



COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Federation Chamber

CONSTITUENCY STATEMENTS

Hunter Electorate: Roads

SPEECH

Thursday, 2 October 2014

BY AUTHORITY OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

SPEECH

Date Thursday, 2 October 2014
Page 11200
Questioner
Speaker Fitzgibbon, Joel, MP

Source House
Proof No
Responder
Question No.

Mr FITZGIBBON (Hunter) (09:30): Constituents in my electorate of Hunter are constantly expressing their delight at the outcome of the former Labor government's decision to fund and build the \$1.7 billion dollar Hunter Expressway. It has made an enormous difference to travelling times and safety for so many local communities because it has effectively provided those communities with a bypass of their local town.

But, alas, it is causing problems elsewhere. As the traffic movements are pushed, the chokepoints are pushed further up the valley. I think it is fair to say that the intersection where the New England Highway meets the Golden Highway is now one of the most dangerous traffic black spots in the Hunter electorate, and I call upon the New South Wales government to take it more seriously. It has done some work there, and it has just announced more work will be done, but it is becoming clear to me, given the busyness of the intersection and some of the visual challenges there, that nothing short of some form of graded separation will suffice to bring it to the safety standard we rightly expect in the 21st century. We must ensure no lives are lost at that intersection in the future.

This highlighted even further the need to bypass the townships of Singleton, Muswellbrook and Scone. Under the former Labor government, we made very significant progress on Muswellbrook and Scone. We allocated \$45 million to the Scone project. The last allocation of funding for Muswellbrook was some \$10 million, which was supposed to bring the project to, as they say, shovel-ready status. However, my advice is that, having asked for the \$10 million, the RMS of New South Wales is now saying that \$10 million is not enough to bring it to shovel-ready status. I do not understand how the New South Wales government can now change its mind and request more money from the Commonwealth.

I say to the RMS: get on with finishing the design works and bring the Muswellbrook bypass design to completion so we can get on with the job. On the Singleton bypass, about a year ago now the New South Wales government did its scoping study to determine whether the project was viable. We have not seen that study. I do not know why we have not seen that study. I do not know whether the government is waiting until we are closer to the March election, but I want that study released. I want the community of Singleton to understand what that study is and says and to have a better idea of what prospects we have of securing a Singleton bypass in the not too distant future. It is a bypass which is sorely needed in that part of the world.