

Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Budget Estimates May 2010

Infrastructure and Transport

Question No.: NB-II 01

Division/Agency: Nation Building – Infrastructure Investment

Topic: Nation Building Program

Hansard Page/s: 8 (26/05/10)

Senator Joyce asked:

Senator JOYCE—Are you giving a commitment, Senator Conroy, that this money will be spent by the end of the financial year?

Senator Conroy—I think Mr Mrdak has made the point that they are state government projects, but we are happy to take on notice and make sure that you—

Senator JOYCE—It did not take long for that defence to come out.

Senator Conroy—Given that we do not have the information you are seeking, we are happy to take that on notice and see if there is any information—

Senator JOYCE—Maybe I could look it up on the website.

Senator Conroy—You probably could actually.

Senator NASH—The answer would come back saying it is not available on the website, so do not worry about it.

Senator Conroy—Except I am sure the broadband is not good enough in St George for you to get on line.

Senator JOYCE—It is good enough for me to know that you borrow in excess of a billion dollars a week.

Senator Conroy—We will take it on notice, and if there is any information that the state governments can make available to us we will provide it.

Answer:

The bring forward of payments to the states and territories is a budgetary measure decision by the Australian Government. For further details please refer to 2010-11 Budget Paper No. 2.

Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Budget Estimates May 2010

Infrastructure and Transport

Question No.: NB-II 02

Division/Agency: Nation Building – Infrastructure Investment

Topic: Local Government Payments – Accelerate of Payments.

Hansard Page/s: 10-11 (26/05/10)

Senator Joyce asked:

Senator JOYCE—No, I will go back to the question: did you receive any requests from the states to bring forward these payments? Did they make the first contact with you in requesting these amounts?

Mr Mrdak—I am aware that in relation to at least a couple of the road projects that is the case.

Senator JOYCE—A couple. Which ones?

Mr Mrdak—I will take the full amount on notice.

Senator JOYCE—Which ones? You said a couple. That is on the record. Which ones?

Mr Mrdak—I am personally aware for projects such as the Ipswich Motorway, the Northern Expressway and the Holbrook bypass that we have received—

Senator JOYCE—Hang on, did they—

CHAIR—Sorry, Senator Joyce, I know you have a lot of questions but I would encourage you to hear Mr Mrdak out then ask the next question if you could.

Mr Mrdak—Thank you. In relation to those projects I am personally aware that they are projects which we have had discussions with the states about where there is opportunity to bring forward funds to accelerate them. In relation to the full list of projects I will take that on notice.

Answer:

The Department works closely with the States and Territories to proactively deliver the investment program within each jurisdiction. This working relationship involves constant interaction and discussion around matters of budgets and progress. In this context, opportunities to progress projects and the timing of funding were identified and agreed on, with respect for the management of appropriate budget measures.

Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee

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Infrastructure and Transport

Question No.: NB-II 03

Division/Agency: Nation Building – Infrastructure Investment

Topic: Infrastructure Road Projects payments – State Governments

Hansard Page/s: 11 (26/05/10)

Senator Joyce asked:

Senator JOYCE—Did they make the request, or did you offer it?

CHAIR—I encourage committee members to always try their best to at least let the officers answer. You will be given as much time within the agenda as you need, Senator Joyce.

Mr Mrdak—Thank you. In relation to those projects, I am aware that discussions took place, including with me and the relevant senior people in those agencies at state level. There were opportunities identified to accelerate the projects or continue the pace at which they were ahead of schedule. In relation to the full list of road projects, I will take on notice as to what contact took place. But in all those circumstances my programs people are, almost on a daily basis, talking to the various state officers, tracking the project schedules and identifying opportunities to, where possible, accelerate project work.

Answer:

Refer to NB–II 02.

Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee

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Infrastructure and Transport

Question No.: NB-II 04

Division/Agency: Nation Building – Infrastructure Investment

Topic: Infrastructure Road Projects payments – State Governments.

Hansard Page/s: 12 (26/05/10)

Senator Joyce asked:

Senator JOYCE—Will you be able to assess whether the money you have transferred early will be spent before the end of the financial year? Do you expect the states to spend the money transferred early by the end of the financial year?

Mr Mrdak—As I outlined earlier, I will take that on notice. My understanding is a number of those projects have already incurred the expenditure or are in the process of it. I would anticipate that a large proportion of it would be expended, but I cannot give you the exact answer until I check with the states as to whether that is the case. Some of it may well be expended in 2010-11 as they pay invoices which are now being accrued.

Senator JOYCE—You will be able to tell me how much of the \$976 million was actually spent by 30 June?

Senator Conroy—We said we would take it on notice. If there is any information that the state governments are able to supply, we will pass it on to you. We have said that three or four times now. You can keep asking the question.

Answer:

Refer to NB-II 01.

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Infrastructure and Transport

Question No.: NB-II 05

Division/Agency: Nation Building – Infrastructure Investment

Topic: Douglas Arterial Road Accelerated Payment

Hansard Page/s: 13 (26/05/10)

Senator Joyce asked:

Senator JOYCE—During the budgetary process, you had discussions with Finance and PMC. That might be the source of our accelerated programs. Can I just take you to the Douglas Arterial Road? Under this project, \$15 million was to be spent in 2012-13, noting now we are in 2009-10, but now it will be spent in 2009-10. Will the Queensland government actually spend this \$15 million, considering you are taking it two years forward?

Mr Mrdak—My understanding is that this is a project which is being accelerated. Its construction is underway. My understanding is the expenditure is being incurred. I will take on notice exactly what their expenditure profile looks like, but certainly the advice we have is the money will be expended, predominantly in 2009-10, 2010-11.

Senator JOYCE—Did they ask you to accelerate the payments forward for them?

