

Chapter 1

Conduct of the inquiry

1.1 The Nation Building Program (National Land Transport) Amendment Bill 2009 (the bill) was referred to the Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee on 14 May 2009.

1.2 The committee advertised this inquiry in *The Australian* on 20 May 2009 and on its website. In addition to relevant government agencies and departments, the committee invited a number of key stakeholder groups and individuals to provide a submission. The committee continued to accept submissions throughout the inquiry.

1.5 The committee received 5 submissions, listed in Appendix 1. The committee held a public hearing in Canberra on 11 June 2009. For a full list of witness please refer to Appendix 2.

1.6 All relevant submissions for the inquiry and the Hansard transcripts of the committee's hearings are available on the Australian Parliament's homepage at <http://www.aph.gov.au>.

The bill

1.3 The bill amends the *Auslink (National Land Transport) Act 2005* (the Principal Act) in the following ways:

- references to AusLink are replaced with references to the 'Nation Building Program', including changing the name of the Principal Act to the *Nation Building Program (National Land Transport) Act 2009*.
- modifies Part 6 of the Principal Act (currently titled 'Auslink Strategic Regional Projects') to make it clear that this Part can be used to approve funding for projects which are off the National Land Transport Network (off-network projects) and which are not in regional areas of Australia (as well as off-network projects that are in regional areas);
- allows the Minister for Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government (the Minister) to incorporate into any funding conditions set for projects funded under the Principal Act, the terms of a particular matter contained in an instrument or other writing as in force or existing from time to time;
- allows for a Regulation to be made to set a prescribed threshold amount which may provide the Minister with an additional criterion by which to grant a funding recipient an exemption from having to call for public tenders on a project approved under section 9 of the Act;

- extends coverage of Nation Building Program Black Spots Projects to allow the Minister to approve funding under Part 7 of the Principal Act for projects on the National Land Transport Network; and
- permits the Minister to increase amounts of money payable to a person or body that is specified in the Nation Building Program Roads to Recovery List.

Acknowledgements

1.4 In view of the brevity of the inquiry, the committee appreciates the time and work of those who provided oral and written evidence to the inquiry. Their work has assisted the committee's deliberations on this bill.

A note on references

1.5 References in this report are to individual submissions as received by the committee, not to a bound volume. References to the committee Hansard are to the proof Hansard: page numbers may vary between the proof and the official Hansard transcript.