



COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES



**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**  
**MATTERS OF PUBLIC IMPORTANCE**

**Economy**

**SPEECH**

**Wednesday, 4 May 2016**

BY AUTHORITY OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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## SPEECH

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**Questioner**  
**Speaker** Albanese, Anthony, MP

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

**Mr ALBANESE** (Grayndler) (15:43): I rise to talk particularly about infrastructure and the failure of this government to understand that infrastructure is the key to future jobs and economic growth. This is a budget that absolutely fails. It is a budget that has a \$1 billion cut to infrastructure investment over the forwards alone. It is a budget that, in four years time, will see the amount of money that is allocated to rail that is not an equity injection through the ARTC fall to zero dollars.

This is a Prime Minister who came to office saying that he was going to talk about cities and urban policy. What we have seen is that his 30-minute city policy did not actually last 30 minutes. It is a 30-minute policy! In last night's budget, not a single new project was approved—not a single new project anywhere in the country. There was no money for the Cross River Rail project. There was no money for light rail or heavy rail in Adelaide. There was no money for Metronet in Perth. There was no money for new major road projects. Just simply, there was a continuation of their magical infrastructure re-announcement tour around the country.

It is coming to an end because projects are being opened. The regional rail link down in Geelong, Bendigo Ballarat is now open. It is functioning. Projects like the Moreton Bay rail link will be opened in the next month. They were promised, funded, built and opened under a Labor government—opposed by those opposite. There is no money for western Sydney rail and no money from major road projects. We have just heard a speech from a Tasmanian. Tasmania gets under two per cent. That is its total percentage of the infrastructure budget: a cut to the rail revitalisation program and a cut of \$100 million to the Midland Highway. Victoria's percentage, to be fair, has increased. It is now up to 9.6 per cent. It is just a pity that they have 25 per cent of the population. One in four Australians are getting less than one in 10 of the dollars.

Those opposite speak about Infrastructure Australia and processes and they raise the east-west link—come in spinner. It was a project that was to produce 45 cents of benefit for every dollar invested. I have a proposition for everyone over there: you give me \$100 today and I will give you back \$45 tomorrow and we will call it a good deal. That is the proposition. What is more, they cut the Infrastructure Australia budget. It falls by 25 per cent in two years. One in four dollars will be cut from the Infrastructure Australia budget. What we saw last night was not budget 2016; it was fudge-it 2016, because the dollars simply do not add up. If today you are not planning for the infrastructure of tomorrow, the investment will fall off the cliff. We have already had under this government a 20 per cent decline in public sector infrastructure investment on their watch.

**Dr Leigh:** Twenty per cent!

**Mr ALBANESE:** Twenty per cent—one in five dollars—gone. That will result in lower future economic growth, lower returns in revenue, slower growth, fewer jobs. Is it any wonder that the steel industry is in trouble when investment has dropped off the cliff? This is a government that has no agenda for infrastructure and, in particular, has no agenda for our cities: \$50 million for planning, that is it. What a joke of a policy. It is no wonder they are not taken seriously.