Mr Mrdak—Again, that is one I will check. I am not personally aware of that one, but my understanding is that is right.

Answer:

Refer to NB-II 02.

Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee

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Question No.: NB-II 06

Division/Agency: Nation Building – Infrastructure Investment

Topic: Douglas Arterial earthworks and bring forward of funds for Ipswich Motorway

Hansard Page/s: 15 (26/05/10)

Senator Joyce asked:

Senator JOYCE—Good. You have some information on the Douglas arterial, so let us drill down to that. They turned a sod back in April, and I hope that is not what we are paying this \$15 million for. What part of completion are we at, in percentage terms?

Mr Mrdak—I would have to take that on notice. I do not have that information with me here today.

Senator JOYCE—Have we started any major earthworks?

Mr Mrdak—My understanding is earthworks are underway.

Senator JOYCE—Major earthworks?

Mr Mrdak—That is my understanding, but I will take that on notice and give you further details.

Senator JOYCE—Even on the Ipswich Motorway, how far ahead of program is that?

Mr Mrdak—It is around six months ahead of schedule.

Ms O’Connell—It is six to eight months ahead of schedule on the Dinmore to Goodna section of the Ipswich Motorway.

Senator JOYCE—In our bringing forward of payments, have we brought forward six months of payments, or have we brought forward two years? How many years of payments have we brought forward?

Mr Mrdak—This brings forward a proportion of what would have been paid in 2010-11, not the full—

Senator JOYCE—How many years have we brought forward on the Ipswich Motorway?

Mr Mrdak—We will take that on notice and we will come back to you.

Answer:

With regard to the Douglas Arterial Road, the contractor has possession of the site. The site offices and compound are established and works are underway. Clearing of the river banks has been completed and construction of the bund is underway which will provide access for the piling rig. Currently traffic control throughout the motorway and adjacent roads is being set up.

The section of the Ipswich Motorway between Wacol and Darra opened on 18 April 2010, eight months ahead of schedule, thanks to funding brought forward through the Economic Stimulus Plan.

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Infrastructure and Transport

Question No.: NB-II 07

Division/Agency: Nation Building – Infrastructure Investment

Topic: Ipswich Motorway Wacol to Darra Completion Timeframe

Hansard Page/s: 18 (26/05/10)

Senator Joyce asked:

Senator JOYCE—This is substantial. This is half a billion dollars. You have brought forward half a billion dollars worth of expenditure two years. You are telling me now that it is six months ahead of schedule. Why would you bring forward two years of expenditure when you are only six months ahead of schedule?

Mr Mrdak—That particular section, Dinmore to Goodna, is six months ahead of schedule, but there has been a completed, earlier section, Wacol to Darra—

Senator JOYCE—How much is it ahead?

Mr Mrdak—It has been completed.

Ms O’Connell—Ahead of schedule again.

Senator JOYCE—How much ahead of schedule?

Mr Mrdak—I will find out. I will get you a definitive answer.

Ms O’Connell—I will find out.

Answer:

The Wacol to Darra section of the Ipswich Motorway was commissioned on 18 April 2010, eight months ahead of schedule.

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Question No.: NB-II 08

Division/Agency: Nation Building – Infrastructure Investment

Topic: Tiger Brennan Drive – Completion Timeframe

Hansard Page/s: 18-19 (26/05/10)

Senator Joyce asked:

Senator JOYCE—The Tiger Brennan Drive, you have brought that forward. Is that going to be completed this year?

Mr Mrdak—It is about to be completed. I think the works are just at the final stages.

Senator JOYCE—Right. When will it be completed?

Mr Mrdak—Again, I will check, but I think it will be in the next month or so.

Answer:

Works on Tiger Brennan Drive are scheduled for completion by December 2010.

The road over rail bridge at Berrimah Road (Stage 3 of the works) is expected to be completed late 2011.

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Budget Estimates May 2010

Infrastructure and Transport

Question No.: NB-II 09

Division/Agency: Nation Building – Infrastructure Investment

Topic: Nation Building Program 2008-09 Payments

Hansard Page/s: 22-23 (26/05/10)

Senator Joyce asked:

Senator JOYCE—Since we are talking about the global financial crisis and all the maladies from it, now that means that you would have brought forward payments in 2008-09. Did you bring forward any payments in 2008-09?

Mr Mrdak—Yes.

Senator JOYCE—You did?

Mr Mrdak—Yes.

Senator JOYCE—How much did you bring forward?

Mr Mrdak—I will get you that answer, but there was an amount from our Nation Building Program which was brought forward into that year.

Senator JOYCE—Do you have a rough idea how much you brought forward, because that was the eye of the storm?

Mr Mrdak—I would not want to give an inaccurate answer. I will take it on notice and come back to you as quickly as I can.

Answer:

Details of the bring forward measure can be found in 2009-10 Budget Paper No. 2.

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Infrastructure and Transport

Question No.: NB-II 10

Division/Agency: Nation Building – Infrastructure Investment

Topic: Funding – Roadway between Giles and Laverton

Hansard Page/s: 49 (26/05/10)

Senator Macdonald asked:

Senator IAN MACDONALD—And did anything go to Western Australia for any roadway between Giles and Laverton?

Mr Mrdak—Not that I am aware of. We will check and come back to you, but not that I am aware of in the program. The focus has been on the Plenty.

Senator IAN MACDONALD—I have inquired before about money to assist the Boulia Shire Council upgrade, which is in fact a state road but which the Queensland government refuses to put any money into. It is between Boulia and Tobermory on the Queensland/Northern Territory border. Is there any Commonwealth funding going into that at all?

