

Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Budget Estimates May 2009
Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government

Question No.: NBII 01

Division/Agency: Nation Building Infrastructure Investment

Topic: Costs of Rebadging the Program from AusLink to Nation Building

Hansard Page: 7 (27/05/09)

Senator Abetz asked:

Senator ABETZ—Just, for example, Nation Building—Roads to Recovery, Roads to Recovery just seems to have a certain ring about it. Is that a continuation of something that existed before?

Mr Tongue—Certainly, the Roads to Recovery program has been a long-standing program. I would have to check whether—

Senator ABETZ—A long-standing program initiated by the Coalition?

Mr Tongue—By the previous Government.

Senator ABETZ—By the previous Government, yes.

Mr Tongue—As I noted in my opening statement, funding for the program has been increased.

Senator ABETZ—Yes, and I understand that under Auslink 2 and other Coalition initiatives—and this is why I asked that earlier question and I will be looking forward to receiving the answer on notice as to what the Coalition had by way of funding under Auslink 2 from 2009-10 to 2013-14 so we can actually do a genuine compare and contrast in relation to those figures—it looks as though we are busily re-badging everything from Auslink to Nation Building. Can you tell us what the costs are associated with that name change?

Mr Tongue—I think I will have to take that one on notice.

Answer:

There was no direct cost to the Federal Government under AusLink nor is there any direct cost under the Nation Building Program. The costs of signage are met by the relevant State or Territory Government or council.

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Question No.: NBII 02

Division/Agency: Nation Building Infrastructure Investment

Topic: Costs of Rebadging the Program from AusLink to Nation Building

Hansard Page: 7 (27/05/09)

Senator Abetz asked:

Senator ABETZ—So, no consideration was given to the cost? New letterheads, undoubtedly, new road signs on the side of the road, re-education classes for all the officials so that they say ‘Nation Building’—surely there must have been some costings done on that?

Mr Tongue—Senator, that nomenclature is relatively recent.

Senator ABETZ—Yes, it is very recent. I would agree with you on that.

Mr Tongue—I would have to take on notice road signs. I am not aware that we have put up any new road signs or done any of that.

Answer:

Existing road signs will not be changed. The Government’s road signage arrangements will only apply to new projects.

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Question No.: NBII 03

Division/Agency: Nation Building Infrastructure Investment

Topic: Costs of Rebadging the Program from AusLink to Nation Building

Hansard Page: 7 (27/05/09)

Senator Abetz asked:

Senator ABETZ—No. At the most unexpected times, Senator Conroy shines. I think we have to make the most of this moment. Mr Tongue, seriously, could I be told about the costs associated with a name change? Will that require the changing of road signs, for example, where projects are ongoing and if we have projects that might go for a number of years?

Mr Tongue—Certainly, Senator. We are still working through that process. I am happy to take it on notice and provide what detail I can.

Answer:

See answer to NBII 01.

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Question No.: NBII 04

Division/Agency: Nation Building Infrastructure Investment

Topic: Costs of Rebadging the Program from AusLink to Nation Building

Hansard Page: 9 (27/05/09)

Senator Abetz asked:

Senator ABETZ—It would not want to be associated with either side. But I understand the term ‘Auslink’ is thought of and then little logos and mottos et cetera are developed. Is any money being spent on ‘Nation Building’—how that ought to be written and stylised? Will it have a squiggle underneath or on top of it—

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

Senator ABETZ—or a stylised map of Australia? What sort of money is being spent on that?

Mr Tongue—We would have to go away and I would have to dig that out.

Senator ABETZ—Have we got a consultant? What sorts of colours are going to be used?

Senator Conroy—I am sure Mr Tongue could not possibly have that information at his fingertips.

Senator ABETZ—No, but is it occurring?

Senator Conroy—We will happily take that on notice and get back to you.

Answer:

The Department engaged a consultant to assist with the design of new signage. In total, the consultant’s fee came to \$1,716. No existing road signage will be changed.

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Question No.: NBII 05

Division/Agency: Nation Building Infrastructure Investment

Topic: Departmental Advice on Rebadging Costs

Hansard Page: 10 (27/05/09)

Senator Macdonald asked:

Senator IAN MACDONALD—Could I interrupt just to clarify one part. Did you say earlier—did the Government seek from your Department advice on the cost of rebadging? I am not asking what you told them or what they asked for, but did they seek advice of your department on the cost of rebadging?

Senator Conroy—The answer that Mr Tongue gives must, by definition, go to advice to Government which is outside the purview of the Senate Estimates.

Senator IAN MACDONALD—No, I am not asking what advice he gave them. I am asking, did the Government seek advice?

Senator Conroy—You have asked him to identify what advice he provided to Government.

Senator IAN MACDONALD—No, I am not. I am asking him if he provided advice, not what he provided.

Senator Conroy—No, but you have asked him if he provided a certain advice.

Senator IAN MACDONALD—In fact, I am not asking what he did at all. I am asking: did the Government ask him for advice on the question of rebadging? I am not asking what he told them.

Senator Conroy—We will take that one on notice, because I am not sure that your definition is one that I agree with. I will happily take that on notice and if there is information that we can provide—

Senator Conroy—I think your question crosses the line. So, just to ensure that we comply with the Standing Orders, we will take that on notice and we will get you whatever information is available.

Senator IAN MACDONALD—Minister, you cannot get out of things that simply. I repeat: I am not asking what advice he gave. I am asking if he was asked for advice and the answer is, yes, he was or, no, he was not.

Senator Conroy—As I said, we will take it on notice, Senator Macdonald, and we will get you the answer.

Answer:

See answer to NBII 01.

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Question No.: NBII 06

Division/Agency: Nation Building – Infrastructure Investment

Topic: Rail Freight through Parkes

Hansard Page: 79 (27/05/09)

Senator Nash asked:

CHAIR—Thank you, Senator O’Brien. Just before we go for the afternoon tea break in a couple of minutes, Mr Marchant, you talked about Parkes, and I have not been out to Parkes. So, is Parkes becoming a freight consolidation area for freight moving between Brisbane and Perth and Melbourne, is it?

Mr Marchant—It is progressively moving that way, not because of anything other than market forces in one sense. Linfox actually acquired one of the terminals there and they are using it for cross-freight forwarding from both the Queensland end down to Melbourne and also the Queensland end across to Perth. Two other operators have set up similar terminals, some of which is trucking across from Sydney and reconsolidating and getting across to Perth or down to Melbourne. So, there are three quite reasonably-sized intermodal terminals being developed or in operation in Parkes.

CHAIR—So, if there is a transport company running around picking up freight in suburban Sydney—and I know how big suburban Sydney is—you are saying it is cheaper for them to have a depot in Parkes to consolidate the freight there, rather than try and battle their way into inner Sydney. Is that right?

Mr Marchant—No. In some cases that is right. What happens is people miss the close-down for the rail movement and actually try and shoot across to get the next movement and get packed up. So, if they miss a deadline at 4 or 5 o’clock for a consolidation of a rail movement, they may actually truck it through to Parkes, or plan to truck it through to Parkes, to catch the longer movement.

CHAIR—You can take it on notice, Mr Marchant, it would be interesting to see how many tonnes of freight come out of Parkes per year.

Mr Marchant—I would be happy to get you some stuff. I do not carry it in my pocket.

CHAIR—No. I do not expect you do. Mr Marchant, on behalf of the Committee, thank you very much. We will now take a break and we will be back at 4.15 and we will call Nation Building—Infrastructure Investments. Thank you.

Answer:

Based on information provided by the Australian Rail Track Corporation, it is estimated that approximately 1.63 million gross tonnes of freight passed through Parkes in 2006-07.

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Question No.: NBII 07

Division/Agency: Nation Building – Infrastructure Investment

Topic: Gold Coast Rapid Transit Project

Hansard Page: 86 (27/05/09)

Senator Macdonald asked:

Senator IAN MACDONALD—What is the total cost of the project?

Ms McNally—The total cost of the project that the Australian Government is contributing to is \$894 million.

Senator IAN MACDONALD—For the total cost of the light rail?

Ms McNally—Other contributions are coming forward from the Queensland Government, the Gold Coast City Council and the private sector.

Senator IAN MACDONALD—And do you have details of what—[the various contributions by the Commonwealth, the Queensland Government, the Gold Coast City Council and the private sector are to the project?]

Ms McNally—I do not have with me the break-up of that.

Senator IAN MACDONALD—Are they available? You do not have them with you. Are they available somewhere, does that suggest?

Senator Conroy—I am attempting to gather that information for you, as we speak, Senator Macdonald.

Senator IAN MACDONALD—So, that information is available we just do not have it in the room today?

Senator Conroy—No. I am attempting to get it for you.

Senator IAN MACDONALD—Thank you for that.

Senator Conroy—I will keep you posted.

Senator IAN MACDONALD—And, if perchance you cannot, you will take that as a question on notice. My question really was to Ms McNally. Does she have those figures somewhere but not with us today?

Ms McNally—I do not have them with me today. I would have to go through the proposals—or get my officers to go through the proposals—to identify those figures.

Senator IAN MACDONALD—Yes. So, the total cost is \$894 million?

Ms McNally—For the component of the project that the Australian Government has decided to contribute to. There are a number of stages for this particular project.

Answer:

The contributions are:

- Commonwealth – \$365 million;
- Queensland – \$464 million; and
- Gold Coast City Council – \$120 million.

The level of private sector contribution to the project will be determined through an Expression-of-Interest process and a Request-for-Proposal process.

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Question No.: NBII 08

Division/Agency: Nation Building – Infrastructure Investment

Topic: Regional Rail Link Funding

Hansard Page: 86 (27/05/2009)

Senator Macdonald asked:

Senator IAN MACDONALD—No; the costings. Are the costings for the \$4.3 billion for the Regional Express project going to be released? You have given us a summary.

Mr Williams—I do not have the costings at hand.

Senator IAN MACDONALD—Sorry?

Mr Williams—I do not have the costings at hand. I would have to take that on notice.

Senator IAN MACDONALD—No, but I said: are they going to be released?

