

**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 201

**Division/Agency:** Nation Building Infrastructure Investment

**Topic:** Princes Highway West/Geelong Ring Road

**Hansard Page/s:** Written Question

**Senator Nash asked:**

I ask this question because obviously we are talking about a different section of road – this involves an additional 38 kilometres of highway from where the Geelong Ring Road intersects the Princes Highway at Waurin Ponds.

So, does the Government stand by the promise made by the Member for Batman as reported by the *Herald Sun* on 22 November 2007 that it would duplicate the Princes Highway from Waurin Ponds to Winchelsea?

**Answer:**

See response NBII 200.

**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 202

**Division/Agency:** Nation Building Infrastructure Investment  
**Topic:** Princes Highway West - Geelong Ring Road  
**Hansard Page/s:** Written Question

**Senator Nash asked:**

When will the Government meet this commitment?

**Answer:**

Planning works for the Princes Highway West – Waurn Ponds to Winchelsea have already commenced.

**Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee**  
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE  
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**Question No.:** NBII 203

**Division/Agency:** Nation Building Infrastructure Investment  
**Topic:** Princes Highway West – Wauron Ponds to Winchelsea  
**Hansard Page/s:** Written Question

**Senator Nash asked:**

Is the Government aware of a statement made by Mr Gary Liddle, the CEO of VicRoads, to the Public Accounts and Estimates hearings of the Victorian State Parliament on 15 May 2009, that the duplication of the Princes Highway from Wauron Ponds to Winchelsea will occur under AusLink 3 – i.e. the round of the so-called Nation Building Program that will occur after 2013-14?

**Answer:**

Yes. Mr Liddle has since clarified that he was talking about the Winchelsea to Colac section of the Princes Highway, not the Wauron Ponds to Winchelsea.

**Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee**  
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**Question No.:** NBII 204

**Division/Agency:** Nation Building Infrastructure Investment

**Topic:** Princes Highway West – Waurin Ponds to Winchelsea

**Hansard Page/s:** Written Question

**Senator Nash asked:**

Does that accord with your understanding – that an election commitment made by Labor in a key Federal Victorian marginal seat in November 2007 was in fact only going to start to be fulfilled seven years into the future?

**Answer:**

The Duplication of the Princes Highway West – Waurin Ponds to Winchelsea project is listed for funding through the Nation Building Program and in the MOU with Victoria.

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**Question No.:** NBII 205

**Division/Agency:** Nation Building Infrastructure Investment

**Topic:** Princes Highway West – Wauru Ponds to Winchelsea

**Hansard Page/s:** Written Question

**Senator Nash asked:**

Is that a correct statement?

**Answer:**

No.

**Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee**  
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**Question No.:** NBII 206

**Division/Agency:** Nation Building – Infrastructure Investment  
**Topic:** Princes Highway West – Waurm Ponds to Winchelsea  
**Hansard Page/s:** Written Question

**Senator Nash asked:**

So, I ask again, when will the Government fulfil its election commitment to duplicate the Princes Highway from Waurm Ponds to Winchelsea?

**Answer:**

See response to NBII 204.

**Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee**  
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE  
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**Question No.:** NBII 207

**Division/Agency:** Nation Building Infrastructure Investment

**Topic:** Western Highway

**Hansard Page/s:** Written Question

**Senator Nash asked:**

During the election campaign, according to its media release of 21 November 2007, Labor made a commitment to provide \$604 million to upgrade the Western Highway from Bacchus Marsh to the South Australian border. Now, this is a perfectly worthwhile aim. What I do notice, however, is that the departmental website only discusses the construction of a four-lane dual carriageway along the Western Highway between Ballarat and Stawell – not quite to the South Australian border.

I also note that the Federal Government provided five million in the 2008-09 Budget to *advance project planning*. Moreover, according to the departmental website, this planning will not be complete until 2010.

So, Labor promised to duplicate the Western Highway, but at the moment has only provided \$5 million for a planning project to duplicate the highway between Ballarat and Stawell – a distance of 121 kilometres. Is that correct?

**Answer:**

There are three Australian Government commitments to National Network projects on the Western Highway with a combined total commitment of \$604 million. These are:

1. Western Highway Anthony's Cutting;
2. Western Highway duplication Ballarat and Stawell; and
3. Western Highway Upgrade Stawell to SA border.

All three projects are included in the Nation Building Program and in the MOU with Victoria.

**Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee**  
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**Question No.:** NBII 208

**Division/Agency:** Nation Building Infrastructure Investment

**Topic:** Western Highway

**Hansard Page/s:** Written Question

**Senator Nash asked:**

When will planning commence to duplicate the remainder of the highway? That is the remaining 181 kilometres?

**Answer:**

During the current Nation Building Program, the Australian Government has committed \$404 million to duplicate the Western Highway from Ballarat to Stawell. The Australian Government has also committed \$40 million to upgrade the Western Highway between Stawell and the SA border.

**Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee**  
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**Question No.:** NBII 209

**Division/Agency:** Nation Building Infrastructure Investment

**Topic:** Western Highway

**Hansard Page/s:** Written Question

**Senator Nash asked:**

When will Labor fulfil its promise to duplicate the Western Highway to the South Australian border?

**Answer:**

See response to NBII 208.

**Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee**  
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**Question No.:** NBII 210

**Division/Agency:** Nation Building Infrastructure Investment

**Topic:** Pacific Highway

**Hansard Page/s:** Written Question

**Senator Nash asked:**

When will the Government duplicate the Pacific Highway?

**Answer:**

The Australian Government has committed \$3.1 billion towards the upgrade of the Pacific Highway from 2008-09 to 2013-14. NSW Government has committed \$500 million towards the upgrade in the same period.

**Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee**  
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**Question No.:** NBII 211

**Division/Agency:** Nation Building Infrastructure Investment

**Topic:** Pacific Highway

**Hansard Page/s:** Written Question

**Senator Nash asked:**

Does the Government stand by its election commitment to complete a dual carriageway on the Pacific Highway between Sydney to Brisbane by 2016?

**Answer:**

The Australian Government has committed \$3.1 billion towards the duplication of the Pacific Highway; \$2.5 billion has been committed for the upgrade of the Pacific Highway through the Nation Building Program and \$618 million for the Kempsey Bypass from the Building Australia Fund.

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**Question No.:** NBII 212

**Division/Agency:** Nation Building Infrastructure Investment

**Topic:** Pacific Highway

**Hansard Page/s:** Written Question

**Senator Nash asked:**

I am disappointed that the Government has simply ignored my specific Questions on Notice lodged by this Committee at the last hearings in February. Of course, it is no surprise that this Government has ignored its promises of openness.  
So, let's try again.

I note that the Government has allocated \$2.5 billion under Auslink 2 for the duplication of the Pacific Highway. Is the Government aware that according to the National Roads and Motorists Association in its January 2009 Budget Submission to the Australian Government, that it estimates the cost of the Pacific Highway duplication to be \$6.67 billion?

**Answer:**

See answer to NBII 211.

**Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee**  
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**Question No.:** NBII 213

**Division/Agency:** Nation Building Infrastructure Investment

**Topic:** Pacific Highway

**Hansard Page/s:** Written Question

**Senator Nash asked:**

Where will the remaining four billion plus dollars come from?

**Answer:**

See answer to NBII 212.

**Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee**  
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**Question No.:** NBII 214

**Division/Agency:** Nation Building Infrastructure Investment

**Topic:** Pacific Highway

**Hansard Page/s:** Written Question

**Senator Nash asked:**

Given the financial wreck that is NSW under its incompetent Labor Government, what confidence does the Government have that NSW will be able to provide its share of the funds to upgrade the Pacific Highway by 2016?

**Answer:**

The Australian Government has committed \$2.5 billion towards the upgrade of the Pacific Highway through the Nation Building Program and \$618 million for the Kempsey Bypass from the Building Australia Fund.

The NSW Government has committed \$500 million under the Nation Building Program Memorandum of Understanding.

**Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee**  
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**Question No.:** NBII 215

**Division/Agency:** Nation Building Infrastructure Investment

**Topic:** Pacific Highway

**Hansard Page/s:** Written Question

**Senator Nash asked:**

The Government is no doubt aware that the NSW Government delivered its mini-Budget in November last year. In that Budget, the bankrupt NSW Labor Government slashed its contribution to Auslink 2. I understand that the NSW Government's contribution was to be \$860 million but now it has been slashed to \$500 million.

Is that correct?

**Answer:**

Not applicable. See answer to NBII 214.

**Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee**  
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**Question No.:** NBII 216

**Division/Agency:** Nation Building Infrastructure Investment

**Topic:** Pacific Highway

**Hansard Page/s:** Written Question

**Senator Nash asked:**

So, the NSW Government's contribution to the Pacific Highway upgrade has been cut by \$360 million.