Mr Mrdak—I would need to check that. No, I do not think so. I will check that, but obviously it may be. I do not know whether the council has decided to apply any of its R2R money or any other funds to the project.

Answer:

The Australian Government committed \$10 million in 2004 under the Strategic Regional Program for the upgrade of priority sections of the 2,800 kilometre Outback Way, including

- \$3.3 million to reconstruct sections of the Great Central Road between Laverton and Giles in Western Australia; and
- \$3 million for gravelling and sealing sections of the Donohue Highway between Boulia and Tobermorey in Queensland.

Under the Roads to Recovery Program the Australian Government will provide approximately \$1.7 million to the Laverton, Ngaanyatjaraku and Boulia Shire Councils for the period 2009-10 to 2013-14 to upgrade sections of the Great Central Road and Donohue Highways forming part of the Outback Way.

The Australian Government has also provided \$3.4 million to Boulia Shire Council under the Black Spots Program for the period from 2008-09 to 2010-11 for sections of the Donohue Highway between Boulia and Tobermorey.

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Infrastructure and Transport

Question No.: NB-II 11

Division/Agency: Nation Building – Infrastructure Investment

Topic: Funding – Winton to Tobermorey

Hansard Page/s: 49 (26/05/10)

Senator Macdonald asked:

Senator IAN MACDONALD—And nothing provided for anything from Winton to Tobermorey?

Mr Mrdak—Not that I am aware of, but I will take that on notice if that is okay.

Answer:

The Australian Government contributed \$3 million between 2006 and 2009 to gravel and seal sections of the Donohue Highway between Boulia and Tobermorey as part of the \$10 million Outback Way upgrade project.

In addition, the Australian Government will contribute funding to the Boulia Shire Council for the Donohue Highway between Boulia and Tobermorey:

- \$0.2 million under the Roads to Recovery Program for the period 2009-10 and 2013-14; and
- \$3.4 million under the Black Spots Program for the period 2008-09 to 2010-11.

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ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Budget Estimates May 2010

Infrastructure and Transport

Question No.: NB-II 12

Division/Agency: Nation Building – Infrastructure Investment

Topic: Approaches to Government from the ARTC on the Melbourne to Adelaide
Extended Loops project

Hansard Page/s: 52-53 (26/05/10)

Senator Nash asked:

Senator NASH—What is the process for a proponent to come to you if they want a variation? What did ARTC do to come to you and say, ‘There is no longer going to be these seven passing loops completely, as we put to you before. Geophysically, this isn’t going to work. We want to do it over here.’ What is the process and who gives the tick-off to the change in the funding?

Ms O’Connell—In terms of the normal process, it is subject to project proposal requests where the proponent responds with more detail in terms of the detailed project proposal. That is what I was talking about in terms of the general case. I will ask Neil to talk to the ARTC specific case.

Mr Williams—I would have to take on notice as to exactly what approaches ARTC made to the government in terms of the change of the project.

Senator NASH—Would you have a rough idea of what they would have had to have done? How much funding went to this one? I know it is seven loops, but how much funding actually went to the Melbourne-Adelaide extended loops?

Mr Williams—The total for the five or six loops was \$76 million.

Senator NASH—When they brought the proposal to you at \$76 million, had they identified the funding required for each of the seven loops?

Mr Williams—I would have to take on notice as to whether that specific information was there at that time.

Senator NASH—Wouldn’t that be fairly self-explanatory, though—that if they are going to do seven different things, they would need to tell the department where the funding was going and how it was going to be spent?

Mr Williams—I would have to take it on notice.

Answer:

ARTC advised the Government of the variation to the location of the Mount Lofty loop to Ambleside by letter on 22 April 2010.

Yes.

Yes.

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Question No.: NB-II 13

Division/Agency: Nation Building – Infrastructure Investment

Topic: Completion date of the Melbourne to Adelaide Extended Loops project

Hansard Page/s: 53 (26/05/10)

Senator Nash asked:

Senator NASH—With the Melbourne to Adelaide loops, what time period did the ARTC indicate to you that that entire project would be finished? I know you have said completion date is December 2011, but is that the date they gave you or is that now a varied date, given the change to the geophysical nature, or whatever, and they have had to obviously alter the project? What was their initial completion date that they gave you for those initial seven loops?

Mr Williams—I would have to take that on notice and hopefully come back to you during the course of this hearing.

Answer:

ARTC advises that the project is expected to be completed by March 2011.

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Question No.: NB-II 14

Division/Agency: Nation Building – Infrastructure Investment

Topic: Nation Building Programs Funding

Hansard Page/s: 55-56 (26/05/10)

Senator Joyce asked:

Senator JOYCE—I will give them to you: Nation Building Program investment, Nation Building Black Spot projects, Nation Building heavy Vehicle Safety and Productivity, Nation Building Roads to Recovery, Nation Building Off-Network Projects and Nation Building Plan for the Future.

Ms O’Connell—Certainly, for the 2010-11 financial year?

Mr Farmer—Is that for the financial year 2010-11?

Senator JOYCE—Yes, 2010-11.

Mr Farmer—For the financial year 2010-11, the Nation Building Program investment is \$2,768.5 million, the off-network program is \$225.4 million, the Black Spot Program will be \$59.5 million, Roads to Recovery is \$350 million, the Heavy Vehicle Safety and Productivity Program is \$20 million and the Nation Building Plan for the Future is \$57.3 million.

Mr Farmer—Was that the completion of your list?

Senator JOYCE—Can you please also separately provide how much has been spent and how much has been allocated to specific projects under this program?

Senator Conroy—I am just reading your transcript with Helen Dalley.

Mr Farmer—Yes, we can. There are a significant number of projects, including the Black Spot Program and Roads to Recovery. We would have to take that on notice.

Senator JOYCE—You are going to take that on notice?