Senator Conroy—We will take it on notice whether or not we will release those for you.

Senator IAN MACDONALD—Okay. But in allocating money for that, the Government has accepted that question and I assume, therefore, that they have had the full costing details of it and have accepted them?

Mr Williams—Again, that would be done through the Infrastructure Australia process.

Answer:

The estimated cost for the Regional Rail Link was based on information provided by the Victorian Government and verified by Infrastructure Australia. The final cost will be subject to the tender process carried out by the Victorian Government.

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Question No.: NBII 09

Division/Agency: Nation Building Infrastructure Investment

Topic: Brisbane Inner City Rail Feasibility Study

Hansard Page: 91 (27/05/09)

Senator Macdonald asked:

Senator IAN MACDONALD—Is there an expectation that the West Metro project will actually be built, that the \$91 million we are putting into the study is a good investment into the future?

Mr Williams—I think the Government has made that decision in terms of its investment of the \$91 million, and future decisions as to the construction will be a matter for the Government.

Senator Conroy—Our funding commitments are appropriate for the specific project in question. For example, to progress the West Metro to the next stage—that is pre-construction work—to make the project ready for tender, we have provided the \$91 million. That is the appropriate amount for that project. Future public sector investment infrastructure will be considered in the context of future budgets, and the current \$91 million will nail down an accurate cost for the project mix for private sector funding options.

Senator IAN MACDONALD—Does anyone know if the New South Wales Government going to contribute to funding on that project?

Mr Williams—They have already contributed \$10 million to the first stage and—

Senator IAN MACDONALD—To the first stage of the study?

Mr Williams—Yes.

Senator IAN MACDONALD—And the Commonwealth is putting in \$91 million?

Mr Williams—Yes.

Senator IAN MACDONALD—And, do you know what the contribution by the State or the Brisbane City Council is to the Brisbane project?

Mr Williams—I would have to take that one on notice.

Answer:

The Queensland Government is contributing \$20 million towards the cost of the feasibility study.

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Question No.: NBII 10

Division/Agency: Nation Building - Infrastructure Investment

Topic: Formby Road, Devonport

Hansard Page: 93 (27/05/09)

Senator Bushby asked:

Senator BUSHBY—The upgrade of the Formby Road in Braddon, which was promised as part of the election campaign.

Mr Foulds—The Formby Road re-development will start in October 2009. It is due to finish in 2010. The total Australian Government contribution is \$2 million. The total project cost is \$7 million. It is an off-network nation building project.

Senator BUSHBY—So, it is off-network—is that why it does not show up on the website?

Ms McNally—It depends where you look, Senator. If you put in that project name, it should come up on the website. There is an area you can go and put—

Senator BUSHBY—So, it should be there somewhere? I just could not find it in the area I was looking at. When is work going to start?

Mr Foulds—It is due to start in October 2009.

Senator BUSHBY—When will it be completed?

Mr Foulds—It is due to finish in June 2010.

Senator BUSHBY—And, arrangements have been finalised with the State Government on that?

Mr Foulds—At this stage, they have, and they have agreed to contribute \$5 million in the \$7 million total project cost.

Senator BUSHBY—Is there anything outstanding to be finalised with the State Government—

Mr Foulds—It is in the planning phase at the moment. For further detail, I would have to take it on notice. It is in the planning stage at the moment.

Senator BUSHBY—Could you take on notice whether there is anything outstanding that has yet to be agreed in respect of that project?

Mr Foulds—Yes.

Answer:

Devonport City Council is the proponent of the Formby Road Upgrade project. The Department has received a preliminary Project Proposal Report (PPR) from the Council.

This PPR needs to be finalised and approved before the Council can enter into a funding agreement with the Australian Government to enable release of funds.

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Question No.: NBII 11

Division/Agency: Nation Building - Infrastructure Investment
Topic: Rail Capacity Improvements at Rhyndaston (Tasmania)
Hansard Page: 95 (27/05/09)

Senators Colbeck and Bushby asked:

Mr Williams—Certainly, Minister Sturges, in Tasmania, released a release yesterday which talked about bringing forward some of the re-sleeper projects, \$21 million to replace 20 kilometres of rail, and 160,000 sleepers.

Senator COLBECK—But is that part of this project or is it part of the other agreement that has been going—

Mr Williams—It is part of a broader Tasmanian Rail Rescue Package.

Senator COLBECK—Sure.

Mr Williams—Plus the funding from the State Government.

Senator COLBECK—So, there is an agreement to bring some of that forward to repair a section of track?

Mr Williams—They are utilising some of the money from the Rail Rescue Package.

Senator BUSHBY—How much are they using to do those repairs?

Mr Williams—\$21 million is being spent on the repairs.

Senator BUSHBY—Yes. So, \$20 million spent on the repairs that are being done at the moment, re-laying of the—

Mr Williams—Yes.

Senator BUSHBY—And, how much is that funded by the Commonwealth?

Mr Williams—I would have to take on notice the exact split on that.

Answer:

The work referred to is being undertaken through the Rail Rescue Package funded by the Australian Government.

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Question No. NBII 12

Division/Agency: Nation Building – Infrastructure Investment

Topic: Bridgewater Bridge Replacement Planning

Hansard Page: 98 (27/05/09)

Senator Bushby asked:

I do not know whether you can answer this question, but, as part of the proposal for that planning, does that include any criteria for ensuring that leisure craft can pass beneath it?

Answer:

The air draft for river craft is one of the planning issues to be resolved as part of the new Bridgewater Bridge project.

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Question No.: NBII 13

Division/Agency: Nation Building – Infrastructure Investment

Topic: Brighton Intermodal Hub Funding

Hansard Page: 118 (27/05/09)

Senator Abetz asked:

Senator ABETZ—What we are seeing is a cost-shifting potentially. When the request was made by the State Government to transfer these funds to other projects, did the State Government say that they would be fully responsible for the Brighton intermodal or did they say that they would fully fund the Brighton intermodal? Because there is a difference, given that they can enter a public-private finance partnership or get it fully privately funded. Is there anything in the MOU or agreements or discussion?

Senator Conroy—No-one at the table has a copy of the MOU, so we will have to take that on notice and see if there is any information that the minister wishes to forward to you.

Senator ABETZ—All right, thank you.

Answer:

The Tasmanian Government has full responsibility for funding the Brighton Transport Hub.

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Question No.: NBII 14

Division/Agency: Nation Building Infrastructure Investment

Topic: Road Funding Commitments

Hansard Page: 119 (27/05/09)

Senator Abetz asked:

Senator ABETZ—From where, Ms McNally, did you get the list to put on the departmental website?

Ms McNally—We were advised by the Government which projects they wanted to fund, and those projects formed the basis of the MOU—

Senator ABETZ—When were you told of those projects that they wanted to fund?

Ms McNally—I do not have a precise date, but we worked through the course of 2008.

Senator ABETZ—Could you provide that to us, because—

Senator Conroy—I will take that on notice.

Answer:

The Government is committed to honouring its election commitments as reflected in the Nation Building Program.

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Question No.: NBII 15

Division/Agency: Nation Building Infrastructure Investment

Topic: List of the Government's Election Commitments

Hansard Page: 121 (27/05/09)

Senator Abetz asked:

Senator ABETZ—So, can I ask for such a ‘chronological list’ of all the Labor Party road funding election promises.

Senator Conroy—You can ask for it, and I will take it on notice and see if—

Senator ABETZ—The Department has told us that this list is to be found on the website—that they are all included.

Senator Conroy—We will happily supply you with a copy of our Nation Building Program, which honours all of our election commitments.

Senator ABETZ—No, that is different. That is different to the specific election promises that were made during the 2007 election, because there are other projects, as I understand it, on the website and other road funding projects that have come into being after the 2007 election promises. What I want to know is which ones were the election promises and which ones have come into being after. It is quite normal that that happens: as State Governments, Federal Governments have different priorities, new projects come along. I just want to know which is which because, looking at the website, I am not informed as to which one is a specific election promise and which one is not.

Senator Conroy—As I said, we will take it on notice and see what information the Minister can make available to you.

Answer:

The Nation Building Program projects can be found on the Nation Building Program website.

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Question No.: NBII 16

Division/Agency: Nation Building Infrastructure Investment

Topic: Regional Funding for Tasmania

Hansard Page: 121 (27/05/09)

Senator Abetz asked:

Senator ABETZ—I cannot see why there is such a difficulty with that – other than the difficulty of providing election promises and accountability. Can I ask then: in relation to the funding for Infrastructure Australia, we have been provided with a split of the funding in States, and I know that Tasmania did not get a dollar, but do we have a split between rural, regional and metro areas in relation to the Nation Building funding?

Mr Tongue—I can provide you with a split across the entire \$36 billion. Regional funding, which is a sub-set of the \$36 billion over six years, regional road and rail, totals \$21.2 billion.

Senator ABETZ—Right. Is Tasmania considered to be regional in that definition?

Mr Tongue—I do not have information to hand about the matter.

Senator ABETZ—Zero is zero. I know that much.

Mr Tongue—Tasmania, you will recall, is getting \$800 million of that \$36 billion

Senator ABETZ—Yes. That was in relation to the \$8.5 billion—

Mr Tongue—Sorry, yes.

Senator ABETZ—Mr Tongue, you are quite right. Out of the larger figure, is Tasmania, for example, considered to be regional, and so its \$800 million is included in that regional figure?

Mr Tongue—I do not have that information to hand, but I will endeavour to get it for you.

Senator ABETZ—If it is not too difficult an exercise, if you could disaggregate and provide it to us on notice, we would appreciate that. Thank you for that.

Answer:

No.

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Question No.: NBII 17

Division/Agency: Nation Building – Infrastructure Investment

Topic: Warrego Highway

Hansard Page: 125 (27/05/09)

Senator Macdonald asked:

Senator IAN MACDONALD—That is very useful, yes. Back to where we were. Where would I find the \$55 million for the Warrego Highway in the Budget Papers?

Senator Conroy—We are just seeking that information for you.

