prone wetlands. This resulted in the proposed external bypass route being abandoned in favour of the Kurri Kurri corridor (Seahampton to Branxton via Kurri Kurri) which was endorsed by the Federal Minister for Transport in November 1993.

The preferred route was announced in May 1994 by the NSW Government and the EIS was exhibited in August/September 1995. The NSW Minister for Planning approved the route and design, subject to 129 Commonwealth conditions and 15 NSW conditions, on 7 November 2001. The RTA's modified design for the project to reduce environmental impacts (including minor changes to the route alignment) received planning approval in August 2007.

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

Questions: II 41

Division/Agency: Infrastructure Investment

Topic: Study into the transport needs of the Lower Hunter Region

Hansard Page: Written question

Senator Nash asked:

Is the Government aware that Mr Fitzgibbon has claimed that it was determined in the mid 1980s?

Answer:

See answer to II 40.

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

Question: II 42

Division/Agency: Infrastructure Investment

Topic: Study into the transport needs of the Lower Hunter Region

Hansard Page: Written question

Senator Nash asked:

The Minister for Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government, Mr Albanese, visited Maitland on May 16. Can you inform the Committee about what the results of that visit were?

Answer:

Minister Albanese met with representatives of the Singleton, Cessnock and Maitland Councils, the NRMA and the Link or Sink group to seek their views and discuss transport issues faced by the Lower Hunter that should be considered in the Lower Hunter Transport Needs Study. The views of Councils, the NRMA and Link or Sink were invited on the draft Terms of Reference and Consultancy Brief, and further opportunities for consultation are a key focus of the study. See http://www.auslink.gov.au/projects/ProjectDetails.aspx?Project_id=NSW04.

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

Question: II 43

Division/Agency: Infrastructure Investment

Topic: Study into the transport needs of the Lower Hunter Region

Hansard Page: Written question

Senator Nash asked:

The previous Government acquired all but a handful of the properties needed along the alignment of this proposed road link. How many further properties need to be acquired?

Answer:

The NSW Roads and Traffic Authority (RTA) has advised that there are four properties (on the road corridor) that would need to be acquired. Another four properties would need to be acquired for compensatory habitat.

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

Question: II 44

Division/Agency: Infrastructure Investment

Topic: Study into the transport needs of the Lower Hunter Region

Hansard Page: Written question

Senator Nash asked:

How much money has this cost the Federal Government?

Answer:

The cost of property acquisition to February 2008 is \$17.965 million.

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

Question: II 45

Division/Agency: Infrastructure Investment

Topic: Study into the transport needs of the Lower Hunter Region

Hansard Page: Written question

Senator Nash asked:

Has the Government stopped all planning and pre-construction works?

Answer:

The Australian and NSW Governments agreed in April 2008 that the current phase of the project should be brought to a conclusion pending the conduct of the Lower Hunter Transport Needs Study.

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

Question: II 46

Division/Agency: Infrastructure Investment

Topic: Study into the transport needs of the Lower Hunter Region

Hansard Page: Written question

Senator Nash asked:

How much money in total has been spent by the Federal Government on this work?

Answer:

As at June 2008 the Australian Government has provided \$47.22 million for this project.

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

Question: II 47

Division/Agency: Infrastructure Investment
Topic: Princes Highway East Duplication
Hansard Page: Written question

Senator Nash asked:

With regard to Labor's undelivered election promise to provide \$140 million to start duplicating the Princes Highway East from Traralgon to Sale, the recent budget only provided \$0.5 million to plan the Princes Highway East duplication from Traralgon to Sale.

Answer:

The Australian Government has allocated \$0.5 million in 2008 – 09 and \$0.7 million in 2009 – 10 for initial planning of the Princes Highway East duplication from Traralgon to Sale. This commitment will enable an early start on this AusLink 2 project. The works program and funding arrangements for the full commitment of \$140 million will be agreed with the Victorian Government during 2008 – 09.

Initial planning for this project will identify the preferred route, develop a concept design and enable commencement of the work necessary to obtain environmental and planning approvals. Planning will also provide an opportunity for stakeholder and community involvement and input into project development. This is a step necessary to address the requirements of state planning, environmental and heritage approvals, and to develop the project to the stage where construction tenders can be called.

