



COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES



**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

**Federation Chamber**

**BILLS**

**Appropriation Bill (No. 1) 2013-2014**

**Consideration in Detail**

**SPEECH**

**Wednesday, 5 June 2013**

BY AUTHORITY OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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## SPEECH

**Date** Wednesday, 5 June 2013  
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**Questioner**  
**Speaker** King, Catherine, MP

**Source** House  
**Proof** No  
**Responder**  
**Question No.**

**Ms KING** (Ballarat—Minister for Road Safety, Minister for Regional Services and Local Communities and Territories) (18:15): The 2013-14 budget continues the government's strong investment in regional Australia and its commitment to working in partnership with regional economies in transition and to helping develop creative solutions to those regions—to support better economic, social and environmental outcomes across all of those regional communities. This budget invests record amounts in community-driven investment. In the budget we have built on our existing commitment to regional Australia, through the Regional Development Australia Fund, to finance very important infrastructure projects that address the specific economic and community needs of all of our regions.

From the first two rounds, we have invested some \$350 million to leverage projects already worth \$1.2 billion across the community. Already 75 projects are under way ensuring people living in rural and regional Australia are getting the services and support that they need, supporting the improvement and construction of regional infrastructure, community sporting and youth associations and cultural projects across regional Australian communities.

We have been strengthening governance, improving infrastructure and supporting economic development in Australia's Indian Ocean territories, committing to Norfolk Island reform, meeting the operating deficit of the Norfolk Island government but at the same time strengthening governance and improving services for the benefit of the island's economy and its residents, particularly in the area of apprenticeships and child protection. They are two very important areas of the island and are in desperate need. We have also been extending the operation of the Reconstruction Inspectorate and the National Disaster Recovery Taskforce to ensure that every cent of our flood-rebuilding package goes where it is needed and helps flood-affected communities to rebuild their roads, bridges, rail lines and public facilities so that they can get their lives back on track.

In the budget we are also contributing to the future economic development of North Queensland and supporting activities that enhance Indigenous and community engagement to facilitate the opportunities that are available under the *Australia in the Asian century* white paper. It is important also as part of this budget that we recognise the important role that local government plays across this country. The budget includes funding, as we have been debating, to conduct a referendum on the financial recognition of local government in the Australian constitution. That referendum will be held on the same date as the 2013 election and \$10 million has been funded for a national civics campaign and education campaign, which is to provide information to the general public about the referendum. It is some time since we have had a referendum. There are generations of kids who have not had exposure to what that means and they will be voting for the first time, so the civics education campaign is very important.

The 2013 budget also includes a \$25 million package to create jobs and encourage a generation of arts and creative businesses. The minister here will talk a little more about that. There is also additional funding being provided in the sports portfolio. We want to continue the very successful, Active After-school Communities program. It is a terrific program that has been doing great work in small and large schools across the country. The program is extended for one calendar year until December 2014. The program also supports around 2,000 primary schools and 1,200 out-of-school care services to provide quality sport programs.

The budget also increases the intelligence, investigative and results-management capabilities of the Australian Sports Anti-Doping Authority and it enhances the National Integrity of Sport Unit's ability to assess and respond to information about drugs and corruption in sport. Our commitment in this budget to regional Australia and its long-term economic and social sustainability is strong. It is something that members on this side of the House have felt very passionately about for a long time and I am very pleased that in this budget we continue that commitment to regional Australia. The portfolio continues to look forward to strengthening those relationships across Australia, particularly through our involvement with regional development through our RDA network; local government, importantly, to get those linkages between the RDA network and local government right;

services to the territories; and arts and sport—that is part of our portfolio—to drive even stronger regional growth and a more sustainable nation to capitalise in particular on the opportunities of the Asian century. I welcome questions.