

**Senate Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee**  
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE  
Supplementary Budget Estimates October/November 2005  
**Transport and Regional Services**

**Question no:** AUSL 01

**Division/Agency:** AusLink  
**Topic:** AusLink bilateral agreements  
**Hansard page:** 22 (31/10/05)

**Senator O'Brien asked:**

**Senator O'BRIEN** - So there is a standard provision about that?

**Mr Mrdak**—There is a standard provision in each of the agreements, including provision for standard signage across the national network.

**Senator O'BRIEN**—Can the Committee see a copy of the standard provision?

**Mr Mrdak**—I will also take that on notice. It forms part of a Bilateral Agreement. I would need to come back to you on that, if I can.

**Senator O'BRIEN**- For the sake of completion, I ask that the Committee see a copy of the full Bilaterals as signed.

**Answer:**

A copy of the Bilateral Agreements as signed, are **attached**.

The delay has been due to the time taken by Victoria to provide its agreement to release this document.

**[AUSL 01 attachments – not included. Available from the committee secretariat on request]**

**Question no:** AUSL 02

**Division/Agency:** AusLink  
**Topic:** Independent Tasmanian rail study  
**Hansard page:** 23 (31/10/05)

**Senator O'Brien asked:**

(The Independent Assessment of Rail Service Requirements in Tasmania)  
What are the terms of reference?

**Answer:**

The Terms of Reference for the Study are **attached**. They can also be accessed at <http://www.dotars.gov.au/latest.aspx>.

**[AUSL 02 attachment]**

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**Question no:** AUSL 03

**Division/Agency:** AusLink

**Topic: Funding for ARTC infrastructure**

**Hansard page:** 23–24 (31/10/05)

**Senator O'Brien asked:**

In relation to the ARTC infrastructure program as contained in AusLink, which is funded by the \$872 million announced at the time of the New South Wales lease agreement and an additional \$550 million contained in AusLink, are there any funding amounts for the construction of ARTC infrastructure, rather than maintenance of it?

**Mr Wolfe**—Absolutely, yes. A main part of that program is for construction, track upgrading and passing loops.

**Senator O'BRIEN**—Are you able to break that down?

**Mr Wolfe**—Could I take that on notice?

**Senator O'BRIEN**—Sure.

**Answer:**

The Australian Government and the Australian Rail Track Corporation (ARTC) are investing over \$2 billion in rail made up of:

- AusLink \$579 million; and
- ARTC \$1,422 million, of which \$693 million is funded by the Australian Government.

Projects being funded under the AusLink Investment Programme are attached.

The ARTC investment strategy for the Melbourne-Sydney-Brisbane corridor can be found at <http://www.artc.com.au/news/latest.htm>.

The ARTC has recently announced three major alliance contracts for the Melbourne-Sydney-Brisbane corridor. The contracts are:

- \$200 million to Transport Express Alliance for the renewal, rehabilitation and enhancement of rail and civil infrastructure along the North-Coast line between Sydney and Brisbane;
- \$134 million to Union Switch and Signal Pty Ltd to upgrade the signalling system between Sydney and Brisbane; and
- \$560 million to Australian Rail Consortium to provide a major track upgrade and construction of additional passing loops between Sydney and Melbourne.

ARTC will be announcing further contracts in 2006.

**[AUSL 03 attachment]**

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**Question no:** AUSL 04

**Division/Agency:** AusLink

**Topic:** Funding for ARTC infrastructure

**Hansard page:** 24 (31/10/05)

**Senator O'Brien asked:**

The original \$872 million included provision for borrowing by the ARTC but underwritten by the Australian Government. What is the status of that borrowing?

**Answer:**

The ARTC expects to undertake this borrowing in 2007-2008.

**Question no:** AUSL 05

**Division/Agency:** AusLink

**Topic:** AusLink Inter-modal Terminals Study consultants

**Hansard page:** 27 (31/10/05)

**Senator O'Brien asked:**

**Mr Wolfe**—We have the consultants Merrick and Associates doing it.

**Senator O'Brien**—And the Commonwealth is funding that consultancy out of the AusLink fund?

**Mr Wolfe**—That is correct

**Senator O'Brien**—Can you tell us how much that consultancy is costing?

**Answer:**

The consultancy is for the Meyrick Consulting Group and Arup to undertake the AusLink National Inter-modal Terminals Study for a total value of \$188,166 (\$171,060 excluding GST).

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**Question no:** AUSL 06

**Division/Agency:** AusLink

**Topic:** The Peel Deviation

**Hansard page:** 30 (31/10/05)

**Senator O'Brien asked:**

Has the Department received representations from the Member for Canning, Mr Randall, about this project?

**Answer:**

The Department of Transport and Regional Services has not received representations from the member for Canning, Mr Randall, about this project. The Department has received copies of correspondence Mr Randall sent to Ministers Truss and Lloyd and former Minister Anderson concerning this project.