Answer:

Refer to Nation Building - Infrastructure Investment website, www.nationbuilding.gov.au.

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Question No.: NB-II 15

Division/Agency: Nation Building – Infrastructure Investment

Topic: Commonwealth Contributions to Infrastructure Projects under the Building Australia Fund

Hansard Page/s: 56 (26/05/10)

Senator Joyce asked:

Senator JOYCE—Can you please provide a list of the Commonwealth contributions to infrastructure projects under the Building Australia Fund? In this list, can you please provide the name of the project, the state or states in which the investment will occur, the size of the contribution, the estimated total cost of the project, and the type of infrastructure that it is— that is, rail, freight, public transport et cetera?

Ms O’Connell—Certainly.

Mr Mrdak—This is for 2010-11, or overall for the project?

Senator JOYCE—For 2010-11.

Mr Farmer—I will start with the BAF projects. The first one is the Gawler line modernisation in South Australia. For 2010-11, the BAF contribution is \$62.1 million. The total contribution under the BAF is \$293.5 million. The second project in South Australia is the Noarlunga to Seaford rail extension. The contribution in 2010-11 is \$90 million. There is a total BAF contribution of \$291.2 million. The O-bahn city access is—

Senator JOYCE—How about you just take them all on notice.

Mr Farmer—Yes.

Answer:

The Commonwealth has committed approximately \$8.5 billion to major infrastructure projects as part of the Nation Building Plan for the Future. Of this, approximately \$7.6 billion will be drawn from the Building Australia Fund. Specific details for each of these projects is set out on the Nation Building Program website.

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Question No.: NB-II 16

Division/Agency: Nation Building – Infrastructure Investment

Topic: West Metro Project – Studies

Hansard Page/s: 58 (26/05/10)

Senator Joyce asked:

Senator JOYCE—This is fascinating, There was \$10 million worth of studies put into a project that never went ahead. Were those studies publicly advertised or open to tender?

Mr Farmer—Yes, to the best of my knowledge they were.

Senator JOYCE—They were. Where were they advertised?

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

Senator JOYCE—Do you know anyone who did them? Can you nominate any company?

Ms O’Connell—There were a number of companies involved in providing advice and doing studies and work in terms of the West Metro.

Senator JOYCE—Could you nominate a couple of them?

Ms O’Connell—I would have to take it on notice.

Answer:

Transport NSW has established an on-line archives for Sydney Metro that includes materials produced as part of the West Metro project. These archives can be found at <http://www.transport.nsw.gov.au/sites/default/file/metrodocs/index.php>.

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Question No.: NB-II 17

Division/Agency: Nation Building – Infrastructure Investment

Topic: Connection of Queensland heavy rail system to Murwillumbah in NSW

Hansard Page/s: 60 (26/05/10)

Senator Joyce asked:

Senator JOYCE—It is great that we are building the light rail down, but why are we shutting the one down to Murwillumbah? There was another rail line spur to Murwillumbah that we shut down? It has been closed. If all that is going to be part of a corridor, would it not be better to try and link all these rail corridors and make it an effective program, rather than having one state shutting down railways lines, where we are opening them up mere kilometres away?

Mr Mrdak—I am not familiar with that. I would have to take that on notice, I am sorry. I do not know the details of that.

Answer:

Operational decisions about railway lines in northern New South Wales and Queensland, including linking rail corridors between the two states, are a matter for the respective state governments.

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Question No.: NB-II 18

Division/Agency: Nation Building – Infrastructure Investment

Topic: Funding considerations for the Scone Level Crossing and Bolivia Hill

Hansard Page/s: 62 (26/05/10)

Senator Williams asked:

Senator WILLIAMS—The ARTC’s position is that they do not fund bridges. The ARTC say that they do not construct road bridges and therefore it is not their problem, though this is inconsistent with recent events. I believe the ARTC has actually helped to fund and construct bridges over railway lines. The New South Wales government say that the road impact is a national highway and federally funded and therefore is not their problem. So we are seeing a heap of buck-passing on a railway crossing that, as I said today, carries 11,000 movements a day. There are a lot of trucks, of course, on the New England Highway, and when we see 50 million tonnes of coal a year coming down there by rail I think this is a very, very serious issue. I ask you to perhaps visit Scone, talk to the council there, see the problem firsthand and try to squeeze some money from somewhere, because I think this is a section of the New England Highway that needs immediate attention for the safety not only of the rail but of the people who use the road—the New England Highway—and the people who live in Scone.

Mr Mrdak—Certainly we will seek some advice, including talking to council and the New South Wales RTA about what plans they have done to this point, and come back to you with some advice.

Senator WILLIAMS—I would appreciate that. On the New England Highway, Bolivia Hill, probably 30 or 40 kilometres south of Tenterfield—I think I have raised it with you before—is a very dangerous stretch of the road. Someone was killed there, probably six or eight months ago. Overall I think the New England Highway is in pretty good shape. I think what I drive on in New South Wales is in pretty good condition, anyway. There has been a lot of money spent on the road in many areas, but Bolivia Hill is a very dangerous section. Has anyone raised that issue with you to actually look at Bolivia Hill and what is required there to upgrade the road?

Ms O’Connell—We will happily have a look and see whether that forms part of the Black Spot Program.

Senator WILLIAMS—That would be great.

Ms O’Connell—As you might be aware, the black spots are set as a sort of a priority by the states, so it is a matter of whether that has been set as a priority project to cross the state of New South Wales. We will happily take it on notice to find out whether that specific location is a black spot and what the proposed treatment is.

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Answer:

Scone level crossing

In the 2010 election, Federal Labor pledged \$2 million to undertake the planning work for the Scone Interchange as part of the Regional Infrastructure Fund.