The point at which projects are put to tender can vary significantly depending on the contractual arrangements being employed for the project. This may include, for example, the construction, design and construction, and alliance contractual arrangements. However, under all contractual arrangements, tendering generally occurs only after a significant amount of planning activity by government agencies. Some of the reasons for this include:

- The need to identify the public outcomes to be achieved by projects and to ensure that these are met;
- The desirability of Government having a sound information base on which to judge the merits of tenders (on matters such as price and design options); and
- The high risk premium likely to be sought by a tenderer when there is planning and regulatory uncertainty.

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

Question: II 48

Division/Agency: Infrastructure Investment

Topic: Princes Highway East Duplication - Planning

Hansard Page: Written question

Senator Nash asked:

What will this plan achieve?

Answer:

See answer II 47.

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

Question: II 49

Division/Agency: Infrastructure Investment
Topic: Princes Highway East Construction
Hansard Page: Written question

Senator Nash asked:

When will it be complete?

Answer:

See answer II 47.

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

Question: II 50

Division/Agency: Infrastructure Investment

Topic: Planning for the Princes Highway

Hansard Page: Written question

Senator Nash asked:

Why is it necessary to commence a plan?

Answer:

See answer II 47.

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

Question: II 51

Division/Agency: Infrastructure Investment

Topic: Planning for the Princes Highway

Hansard Page: Written question

Senator Nash asked:

Why not just put the project to tender, including the planning process, and build it?

Answer:

See answer II 47.

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

Question: II 52

Division/Agency: Infrastructure Investment

Topic: Esperance Coast Road Upgrade

Hansard Page: Written question

Senator Abetz asked:

What is the status of the upgrade to the Esperance Coast Road upgrade in the Huon Valley Tasmania?

Answer:

Project Status Report for Esperance Coast Upgrade:

The Huon Valley Council advises that for the period to 30th June 2008:

- earthworks, road stabilisation and sealing works have been completed on the previously unsealed 8.36km section of the road;
- scenic viewing areas have been established;
- works on embankment stabilisation has been completed;
- survey works on the sealed section of the road has been completed; and
- bridge work has commenced on Kent Beach road bridge.

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

Question: II 53

Division/Agency: Infrastructure Investment

Topic: Esperance Coast Road Upgrade

Hansard Page: Written question

Senator Abetz asked:

Can the Department detail how much of the \$2.8 million promised by the previous Government for the Esperance Coast Road upgrade has been expended so far and how much remains to be expended out of that fund?

Answer:

From the \$2.8 million Australian Government contribution, \$ 1,782,719 has been paid to the Huon Valley Council for the period to 30th June based on project expenditure and estimated expenditure for the next reporting period. The balance of the Australian Government contribution for this project is \$1, 017,281. It will be paid progressively to the Council based on their regular reporting of expenditure and progress of work.

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

Question: II 54

Division/Agency: Infrastructure Investment

Topic: Funding Commitments since 24th November 2007

Hansard Page: Written question

Senator Abetz asked:

Can the Department detail any further commitments that have been made by the current Government, either through the election or since the 24th of November 2007?

Answer:

The election commitments made by federal Labor, the great majority of which were accompanied by an estimate of costs, are on the public record.

Commitments announced in the 2008 - 09 Budget are set out at

http://www.infrastructure.gov.au/departments/statements/2008_2009/media/index.aspx

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

Question: II 55

Division/Agency: Infrastructure Investment

Topic: NSW Grain Lines

Hansard Page: 125 (28/05/08)

Senator Nash asked:

Senator NASH—I think it is more than just the grain lines. That is one issue. It is the issue of the rolling stock. That is really where we have had the difficulty this year. I guess I would ask you to ask the minister when the taskforce is going to very seriously consider the ongoing arrangements for the rolling stock and what can be put in place to ensure that there is some kind of security for growers that not only the grain line is going to be maintained but there will be some arrangement in place.

Ms Page—We will pass that information on.

Answer:

The details of the Taskforce, including terms of reference, are under consideration.