Senator IAN MACDONALD—Okay. But can I just be clear here: it has actually been allocated, has it?

Ms McNeill—Yes.

Senator IAN MACDONALD—Does that mean the cheque has been sent to the Queensland Government or just that someone has said it is going to happen?

Senator Conroy—We are not sure that it is separately identified. I am just seeking to confirm that for you.

Senator IAN MACDONALD—Okay.

Senator Conroy—We can take that on notice, if you would like, just to allow you to go on with your questions.

Senator IAN MACDONALD—Thank you.

Senator Conroy—We will take that on notice.

Answer:

The Australian Government has committed \$55 million towards the Warrego Highway, consisting of: \$40 million for the upgrade from Roma to Mitchell; \$10 million for additional overtaking lanes; and \$5 million additional rest areas.

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Question No.: NBII 18

Division/Agency: Nation Building – Infrastructure Investment

Topic: Bruce Highway - Cooroy to Curra

Hansard Page: 126 (27/05/09)

Senator Macdonald asked:

Senator IAN MACDONALD—Mr Chairman, my question was very specific. The \$176 million which I was told by an officer had been allocated to the current financial year: has that been spent and, if not, what will happen to it? I am waiting for that answer.

Senator Conroy—While the officer was gathering that information, Senator Macdonald, I was quickly updating you on some further information.

Senator IAN MACDONALD—I can give a political speech too, if you like, while the officer is looking for it.

CHAIR—Has the officer got the answer to Senator Macdonald's question?

Ms McNally—If the money is not spent this financial year, no further funds will be paid until that money is spent.

Senator IAN MACDONALD—Thank you for that. I was interested in that aspect. But you cannot tell me yet whether it has been spent or has not been spent?

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

Answer:

All money allocated to the road will be spent on the construction process.

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Question No.: NBII 19

Division/Agency: Nation Building – Infrastructure Investment

Topic: Bruce Highway - Cooroy to Curra

Hansard Page: 127 (27/05/09)

Senator Macdonald asked:

Senator IAN MACDONALD—It seems, if I follow this correctly, there is the 12-kilometre stretch of the road around the eastern buffer area of the proposed Traveston Crossing Dam—a section that will cost at least half a billion dollars—and we are left with slightly over 50 kilometres of road duplication in fairly open country. Can anyone explain to me why the remainder of this section should cost in the realm of \$5½ billion?

Senator Conroy—Probably because of the 12 years of inaction by the former Government.

Senator IAN MACDONALD—That is almost \$100 million per kilometre.

Senator Conroy—If you had addressed it in any of the 12 years you were in Government—I mean, when the Nationals were in Government they only spent \$3.22 million on this stretch of road. They were in a position to fix the highway but did nothing. So, when we now have to correct 12 years of slothfulness, do not sit here and think that you are able to try and claim some sort of over-spending by this Government. On 14 May 2002—2002—the then Deputy Prime Minister, John Anderson, announced \$1 million for a study to examine possible future routes for the Bruce Highway over 70 kilometres between Cooroy and Curra.

Senator IAN MACDONALD—Mr Chairman, my question was about the cost of \$100 million per kilometre.

Senator Conroy—Construction is likely to be 15 to 20 years. That was the position of the Government that you served in.

Senator IAN MACDONALD—Mr Chairman, can I take a point of order.

Senator Conroy—I think you may have even been a Minister at the time.

Senator IAN MACDONALD—Stop this babble from—

CHAIR—Sorry, Senator Macdonald. Minister, I think you have had enough time to answer. I am sorry, Senator Macdonald. If you want to, ask that question again.

Senator IAN MACDONALD—Yes. It then works out at about \$100 million per kilometre, which seems, in anyone's understanding, an extraordinarily expensive bit of roadway. Can anyone explain why that would be costed at \$100 million per kilometre?

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

Answer:

\$6.3 billion is the cost estimate analysed by Infrastructure Australia based on the submission from the Queensland Government.

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Question No.: NBII 20

Division/Agency: Nation Building – Infrastructure Investment

Topic: Black Spots – Childers to Sarina

Hansard Page: 128 (27/05/09)

Senator Macdonald asked:

Senator IAN MACDONALD—In the same press release, Labor promised \$115 million for black spots between Sarina and Childers. Can anyone tell me if that has been divvied out and, if not, when it will be?

Ms McNally—We can take that on notice in terms of where they are and what state they are at.

Answer:

The \$115 million in funding is allocated under the Nation Building Program, with \$15 million available in 2009-10 for works to commence.

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Question No.: NBII 21

Division/Agency: Nation Building – Infrastructure Investment

Topic: Strengthening and Widening Rockhampton

Hansard Page: 128 (27/05/09)

Senator Macdonald asked:

Senator IAN MACDONALD—I have a few of these questions. Perhaps if I can quickly just list them. Has the \$70 million for widening and strengthening sections of the highway between Benaraby and Rockhampton and Rockhampton and St Lawrence been allocated yet?
Ms McNally—We will take that on notice.

Answer:

Yes.

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Question No.: NBII 22

Division/Agency: Nation Building – Infrastructure Investment

Topic: Calliope Crossroads and Gairloch Flood Immunity

Hansard Page: 128 (27/05/09)

Senator Macdonald asked:

Senator IAN MACDONALD—Has the \$55 million to upgrade the Bruce Highway for the Calliope Crossroads near Gladstone been spent or allocated yet? What is the state of that?

Senator Conroy—We can take that on notice, just to speed the journey here if you are just listing them.

Senator IAN MACDONALD—Similarly, \$40 million was promised to improve flood immunity on the Bruce Highway at Gairloch north of Ingham. Has that been done?

Ms McNally—We will take that on notice.

Answer:

The \$55 million in funding for the Calliope Crossroads is allocated under the Nation Building Program, with \$1.7 million available in 2009-10 to continue planning works.

The \$40 million in funding for the flood immunity project at Gairloch Floodway is allocated under the Nation Building Program.

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Question No.: NBII 23

Division/Agency: Nation Building Infrastructure Investment

Topic: Roads to Recovery Funding for Un-incorporated Areas in NT

Hansard Page/s: Written Question

Senator Ludlam asked:

I refer to a press statement by Minister Albanese on 13 May 2008 relating to the granting of \$6.4 million for un-incorporated areas under the Roads to Recovery Program.

1. By what processes are the acquittals of funding grants under Roads to Recovery audited by the Commonwealth Government?
2. Does the Minister concur that the unincorporated areas in question relate to the Dundee and Marrakai districts?
3. In no to (2), can the Minister outline his understanding of the regions in question?
4. Is the minister aware of whether this specific grant has been drawn down by the NT Government?
5. If yes can the Minister detail any outcomes of this expenditure?
6. Does the 2009/10 budget include any related grant under Roads to Recovery or other relevant funding source for these areas?

Answer:

1. Roads to Recovery is administered under Part 8 of the *Nation Building Program (National Land Transport) Act 2009* (the Act) and by funding conditions determined under section 90 of the Act. The funding conditions require a funding recipient to submit to my Department by 31 October an Annual Report which includes an audited financial statement setting out the amount of Roads to Recovery funding spent or retained in the preceding financial year.
2. I am advised that the Dundee and Marrakai districts are located in a part of the NT which is still un-incorporated.
3. Not applicable.
4. The amount of \$6.4 million was an estimate of the time of the 2008-09 Budget of the Roads to Recovery funding which would be available to both local councils and the NT Government in that financial year. Actual Roads to Recovery payments to the NT Government in 2008-09 for the un-incorporated areas were \$2,477,208 which was the balance of their life program allocation for the period 1 July 2005 to 30 June 2009.
5. A statement of outcomes of this expenditure forms part of each funding recipients Roads to Recovery Annual Report. The NT Government is required to submit its 2008-09 Roads to Recovery Annual Report by 31 October 2009.

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6. The NT Government has been allocated \$23.0 million (4.6 million per year) in Roads to Recovery funds for the period of 1 July 2009 to 30 June 2014. This money will be spent on roads in those areas which, until the recent shire amalgamations, were un-incorporated and in those remaining areas which are still un-incorporated except for the roads covered under the allocation to the Local Government Association of the NT. The projects to be funded will be selected by the NT Government.

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Question No.: NBII 24

Division/Agency: Nation Building Infrastructure Investment

Topic: Boom Gates for Rail Crossings Program

Hansard Page: 133 (27/05/2009)

Senator Nash asked:

Senator NASH—I am more than happy to accede to your intermittent questions, Chair. Can I have that New South Wales figure again, Mr Williams?

Mr Williams—The figure?

Senator NASH—The cost and the number of boom gates.

Mr Williams—New South Wales, \$42.77 million for 55 level crossings.

Senator NASH—What consultation do you do with the New South Wales State Government on that?

Mr Williams—The initial allocation to states was determined by the minister. He then wrote to his state colleagues asking them to provide priority projects using the model that I referred to, and they came back with those high-priority projects.

Senator ABETZ—If I may follow up, Senator Nash: so the Minister wrote to his state counterparts after determining how much would go to each State?

Mr Williams—Yes, correct.

Senator ABETZ—How did he determine that?

Mr Williams—There was a prior step in that process. We went out to the States to determine the number of level crossings in each State and we used that information, together with crash history from Australian Transport Safety Bureau data in terms of the number of crashes and collisions at level crossings across Australia, and determined an allocation having regard to those two factors.

Senator NASH—It is particularly interesting that funding has been allocated before it is determined where. [a]How many crashes were there in New South Wales, over the period of time that you looked at, that you based this information on?

Mr Williams—I would have to take that on notice, sorry.

Senator NASH—If, as you say, the allocation of funding was based—and quite rightly—on some of that information coming back to you on the number of crashes and incidents, [b]can you supply in detail to the committee that information that you based the funding recommendation on?

Mr Williams—I will take that on notice.

Answer:

- a. There were 85 collisions with vehicles at level crossings in NSW over the period examined. These statistics were obtained from the Australian Transport Safety Bureau's report: Australian Rail Safety Occurrence Data, 1 January 2009 to 30 June 2008.
- b. Funding was allocated to the states and Northern Territory by taking into account both the number of rail level crossings in each state and the number of rail level crossing collisions per State.

