



AUSTRALIAN SENATE
RURAL AND REGIONAL AFFAIRS AND TRANSPORT
LEGISLATION COMMITTEE

25 May 2012

The Hon Anthony Albanese MP
Minister for Infrastructure and Transport

Dear Minister,

Evidence was given on Wednesday, 23 May 2012 at the Senate Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee's Budget Estimates hearing in relation to \$20.0 million of funding for Temporary Assistance to Tasmanian exporters accessing international markets.

Officials from Infrastructure Australia and the Department of Infrastructure and Transport stated in evidence that negotiations were still taking place with the relevant Tasmanian authorities, that funding announcements would be made in conjunction with the release of the Infrastructure Australia report (Attachment A), and that the report had not yet been handed to you (Attachment B).

This evidence appears to be contrary to a press release by you, and the Parliamentary Secretary for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, the Hon Sid Sidebottom on Thursday 24 May 2012, that announced \$4.0 million of this funding, and also provided a link to the Infrastructure Australia report (Attachment C).

The committee is seeking an explanation as to why the evidence given on Wednesday, 23 May 2012, did not provide any of the information contained in the press release.

Also attached for your information is an excerpt of the Hansard transcript from Thursday, 24 May 2012 (Attachment D), which contains a statement made by Senator the Hon Richard Colbeck in relation to this matter, as well as an article from *The Advocate*, titled *Burnie receives \$4m for port* that was tabled at the same time (Attachment E).

The committee would like a response to these matters by COB Friday, 1 June 2012. The committee is also seeking a response from the Department of Infrastructure and Transport, and Infrastructure Australia.

If you require further information on this matter please contact the Committee Secretary, Mr Stephen Palethorpe on 02 6277 3510.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'G. Sterle', written over a circular stamp or seal.

Senator Glenn Sterle
Committee Chair