

Rural & Regional Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Budget Estimates May 2012

Infrastructure and Transport

Question no.: 177

Program: n/a

Division/Agency: (PAR) Policy and Research

Topic: Melbourne-Brisbane road freight volumes

Proof Hansard Page/s: 9 (23/05/12)

Senator JOYCE and Senator NASH asked:

Senator JOYCE: We have a de facto inland rail system. The trouble is it is on the road. We have 6,000 trucks a day going through Moree or something, have we not?

Mr Mrdak: Certainly. But the question is how much of that freight is doing the full length from Brisbane to Melbourne and how much of it is serving intermediate points along the way. So those sorts of things come into play.

Senator NASH: Could you actually take that on notice for us and provide it by freight task and the various legs of that route?

Mr Mrdak: Certainly. We will see what data we have.

Answer:

Road traffic count data suggests that average heavy vehicle numbers north and south of Moree are between 1500 and 2500 vehicles per day.

There is little current data available on freight volumes for the inland route by origin–destination pair. BITRE estimates of intercapital road freight volumes on that route suggest Brisbane–Melbourne road freight volumes are around 1.0 to 1.5 million tonnes per year, in each direction, accounting for around 350 to 400 heavy vehicle movements per day on the Newell Highway.

Rural & Regional Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Budget Estimates May 2012

Infrastructure and Transport

Question no.: 178

Program: 2.2

Division/Agency: (PAR) Policy and Research

Topic: High speed rail study work

Proof Hansard Page/s: 106 (23/05/12)

Senator JOYCE asked:

Mr Mrdak: The government has allocated \$20 million to this point for studies on high-speed rail. That work will be completed by the end of this year.

Senator JOYCE: Have they actually been out there surveying routes? Will they make the route for this new preferred line public?

Mr Mrdak: That is the intention. I believe by the end of this year we will have advice to governments on a preferred alignment.

Senator JOYCE: My gosh!

Senator NASH: Can you take on notice exactly what the \$20 million is being spent on and who is doing what?

Mr Mrdak: Certainly, that is fine. We can give you that detail. The first stage of the work was released last year. The government's commitment was to complete the first stage within six months. That was done. The second stage of work, the more detailed financial and economic analysis and route analysis, will be completed by the end of this year.

Answer:

Phase one of the high speed rail (HSR) study, which was publicly released by the Minister on 4 August 2011, identified corridors and potential station locations and potential patronage, as well as an indicative cost estimate to build an HSR network.

Phase two of the HSR study is determining the recommended route alignment, refining cost estimates, passenger and revenue forecasts, assessing financial and economic viability and providing options for staging, financing and governance.

The allocated funding is being used to support all aspects of the study, which is managed within the Department by the HSR Unit. Following an open tender process the phase one contract was awarded to a consortium led by AECOM. The consortium also included Grimshaw Architects, KPMG and SKM. For phase two, an open tender process was also conducted, with the contract awarded to a consortium led by AECOM. The other phase two consortium members are Grimshaw Architects, KPMG, SKM, ACIL Tasman, Booz & Co. and Hyder.

The Department has also engaged four independent advisors to help oversight aspects of the study.

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Infrastructure and Transport

Question no.: 179

Program: 2.2

Division/Agency: (PAR) Policy and Research

Topic: Power requirements for High Speed Rail

Proof Hansard Page/s: 108 (23/05/12)

Senator JOYCE asked:

Senator JOYCE: What power requirements would this high-speed rail have? What is it run on? Electricity?

Mr Mrdak: It is electric.

Senator JOYCE: Does it run on tracks or is it one of these levitation jobs?

Mr Mrdak: We are looking at wheel on rail.

Senator JOYCE: What power requirements would that have?

Mr Mrdak: It is not inconsiderable, but the advice we have is that it is within the capacity of the existing grid. I can get that detail for you.

Answer:

The phase one study estimated that HSR rolling stock would use 29 kWh per train kilometre.

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Question no.: 180

Program: 2.2

Division/Agency: (PAR) Policy and Research

Topic: International High Speed Rail example

Proof Hansard Page/s: 108 (23/05/12)

Senator JOYCE asked:

Senator JOYCE: Can you give me an example, in the study you have done so far, of any high-speed rail that actually pays for itself around the world. I think I asked you this before.

Unidentified speaker: You did.

Mr Mrdak: I will come back to you in relation to that. Essentially, as I said, there are a number of services that cover operating cost, but obviously capital contribution in those services—

Senator JOYCE: But can you give me an example of any? It might be the one in Taiwan or Shanghai.

Mr Mrdak: I will come back to you on notice.

Senator JOYCE: I suppose the question I am getting at is: what population numbers are they dealing with as opposed to ours? We have a total population down the east coast of around 20 million—maybe even less; maybe 19 million, 18 million—and that would be the size of one of those towns.

Mr Mrdak: Certainly there are services in Europe which are serving centres of equivalent size to Melbourne, Sydney and Brisbane. I can get you some details of that.

Answer:

Joint OECD / International Transport Forum research shows that major French high speed lines (TGV) have financial rates of return ranging between 2.9% and 15% per annum. Whilst Paris is the hub of the TGV network, the lines in question also service destinations such as Lyon (population 1,521,030), Tours (population 344,799) and Le Mans (population 207,899).

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Infrastructure and Transport

Question no.: 181

Program: n/a

Division/Agency: (PAR) Policy and Research

Topic: IMF Report

Proof Hansard Page/s: 124 (23/05/12)

Senator LUDLAM asked:

Senator LUDLAM: Yes, and we did speak of that either the last time or the time before. If you are not directly aware of this IMF thing that I am citing tonight, there is probably not much use pursuing this too much further. Could you take on notice for us whether the projections that you look at would include the scenario that the IMF is warning of there. So by 2022 sustained doubling of spike, a sustained doubling of the world oil price, what that would do to Australia and the infrastructure that we are building today?

Mr Williamson: Certainly, Senator.

Answer:

A recent BITRE report “Traffic Growth: Modelling a Global Phenomenon” (Report 128) models traffic growth (vehicle kilometres travelled or vkt). One of the explanatory variables is petrol price: the report links petrol prices in Australia to world oil supply and oil price, and makes a base-case forecast for Australian traffic growth based on IEA projections. It also includes analysis of a high petrol price scenario that closely matches the IMF projections for oil price and supply to 2020.

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Budget Estimates May 2012

Infrastructure and Transport

Question no.: 182

Program: n/a

Division/Agency: (PAR) Policy and Research

Topic: IMF Report

Proof Hansard Page/s: 125 (23/05/12)

Senator LUDLAM asked:

Senator LUDLAM: You have offered to take a couple of points on notice. But just to conclude here: if you have time to review the IMF report, is it the view of you folk—and I am not trying to verbal anybody at the table—that we could cop the IMF scenario without substantially changing the way we do business here in Australia?

Dr Dolman: I think we would have to take that on notice and have a look at the report in detail.

Answer:

Refer to Question 181.

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ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Budget Estimates May 2012

Infrastructure and Transport

Question no.: 183

Program: 2.2

Division/Agency: (PAR) Policy and Research

Topic: High speed rail study completion date and assessment

Proof Hansard Page/s: Written

Senator WILLIAMS asked:

1. When is stage 2 of the high speed rail expected to be complete?
2. So the High Speed Rail unit will assess the report?

Answer:

Phase two of the high speed rail study is scheduled for completion in the first quarter of 2013. The Government will then consider the findings of the study.