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Question No.: NBII 25

Division/Agency: Nation Building – Infrastructure Investment

Topic: Western Victoria Track Upgrades

Hansard Page: 134 (27/05/09)

Senator Nash asked:

Senator NASH—I have not had one email about boom gates and flashing lights and I have had a bucketload of ones about the rail lines closing. It is very interesting to focus on what the priorities are. One of the questions I asked earlier is apparently appropriate to ask here now. It was about the rail corridor between Melbourne and Adelaide. It was the \$105.7 million that was in the Nation Building package. As I was saying at the time, because I do not understand the geography all that well, I was trying to ascertain whether the line between Maroona and the South Australian border for \$100 million, which was announced in the budget, is the same thing as the rail corridor, Melbourne to Adelaide, that was announced in the Nation Building package?

Mr Williams—Can you point me to the budget paper reference?

Senator NASH—I probably cannot, actually. It is the upgrade of the rail corridor between Melbourne to Adelaide, \$105.7 million. Is that enough?

Mr Williams—That was one that Mr Marchant talked about earlier, which was the western Victoria track upgrade. That is between Melbourne and Adelaide.

Senator NASH—That is what I was asking him at the time.

Mr Williams—Yes.

Senator NASH—But it was not clear, and then I was flicked to here because I would get more detail from these officers.

Mr Williams—Construction on that project is underway.

Senator NASH—No. I am just trying to find out if they are the same thing, if the Melbourne to Adelaide rail corridor of \$105.7 million in the Nation Building package is the same thing as the line between Maroona and the South Australian border of \$100 million announced in the budget. I just geographically do not know where they are. I want to know if they are the same.

Mr Williams—I cannot help you. I will have to take that on notice.

Senator NASH—Take it on notice.

Answer:

The \$105.7 million Western Victoria Track Upgrades is the project on this corridor.

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Question No.: NBII 26

Division/Agency: Nation Building – Infrastructure Investment

Topic: ARTC 17 Nation Building Rail Projects

Hansard Page: 135 (27/05/09)

Senator Nash asked:

Senator NASH—I think there are 17 rail projects listed in the Nation Building document. How many are underway and how many are completed?

Mr Williams—I believe nine are under active constructive. All 17 are underway in terms of planning and design as well.

Senator NASH—None are actually completed as yet?

Mr Williams—There are elements, as Mr Marchant referred to earlier today, in some of the projects. One of the passing loops on the Ulan line is already complete, and I think another passing loop in one of the other projects is also complete.

Senator NASH—Are they all running to budget?

Mr Williams—They are all running to budget as far as I am aware.

Senator NASH—Can I have a list of all those projects—on notice is fine—and exactly where each project is up to?

Mr Williams—Yes.

Answer:

A list of all projects can be found on the Government's website.

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Question No.: NBII 27

Division/Agency: Nation Building – Infrastructure Investment

Topic: NSW Grain Freight Review

Hansard Page: 138 (27/05/09)

Senator Nash asked:

Senator NASH—How many members make up the task force?

Mr Williams—The task force is made up of a number of grower groups, the New South Wales Farmers Federation; the Grain Growers Association; a number of the handlers, GrainCorp, AWB, ABB and ABA; the transporters, Asciano or Pacific National, El Zorro, the Australian Rail Track Corporation, the Australian Livestock Transporters Association, the Rail Tram and Bus Union and representatives; and the users, Manildra Flour Mills, the New South Wales Local Government Association, the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry. The Secretariat is made up from this Department and the New South Wales Ministry of Transport.

Senator NASH—When did this kick off? When did it start?

Mr Williams—It kicked off in November last year.

Senator NASH—How many times has the task force met?

Mr Williams—It has met seven times. The Chair of the Review, I forgot to mention, is Mr Des Powell.

Senator NASH—What expenses have been incurred during the process of the review?

Mr Williams—To date, \$825,397 has been spent.

Senator NASH—I am happy for you to take this on notice. Could you give us the breakdown of where that funding has gone?

Mr Williams—Yes.

Answer:

The Review was announced on 20 October 2008, and \$3 million was set aside in the 2008-09 financial year.

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Question No.: NBII 28

Division: Nation Building - Infrastructure Investment

Topic: Central West Transport Needs Study

Hansard Page: 139 (27/05/09)

Senator Nash asked:

Question:

Senator NASH—Was the study undertaken in conjunction with the Grain Freight Review that I was just talking about? Was there any collaboration of information? They obviously would have crossed over in a number of areas.

Mr Williams—I am certainly aware that the Grain Freight Review is aware of the Central West Transport Needs Study and has the report which has been released.

Senator NASH—This might be something where I may well have to wait for the report to come out. **[a]** Did the study just focus on the central west, or did it actually take into account the anticipated growth in Sydney and spill-out over into the central western areas? Did it look at the logistics as well?

Ms McNally—The central west study has been published on the website. I think we would have to take the issue around the geography on notice.

Mr Foulds—Yes, around Sydney we would have to take on notice.

Senator NASH—Yes, that would be fine. Again, if you want to take these on notice, because I realise this might not be information that you have got right there with you. **[b]** The study found that an upgrade of the Bells Line of Road expressway would not be required until 2033. That is a very interesting figure, given the population boom that there is going to be, and a whole range of reasons around that. I am happy for you to take this on notice: did the study take into account that the upgrade of the Bells Line of Road would encourage population growth, consolidate industry, and assist tourism in the west of New South Wales? Very importantly—and could you take this on notice as well if you cannot give me an answer now—**[c]** did the study identify the corridor that would accommodate the upgrade of the Bells Line of Road and did it make any recommendations that the line be preserved?

Ms McNally—We will take that on notice.

Answer:

- (a) The study's brief included the identification of passenger and freight land transport needs between the Central West and greater Sydney, Port Botany, Port of Newcastle and Port Kembla over the next 25 years.
- (b) No.
- (c) It did not identify a specific corridor for a potential future upgrade.

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Question No.: NBII 29

Division/Agency: Nation Building Infrastructure Investment
Topic: Boom Gates for Rail Crossings Projects in Tasmania
Hansard Page: 139 (27/05/2009)

Senator Abetz asked:

Senator ABETZ—The 13 crossings in Tasmania that are going to benefit from boom gates et cetera: can you provide us with the location and the crash history over the past decade for each one of those 13 crossings? And I do not need the figures now.

Mr Williams—Yes, I will take that on notice.

Answer:

The list of projects funded by the Australian Government can be found on the Nation Building Program website.

Records for collisions at specific sites are only available from 2004. There have been two collisions at Lillico Road, Lillico and one at Serby Street, Queenstown.

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Question No.: NBII 30

Division/Agency: Nation Building – Infrastructure Investment

Topic: Calliope Crossroads and Gairloch Flood Immunity

Hansard Page: Written Question

Senator Macdonald asked:

I notice that on 4 November 2007 the Labor Party promised to provide up to \$55 million to upgrade the Bruce Highway for the Calliope Crossroads near Gladstone.
What stage is the Government up to in fulfilling this promise?

Answer:

Refer to the answer for NBII 22.

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Question No.: NBII 31

Division/Agency: Nation Building – Infrastructure Investment

Topic: Calliope Crossroads and Gairloch Flood Immunity

Hansard Page: Written Question

Senator Macdonald asked:

In its media releases of 4 October and 5 November 2008 Labor promised \$40 million to improve flood immunity on the Bruce Highway at Gairloch, north of Ingham. Has Labor fulfilled this promise?

When will it do so?

Answer:

Refer to the answer for NBII 22.

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Question No.: NBII 32

Division/Agency: Nation Building - Infrastructure Investment

Topic: New Road Funding Requests

Hansard Page/s: Written Question

Senator Bushby asked:

What other requests has the Tasmanian Infrastructure Minister, or any other Tasmanian Minister or public service officer made to the federal Department since November last year?

Answer:

See NBII 60.

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Question No.: NBII 33

Division/Agency: Nation Building - Infrastructure Investment

Topic: Off-Network Infrastructure Projects in Tasmania

Hansard Page/s: Written Question

Senator Bushby asked:

1. During my questioning of Infrastructure Australia, it became clear that not all Tasmanian infrastructure projects were on the Infrastructure Australia, Better Regions or Stimulus websites, or if they were there was difficulty finding them because they were "off network" or other reasons. To make it easier for me and my Tasmanian colleagues to track projects in Tasmania, could you please list all infrastructure projects being Federally funded in Tasmania?
2. Where there is agreed or approved funding for projects what is that amount?
3. Where there is an agreed project what is the commencement and completion time frame?

Answer:

See NBII 61.

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Question No.: NBII 34

Division/Agency: Nation Building Infrastructure Investment

Topic: Regional Rail Link Funding

Hansard Page/s: Written Question

Senator Williams asked:

A number of projects have a significant shortfall of investment i.e. regional Rail Express, construction of the rail link from Werribee to Sunshine in Melbourne. The Federal Government has committed \$3.2 billion over the next six years to this project and given that this project will cost around \$4.3billion where will the remaining \$1.1 billion come from?

Answer:

See response to Question NBII 66.

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Question No.: NBII 35

Division/Agency: Nation Building Infrastructure Investment

Topic: Regional Rail Link Funding

Hansard Page/s: Written Question

Senator Williams asked:

The Brumby Government in its Victorian Transport Plan has included Regional express as a priority. What funds have the State Government allocated to the project?

Answer:

See response to Question NBII 66.

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Question No.: NBII 36

Division/Agency: Nation Building Infrastructure Investment

Topic: Regional Rail Link Funding

Hansard Page/s: Written Question

Senator Williams asked:

What agreements have been established between the Commonwealth and Victorian Government regarding Victorian Government's contribution?

Answer:

See response to Question NBII 66.