The Federal Labor Government will now undertake that planning work to determine the timelines and cost of a future upgrade.

Bolivia Hill

There have been no proposals submitted for funding under the Black Spot Program from the NSW Government or Tenterfield Shire Council for works at Bolivia Hill over the past two years.

The Australian Government has made available \$59.5 million per year to 2013-14 for Black Spot funding on Australian roads. Nominations for Black Spot funding are invited from state and territory governments, local councils, community groups and associations, road user groups, industry and individuals. All nominations should be made on the official Black Spot Nomination Form and be submitted through the NSW Roads and Traffic Authority.

Further information on the Black Spot Program, including the nomination form and eligibility criteria, is available from <www.nationbuildingprogram.gov.au>.

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Question No.: NB-II 19

Division/Agency: Nation Building – Infrastructure Investment

Topic: New England Highway, Tenterfield

Hansard Page/s: 62-63 (26/05/10)

Senator Williams asked:

Senator WILLIAMS—It is very much out of order. He is a very badly behaved minister today. I want to move on to Tenterfield. You would be well aware of the amount of traffic on the New England Highway. Tenterfield has a very narrow main street. All the traffic goes straight through the main street. Perhaps one thing you desperately need to look at as well is a bypass for the town of Tenterfield. As I said, the main street is extremely narrow—probably about as wide as this room, if that, from footpath to footpath. Once again, it is national Highway 1. I know the local government there and Mayor Toby Smith have had concerns about this for many years. Mr Mrdak, I would appreciate it if your department could look at that as well.

Mr Mrdak—Certainly, we will come back to you with some advice on where Tenterfield sits with the New South Wales priorities.

Answer:

The Australian Government will work closely with the NSW Government to identify priority projects in NSW. This process will take into consideration issues on the New England Highway.

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Question No.: NB-II 20

Division/Agency: Nation Building – Infrastructure Investment

Topic: Ipswich Motorway – Dinmore to Goodna

Hansard Page/s: 65 (26/05/10)

Senator Joyce asked:

Senator JOYCE—So what percentage of project completion are they at right at this moment?

Mr Mrdak—Is the Ipswich Motorway at?

Senator JOYCE—Yes, the Ipswich Motorway.

Mr Mrdak—As I said, they have completed Wacol to Darra and there are—

Senator JOYCE—So what percentage of the total project do we have?

Ms O’Connell—On the Wacol to Darra section, it is complete. It is finished.

Senator JOYCE—So the whole—

Ms O’Connell—Then there is the Dinmore to Goodna section, and I do not have a percentage that is complete there.

Mr Mrdak—We will get that for you.

Senator JOYCE—What do they give you in those reports—if they are not telling you what percentage of completion they are at?

Mr Farmer—I do not have a percentage figure in front of me. I will have to take it on notice.

Answer:

Works on the Dinmore to Goodna section of the Ipswich Motorway are progressing well with 100 per cent scheduled for completion in late 2012.

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Question No.: NB-II 21

Division/Agency: Nation Building – Infrastructure Investment

Topic: Nation Building - Infrastructure Investment Monthly Project Reports

Hansard Page/s: 65 (26/05/10)

Senator Joyce asked:

Senator JOYCE—What do they give you in those reports—if they are not telling you what percentage of completion they are at?

Mr Farmer—I do not have a percentage figure in front of me. I will have to take it on notice.

Answer:

Refer to NB-II 20.

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Question No.: NB-II 22

Division/Agency: Nation Building – Infrastructure Investment

Topic: Rail Productivity Improvements Package

Hansard Page/s: 66 (26/05/10)

Senator Joyce asked:

Senator JOYCE—What basis does the government have for the \$996 million contribution to the Australian Rail Track Corporation?

Mr Mrdak—The Australian Rail Track Corporation provided its capital works program and part of its strategic plan, so we have quite detailed project information in relation to each of those projects that were provided to the Australian government. Essentially, this is the next stage of its 10-year capital works program.

Senator JOYCE—So what is the ultimate goal of that 10-year capital works program?

Mr Mrdak—The ARTC has set a number of performance outcomes on the national freight network, including reducing train table times, increasing reliability, increasing productivity and the like. There are some quantitative measures that they have presented in their strategic plan. We can get you details of some of that.

Ms O’Connell—We can give you details, if you like, and take you through the seven projects that were part of that \$996 million investment.

Senator JOYCE—I will take that on notice rather than chew up time.

Ms O’Connell—Okay.

Answer:

The objectives provided by the ARTC in applying for funds for its \$996 investment program were to deliver:

- Improvements to economic productivity within the transport sector by reducing train operating costs;
- Environmental benefits, particularly through reduced greenhouse gas emissions;
- Enhancements to the performance of rail transport through reduced transit times; and
- Strong employment outcomes from the dollars invested.

Details of the projects are provided in the Government’s 2010-11 Budget Statement on Stronger Rural and Regional Communities delivered on 11 May 2010. Please refer to *2010-11 Budget Paper No. 2*.

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Question No.: NB-II 23

Division/Agency: Nation Building – Infrastructure Investment

Topic: Costing of construction of Freeways

Hansard Page/s: 67 (26/05/10)

Senator Joyce asked:

Senator JOYCE—Give me an idea of how many kilometres of freeway we would build for \$700 million.

Mr Mrdak—It varies. The costs of projects vary a lot on location and complexity—

Senator JOYCE—Ipswich Motorway?

Mr Mrdak—The Ipswich Motorway work, total commitment, is around \$3 billion.

CHAIR—Take it on notice.

Senator JOYCE—And how many kilometres do we get for that? Seven, do we?

Mr Mrdak—I would have to come back to you with an exact amount. It is a complex process because it is an operating inner-city motorway and it has complexity to it.