Is that correct?

**Answer:**

See answer to NBII 214.

**Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee**  
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**Question No.:** NBII 217

**Division/Agency:** Nation Building Infrastructure Investment

**Topic:** Pacific Highway

**Hansard Page/s:** Written Question

**Senator Nash asked:**

Will the Australian Government make up the difference?

**Answer:**

See answer to NBII 214.

**Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee**  
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**Question No.:** NBII 218

**Division/Agency:** Nation Building Infrastructure Investment

**Topic:** Pacific Highway

**Hansard Page/s:** Written Question

**Senator Nash asked:**

Where does that leave the Government in meeting its election promise of completing the duplication of the Pacific Highway by 2016?

**Answer:**

See answer to NBII 211.

**Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee**  
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**Question No.:** NBII 219

**Division/Agency:** Nation Building Infrastructure Investment

**Topic:** Pacific Highway

**Hansard Page/s:** Written Question

**Senator Nash asked:**

I consider now an important project to upgrade the Pacific Highway at Sexton's Hill, Banora Point. I note the commitment by the Government in its so-called Nation Building Stimulus Package in December last year to invest \$210 million to fund this project.

Just to be clear about this money, I quote from page 59 of the December 2008 Nation Building paper. The relevant paragraph reads:

*The Australian Government has committed \$210 million to upgrade the works at Banora Point, with \$2 million being accelerated in 2008-09. Additional funding to complete the project is currently being discussed with NSW.*

So, does that mean that between now and 30 June this year the Government is providing the sum of just \$2 million for this much needed project?

**Answer:**

\$2 million for the Banora Point upgrade is being accelerated in 2008-09 to enable work to commence including progress on planning and pre-construction activities.

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**Question No.:** NBII 220

**Division/Agency:** Nation Building Infrastructure Investment

**Topic:** Pacific Highway

**Hansard Page/s:** Written Question

**Senator Nash asked:**

So, the balance of this amount, \$208 million is to be provided, according to the recent Budget, by 2011-12.

Is that correct?

**Answer:**

The Australian Government has committed a total of \$298 million from the Nation Building Program for the Banora Point Upgrade.

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**Question No.:** NBII 221

**Division/Agency:** Nation Building Infrastructure Investment

**Topic:** Pacific Highway

**Hansard Page/s:** Written Question

**Senator Nash asked:**

So when will the \$208 million be spent?

**Answer:**

See answer to NBII 220.

**Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee**  
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**Question No.:** NBII 222

**Division/Agency:** Nation Building Infrastructure Investment

**Topic:** Pacific Highway

**Hansard Page/s:** Written Question

**Senator Nash asked:**

I notice that the Australian Government announced the \$210 million for the Banora Point upgrade in its December Nation Building Package. Now, we have the same announcement in the recent Budget.

So, is this simply a re-announcement of a previously-declared commitment?

**Answer:**

The December Package was an announcement of the acceleration of funds to financial year 2008-09 to enable works to commence earlier. The recent Budget announcement detailed the Australian Government's commitment to the project for 2009-10 onward.

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**Question No.:** NBII 223

**Division/Agency:** Nation Building Infrastructure Investment

**Topic:** Pacific Highway

**Hansard Page/s:** Written Question

**Senator Nash asked:**

How is it different from what has been announced last December?

**Answer:**

See answer to NBII 220.

**Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee**  
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE  
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**Question No.:** NBII 224

**Division/Agency:** Nation Building Infrastructure Investment

**Topic:** Pacific Highway

**Hansard Page/s:** Written Question

**Senator Nash asked:**

How much is the project estimated to cost?

**Answer:**

The Banora Point upgrade is estimated to cost \$310 million.

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**Question No.:** NBII 225

**Division/Agency:** Nation Building Infrastructure Investment

**Topic:** Pacific Highway

**Hansard Page/s:** Written Question

**Senator Nash asked:**

How much additional funding is to be provided by NSW?

**Answer:**

See answer to NBII 214.

**Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee**  
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE  
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**Question No.:** NBII 226

**Division/Agency:** Nation Building Infrastructure Investment

**Topic:** Pacific Highway

**Hansard Page/s:** Written Question

**Senator Nash asked:**

I understand that the NSW Government in its mini-Budget axed its counterpart funding to the Pacific Highway projects, including Banora Point.

