



COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Federation Chamber

CONSTITUENCY STATEMENTS

Higgins Electorate: Railway Level Crossings

SPEECH

Wednesday, 13 February 2013

BY AUTHORITY OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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Speaker O'Dwyer, Kelly, MP	Question No.

Ms O'DWYER (Higgins) (09:36): I was very surprised at recent media reports eliciting the fact that the Minister for Infrastructure and Transport and the local member, Bill Shorten, have suddenly discovered the need for spending on infrastructure around railway crossings. I was surprised about that because during the last federal budget the minister for infrastructure provided no money whatsoever for removal of railway crossings to the Victorian government, who had asked for it in their submission. Mr Deputy Speaker, you will know that I have raised this issue in this place on a number of occasions. In my electorate of Higgins I have officially 21 railway stations and I have eight level crossings. I have level crossings along the Glen Waverley line at Glenferrie Road, Kooyong; Toorak Road, Kooyong; Tooronga Road, Malvern; Burke Road, Glen Iris; and High Street, Glen Iris. Along the Dandenong railway line, there are Koornang Road, Carnegie; Murrumbeena Road, Murrumbeena; and Poath Road, Hughesdale.

Since I last spoke in this place the RACV has released its 2012 Redspot Survey. The survey is a snapshot of Victoria's most frustrating congestion sites and it draws on the experience of RACV's two million Victorian members. It has said yet again in its survey that five of Victoria's 10 worst congestion sites are level crossings, with Murrumbeena Road, Murrumbeena coming in at number one for the second time and Koornang Road, Carnegie coming in at number four. Yet the railway crossing at Main Road, St Albans did not come in the top 10 in either the 2010 or 2012 survey.

I am very encouraged to hear that the federal government is pleased to speak with the Victorian government about what it can do to invest in this vital infrastructure. The Dandenong railway corridor is currently operating at or above capacity. As a result, peak-hour train journeys result in the constant closure of level crossings. The related congestion of pedestrian, car and road traffic has a substantial negative impact on businesses, community life, productivity and economic growth.

I would like to invite the minister for infrastructure to come down and visit the railway crossings in my electorate of Higgins, but not to come empty-handed; to come with a promise to help invest in the vital infrastructure that is needed. There is a petition that is currently circulating in my electorate to call for this vital infrastructure spend and the federal government needs to make its contribution. Victoria has received the least amount of infrastructure spending by this current federal government. This issue has been ignored by the previous state Labor governments. In fact, the member for Oakleigh, who has been the member for the last 13 years, has only recently discovered this issue, raising it in the parliament at the end of last year after much agitation in the local community. It is an issue we must act upon. It is an issue that requires federal government intervention and I call on the minister to intervene.