Answer:

Refer to Nation Building - Infrastructure Investment website, www.nationbuilding.gov.au

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Infrastructure and Transport

Question No.: NB-II 24

Division/Agency: Nation Building – Infrastructure Investment

Topic: Building Australia Fund – balance of uncommitted funds

Hansard Page/s: 72 (26/05/10)

Senator Joyce asked:

Senator JOYCE—In summary, what you had was slightly in excess of \$10.4 billion, most of it allocated except for about \$700 million. Is that correct?

Mr Mrdak—This is the Building Australia Fund?

Senator JOYCE—Yes, for BAF.

Mr Mrdak—I would have to check exactly how much was in the Building Australia Fund, but I think you are right. The current figure of uncommitted funds is around that \$705 million.

Answer:

This information is detailed on the Department of Finance and Deregulation website:

http://www.finance.gov.au/investment-funds/NBF/NBF_transfers.html.

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Question No.: NB-II 25

Division/Agency: Nation Building – Infrastructure Investment

Topic: Bruce Highway Blackspots

Hansard Page/s: 81 (26/05/10)

Senator Macdonald asked:

Senator IAN MACDONALD—Thank you. That has been very useful. I appreciate that. Who is doing Western Australia?

Ms Johnson—I have some of the other lists here. I will continue on with Sarina to Cairns. The Australian government has approved three projects to address crash black spots on the Bruce Highway. That has a combined value of \$250 million over the period of the Nation Building Program. The three projects are Caboolture to Curra, \$30 million; Childers to Sarina, \$115 million; and the one you are referring to, Sarina to Cairns, \$105 million, with \$10 million allocated in 2009-10 and \$12 million allocated in 2010-11.

Senator IAN MACDONALD—That is \$10 million and \$12 million out of the \$60 million promised?

Ms Johnson—There is \$105 million for black spots from Sarina to Cairns.

Senator IAN MACDONALD—Okay. So that is \$10 million and \$12 million out of the \$105 million?

Ms Johnson—Yes.

Senator IAN MACDONALD—Has any work happened or is it still in planning?

Ms Johnson—I have not got the exact detail but, yes, work has absolutely commenced on those projects.

Senator IAN MACDONALD—Actual physical work?

Ms Johnson—Physical work, yes.

Senator IAN MACDONALD—Bulldozer work?

Ms Johnson—Well, maybe brush cutting; maybe all sorts of things but, yes, some work—

Senator IAN MACDONALD—If you could just take that one on notice and give me some more details, that would be great.

Ms Johnson—Okay.

Answer:

The Nation Building Bruce Highway Black Spot program (2008-2009 – 2013-2014) is comprised of three sub-links; Caboolture to Curra, Curra to Sarina and Sarina to Cairns. 83 priority crash blackspots along the Bruce Highway have been identified for treatment under the program commencing in 2009-2010.

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Currently 4 of these projects are in the construction/delivery phase, a further 51 are in the development phase, while 8 are in the scoping phase. The works currently underway include:

Caboolture to Curra Sub-link

- between Cooroy and Gympie - a painted centre median supplemented by retroreflective raised pavement markers.
- Traveston Crossing Road intersection - work to significantly improve the intersection through benching the face of the cutting north of the intersection, clearing of vegetation, improving skid resistance and signage and delineation.
- The redesign of the Bruce Highway and Wide Bay Highway intersection.

Sarina to Cairns Sub-link

- the northbound and southbound overtaking lanes from Spanos Road to McCutcheon Road.

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Question No.: NB-II 26

Division/Agency: Nation Building – Infrastructure Investment

Topic: Jubilee Bridge Funding

Hansard Page/s: 87 (26/05/10)

Senator Macdonald asked:

Senator IAN MACDONALD—Can you respond to my question? How much have you provided for the Jubilee Bridge?

Senator Conroy—I will take that on notice and come back to you.

Senator IAN MACDONALD—While you are at it, would you tell me how much you have promised for the Jubilee Bridge?

Senator Conroy—I will have to take that one on notice as well.

Answer:

The Jubilee Bridge is a local government responsibility.

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Question No.: NB-II 27

Division/Agency: Nation Building – Infrastructure Investment

Topic: Pacific Highway Duplication Lengths by year

Hansard Page/s: 92 (26/05/10)

Senator Nash asked:

Senator NASH—Would you mind taking on notice for me—and I will take it in context, again, of the different nature of where the road is, the terrain and everything else—what length of the Pacific Highway has been done in each of the last 10 years? I want to get an overall picture. Just shy of 250 kilometres in two years seems an awfully big stretch, pardon the pun, of road to do in two years. Notwithstanding any great belief and intent, that is a long, long stretch of road.

Answer:

This information is available on the NSW Roads and Traffic Authority website at <http://pacifichighwayupgrade.com.au/>

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Question No.: NB-II 28

Division/Agency: Nation Building – Infrastructure Investment

Topic: Northern Sydney Freight Corridor Program

Hansard Page/s: 95 (26/05/10)

Senator Nash asked:

Senator NASH—So, at this stage, \$840 million has turned into a \$15 million study. What is the likelihood of the track being completed in three years? What is the length of the track?

Mr Williams—I will take that on notice and get back to you pretty quickly on that one.

Answer:

The \$15 million study was an initial investment to ensure the right scope of the project. The \$840 million is on top of that for further planning work, geotechnical activities as well as construction.

The projects identified as part of the \$840 million Northern Sydney Freight Corridor Program are expected to be completed by the end of 2013-14.

The construction program will consist of several discrete projects at various locations over the approximately 155 kilometres between North Strathfield in Sydney and Broadmeadow in Newcastle.