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

Question: II 56

Division/Agency: Infrastructure Investment

Topic: Concrete Rail Line Sleepers

Hansard Page: 11 (29/05/08)

Senator Heffernan asked:

Senator HEFFERNAN—I apologise, Chairman, for not being here for the concrete sleeper man last night. I am very familiar with the operation and I have to admit Juneec is in the heart of it. You may take my question on notice because it is a curiosity at the plant, which is a fantastic new plant there at Bowman at Wagga. There is a huge stack of 100 yards by 50 yards—as I said out in the room there last night I think—of sleepers with a red X on them. I happened to go to Wagga one day with one of the guys who manages the plant and I said, ‘What are those red Xs?’ He said, ‘They are rejects.’ So, I wondered what the reject percentage was—I guess it is from stress and they are probably tested in some way—and what would become of them? He said that they will be used in lower grade lines. But I just wondered, given that it is a modern plant, what is the success rate of throughput—that is, the ones that meet the specifications and the ones that come out the other end under specification? Would it be one in 10, one in 50?

Ms Page—We would have to take that on notice with the ARTC.

Answer:

The Australian Rail Track Corporation (ARTC) has advised that the Austrak sleeper plant at Bowman has manufactured over 500,000 concrete sleepers for ARTC’s use. Of those, 728 (0.15%) were not acceptable to ARTC’s standard.

All concrete sleepers are manufactured and tested under Australian Standard 1085.14 and testing is conducted on concrete batches and daily individual tests on sleepers to ensure conformance to gauge and dimensions as required by the standard.

ARTC only pays for sleepers that fully meet the agreed specification and all other non-conforming sleepers are at the supplier’s expense.

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

Question: II 57

Division/Agency: Infrastructure Investment

Topic: Budget Announcements for Queensland, the Northern Territory and Western Australia.

Hansard Page: 11 (29/05/08)

Senator Macdonald asked:

Senator IAN MACDONALD—Thank you. I am sorry I was not here last night, Minister, when this was being done, but can you point me to the areas of the budget where I would be able to get the details of what projects have been mentioned in the budget papers in relation to Queensland, Northern Territory and Western Australia?

Ms Page—We can provide you with the budget announcements in relation to Queensland and Western Australia.

Senator IAN MACDONALD—And the Northern Territory, please?

Ms Page—Yes.

Senator IAN MACDONALD—That may have already been requested by others last night.

Ms Page—We can provide you with that information.

Senator IAN MACDONALD—Dare I mention the word ‘lists’, but is it a lot of trouble to you just to actually prepare me a brief list of the projects?

Ms Page—There are formal announcements in relation to all new projects that were announced in the budget context.

Senator IAN MACDONALD—Are these media releases?

Ms Page—They are media releases, but they also have supporting information as well. We will put together a package for you of those.

Answer:

Details of 2008-09 Budget measures are contained in Budget Paper 2 and payments to the states in Budget Paper 3 which can be found at <http://www.budget.gov.au/> and in my department's Portfolio Budget Statements at www.infrastructure.gov.au.

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

Question: II 58

Division/Agency: Infrastructure Investment

Topic: Coal Centre Freight Lines

Hansard Page: 20 (29/05/08)

Senator Milne asked:

Senator MILNE—Also, how many of those are freight routes from coal centres? The Hunter Valley will be one and there may be others.

Ms Page—We will take that on notice

Answer:

Neither the rail projects continuing from AusLink 1 into the period 2009-14 nor the Government's rail election commitments are on freight routes from coal centres.

Funding for the Hunter Valley upgrades is being provided by the Australian Rail Track Corporation.

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

Question: II 59

Division/Agency: Infrastructure Investment

Topic: Infrastructure Australia Budget

Hansard Page: 26 (29/05/08)

Senator Nash asked:

Senator NASH—With the funding of \$20 million over four years for the operation of Infrastructure Australia, how is that figure arrived at? I assume it is \$5 million per year for the four years.

Ms Page—No. It is \$500,000 this financial year and \$6.5 million per year after that.

Senator NASH—How was that arrived at?

Ms Page—That is an election commitment.

Senator NASH—Is there a reason?

Ms Page—It is an election commitment.

Senator NASH—It is an election commitment. Minister, can you shed any light on it? Did you say it was \$500,000 for this year?

Ms McNally—This financial year.

Senator NASH—And then it is?