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Question No.: NBII 37

Division/Agency: Nation Building Infrastructure Investment

Topic: Regional Rail Link Funding

Hansard Page/s: Written Question

Senator Williams asked:

The cost of the regional Express is 4.3 billion. This means the cost of 50 km of track is four times the cost of the Adelaide to Darwin rail link that is \$1.3 billion to lay 1400 km of rail is that correct?

Answer:

This question has been answered by the response of Mr Williams on page 90 of Hansard for 27 May 2009.

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Question No.: NBII 38

Division/Agency: Nation Building Infrastructure Investment

Topic: Bunbury Port Access Road

Hansard Page/s: Written Question

Senator Williams asked:

What is the latest update on the Bunbury Port Access Road?

Answer:

Construction of Stage 1 of the Bunbury Port Access Road is underway.

Planning work for Stage 2 of the Bunbury Port Access Road and Stage 1 of the Bunbury Outer Ring Road is also underway.

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Question No.: NBII 39

Division/Agency: Nation Building Infrastructure Investment

Topic: Bunbury Port Access Road

Hansard Page/s: Written Question

Senator Williams asked:

When is it anticipated this work will be completed?

Answer:

Stage 1 is scheduled for completion in 2010.

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Question No.: NBII 40

Division/Agency: Nation Building Infrastructure Investment

Topic: Bunbury Port Access Road

Hansard Page/s: Written Question

Senator Nash asked:

What is the latest update on the construction of the Bunbury Port Access Road?

Answer:

Refer to the answer to question NBII 38.

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Question No.: NBII 41

Division/Agency: Nation Building Infrastructure Investment

Topic: Bunbury Port Access Road

Hansard Page/s: Written Question

Senator Nash asked:

When is it anticipated that this project will be completed?

Answer:

Refer to the answer to question NBII 39.

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Question No.: NBII 42

Division/Agency: Nation Building – Infrastructure Investment

Topic: Bruce Highway - Cooroy to Curra

Hansard Page/s: Written Question

Senator Macdonald asked:

In the recent Budget, the Labor Government has committed to spend a further \$488 million over four years towards the duplication of a twelve-kilometre section of the Bruce Highway between Cooroy to Curra to provide a four-lane divided highway. This is on top of the \$200 million the Labor has already promised to the Cooroy to Curra section.

Aside from a belated commitment by Labor to finally match the Coalition's promise to provide \$700 million towards the upgrade of the Cooroy to Curra section, I just wish to clarify the dispersal of these funds.

1. According to page 347 of Budget Paper No.2 2009-10, the Government has allocated \$468.3 million of this total in the financial year 2008-09. Is that correct?
2. Now given that the financial year is nearly over, how much of this money will be spent?
3. If it is not spent where will this money go? To the Queensland Government account? Can an official make clear to me this process?
4. How much money will be spent on the duplication of this section in the 2009-10 financial year?

Answer:

1. No, the \$468.3m relates to expenditure on a number of projects in the 2008-09, not just Cooroy to Curra Section B.
- 2-4 All money allocated to this road will be spent on the construction process.

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Question No.: NBII 43

Division/Agency: Nation Building – Infrastructure Investment

Topic: Bruce Highway - Cooroy to Curra

Hansard Page/s: Written Question

Senator Macdonald asked:

I notice in your answer to a Question on Notice lodged in the February 2009 Additional Budget Estimates you confirmed the cost of the Cooroy to Curra upgrade to be \$6.3 billion.

1. Can any official explain to me this extra-ordinary blow out in costs, given previous estimates such as that of the Royal Automobile Club of Queensland in its October 2008 submission to Infrastructure Australia estimated this project would cost \$4 billion? Other estimates have been lower.
2. Now, if we set aside from the most expensive twelve-kilometre stretch of road around the eastern buffer area of the proposed Traveston Crossing dam – a section that will cost at least half a billion dollars – we are left with slightly over 50 kilometres of road duplication in open country.
3. Can anyone explain to me why the remainder of the section should cost in the realm of five and a half billion dollars? This is after all about \$100 million per kilometre?

Answer:

Refer to the answer to question NBII 19.

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Question No.: NBII 44

Division/Agency: Nation Building – Infrastructure Investment

Topic: Bruce Highway - Cooroy to Curra

Hansard Page/s: Written Question

Senator Macdonald asked:

1. Just to confirm, the Federal Government has accepted the eastern route for the Bruce Highway between Federal and Traveston Road – that is to build the Bruce Highway around the dam’s potential inundation area. Is this correct?
2. The final version of the Federal Government’s Bruce Highway (Cooroy to Curra) Strategic Planning Study was released to the public in November 2008. With regard to that report, I refer to the map contained on page seven in its introduction. This map, an explanation of the proposed routes of the Bruce Highway in the area potentially affected by the proposed Traveston Dam. This explanation reads:

*Should the dam not proceed then the location of the highway may change to an alignment close to the existing Bruce Highway as **originally favoured by the community.***

Given that the report categorically states the route closer to the original highway is favoured by the community, how can the Government assert in its answers to Questions on Notice, and I refer to NBII 52 and NBII 53, NBII55, NBII 56, that the new route, i.e. the eastern route, is the route ‘favoured by the community’?

3. Are these answers simply incorrect?
4. Has the Government lied?
5. Given that Queensland Premier Anna Bligh has shelved the Traveston Crossing dam for many years, why has the Federal Government ignored two years of community consultation and community wishes in approving the eastern route?
6. The Government has advised, in response to a Question on Notice lodged in the February 2009 Additional Budget Estimates that the Federal Minister for the Environment, Heritage and the Arts has not been consulted about the decision to build the eastern route for the Bruce Highway around the dam’s potential inundation area. When will he be consulted?
7. I refer to the non-answer this Committee received to its Question on Notice lodged in the February 2009 Additional Budget Estimates. The question was quite clear. I quote:

What advice did the Federal Minister for Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government receive from his Department in approving the unpopular eastern route?

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Making a bland assertion that eastern alignment was supported by the community is not answer. It is an untruth. What is the answer?

Answer:

The currently proposed Section B alignment has been well received by the community as its preferred option.

The approval of the eastern route allowing a commencement of works on Section B provides benefit to the local community and is in the national interest through a safer more efficient highway.

The Minister for the Environment, Heritage and the Arts, does not need to be consulted in determining the route for section B of the Bruce Highway between Cooroy and Curra.

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Question No.: NBII 45

Division/Agency: Nation Building – Infrastructure Investment

Topic: Bruce Highway - Cooroy to Curra

Hansard Page/s: Written Question

Senator Macdonald asked:

1. Given the Federal Government has confirmed the eastern route. Has the Federal Government given its approval for the Traveston Crossing dam?
2. What is the cost of the shorter route that closely follows the existing Bruce Highway?
3. How much extra is the taxpayer picking up as a result of the decision to build the Traveston Crossing dam?

Answer:

- 1-3 The project cost for Section B, along the eastern alignment (the longer route), has been confirmed as \$613 million. This is the cost announced as part of the 2009-10 Budget, to which the Australian Government is contributing \$488 million and the Queensland Government is contributing \$125 million.

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Question No.: NBII 46

Division/Agency: Nation Building – Infrastructure Investment

Topic: Bruce Highway - Cooroy to Curra

Hansard Page/s: Written Question

Senator Macdonald asked:

1. I understand that the Queensland Government will contribute \$125 million to the duplication of the Bruce Highway from Cooroy to Curra. Is that correct?
2. How was that contribution calculated?

Answer:

1. Yes.
2. The contribution was agreed between the Australian and Queensland Governments.

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Question No.: NBII 47

Division/Agency: Nation Building – Infrastructure Investment

Topic: Bruce Highway - Cooroy to Curra

Hansard Page/s: Written Question

Senator Macdonald asked:

I notice that even though the eastern route around the area of potential inundation is longer – the Government claims that cost between this route and the shorter route along the existing site of the Bruce Highway – are the same. I refer to your answer to a Question on Notice lodged by this Committee after the February hearings. I quote Question No. NBII 58:

Indicative estimates provided by the Queensland Department of Main Roads show that the costs would be similar, subject to delivery and construction schedules.

1. Can anyone explain to me how a longer route can be the same cost as a shorter route? Is the topography that different?
2. Do you have the respective cost estimates provided by the Queensland Government?
3. Will you provide them to this Committee?
4. What is the basis for the answer to Question on Notice NBII 58?

Answer:

The proposed Western alignment would have had a greater need for earthworks, drainage lines, and additional bridges than required for the eastern alignment, due to the differing terrain of the two alignments. This is why the costs of the two possible alignments are comparable despite the Eastern alignment traversing a longer route.

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Question No.: NBII 48

Division/Agency: Nation Building – Infrastructure Investment

Topic: Bruce Highway - Cooroy to Curra

Hansard Page/s: Written Question

Senator Macdonald asked:

1. Given that the Government has confirmed that this duplication will cost over six billion dollars and given Labor has promised slightly over two billion dollars, has the Queensland Government agreed to make up the four billion dollar shortfall?
2. How are negotiations proceeding with the Queensland Government to make up for this funding gap?
3. What funding arrangements regarding the upgrade of the Bruce Highway have been established between the Commonwealth and the Queensland Government?

Answer:

The Australian and Queensland Governments have committed \$613 million to Section B of Cooroy to Curra, comprising \$488 million in Australian Government funding and \$125 million in Queensland Government funding. The Australian Government has committed a further \$200 million to planning and pre-construction activity for the entire 65km section of the Bruce Highway between Cooroy and Curra under the Nation Building Program.

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Question No.: NBII 49

Division/Agency: Nation Building – Infrastructure Investment

Topic: Bruce Highway - Cooroy to Curra

Hansard Page/s: Written Question

Senator Macdonald asked:

1. What is the expected completion date of duplicating the Bruce Highway around the expected site of the Traveston Crossing dam?
2. What about duplicating the Bruce Highway from Cooroy to Curra?

Answer:

Construction of the Cooroy to Curra project Section B is scheduled to be completed in 2012.