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Question No.: NB-II 29

Division/Agency: Nation Building – Infrastructure Investment

Topic: Clyde Road Upgrade

Hansard Page/s: 98 (26/05/10)

Senator Nash asked:

Senator NASH—I do understand the complexities of the type of piece of roadwork that you are telling me this is, but \$55 million seems an awful lot for a kilometre of road. I understand that you will have to take this on notice, but could you perhaps provide for the committee other instances where there has been work of this nature and the comparative costings?

Mr Mrdak—We will seek to do that.

Answer:

Direct comparisons between projects is impossible given variations in scope, geotechnical conditions, land values and road usage.

The scope of works for the Clyde Road upgrade includes:

- Duplicating the road over an at grade railway crossing;
- Land acquisition;
- Provision of bus priority treatments at the Reserve Street and Kangan Drive intersections;
- Remodelling of the existing signalised intersections at High Street and Enterprise Avenue;
- Signalisation of the Mansfield Street/ Langmore Lane and Reserve Street intersections;
- Converting Gibb Street and Jane Street intersections to left in/left out only;
- Provision of separated bicycle facilities along both sides of Clyde Road; and
- Provision of pedestrian facilities along Clyde Road in the form of pedestrian phases at all signalised intersections.

This project is complicated by the fact that up to 25,000 vehicles travel this road each weekday and that it is being undertaken in an urban area with businesses on both sides of the road.

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Question No.: NB-II 30

Division/Agency: Nation Building – Infrastructure Investment

Topic: Expenditure on the Great Northern Highway

Hansard Page/s: 99-100 (26/05/10)

Senator Eggleston asked:

Senator EGGLESTON—Michay is north of Perth, too, yes. Go on.

Senator ADAMS—I am sure if you go another 2,000 up—

Senator BACK—Just read them out.

Senator EGGLESTON—Just reading them out will do, thank you.

Ms Johnson—For Michay to Wooben, the construction end date is mid-2010. It involves there construction, widening, overlays, realignments, construction of passing lanes and intersection improvements. The total Australian government contribution is \$51,100,000.

Senator EGGLESTON—Okay.

Ms Johnson—And it is currently under construction.

Senator EGGLESTON—That is very good.

Ms Johnson—We have projects that are completed or under construction. Do you just want me to talk through the ones that are in planning or under construction?

Senator EGGLESTON—I am just interested in the ones further north, or any on the Great Northern Highway or the North West Coastal Highway.

Mr Mrdak—I think it is best if we take that on notice and we will come back to you.

Senator EGGLESTON—Could you do that for me.

Mr Mrdak—To have a detailed project schedule for the north-west is probably the easiest way.

Senator EGGLESTON—I do not want to hold you up particularly.

Mr Mrdak—That way we will get a full picture of what the north-west region looks like.

Senator EGGLESTON—It is difficult to find items in the budget, but I am sure that there is some road expenditure there. So could you take on notice that I am interested in road expenditure on the Great Northern Highway from Perth to Kununurra, including through the inland sections—through Meekatharra, Newman and so on.

Mr Mrdak—Yes. We will come back with a—

Senator EGGLESTON—Also the North West Coastal Highway, which runs up through Geraldton to Carnarvon and on to Karratha, Dampier.

Senator LUDLAM—Can I just chip in with one, if I may?

Senator EGGLESTON—Please do.

Senator LUDLAM—The only stretch of road that is not sealed between Kalgoorlie and the Pilbara is the section between Wiluna and Meekatharra. That is dirt and that has been a black spot in that part of the world forever. I think I asked about it the last time we were here. Is there anything? Have you received a request for funding from the state government? That would be the one that I would pick, if I could choose any. It is the only section on that freight route—and it is a very important local road as well for communities in Wiluna and Meekatharra—that is unsealed.

Ms Johnson—I will have to take that on notice. I do not have the information on those roads with me today.

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Answer:

Refer to Nation Building - Infrastructure Investment website, www.nationbuilding.gov.au

With respect to the Wiluna to Meekatharra Road, no funding proposal has been submitted to the Australian Government for a project on this section of road.

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Question No.: NB-II 31

Division/Agency: Nation Building-Infrastructure Investment

Topic: Adelaide Hills Rail Alignment

Hansard Page/s: Written Question

Senator Xenophon asked:

Regarding the Adelaide Hills rail alignment, I understand some public concerns have been raised by the local member, Jamie Briggs MP. What public consultation was undertaken in the planning stages of this project?

Answer:

ARTC proposed to extend an existing loop at Mount Lofty in the Adelaide Hills. ARTC has advised the Department that, following an examination of detailed site surveys and engineering design options and with regard to the terrain, alignment and cost of land acquisition at the Mt Lofty site, it has determined that construction of an extended loop at Ambleside, 10km east of the Mt Lofty site, would be a more suitable alternative.

ARTC has undertaken community consultation regarding the proposed Ambleside loop, including public meetings as well as providing community members opportunities to make written submissions.

As required by South Australian law, ARTC is now seeking planning approval from the South Australian Minister for Urban Development and Planning before commencing any works. As part of this process, individuals and groups will have opportunity to comment on the proposed works to the South Australian Development Assessment Commission.

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Question No.: NB-II 32

Division/Agency: Nation Building-Infrastructure Investment

Topic: Ambleside Crossing Loop Location Change

Hansard Page/s: Written Question

Senator Xenophon asked:

I understand the location of the Ambleside crossing loop was changed when it was discovered that the original site was not appropriate. What public consultation was undertaken regarding the changed location?

Answer:

Refer to NB-II 31.