Ms McNally—It is \$6.5 million per year.

Senator NASH—Per year after that?

Ms McNally—For the next three years.

Senator NASH—Can you shed any light on that for me, Minister?

Senator Conroy—As I am sure you would understand, I was not involved in the preparation of all of our election commitments, but I am happy to take that on notice and see if there is any information that we can provide to you that sheds on light on it.

Senator NASH—Thank you. Very genuinely it seems quite extraordinary if it is weighted that way. It almost seems like there is an expectation that not that much is going to happen in the first year. If you could take that on notice that would be very useful. Indeed, I would like to know not just why it is skewed so extraordinarily towards the three out years, but what that funding actually goes towards.

Answer:

The Budget allocation for Infrastructure Australia for 2007-08 represents a part-year operation. The Budget allocations for the years 2008-09 to 2010-11 cover full year operations.

Budget funding for 2008-09 to 2010-11 will cover costs including:

- sitting fees and travel expenses for the Infrastructure Australia Council;
- rental expenses for its Sydney office;
- employment of specialist support staff; and
- other costs, such as specialist advice.

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

Question: II 60

Division/Agency: Infrastructure Investment

Topic: Infrastructure Australia Remuneration

Hansard Page: 27 (29/05/08)

Senator Nash asked:

Senator NASH—Thank you, that clarifies it a lot. That is 2007-08 and then for the following years it is \$6.5 million. For 2008-09, of the \$6.5 million, how much is going to pay the people at Infrastructure Australia?

Ms McNally—I will have to take that on notice. One of the issues is that the staff have yet to be recruited.

Senator NASH—I am sorry, I might have this entirely wrong—

Ms McNally—Are you referring to sitting fees?

Senator NASH—Yes, I am referring to the board.

Ms Page—We will take that on notice.

Answer:

Remuneration for Infrastructure Australia members is determined by the Remuneration Tribunal. Determination 2008/05 covers the remuneration for members.

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

Question: II 61

Division/Agency: Infrastructure Investment

Topic: Infrastructure Australia Remuneration

Hansard Page: 27 (29/05/08)

Senator Nash asked:

Senator NASH—I am sorry, I will rephrase it. Each board member is paid per day. Is that right?

Ms Page—We would have to take that on notice, but certainly it would be a relatively small percentage of that funding, most of which is to meet the cost of staff, of procuring information and the accommodation of Infrastructure Australia.

Answer:

See answer to II 60.

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

Question: II 62

Division/Agency: Infrastructure Investment

Topic: Infrastructure Australia Remuneration

Hansard Page: 27 (29/05/08)

Senator Nash asked:

Senator NASH—I would suggest that perhaps we could get it monthly as the development of the first year rolls out and people are put on staff. I would not expect you to get back to the committee every day, but it would be appropriate if you could advise the committee at the end of each month how many people have been retained in that given month and at what cost.

Ms Page—I will take that on notice.

Answer:

Advice concerning Infrastructure Australia's expenses will be provided in the annual report of the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government.

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

Question: II 63

Division/Agency: Infrastructure Investment

Topic: Climate Change

Hansard Page: 28 (29/05/08)

Senator Milne asked:

Senator MILNE—I know where your environment policies are. You are setting up a conflict now between delivering on transport infrastructure, when emissions are increasing in transport, and a promise for a whole of- government approach in reducing greenhouse gas emissions. I am asking, since you are locked in to delivering on these transport strategies, are you going to exempt transport from emissions trading?

Senator Conroy—I am happy to take that on notice and seek any further information, but I suspect that is a question that you probably need to put to the environment minister or the climate change minister.

Answer:

The Australian Government's proposed approach is set out in the Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme Green Paper.

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

Question: II 64

Division/Agency: Infrastructure Investment

Topic: Adelaide to Darwin Rail Line

Hansard Page: 31 (29/05/08)

Senator Milne asked:

Senator McGAURAN—There is another matter that you have raised on more than one occasion, Minister, that I am again compelled to ask questions about it, whoever the likely person is. With regard to the previous government's infrastructure projects, can you tell me the cost of the Alice to Darwin rail line and when it was completed?

Ms Page—I think we have provided an answer on that in the recent past, but we will take it on notice again and seek out that information.

