



Amanda Rishworth MP

Member for Kingston

Speech to Federal Parliament

28 May 2009

Nation Building Program (National Land Transport) Amendment Bill 2009

Ms Rishworth (Kingston) (1:42 PM) —I rise today to support the Nation Building Program (National Land Transport) Amendment Bill 2009, which is central to the effective delivery of the government's \$26.4 billion road and rail program—the Nation Building Program. The previous speaker, for some reason, spoke about why he does not believe that we should build this nation. The program before the House today delivers to projects that will support jobs today and will support jobs tomorrow. This program funds essential road and rail upgrades that will improve the capacity of the Australian economy long into the future. This investment in infrastructure is essential if Australia is going to get out of the infrastructure deficit left to us by the previous government. While the previous government, as we know, enjoyed the fruits of the mining boom, they squandered it. They did not use that opportunity wisely. They squandered the opportunity to invest in critical economic infrastructure for the country's long-term future. And it has now been left to this government to rebuild Australia. We have taken this challenge up with gusto.

I would like to take this opportunity to commend the Minister for Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government for delivering the Nation Building Program. He is doing so with the full support of the states. This support comes because, unlike the previous government, who, when they talk about infrastructure, really like to just blame the other side—

Mr Pyne interjecting—

Ms Rishworth —The member for Sturt might like to listen to some of this. There are some very important things in this.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms AE Burke)—I remind the member for Sturt that it is actually the prerogative of the chair who the call is given to.

(Quorum formed)

Ms Rishworth —I know that the opposition and members of the previous government do not like to talk about their failings, but I am going to talk about them.

They continue to blame the states for infrastructure issues; they play this blame game. The minister for infrastructure has looked at being cooperative with the states and I commend him because he is committed to meeting the needs of local communities and committed to working with the states to deliver important pieces of critical infrastructure for this nation.

I would like to talk about a couple of these examples of investment in my electorate of Kingston. Firstly, among the projects funded by the government's Nation Building Program is the Victor Harbor Road and Main South Road intersection upgrade. This project received \$3.5 million from the federal government in this budget to ensure construction is completed by 2010. The upgrade will provide three northbound lanes on Victor Harbor Road instead of one, three northbound lanes on Main South Road extending through to the Flemington Bridge, two southbound lanes to the Victor Harbor Road, two southbound roads between Seaford Road and Victor Harbor, two right turn lanes into Seaford Road and a left turn acceleration lane out of Seaford Road. This is a big boost for safety for the people in the southern suburbs of Adelaide who use this road. This will ease congestion at an incredibly busy intersection. It is another example of this government delivering on its election promises.

Fixing this intersection will improve access to the Fleurieu Peninsula. The Fleurieu Peninsula is a lovely destination for holiday makers, but often on long weekends there is a huge amount of frustration at this intersection. This intersection will improve access and stop frustrated motorists from taking a parallel route through the Old Noarlunga township. This means less through-traffic on our local roads, which will improve safety and quality of life for those in Old Noarlunga. This improvement of the Victor Harbor Road has been demanded by locals for some time. However, it was ignored by the previous government. I just want to illustrate this by quoting David, who lives in the southern suburbs. He sent me an email, which said:

Hi Amanda,

I have lived down south for six years and the bottleneck at Victor Harbor turn-off is getting beyond a joke in the mornings.

I was pleased to tell David that this government is listening to local residents and is doing something about it.

In addition to dealing with one of Adelaide's worst bottlenecks, the Nation Building Program provides funding for the Black Spot Program, which will provide funding in my electorate for upgrades at Wickham Hill Road at McLaren Flat and Meadows Road at Willunga Hill. This means an extra \$235,000 will be invested in an extension of guardrails, shoulder sealing, delineation and signage on a three-kilometre section of the Wickham Road and \$185,000 in shoulder sealing on a three-kilometre section of Meadows Road at Willunga. These projects are critical for the safety of residents who use this area. The safety of some of these roads has been raised with me a number of times and I am very pleased to let the residents know that we are concerned about safety, despite what the previous speaker said. We do want to make our roads safer and we are doing just that.