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ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

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Question No.: NB-II 33

Division/Agency: Nation Building-Infrastructure Investment

Topic: Ambleside Crossing loop - consultation

Hansard Page/s: Written Question

Senator Xenophon asked:

- 1) As part of this consultation, did the department take formal comments or submissions from the community?
- 2) If so, how many comments or submissions were received?
- 3) What percentage was from individual residents as opposed to businesses and local government?
- 4) What was the general feel of the submissions or comments from individuals, as opposed to businesses and local government?

Answer:

Refer to NB-II 31.

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Question No.: NB-II 34

Division/Agency: Nation Building-Infrastructure Investment

Topic: Ambleside Crossing loop - compensation to residents

Hansard Page/s: Written Question

Senator Xenophon asked:

What compensation will the department be offering to residents affected by the new loop?

Answer:

Refer to NB-II 31.

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Question No.: NB-II 35

Division/Agency: Nation Building-Infrastructure Investment

Topic: New Ambleside Crossing Loop

Hansard Page/s: Written Question

Senator Xenophon asked:

What alternatives were there to the new Ambleside loop?

Answer:

Refer to NB-II 31.

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ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

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Question No.: NB-II 36

Division/Agency: Nation Building-Infrastructure Investment

Topic: Future of Ambleside Crossing Loop

Hansard Page/s: Written Question

Senator Xenophon asked:

Were these alternatives considered both before the original loop was decided on, and once it was clear an alternative loop would have to be planned?

Answer:

Refer to NB-II 31.

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ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

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Question No.: NB-II 37

Division/Agency: Nation Building-Infrastructure Investment

Topic: Amleside Crossing Loop-Public Consultation

Hansard Page/s: Written Question

Senator Xenophon asked:

Were these alternatives also open to public consultation?

Answer:

Refer to NB-II 31.

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Question No.: NB-II 38

Division/Agency: Nation Building-Infrastructure Investment

Topic: Gateway Motorway North

Hansard Page/s: Written Question

Senator Nash asked:

- 1) Gateway Motorway- I understand this project involves the construction of a link from the Gateway Motorway at Nudgee to the Bruce Highway. It will provide for the widening of a 16 kilometre section from Nudgee Road to the Gympie Arterial Road junction. I further understand the Commonwealth has committed \$125 million. Is that correct?
- 2) Is it correct that the progress on this project is the provision of \$10 million of Commonwealth money to the QLD Government to fund a planning study?
- 3) According to a media release issued by the Government on 20 August 2008 the Rudd Government provided this money pledging that the study would be complete by June 2009. According to the Minister's website, the planning study will be finished by late 2010. Is it correct that the planning study will now be 18 months late?
- 4) How much of the \$10 million federal money has been spent?

Answer:

- 1-2) Yes
- 3) No. The final consultants report has been completed.
- 4) The committed amount has been spent.

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ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

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Question No.: NB-II 39

Division/Agency: Nation Building-Infrastructure Investment

Topic: ARTC Matters

Hansard Page/s: Written Question

Senator Nash asked:

ARTC's Hunter Valley rail network is largely dedicated to coal-related above rail services.

- 1) Does ARTC believe that its risk profile and weighted average cost of capital will need to be adjusted as a result of the resource super profit tax and its potential impact on coal mine output, coal mine investment, and the economic life of coal mines in the Hunter Valley?
- 2) Does ARTC anticipate requiring further equity injections by the government to fund its investment program on either the interstate network or the Hunter Valley network? Can these anticipated equity injections, including estimated amounts and timings, be outlined?
- 3) Will ARTC be seeking changes to its Interstate Undertaking as a result of the government's \$1 billion equity injection announced in the 2010-11 budget? In particular, will ARTC be seeking adjustments to its weighted average cost of capital and forecast capital expenditure program?
- 4) Will ARTC participate in any bid for the below rail network currently owned by Queensland Rail and scheduled for privatisation by the Queensland government?
 - a. Will ARTC fund this bid, whether in part or whole, through current capital or will it require equity injections by the Federal government?
 - b. Does ARTC anticipate that acquisition of the Queensland Rail below rail network will substantially alter ARTC's risk profile on the Interstate Network and on the Hunter Valley network?
 - c. In considering any bid for the Queensland Rail below rail network, has ARTC considered the potential impacts of the government's resources super profit tax on the risk profile and costs of the acquisition? In particular, does ARTC believe that the super profit tax will increase the risk exposure of any bid and the capital costs of any acquisition?
- 5) ARTC submitted an access undertaking for its Hunter Valley network in April 2009. Why has this undertaking still not been accepted by the ACCC?
- 6) What provisions has ARTC made for legal disputes relating to land acquisitions for the rail line to the proposed Moorebank intermodal terminal?
- 7) What provisions has ARTC made for delays and greater than anticipated costs relating to the delivery of the Southern Sydney Freight Line?
 - a. Does ARTC believe these delays and higher costs will have negative implications for its projected north-south traffic volumes and subsequent revenue forecasts?
 - b. Is ARTC exposed to any financial penalties payable to either the state or local governments or to other businesses as a result of delays in the delivery of the Southern Sydney Freight Line?
- 8) What are the projected costs and delivery timeframes for the Geelong Port rail upgrades?

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Answer:

- 1) ARTC is an independent corporation which takes decisions based on its commercial interests and the interests of its shareholders.
- 2) No
- 3) No
- 4) ARTC was invited by coal companies operating in Queensland to participate in an offer to purchase the below rail coal assets in QLD.
- 5) On 19 April 2010 ARTC, with leave from the ACCC, withdrew its proposed Hunter Valley Access Undertaking in order to undertake further consultation with industry with a view to updating the Undertaking and resubmitting at a future date.
- 6) None.
- 7) a. No.
b. No.
- 8) Details about this project can be viewed on the Department's website at www.infrastructure.gov.au.