Senator McGAURAN—If you provided it in the recent past, should it not be ready and handy?

Ms Page—We do not have it with us. No, I do not believe that we do. But we certainly have answered a question, I think, over the last 12 to 18 months, in my memory, concerning the costs of the Alice Springs to Darwin railway.

Senator McGAURAN—It was a major infrastructure project. But I think at the time it was Australia's largest infrastructure project since the Snowy.

Ms Page—I could not comment on that, Senator.

Senator McGAURAN—You could not? You are unaware or you cannot?

Ms Page—I do not know how you would judge infrastructure projects and where that fitted at the time in which it was built.

Senator McGAURAN—Would you find out for me, or do you not think it is down your line?

Ms Page—It is difficult to make retrospective judgements about how, a number of years ago, a particular project compared with others that were being constructed at the time. But we can certainly find you the information that we provided in the past concerning the cost of that project.

Answer:

The Adelaide to Darwin Railway was completed in September 2003 by the Asia Pacific Transport Consortium (APTC), at an estimated cost of \$1.3 billion. Consortium members include Halliburton KBR, Barclay Mowlem, the Australian Railroad Group, Macmahon Holdings, and the John Holland Group.

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

Question: II 65

Division/Agency: Infrastructure Investment
Topic: Operation of Infrastructure Australia
Hansard Page: Written question

Senator Nash asked:

Will Infrastructure Australia evaluate ALP infrastructure election promises?

Answer:

The Government will deliver all of its election commitments.

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

Question: II 66

Division/Agency: Infrastructure Investment

Topic: Labor's Election Commitments

Hansard Page: Written question

Senator Nash asked:

What is the value of Labor's infrastructure election promises?

Answer:

Election commitments made by federal Labor are on the public record.

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

Question: II 67

Division/Agency: Infrastructure Investment
Topic: Operation of Infrastructure Australia
Hansard Page: Written question

Senator Nash asked:

Members of the Advisory Council are charged with developing an Infrastructure Priority List – a list that is going to direct billions of dollars of investment into infrastructure projects. Is it correct that some of these members have ongoing commercial relations and interests in the infrastructure sector?

Answer:

The function of Infrastructure Australia is to provide advice to the Minister, Commonwealth, State, Territory and local governments, investors in infrastructure and owners of infrastructure on matters relating to infrastructure. Infrastructure Australia does not have investment responsibilities.

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

Question: II 68

Division/Agency: Infrastructure Investment
Topic: Operation of Infrastructure Australia
Hansard Page: Written question

Senator Nash asked:

What are the precise administrative arrangements to be put in place to avoid conflicts of interest matters in the conduct of the Infrastructure Australia Advisory Council?

Answer:

Sections 13 and 14 of the *Infrastructure Australia Act 2008* set out requirements for managing conflicts of interest which may arise for Infrastructure Australia members.

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

Question: II 69

Division/Agency: Infrastructure Investment
Topic: Operation of Infrastructure Australia
Hansard Page: Written question

Senator Nash asked:

Infrastructure Australia met for the first time on 4 June 2008. Now that it has done so, what will be the procedures for reporting to the Minister its deliberations?

Answer:

Section 26 of the *Infrastructure Australia Act 2008* sets out the reporting requirements for Infrastructure Australia.

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

Question: II 70

Division/Agency: Infrastructure Investment

Topic: **Nationally Significant Infrastructure**

Hansard Page: Written question

Senator Nash asked:

In light of this meeting, what is Infrastructure Australia's definition of nationally significant infrastructure?

Answer:

Section 3 of the *Infrastructure Australia Act 2008* provides a definition of nationally significant infrastructure.

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

Question: II 71

Division/Agency: Infrastructure Investment
Topic: Operation of Infrastructure Australia
Hansard Page: Written question

Senator Nash asked:

Has Infrastructure Australia now decided what is to be the minimum size of infrastructure it will consider?

Answer:

Infrastructure Australia is still in the process of completing its infrastructure audit which is due for completion in December 2008. Refer to the IA website at <www.infrastructureaustralia.gov.au>.

