



COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

ADJOURNMENT

Roads: Funding

SPEECH

Tuesday, 5 December 2000

BY AUTHORITY OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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Questioner
Speaker Cox, David, MP

Source House
Proof No
Responder
Question No.

Mr COX (Kingston) (10.32 pm)—The local government component of the Roads to Recovery Program is being distributed between the states under a formula based on the length of local roads and on population. The Minister for Transport and Regional Services has, however, declined to release that formula and instead has taken the extraordinary step of referring to a tabled list in the bill that sets out each local government body's entitlement. He claims this secret formula will advantage South Australia—it needs to.

In 1999-2000, South Australia received the lowest local government identified roads grant of any of the states in terms of dollars per kilometre. South Australia received less than \$300 per kilometre whereas Western Australia, Queensland and Victoria each received between \$400 and \$600 per kilometre, New South Wales almost \$800 per kilometre and Tasmania more than \$1,400 per kilometre. Expressed in per capita terms, South Australia again came out worst, with less than \$15 per capita, whereas New South Wales, Victoria, Queensland and Western Australia received between \$15 and \$35 per capita, while Tasmania received almost \$45. I seek leave to incorporate in *Hansard* a table provided to me by the Local Government Association of South Australia.

Mr SPEAKER—The member for Kingston seeks to have a table incorporated in *Hansard*.

Mrs Bronwyn Bishop—Mr Speaker, I have no confirmation that this has been discussed with the relevant shadow minister, so I will decline leave.

Mr SPEAKER—It may be possible, in fact, to have a look at the table and to reconsider the matter.

Mrs Bronwyn Bishop—I find it a particularly unusual thing to do in an adjournment debate. I decline leave.

Mr COX—I understand that the division of shares between the states—by which South Australia does so badly: 5.5 per cent—was part of some piece of ancient history, the logic of which neither the Commonwealth Treasury nor the Office of Local Government is now able to explain. South Australia's share of the Roads to Recovery local government allocation is 8.3 per cent. However, the Roads to Recovery Program represents only half the Commonwealth funding that will be received for local roads and it will expire in four years, at which time South Australia's share will revert to 5.5 per cent. It would have been far better if the opportunity of this additional funding had been used to make the relativities between the states fairer on a permanent basis.

There are two local councils that cover my electorate of Kingston. The City of Onkaparinga will receive Roads to Recovery funding of \$5.5 million over four years. The City of Marion will receive \$2.4 million over the four years. Another component of the Roads to Recovery Program is \$400 million to be spent over the four years from 2001-02 for—in the words used by the Deputy Prime Minister in his letter to me:

... developing key arterial link roads in outer metropolitan areas. The Government will provide details of this programme next year once it has assessed and prioritised potential projects.

Priority in federal road funding has always gone to the national highway system, to roads designated as of national significance and to black spots. The area where there are the largest community benefits, though, is urban arterial roads. I was therefore very interested in the Deputy Prime Minister's letter. Noting that the government has not yet 'assessed and prioritised potential projects', I immediately contacted the respective mayors and city managers of the cities of Marion and Onkaparinga to discuss what suggestions we might pass on to the minister.

Two of those suggestions are linked. The first, in the City of Onkaparinga, is Commercial Road, south of the Onkaparinga River. Commercial Road services a major outer urban growth area. It carries a very large volume of traffic and is in poor condition, and the state government's attitude has led me to doubt it will ever give it appropriate priority. Commercial Road is connected to Lonsdale Road and together they service 35 kilometres of beachside suburbs. Lonsdale Road is in the City of Marion. Intersections connecting Hallett Cove, Sheidow and Trott Park and Woodend to Lonsdale Road create a substantial traffic hazard there have been fatalities, including one in the last month and impede traffic flow. Lonsdale Road also divides the community, with residents of

Sheidow and Trott Park and Woodend having impeded access to shops and community facilities—including churches—and also the rail line and the beach. I have asked the Marion council to look at some engineering solutions that would alleviate these problems. These two projects fit the criteria of outer metropolitan arterial roads.

There are two other projects that I discussed with the two councils: upgrading the wine roads connecting McLaren Vale to other local wine regions and upgrading Majors Road, which joins Lonsdale Road and South Road and services the Onkaparinga TAFE. I will forward these four proposals to the minister so that he can consider them in his assessment and prioritisation of potential projects. I understand that, in the Prime Minister's address to the Local Government Association conference, he referred to this funding as for roads of national significance. I hope this does not indicate a split within the government about the objectives of this part of the program. I fear that the central departments may be attempting to thwart the Commonwealth funding arterial links in outer metropolitan areas because of the precedent that would set. In my view, because of the substantial community benefits to be derived from those projects, it is time funding was shifted in that direction.