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Question No.: NBII 50

Division/Agency: Nation Building – Infrastructure Investment

Topic: Bruce Highway

Hansard Page/s: Written Question

Senator Macdonald asked:

1. I further notice that elsewhere that Labor promised to spend \$2.2 billion on a better Bruce Highway, delivered under Auslink 2 from 2009 to 2014. Now, this \$2.2 billion includes the nearly \$700 million on the Cooroy to Curra does it not?
2. So how will Labor spend the balance of this money on the remainder of the Bruce Highway?
3. On what sections of the Bruce Highway?
4. When?

Answer:

1. The Government's commitment to the Bruce Highway under the Nation Building Program is over \$2.6 billion. This includes Cooroy to Curra.
- 2-4 The Australian Government commitments and contributions can be found on the Nation Building Program website. Timing of specific projects is subject to agreement with the Queensland Government.

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Question No.: NBII 51

Division/Agency: Nation Building – Infrastructure Investment

Topic: Dawson / Bruce Highway Southern Approach to Mackay

Hansard Page/s: Written Question

Senator Macdonald asked:

1. In the election campaign, Labor in its press release dated 6 November 2007, pledged to spend \$150 million in the Seat of Dawson on the Bruce Highway. Well, I would be interested to know as to the success the new Member for Dawson has had in ensuring the delivery of these promises.
2. So, as part of that, Labor promised \$50 million to duplicate the Bruce Highway and improve sections on the 3.5 kilometre stretch south of Mackay. How is the implementation of that promise going?
3. When will that duplication be complete?

Answer:

1. The funding of \$150 million is allocated under the Nation Building Program on the following projects: Upgrade the southern approach to Mackay \$50 million; re-align and raise the Bruce Highway from Sandy Corner to Collinsons Lagoon \$50 million; upgrade Burdekin River Bridge \$25 million; and Burdekin Road Safety Audit projects \$25 million.
- 2-3 The project to upgrade the southern approach to Mackay commenced in February 2009 and is scheduled for completion in 2011.

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Question No.: NBII 52

Division/Agency: Nation Building – Infrastructure Investment

Topic: Bruce Highway - North Of Brandon

Hansard Page/s: Written Question

Senator Macdonald asked:

1. Labor promised \$50 million to flood-mitigate the Bruce Highway north of Brandon. Has that promise been implemented?
2. When will Labor fulfil this promise?

Answer:

- 1-2 The \$50 million in funding for the project to realign and raise the highway from Sandy Corner to Collinsons Lagoon is allocated under the Nation Building Program.

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Question No.: NBII 53

Division/Agency: Nation Building – Infrastructure Investment

Topic: Bruce Highway - Cabbage Tree Creek to Carman Road

Hansard Page/s: Written Question

Senator Macdonald asked:

1. The Labor Party promised, on 7 November 2007, that it would spend \$100 million to fix a dangerous section of the Bruce Highway between Miriam Vale and Gin Gin. Specifically, this would involve fixing a 7.9 kilometre stretch from Cabbage Tree Creek to Carman Road and 3.6 kilometres around Back Creek Range. Has the Rudd Government carried out its promise to fix these sections of the Bruce Highway?
2. When will it do so?

Answer:

The \$100 million in funding for this project is allocated under the Nation Building Program, with \$2 million available in 2009-10 for planning to commence.

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Question No.: NBII 54

Division/Agency: Nation Building – Infrastructure Investment

Topic: Rest Area – Childers to Sarina

Hansard Page/s: Written Question

Senator Macdonald asked:

1. Labor also promised \$20 million for more rest areas on the Bruce Highway between Sarina and Childers – north of Brisbane and south of Mackay - in its press release of 6 November 2007. Have they been built yet?
2. When will they be built?
3. Will that \$20 million come out of the Government's \$70 million Heavy Vehicle Safety Package?

Answer:

- 1-2 The funding for the rest areas is allocated under the Nation Building Program. The timing for commencement of this project is subject to further discussion between the Australian and Queensland Governments.
3. No.

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Question No.: NBII 55

Division/Agency: Nation Building – Infrastructure Investment

Topic: Black Spots – Childers to Sarina

Hansard Page/s: Written Question

Senator Macdonald asked:

I note in the same press release Labor promised \$115 million for black spots between Sarina and Childers. Where is the money and where will they be built?

Answer:

Refer to NBII 20.

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Question No.: NBII 56

Division/Agency: Nation Building – Infrastructure Investment
Topic: Bruce Highway - Overtaking Lanes Childers to Sarina
Hansard Page/s: Written Question

Senator Macdonald asked:

1. In fact, Labor made quite a lot of promises in its media release of 6 November 2007. Has the Rudd Government provided the \$65 million it promised on new overtaking lanes between Childers and Sarina?
2. When will Labor fulfil these promises?

Answer:

- 1-2 The \$65 million in funding for new overtaking lanes between Childers and Sarina is allocated under the Nation Building Program.

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Question No.: NBII 57

Division/Agency: Nation Building – Infrastructure Investment

Topic: Strengthening and Widening Rockhampton

Hansard Page/s: Written Question

Senator Macdonald asked:

1. Has the Government spent the \$70 million it promised to widen and strengthen sections of narrow and broken highway between Benarby and Rockhampton and Rockhampton to St Lawrence?
2. When will the Government meet this promise?

Answer:

Refer to the answer to NBII 21.

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Question No.: NBII 58

Division/Agency: Nation Building – Infrastructure Investment

Topic: Calliope Crossroads

Hansard Page/s: Written Question

Senator Macdonald asked:

1. I notice that on 4 November 2007, the Labor Party promised to provide up to \$55 million to upgrade the Bruce Highway for the Calliope Crossroads near Gladstone.
2. What stage is the Government up to in fulfilling this promise?

Answer:

Refer to the answer to NBII 22.

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Question No.: NBII 59

Division/Agency: Nation Building – Infrastructure Investment

Topic: Bruce Highway - Gairloch Flood Immunity

Hansard Page/s: Written Question

Senator Macdonald asked:

1. In its media releases of 4 October and 5 November 2008, Labor promised \$40 million to improve flood immunity on the Bruce Highway at Gairloch, north of Ingham. Has Labor fulfilled this promise?
2. When will it do so?

Answer:

Refer to the answer to NBII 22.

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Question No.: NBII 60

Division/Agency: Nation Building - Infrastructure Investment

Topic: New Road Funding Requests

Hansard Page/s: Written Question

Senator Bushby asked:

What other requests has the Tasmanian Infrastructure Minister, or any other Tasmanian Minister or public service officer made to the Federal Department since November last year?

Answer:

None.

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Question No.: NBII 61

Division/Agency: Nation Building - Infrastructure Investment

Topic: Off-Network Infrastructure Projects in Tasmania

Hansard Page/s: Written Question

Senator Bushby asked:

1. During my questioning of Infrastructure Australia it became clear that not all Tasmanian infrastructure projects were on the Infrastructure Australia, Better Regions or Stimulus websites, or if they were there was difficulty finding them because they were "off network" or other reasons. To make it easier for me and my Tasmanian colleagues to track projects in Tasmania could you please list all infrastructure projects being Federally-funded in Tasmania?
2. Where there is agreed or approved funding for projects what is that amount?
3. Where there is an agreed project what is the commencement and completion timeframe?

Answer:

Road and rail infrastructure funded by the Australian Government is set out in the MOU which is available on the Nation Building Program website.

A number of road and rail infrastructure projects in Tasmania are funded as Off-Network projects. They are also available on the Nation Building Program website.

Information on the Australian Government contribution and project timeframes is also on the website.

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Question No.: NBII 62

Division/Agency: Nation Building - Infrastructure Investment

Topic: Funding for Tasmanian Road Projects

Hansard Page/s: Written Question

Senator Bob Brown asked:

The Government is committing significant funds to Tasmania's road infrastructure. The budget committed funding to:

- a Midland Highway Safety Upgrade;
- East Tamar Highway Upgrade projects:
 - Batman Highway Junction grade separation;
 - Dalrymple; and
 - Egg Island Creek.
- \$3.2 million to eliminate 28 dangerous black spots on local roads;
- \$2.6 million to install boom gates and other safety measures at 13 high risk level crossings;
- \$800,000 to address the lack of safe, modern roadside facilities for truck drivers, including new and refurbished rest stops, parking bays and de-coupling areas.

For each of these commitments, please provide:

- a. the exact location of each project to be funded and budget for each project;
- b. the details of which existing or newly-upgraded roads/infrastructure are regularly used by logging trucks and/or the transport of related forestry equipment;
- c. the reasons for investing in road infrastructure in each of these locations.

Answer:

Midland Highway Safety Upgrade

- a. This project comprises two components: the Upgrade at Constitution Hill in the vicinity of Dysart and new audible line marking over appropriate sections along the Midland Highway between Pontville and Breadalbane. The Federal Government is contributing \$4.5 million towards this project.
- b. The use of roads is an issue for the State Government.
- c. As this funding is being provided under the *Nation Building Program (National Land Transport) Act 2009* (the Act), the project seeks to meet the objective of the Act which is to improve the performance of land transport infrastructure. The Act Section 11(c) specifies that in considering the approval of projects the Minister *may have regard to the extent to which the project will improve efficiency, security or safety of transport operations on the National Land Transport Network*. In the case of the Midland Highway Safety Upgrade, it was undertaken in responding to the recommendations of the Tasmanian Coroner who concluded

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that the deaths of four young women as a result of two vehicles head-on collision at Constitution Hill in May 2006. The upgrading of line-marking over appropriate sections to audible tactile line-marking will also improve the safety of the highway for both light and heavy vehicles.

East Tamar Highway Upgrade

- a. The Batman Highway Junction grade separation project is located at the junction of the Batman Highway and the East Tamar Highway. The Australian Government contribution was \$10.1 million.

The Dalrymple project is located on the East Tamar Highway 17.6 to 24.5 km north of the Charles St Bridge. The Australian Government contribution was \$8.1 million. The Egg Island Creek project is located on the East Tamar Highway 24.5 to 30.7 km north of the Charles St Bridge. The Australian Government contribution was \$7.5 million.