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

Question: II 72

Division/Agency: Infrastructure Investment

Topic: Infrastructure Australia and the Building Australia Fund

Hansard Page: Written question

Senator Nash asked:

What will be the relationship between Infrastructure Australia and the Building Australia Fund?

Answer:

The government's decision on allocations from the Building Australia Fund will be guided by Infrastructure Australia's national infrastructure audit and Infrastructure Priority List.

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

Question: II 73

Division/Agency: Infrastructure Investment
Topic: Operation of Infrastructure Australia
Hansard Page: Written question

Senator Nash asked:

Will Infrastructure Australia consider commercial rates of return on capital when making its recommendations on infrastructure projects?

Answer:

Infrastructure Australia is still in the process of completing its infrastructure audit which is due for completion in December 2008. Refer to the IA website at <www.infrastructureaustralia.gov.au>.

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

Question: II 74

Division/Agency: Infrastructure Investment
Topic: Operation of Infrastructure Australia
Hansard Page: Written question

Senator Nash asked:

Now that Infrastructure Australia has met, how will it determine what are infrastructure priorities it should consider and what are should remain the responsibilities of the States?

Answer:

Infrastructure Australia is still in the process of completing its infrastructure audit which is due for completion in December 2008. Refer to the IA website at <www.infrastructureaustralia.gov.au>.

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

Question: II 75

Division/Agency: Infrastructure Investment
Topic: Operation of Infrastructure Australia
Hansard Page: Written question

Senator Nash asked:

Will Infrastructure Australia be recommending that the Commonwealth underwrite metropolitan public transport infrastructure?

Answer:

Infrastructure Australia is still in the process of completing its infrastructure audit which is due for completion in December 2008. Refer to the IA website at <www.infrastructureaustralia.gov.au>.

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

Question: II 76

Division/Agency: Infrastructure Investment
Topic: Operation of Infrastructure Australia
Hansard Page: Written question

Senator Nash asked:

As Infrastructure Australia develops its Infrastructure Priority List to guide public and private investments, how will it prioritise projects across State boundaries?

Answer:

Infrastructure Australia is still in the process of completing its infrastructure audit which is due for completion in December 2008. Refer to the IA website at <www.infrastructureaustralia.gov.au>.

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

Question: II 77

Division/Agency: Infrastructure Investment
Topic: Operation of Infrastructure Australia
Hansard Page: Written question

Senator Nash asked:

The Infrastructure Australia Advisory Council includes Dr Kerry Schott the CEO of Sydney Water, Mr Anthony Kannis, the Executive Director of the Western Australia Treasury and Mr Phil Hennessy , the Queensland Chairman of KPMG. In other words, out of the twelve members of the Advisory Council, there are three who directly represent State-based interests – NSW, Queensland and Western Australia.

How will Infrastructure Australia prevent a bias in its funding decisions to these three States?

Answer:

See answer to II 68.

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

Question: II 78

Division/Agency: Infrastructure Investment
Topic: Operation of Infrastructure Australia
Hansard Page: Written question

Senator Nash asked:

When will Infrastructure Australia make its first recommendations on road priorities?

Answer:

Infrastructure Australia is required to provide its national infrastructure audit to the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) in December 08 and the Infrastructure Priority List to COAG in March 09.

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

Question: II 79

Division/Agency: Infrastructure Investment
Topic: Operation of Infrastructure Australia
Hansard Page: Written question

Senator Nash asked:

Will Auslink fall under Infrastructure Australia?

Answer:

Decisions concerning expenditure under the Auslink (*National Land Transport*) Act 2005 are made by the Minister for Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government.

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

Question: II 80

Division/Agency: Infrastructure Investment

Topic: Labor's Election Promises

Hansard Page: Written question

Senator Nash asked:

With Regard to Labor's election promises on roads, what analysis underpinned these promises?

Answer:

This question was addressed several times by Senator Conroy at the Senate Estimates Hearings on 29 May 2008 (refer to pages 30, 31, 34 and 35).

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

Question: II 81

Division/Agency: Infrastructure Investment

Topic: Private Sector Investment

Hansard Page: Written question

Senator Nash asked:

How would you describe the rapid growth in private sector investment over the last few years?

Answer:

The Government welcomes private sector investment.