**Question no:** AUSL 07

**Division/Agency:** AusLink

**Topic:** Peel Development Commission meeting

**Hansard page:** 31 (31/10/05)

**Senator O'Brien asked:**

I understand that Minister Lloyd held a meeting with the Peel Development Commission and stakeholders on 19 October this year.

- (a) Who initiated this meeting?
- (b) Can we find out which members of the Federal Government attended?
- (c) Do you know whether there was an outcome to the meeting?

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**Answers:**

- (a) The meeting was with the Peel Deviation Stakeholders Group, and the meeting was initiated by the Group.
- (b) Members of the Federal Government that attended the meeting were Minister Lloyd and Don Randall MP.
- (c) The outcomes of the meeting were Australian Government confirmation of \$170 million in capped funding for the New Perth-Bunbury Highway (Peel Deviation and Kwinana Freeway Extension project) and that the Western Australian Government needed to sign the AusLink Bilateral Agreement to enable funding in 2005-06 for this project and other AusLink National Network projects in the State.

**Question no:** AUSL 08

**Division/Agency:** AusLink

**Topic:** Tasman Highway election commitment

**Hansard page:** 32 (31/10/05)

**Senator O'Brien asked:**

In terms of Tasmanian commitments, I wanted to look briefly at the Howard Government's election commitment of \$1.5 million for the Tasman Highway between Nunamara and Targa. According to an answer to a question I placed on notice, this funding was announced by the then Liberal candidate, Mr Ferguson, on 28 September 2004. Does the Department have a copy of that statement?

**Ms Armitage** – We can provide it. I have not got it here with me. I will need to check whether the Department has it.

**Senator O'Brien** – Do you know if the Department wrote the announcement?

**Ms Armitage** – I am not aware of that. As I said, I need to check that. I would be surprised.

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**Answer:**

A copy of Mr Ferguson's media statement, entitled "Ferguson's \$5 million Plan for North East Tasmania", was provided during the hearings – Senator O'Brien's acknowledgement of receipt of the media statement is at page 34 of the *Hansard* transcript of the Senate Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee for 31 October 2005. A further copy is **attached**. [See Attachment to AUSL 08]

The Department of Transport and Regional Services was not involved in preparation of this media statement.

**[AUSL 08 attachment]**

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**Question no:** AUSL 09

**Division/Agency:** AusLink

**Topic:** Tasman Highway: Commonwealth and State consultation

**Hansard page:** 35 (31/10/05)

**Senator O'Brien asked:**

What consultations occurred between the Commonwealth and the State Government prior to this announcement being made to understand the priority given to this project by the State and the amount of funding the State could provide?

**Answer:**

As provided in answer to Questions on Notice 1235 and 1236, **attached**, the Government made the decision to commit \$1.5 million towards the upgrade of the Tasman Highway, between Nunamara and Targa, during the 2004 election campaign. The Department of Transport and Regional Services was not involved in any consultation with the Tasmanian Government regarding this project prior to the announcement.

**[AUSL 09 attachment]**

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**Question no:** AUSL 10

**Division/Agency:** AusLink

**Topic:** Queensland Government and the Warrego, Bruce, Carnarvon and Outback Highways

**Hansard page:** 35 (31/10/05)

**Senator Joyce asked:**

Have the Queensland Government done anything about the Carnarvon, Warrego, Bruce or Outback Highways? Have the Queensland Government ever lobbied you about moving those roads up as a priority? Or, do they mainly concentrate on the south-east corner?

**Answer:**

The Carnarvon Highway is a State-controlled road. Setting of priorities and funding is the responsibility of the Queensland Government.

The Warrego and the Bruce Highways form part of the AusLink Network and were formerly part of the Federal Government-funded National Highway system. Before the introduction of AusLink, the Queensland Government submitted forward strategy reports that sought Federal Government funding for works identified as priorities by the State, on an annual basis.

AusLink provides funding on a 5-year basis. The Australian Government is currently developing corridor strategies in consultation with the State Government and this will assist in informing priorities for funding under future AusLink programmes. The Brisbane to Cairns (Bruce Highway) corridor strategy is one of the early pilot studies undertaken and initial work is now approaching completion. Corridor studies for other links in the AusLink network will be undertaken progressively over the coming year or so.

The Outback Highway route links Laverton in Western Australia with Winton in Queensland, via Uluru and Alice Springs. In Queensland, the Outback Highway comprises the Kennedy Developmental Road, a State-controlled road, and the Donohue Highway (west of Boulia), a local government road in Boulia Shire.

Prior to the 2004 Federal Election, the Australian Government committed \$10m under the Roads to Recovery Programme towards the Outback Highway. \$3m of this is proposed for the Outback Highway in Queensland, conditional on the Queensland Government providing matching funds. The Australian Government is currently developing arrangements for funding in consultation with the relevant State and Territory Governments involved.



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Within the framework of AusLink funding arrangements, the Queensland Government seeks funding for roads across the entire AusLink National Network in Queensland, including those sections of the Network in Queensland's south-east.