- b. The use of roads is an issue for the State Government.
- c. This funding was provided by the then Government under the *AusLink (National Land Transport) Act 2005* and the project seeks to meet the objective of the Act which is to improve the performance of land transport infrastructure. The Act Section 11(c) specifies that in considering the approval of projects the Minister *may have regard to the extent to which the project will improve efficiency, security or safety of transport operations on the National Land Transport Network.*

Black Spot Projects

- a. Details of the Black Spot projects approved for funding in Tasmania are available from the Nation Building Program website.
- b. N/A.
- c. All sites nominated for Black Spot program funding in Tasmania are first assessed by the Department of Infrastructure, Energy and Resources. For individual sites such as intersections or short road sections, there should be a history of at least three casualty crashes over a five-year period. For lengths of road, there should be an average of 0.2 casualty crashes per kilometre per annum over the length in question over five years. Project proposals should be able to demonstrate a benefit to cost ratio of at least 2:1. Some program funds may be used to treat sites where a Road Safety Audit has found that remedial work is necessary. This allows an opportunity for proactive safety works to be undertaken before casualties occur.

Identified projects were considered by the Tasmanian Black Spot Consultative Panel, which is chaired by Ms Julie Collins MP and includes representatives from road user groups, industry and local government.

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Boom Gates and other Safety Measures

- a. Details are available on the Department's website.
- b. N/A.
- c. The projects were identified by the Tasmanian Government following an assessment that took into account factors such as road and rail traffic volumes and crash history. The Australian Government investment in the installation of flashing lights and advance warning systems at the 13 high-risk rail level crossings in Tasmania will improve road safety for all users.

Heavy Vehicle Safety and Productivity Program (HVSPP) – Tasmanian Round 1 Projects

- a. The projects and respective budgets being funded in Tasmania are as follows:
 - i. Emu River Bridge, 3km east of Burnie on the Bass Highway. The Australian Government contribution is \$38,000.
 - ii. Blythe River Bridge, 9km east of Burnie on the Bass Highway. The Australian Government contribution is \$520,000.
 - iii. Meander River Bridge, 45km west of Launceston on the Bass Highway. The Australian Government contribution is \$212,000.
 - iv. Macquarie River Bridge, 142km north of Hobart on the Midland Highway. The Australian Government contribution is \$730,000.
- b. N/A.
- c. The HVSPP objective of the Tasmanian projects is to increase productivity and safety by enhancing the capacity of existing roads.

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Question No.: NBII 63

Division/Agency: Nation Building - Infrastructure Investment

Topic: Funding for Local Roads in Tasmania

Hansard Page/s: Written Question

Senator Bob Brown asked:

The Government has also committed to spend \$42.7 million to maintain and upgrade local roads in Tasmania. Please provide:

- a. the location of each project to be funded;
- b. the details of which existing or newly upgraded roads are regularly used by logging trucks and/or the transport of related forestry equipment; and
- a. the reasons for investing in road infrastructure in each of these locations.

Answer:

This funding for local roads in Tasmania in 2009-10 is comprised of funding for local government through Financial Assistance Grants for roads and the Nation Building Program Roads to Recovery program. In each case, these funds can be used for any road works at the discretion of the councils.

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Question No.: NBII 64

Division/Agency: Nation Building Infrastructure Investment

Topic: Secondary roads in Tasmania

Hansard Page/s: Written Question

Senator Parry asked:

What specific bids were made for the upgrade of secondary roads in Tasmania?

Answer:

The Australian Government has committed a total of \$55,450,000 to the following Off-Network road projects in Tasmania:

(a) Upgrade of North-East Freight Roads	\$34,000,000
(b) Kingston Bypass	\$15,000,000
(c) Westbury and Mount Leslie Roads	\$350,000
(d) Upgrade of Port Sorell Road	\$1,000,000
(e) Upgrade of Formby Road	\$2,000,000
(f) Upgrade of Illawarra Link Road	\$3,100,000

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Question No.: NBII 65

Division/Agency: Nation Building – Infrastructure Investment

Topic: Cam River Bridge

Hansard Page/s: Written Question

Senator Parry asked:

1. Has the Member for Braddon (Mr Sidebottom) been in contact with the Minister's office to make representations about the state of, or to make requests for funding for the upgrade of the Cam River Bridge?
2. Has the Mr Sidebottom made contact with the Department to make any representations (as above)?
3. For both of the above, if contact was made, please specify by what medium he contacted either the Department or Minister's office and what date contact was made.
4. Has the Minister or the Department received any representations from any group or individual about the Cam River Bridge and the concerns surrounding it?
5. If so, please list the person/group who has been in contact and on what date they made contact.

Answer:

Cam River Bridge between Burnie and Somerset is on a section of the Bass Highway that is not included in the National Land Transport Network and is consequently the responsibility of the Tasmanian Government.

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Question No.: NBII 66

Division/Agency: Nation Building Infrastructure Investment

Topic: Regional Rail Link Funding

Hansard Page/s: Written Question

Senator Nash asked:

I notice that the Victorian Brumby Government in its Victorian Transport Plan has included the Regional Express as a priority. The State Government of Victoria is silent on its funding commitment. That is, at present it has allocated no State funds to the project.

What agreements have been established between the Commonwealth and Victorian regarding Victoria's contribution?

Answer:

The Memorandum of Understanding is available on the Nation Building Program website.

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Question No.: NBII 67

Division/Agency: Nation Building – Infrastructure Investment

Topic: NSW Grain Freight Review

Hansard Page/s: Written Question

Senator Nash asked:

Mr Neil Williams, General Manager, Rail and Intermodal, advised in the Budget Estimates hearing on Wednesday 27 May 2009 that \$825,397 of the \$3m allocated had been spent to date on the NSW Grain Freight Review.

What other expenses are expected to be incurred?

Answer:

Refer to answer to NBII 27.

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Question No.: NBII 68

Division/Agency: Nation Building – Infrastructure Investment

Topic: NSW Grain Freight Review

Hansard Page/s: Written Question

Senator Nash asked:

Has further funding been allocated for more detailed follow-up studies, or for projects resulting from the NSW Grain Freight Review?

Answer:

No.

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Question No.: NBII 69

Division/Agency: Nation Building – Infrastructure Investment
Topic: NSW Central West Needs Study – Rail Branch Lines
Hansard Page/s: Written Question

Senator Nash asked:

Following the release of the Central West Transport Needs Study, will the Government be further investigating an upgrade of the Bogan gate to Tottenham; Koorawatha to Greenethorpe; and Ungarie to Lake Cargelligo branch lines to alleviate the problem for the movement of rail freight within and through the central west region?

Answer:

The Government is giving consideration to the findings of the Central West Transport Needs Study and has not decided what further investigations or studies may be required.

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Question No.: NBII 70

Division: Nation Building Infrastructure Investment

Topic: Central West Transport Needs Study and Great Western Highway Upgrade

Hansard Page/s: Written Question

Senator Nash asked:

On the Department's website, it states *a further \$4M will be made available for more detailed follow up studies, or for projects resulting from this Study.*

Will these funds be used to further investigate the above-mentioned branch lines?

Answer:

The Government is giving consideration to the findings of the CWTN Study and has yet to decide where the remaining funds will be allocated.

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Question No.: NBII 71

Division: Nation Building Infrastructure Investment

Topic: Central West Transport Needs Study and Great Western Highway Upgrade

Hansard Page/s: Written Question

Senator Nash asked:

Did the Central West Transport Needs Study (CWTNS) take into consideration the effect on regional roads caused by the transport of grain during harvest times in the event of the closure of rail branch lines?

Answer:

No.

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Question No.: NBII 72

Division: Nation Building Infrastructure Investment

Topic: Central West Transport Needs Study and Great Western Highway Upgrade

Hansard Page/s: Written Question

Senator Nash asked:

Did the CWTNS identify that the Bells Line of Road would allow the development of a B-Double link between the major production areas of the Central West and Sydney, which would further improve efficiency and reduce transport costs for industry in the Central West?

Answer:

A decision on whether to allow B-Doubles on a particular highway is a matter for the NSW Government.

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Question No.: NBII 73

Division: Nation Building Infrastructure Investment

Topic: Central West Transport Needs Study and Great Western Highway Upgrade

Hansard Page/s: Written Question

Senator Nash asked:

Was the CWTNS undertaken separately to the joint Federal and State Government study currently being undertaken of the upgrade of the Great Western highway to determine which section of the highway, among other things, will improve road freight efficiency, road safety and improve through and tourist traffic?

Answer:

The CWTNS was a strategic study undertaken separately from the jointly funded investigation to upgrade the Great Western Highway west of Katoomba, that is, the upgrade of the Highway between Mount Victoria and Lithgow.

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Question No.: NBII 74

Division: Nation Building Infrastructure Investment

Topic: Central West Transport Needs Study and Great Western Highway Upgrade

Hansard Page/s: Written Question

Senator Nash asked:

What is the Federal Government's contribution to this joint State/Federal Government study of the upgrade of the Great Western Highway?

Answer:

The Australian Government has committed \$200 million towards the upgrading of the Great Western Highway between Mount Victoria and Lithgow through the Nation Building Program.

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Question No.: NBII 75

Division: Infrastructure Investment Division

Topic: Central West Transport Needs Study and Great Western Highway upgrade between Mount Victoria and Lithgow.

Senator Nash asked:

One of the four routes being investigated in the Great Western Highway Upgrade, the Newnes Plateau route, has been ruled out of the study due to a submission by the Department of Defence. What is the Department's objection?

Answer:

The Department of Defence advised they had an enduring requirement for the facility, and did not support the Newnes Plateau corridor. The route was therefore considered unviable and eliminated from further consideration by the NSW Roads and Traffic Authority.

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Question No.: NBII 76

Division: Nation Building Infrastructure Investment

Topic: Central West Transport Needs Study and Great Western Highway Upgrade

Hansard Page/s: Written Question

Senator Nash asked:

Can you advise what other options are being considered for the Great Western Highway Upgrade? And when will a final decision be made?

Answer:

Information is available on the NSW Roads and Traffic Authority website.