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

Question: II 82

Division/Agency: Infrastructure Investment

Topic: Infrastructure in Australia

Hansard Page: Written question

Senator Nash asked:

Does Australia have an infrastructure shortage?

Answer:

Evidence suggests that Australia does have an infrastructure shortage. For example, we know that infrastructure shortfalls cost the nation 0.8 percent of GDP in lost production.

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

Question: II 83

Division/Agency: Infrastructure Investment

Topic: Infrastructure Funding

Hansard Page: Written Question

Senator Nash asked:

Is there a shortage of funding for infrastructure?

Answer:

The Government has allocated \$20 billion to the Building Australia Fund to assist in addressing infrastructure bottlenecks.

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

Question: II 84

Division/Agency: Infrastructure Investment

Topic: Infrastructure Provisioning

Hansard Page: Written question

Senator Nash asked:

Have there been regulatory failures in the provision of infrastructure? What were the failures?

Answer:

Evidence suggests there have been regulatory failures. For example, the Council of Australian Governments has been working to address infrastructure access and pricing issues over recent years. The Government has established Infrastructure Australia to provide, among other things, advice on pricing and regulatory issues that may impact on the utilisation of infrastructure.

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

Question: II 85

Division/Agency: Infrastructure Investment
Topic: Operation of Infrastructure Australia
Hansard Page: Written question

Senator Nash asked:

How will Infrastructure Australia avoid these failures occurring again?

Answer:

Infrastructure Australia will provide advice to governments and industry on options and reforms, including regulatory reforms, to make the utilisation of national infrastructure networks more efficient.

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

Question: II 86

Division/Agency: Infrastructure Investment
Topic: Operation of Infrastructure Australia
Hansard Page: Written question

Senator Nash asked:

How will Infrastructure Australia solve the problems raised by Patrick Corporation in its submission to the Exports and Infrastructure Taskforce in May 2005 where they pointed out that an operator of an interstate train may have to deal with seven rail safety regulators, three transport accident investigators, fifteen pieces of legislation covering occupational health and safety of rail operations and seventy-five pieces of legislation with powers over environmental management? (Page 49, Australia's Export Infrastructure, Report to the Prime Minister by the Exports and Infrastructure Taskforce.)

Answer:

Infrastructure Australia will provide advice to governments and industry on options and reforms, including regulatory reforms, to make the utilisation of national infrastructure networks more efficient.

Model Rail Safety legislation is currently being implemented in each jurisdiction with the aim of harmonising rail safety regulatory arrangements. ATC is currently considering how it might further develop arrangements to deal with these issues through, for example, the establishment of a single national regulatory framework as part of the development of a National Transport Policy.

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

Question: II 87

Division/Agency: Infrastructure Investment

Topic: Infrastructure Bottlenecks

Hansard Page: Written question

Senator Nash asked:

To what degree are infrastructure bottlenecks the result of lack of public financing?

Answer:

Total public sector investment in infrastructure has declined as a proportion of GDP, from just under 2.5 per cent to just over 1.8 per cent of GDP since the mid 1990s.

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

Question: II 88

Division/Agency: Infrastructure Investment

Topic: **Infrastructure Bottlenecks**

Hansard Page: Written question

Senator Nash asked:

To what degree are infrastructure bottlenecks due to conflicting, complex and overlapping State regulations?

Answer:

State and Territory Governments, working under the auspices of the Australian Transport Council (ATC) are considering these issues as they relate to transport as part of the development of a National Transport Policy.

The Government has also established Infrastructure Australia to provide advice on pricing and regulatory issues that may impact on the utilisation of infrastructure.

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

Question: II 89

Division/Agency: Infrastructure Investment
Topic: Operation of Infrastructure Australia
Hansard Page: Written question

Senator Nash asked:

How will Infrastructure Australia solve these issues?

Answer:

Infrastructure Australia is still in the process of completing its infrastructure audit which is due for completion in December 2008. Refer to the IA website at www.infrastructureaustralia.gov.au.

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

Question: II 90

Division/Agency: Infrastructure Investment

Topic: Building Australia Fund

Hansard Page: Written question

Senator Nash asked:

How much of the Building Australia Fund will be spent on roads?

Answer:

No determination has been made regarding the allocation of funds from the Building Australia Fund.