This funding is in addition to the Roads to Recovery funding for southern Adelaide provided in this budget. The Roads to Recovery program is another important part of our Nation Building Program. Through the program, the City of Onkaparinga and the

Marion council will receive over \$2.3 million. These funds will assist in the maintenance and upgrade of roads across the southern suburbs, and the jobs generated by this activity in tandem will increase the capacity for people in the south. This shows real value infrastructure. We hear a lot from the opposition, who talk about poor spending on infrastructure. My message to the opposition is clear: money provided to my electorate in this budget for local roads is high-quality spending. The investment builds on the investment from the first Rudd government budget for roads in Kingston. The previous budget provided for \$2.8 million to both of the councils in my local area, and it was certainly welcomed by my constituents.

The bill before the House today makes administrative changes to ensure that there are more effective provisions for major road and rail infrastructure projects, particularly those that are on and off the national network. It also makes more effective provision for the two programs I have just discussed—that is, the Roads to Recovery and Black Spot programs. For the Black Spot Program, the bill extends coverage of the Nation Building Program Black Spots Project to allow the minister to approve funding under part 7 of the act for projects on the national land transport network. Importantly, the bill also allows the minister to increase funding to Roads to Recovery projects if the minister sees fit. This flexibility is incredibly important, as currently no increases can be made during the funding period once the funding has been determined. This is impractical in the real world, where costs are not stagnant, and certainly not as stagnant as bureaucrats' lists. We need to make these changes now in order to make sure that the government can deliver on its road and rail infrastructure program in the most efficient way.

The bill before us today is just one part of this government's nation-building agenda. In addition, we have seen this government create Infrastructure Australia and the Building Australia Fund, which will also invest in major infrastructure projects. I am pleased that one of the projects announced in this budget is the rail extension from Noarlunga to Seaford. I have already mentioned this project a number of times in the House and I will do so again, because this project is critical to the outer metropolitan suburbs of Adelaide. It will create a significant benefit by reducing urban congestion and providing vital public transport infrastructure to those in the outer southern metropolitan suburbs of Adelaide. The outer metropolitan suburbs of Adelaide are growing, and they need this infrastructure. The corridor from Noarlunga to Seaford has existed for 30 years with no previous government doing anything about it.

There are a number of other nation-building projects that have also been mentioned in the budget. Another project in South Australia is the extension of the O-Bahn. The member for Makin has made it clear that he has been calling for this project. The member for Makin, who is here in the chamber—

Ms King —He was here.

Ms Rishworth —He was here a moment ago; he is no longer here. The member for Makin informed me that previous speakers have said that this project was just dreamt up—

Mr Hunt —It's a D'Ath moment.

Ms Rishworth —The interjection from the shadow minister for environment and water suggested that that was an embarrassing moment. I am not sure what is more embarrassing: not investing in infrastructure or realising that someone is not in the chamber. I would say that it is pretty embarrassing not to have invested in infrastructure for so many years—not to have invested in infrastructure in southern Adelaide and not to have made a commitment to the extension of the O-Bahn, which the member for Makin has been calling for for many years. I would say that is pretty embarrassing.

This government's Nation Building Program will address the previous government's infrastructure deficit. We hear a lot of criticism from the opposition about deficit. They need to stand up and be counted about the deficit they left for this nation when it comes to infrastructure. They squandered the proceeds of the mining boom and did not invest in the critical infrastructure that we need today. The Seaford rail is just one example of a project that has been desperately cried out for. This is a project that the local residents association, the council and the state government have all wanted. I am very pleased that this is one of the many nation-building projects around the country that will be delivered. This program, along with the many other programs that have been announced in the budget, will support jobs today by investing in infrastructure that we need for tomorrow. The population is growing in the southern suburbs of Adelaide, and those people want and require this investment in infrastructure.

The bill will help support jobs in Kingston, it will help support local jobs in the southern Adelaide region and it will help employ people right across South Australia. The improvement of Main South Road and the Victor Harbor Road intersection is just one small part in the Rudd government's investment in infrastructure across the country. The Rudd government is working with councils, working with state governments and cooperatively investing in our future. Along with other projects in southern Adelaide, this is of tremendous importance to the local area and to the economy of South Australia generally. This bill allows for a very effective way to provide these funds. This bill is very much about investing for the future and making sure that we have a nation that is prepared to the future. I have been overwhelmed by support from local residents, who have been clear that this is the type of investment that they want for the future because it shows that this government is planning for the future. It is planning not for five years, not for 10 years but for decades into the future. I therefore commend the bill to the House.