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Question No.: NBII 77

Division: Nation Building Infrastructure Investment

Topic: Predicted Global Oil Decline Rates

Hansard Page/s: Written Question

Senator Ludlam asked:

Is the Minister aware that the planning documents submitted for the proposed F3 Freeway extension assume +22% to +59% traffic growths in 10 years?

Answer:

See response to BITRE 03 (4) attached.

[NBII 77 – Attachment]

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Question No.: NBII 78

Division: Nation Building Infrastructure Investment

Topic: Predicted Global Oil Decline Rates

Hansard Page/s: Written Question

Senator Ludlam asked:

Does the Minister consider these projections plausible in the light of the WEO document and related sources?

Answer:

See response to BITRE 03 (5) attached.

[NBII 78 – Attachment]

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Question No.: NBII 79

Division: Nation Building Infrastructure Investment

Topic: Predicted Global Oil Decline Rates

Hansard Page/s: Written Question

Senator Ludlam asked:

Is the Minister aware that the planning documents submitted for the proposed Pacific Highway Kempsey bypass assume a doubling of traffic out to 2031?

Answer:

See response to BITRE 03 (6) attached.

[NBII 79 – Attachment]

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Question No.: NBII 80

Division: Nation Building Infrastructure Investment

Topic: Predicted Global Oil Decline Rates

Hansard Page/s: Written Question

Senator Ludlam asked:

Does the Minister consider these projections plausible in the light of the WEO document and related sources?

Answer:

See response to BITRE 03 (7) attached.

[NBII 80 – Attachment]

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Question No.: NBII 81

Division/Agency: Nation Building Infrastructure Investment
Topic: Renaming of AusLink to the Nation Building Program
Hansard Page/s: Written Question

Senator Nash asked:

Senator NASH—When was the decision made to rename AusLink the Nation Building Program? Why was that decision made? Is this a bit of standard Labor pin and the rewriting of history? I notice that on page 3 of the Executive Summary of the \$4.7 billion Nation Building Package it states, and I quote: *The Government will bring forward the commencement of construction of 14 national road projects already announced under the Building Australia Program (formerly known as AusLink 2).*

Answer:

It was a Government decision in light of the changing nature of the program and the new funding components it entails.

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Question No. NBII 82

Division/Agency: Nation Building Infrastructure Investment

Topic: Renaming of AusLink to the Nation Building Program

Hansard Page/s: Written Question

Senator Nash asked:

Senator NASH—So, in December last year, the Government decided to change the name of AusLink to the Building Australia Program. Is that right?

Answer:

See answer to NBII 81.

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Question No.: NBII 83

Division/Agency: Nation Building Infrastructure Investment

Topic: Renaming of AusLink to the Nation Building Program

Hansard Page/s: Written Question

Senator Nash asked:

Senator NASH—Now, it is called the Nation Building Program. Did the Government have trouble making up its mind as to what it should be called? Did a departmental official come up with the latest version over last year's summer break?

Answer:

See answer to NBII 81.

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Question No.: NBII 84

Division/Agency: Nation Building Infrastructure Investment
Topic: Cost of Renaming AusLink to the Nation Building Program
Hansard Page/s: Written Question

Senator Nash asked:

Senator NASH—How much will it cost to change the name AusLink to the Nation Building Program?

Answer:

See answer to NBII 01.

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Question No.: NBII 85

Division/Agency: Nation Building Infrastructure Investment

Topic: AusLink Signage

Hansard Page/s: Written Question

Senator Nash asked:

Senator NASH—Will the Government run around the country side removing and changing the signage so offensive AusLink signs are removed?

Answer:

See answer to NBII 02.

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ANSWERS TO WRITTEN QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Budget Estimates May 2009
Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government

Question No.: NBII 86

Division/Agency: Nation Building Infrastructure Investment
Topic: Renaming AusLink to the Nation Building Program
Hansard Page/s: Written Question

Senator Nash asked:

Senator NASH—Why does the Government consider it necessary to rewrite history?

Answer:

See answer to NBII 81.

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Question No.: NBII 87

Division/Agency: Nation Building Infrastructure Investment
Topic: Renaming AusLink to the Nation Building Program
Hansard Page/s: Written Question

Senator Nash asked:

Senator NASH—Is this to give the Australian people the impression that the Government is spending additional money on infrastructure?

Answer:

See answer to NBII 01.

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Question No.: NBII 88

Division/Agency: Nation Building Infrastructure Investment
Topic: Renaming of AusLink to the Nation Building Program
Hansard Page/s: Written Question

Senator Nash asked:

What was wrong with the term AusLink?

Answer:

See answer to NBII 81.

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Question No: NBII 89

Division/Agency: Nation Building Infrastructure Investment
Topic: Renaming of AusLink to the Nation Building Program
Hansard Page/s: Written Question

Senator Nash asked:

I refer to the statement by Minister Albanese regarding this matter, as reported on page six of *The Australian* on Wednesday, 6 May 2009. Minister Albanese's office maintained and I quote from *The Australian: the Government was entitled to identify new projects under its Nation Building Program – a term it has used to describe its policies since it came into Government.*

The point is, the road projects being funded under the Government's so-called Nation Building Program are the AusLink projects – national projects identified as worthy of Commonwealth funding by the previous Coalition Government and simply rolled out by this Government under a new name. So they are not 'new projects' are they?

Answer:

See answer to NBII 81.

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Question No.: NBII 90

Division/Agency: Nation Building Infrastructure Investment
Topic: Renaming of AusLink to the Nation Building Program
Hansard Page/s: Written Question

Senator Nash asked:

Senator NASH—So why the name change?

Answer:

See answer to NBII 81.

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Question No.: NBII 91

Division/Agency: Nation Building – Infrastructure Investment

Topic: Nation Building Program

Hansard Page/s: Written Question

Senator Nash asked:

I also notice that the *National Building Program (National Land Transport) Amendment Bill 2009* makes a number of changes to funding arrangements that apply to projects funded under the Nation Building Program. For example, the amendment to *Section 71* of the *AusLink (National Land Transport) Act 2005* to make it possible for Black Spot funding to occur for sites on the National Transport Network. Currently of course, that is not the case.

What prompted this change?

Answer:

The Government made a decision in February 2009, as part of the Nation Building and Jobs Plan, to significantly increase funding for black spots and to fund black spots on the National Land Transport Network. The Bill, which received Royal Assent on 26 June 2009, allows on-network black spots to be funded as Black Spot Projects and brings greater consistency, transparency and accountability to the Black Spot Program.

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Question No.: NBII 92

Division/Agency: Nation Building - Infrastructure Investment

Topic: Black Spot Projects on the National Land Transport Network

Hansard Page/s: Written Question

Senator Nash asked:

What areas of the National Transport Network will now receive Black Spot funding?

Answer:

All Black Spot locations are available on the Nation Building Program website.

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Question No.: NBII 93

Division/Agency: Nation Building - Infrastructure Investment

Topic: Black Spot Program Funding

Hansard Page/s: Written Question

Senator Nash asked:

How much is the Government allocating to the Black Spot program in 2009-10? And, in the four years from 2009-10 to 2012-13?

Answer:

All Black Spot details are listed in the Budget Papers.

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Question No.: NBII 94

Division/Agency: Nation Building - Infrastructure Investment

Topic: Black Spot Funding Allocated to the National Land Transport Network

Hansard Page/s: Written Question

Senator Nash asked:

Of all the Black Spot funding, how much will now be allocated to the National Transport Network?

Answer:

Total funding for Black Spot projects on the National Land Transport Network in 2008-09 and 2009-10 is \$27,383,800.

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Question No.: NBII 95

Division/Agency: Nation Building - Infrastructure Investment

Topic: Local Road and Street Black Spots

Hansard Page/s: Written Question

Senator Nash asked:

Will this change result in less money being spent on local roads and street Blacks Spots?

Answer:

The Government increased funding for Black Spots in 2008-09 and 2009-10 by \$150 million.

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Question No.: NBII 96

Division/Agency: Nation Building - Infrastructure Investment

Topic: Black Spot Funding Directed to Regional Australia

Hansard Page/s: Written Question

Senator Nash asked:

Out of all the Black Spot funding, what percentage is directed to regional Australia?

Answer:

Under the Notes on Administration issued to the States and Territories to provide guidance on the day-to-day operation of Part 7 of the Act, over the life of the program approximately 50 per cent of Black Spot funds in each State (other than Tasmania, the Australian Capital Territory and the Northern Territory) are reserved for projects in non-metropolitan areas. The amount finally allocated can be greater than this but not less.

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Question No.: NBII 97

Division/Agency: Nation Building - Infrastructure Investment

Topic: Black Spot funding directed to regional Australia

Hansard Page/s: Written Question

Senator Nash asked:

Can you promise that under these amendment that will not change? (NBII 97)

Answer:

The Government is providing an additional \$150 million for Black Spot projects under the Nation Building – Economic Stimulus Plan. As a result, more funding will be delivered in regional Australia.

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Question No.: NBII 98

Division/Agency: Nation Building - Infrastructure Investment

Topic: Black Spot Funding Directed to Regional Australia

Hansard Page/s: Written Question

Senator Nash asked:

Can you see more or less Black Spot funding being directed out of regional Australia?

Answer:

See answer to NBII 97.

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Question No. NBII 99

Division/Agency: Nation Building - Infrastructure Investment

Topic: Black Spot Funding to the National Land Transport Network

Hansard Page/s: Written Question

Senator Nash asked:

Given that the National Transport Network already receives enormous allocations, why subsume Black Spot funding into this allocation?

Answer:

The primary objective of the Black Spot program is to reduce the social and economic cost of road trauma, primarily by the identification and cost effective treatment of locations with a record of serious crashes or where serious crashes are likely.

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Question No.: NBII 100

Division/Agency: Nation Building - Infrastructure Investment

Topic: Local Road and Street Black Spots

Hansard Page/s: Written Question

Senator Nash asked:

Do you see that less Black Spot funding will now go to local roads and streets?

Answer:

The Government increased funding for Black Spots in 2008-09 and 2009-10 by \$150 million.