In fact, in its mini-Budget, delivered by the NSW Government in November 2008, the NSW Government slashed its contribution to the Pacific Highway upgrade to \$500 million from \$860 million.

Am I correct?

**Answer:**

See answer to NBII 214.

**Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee**  
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**Question No.:** NBII 227

**Division/Agency:** Nation Building Infrastructure Investment

**Topic:** Pacific Highway

**Hansard Page/s:** Written Question

**Senator Nash asked:**

So, will the Australian Government make up the shortfall?

**Answer:**

The Australian Government has committed \$3.1 billion to the upgrade of the Pacific Highway over the next five years, from 2009-10 to 2013-14.

**Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee**  
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**Question No.:** NBII 228

**Division/Agency:** Nation Building Infrastructure Investment

**Topic:** Pacific Highway

**Hansard Page/s:** Written Question

**Senator Nash asked:**

How are the discussions with the NSW Government proceeding to secure their side of the funds for this project?

**Answer:**

See answer to NBII 214.

**Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee**  
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**Question No.:** NBII 229

**Division/Agency:** Nation Building Infrastructure Investment

**Topic:** Pacific Highway

**Hansard Page/s:** Written Question

**Senator Nash asked:**

Is the Government aware that a 2007 NRMA audit of the Pacific Highway identified Banora Point as one of the most dangerous sections of the highway – the site of 127 crashes, two fatalities and 61 injuries between 2003 and 2007?

**Answer:**

The Australian Government is aware of crash statistics for the Pacific Highway at Banora Point as provided by the NSW Roads and Traffic Authority.

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**Question No.:** NBII 230

**Division/Agency:** Nation Building Infrastructure Investment

**Topic:** Pacific Highway

**Hansard Page/s:** Written Question

**Senator Nash asked:**

Given its appalling safety record, will the Commonwealth pick-up the whole tab?

**Answer:**

See answer to NBII 229.

**Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee**  
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**Question No.:** NBII 231

**Division/Agency:** Nation Building Infrastructure Investment

**Topic:** Pacific Highway

**Hansard Page/s:** Written Question

**Senator Nash asked:**

In view of the funding delays and since no tangible works have yet been done on the Banora Point upgrade, will the Government re-consider the preferred community option of a tunnel being built under Sexton's Hill rather than the visually-intrusive viaduct?

**Answer:**

Planning approval for the project has been secured and construction is on track to commence later this year.

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**Question No.:** NBII 232

**Division/Agency:** Nation Building Infrastructure Investment

**Topic:** Pacific Highway

**Hansard Page/s:** Written Question

**Senator Nash asked:**

When will the project be completed?

**Answer:**

The project is estimated to be completed in 2012.

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**Question No.:** NBII 233

**Division/Agency:** Nation Building Infrastructure Investment

**Topic:** Pacific Highway

**Hansard Page/s:** Written Question

**Senator Nash asked:**

What is the status of the Auslink/Nation Building agreements with the NSW Government, given its decision to slash its contribution to this program?

**Answer:**

See answer to NBII 214.

**Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee**  
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**Question No.:** NBII 234

**Division/Agency:** Nation Building Infrastructure Investment

**Topic:** Pacific Highway

**Hansard Page/s:** Written Question

**Senator Nash asked:**

Is the decision by the Australian Government to fund the Kempsey Bypass in NSW by 2014 an acknowledgement that the incompetent NSW Labor Government is simply unable to meet its responsibilities to the Pacific Highway?

**Answer:**

The Australian Government has committed \$618 million towards the Kempsey Bypass to be funded from the Building Australia Fund. This project was recommended by Infrastructure Australia.

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**Question No.:** NBII 235

**Division/Agency:** Nation Building Infrastructure Investment

**Topic:** Pacific Highway - Kempsey Bypass

**Hansard Page/s:** Written Question

**Senator Nash asked:**

The Australian Government is tipping in \$618 million. Is that right?

**Answer:**

The Australian Government is investing \$618 million in the construction of the Kempsey Bypass.

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**Question No.:** NBII 236

**Division/Agency:** Nation Building Infrastructure Investment

**Topic:** Pacific Highway - Kempsey Bypass

**Hansard Page/s:** Written Question

**Senator Nash asked:**

In what years will that money be spent?

**Answer:**

The Government has committed to provide \$618 million to the Kempsey Bypass project on the Pacific Highway from the Building Australia Fund.

**Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee**  
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**Question No.:** NBII 237

**Division/Agency:** Nation Building Infrastructure Investment

**Topic:** Pacific Highway - Kempsey Bypass

**Hansard Page/s:** Written Question

**Senator Nash asked:**

What will be the total cost of the Kempsey Bypass?

**Answer:**

The Kempsey Bypass is estimated to cost \$640 million. The Australian and NSW Governments have previously contributed funds for planning and preconstruction activities.

**Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee**  
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**Question No.:** NBII 238

**Division/Agency:** Nation Building Infrastructure Investment

**Topic:** Pacific Highway Kempsey Bypass

**Hansard Page/s:** Written Question

**Senator Nash asked:**

Is the NSW Government contributing the difference?

**Answer:**

See answer to NBII 237.

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**Question No.:** NBII 239

**Division/Agency:** Nation Building Infrastructure Investment

**Topic:** Pacific Highway

**Hansard Page/s:** Written Question

**Senator Nash asked:**

What is the total cost to duplicate the Pacific Highway?

**Answer:**

The Australian Government has committed \$3.1 billion on the Pacific Highway.

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**Question No.:** NBII 240

**Division/Agency:** Nation Building Infrastructure Investment

**Topic:** Pacific Highway

**Hansard Page/s:** Written Question

**Senator Nash asked:**

The Australian Government is contributing \$2.45 billion to upgrade the Pacific Highway according to a response to a Question on Notice we asked last February. The Budget Media Release of the Minister says \$3.1 billion. Which figure is correct? By which year?

**Answer:**

The Australian Government has committed a total of \$3.1 billion to upgrade the Pacific Highway. This includes a commitment of \$2.5 billion from the Nation Building Program and \$618 million from the Building Australia Fund for construction of the Kempsey Bypass.

**Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee**  
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**Question No.:** NBII 241

**Division/Agency:** Nation Building Infrastructure Investment

**Topic:** Pacific Highway

**Hansard Page/s:** Written Question

**Senator Nash asked:**

Has the Australian Government negotiated an agreement with NSW to fund the difference in cost to duplicate the Pacific Highway? Yes or no?

**Answer:**

The Australian Government has committed a total of \$3.1 billion and the NSW Government has committed \$500 million to upgrade the Pacific Highway.

**Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee**  
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**Question No.:** NBII 242

**Division/Agency:** Nation Building – Infrastructure Investment

**Topic:** Princes Highway East – Traralgon to Sale

**Hansard Page/s:** Written Question

**Senator Nash asked:**

I refer to \$150 million commitment to duplicate the Princes Highway between Sale and Traralgon. Can you provide an update on the project?

**Answer:**

The Australian Government has committed \$140 million for the Princess Highway East – Traralgon to Sale upgrade.

Planning and pre-construction works have commenced and are well underway.

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**Question No.:** NBII 243

**Division/Agency:** Nation Building Infrastructure Investment

**Topic:** Princes Highway East – Traralgon to Sale

**Hansard Page/s:** Written Question

**Senator Nash asked:**

Can you explain the rationale for deciding which sections will be duplicated first? How have the priorities been arrived at?

**Answer:**

VicRoads undertake rigorous planning processes to determine construction priorities. These include:

- Traffic Volume statistics;
- Crash statistics;
- Boosting road freight capacity;
- Improvement of traffic flows; and
- Improved road safety.

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**Question No.:** NBII 244

**Division/Agency:** Nation Building – Infrastructure Investment

**Topic:** Princes Highway East – Traralgon to Sale

**Hansard Page/s:** Written Question

**Senator Nash asked:**

As I understand the total Federal commitment at this stage is \$150 million – what is the State Government contributing?

**Answer:**

The Australian Government has committed \$140 million for the Princes Highway East – Traralgon to Sale.

The State Government has committed \$35 million.

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**Question No.:** NBII 245

**Division/Agency:** Nation Building – Infrastructure Investment

**Topic:** Princes Highway East – Traralgon to Sale

**Hansard Page/s:** Written Question

**Senator Nash asked:**

Given we are talking about approximately 50 kilometres of road – of which some sections already have extensive passing lanes. How much work will get done with the money provided? Is the current funding commitment from State and Federal sources enough to duplicate the entire length of road between Sale and Traralgon?

**Answer:**

The schedule of works is still being finalised by VicRoads.