



SENATOR SCOTT LUDLAM
AUSTRALIAN GREENS
SENATOR FOR WESTERN AUSTRALIA

The Hon Paul Fletcher MP
Minister for Minister for Urban Infrastructure
Suite M151, Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600
Email: Paul.Fletcher.MP@aph.gov.au
cc: Minister for Infrastructure and Transport

18 April 2017

Dear Minister

Paul

I write to you at the request of your colleague Mathias Cormann, Minister for Finance, regarding a question taken on notice during the Finance Portfolio session of Additional Senate Estimates hearings. (Answer to Question F29 Attached)

My question was in relation to the Perth Freight Link, and in particular, the decision by your government to provide \$1.2 billion of commonwealth funding to this project.

I specifically asked the Minister whether he or then Prime Minister Abbott had a copy of the completed business case or a cost benefit analysis at the time the funding commitment was made.

He answered "I will take on notice what specific documentation was in front of government."

Despite this promise, and in breach of your government's 2013 election commitment to require all projects receiving federal funding worth more than \$100m to have a full cost benefit analysis, the Minister failed to provide an answer. Instead he asked that my question be directed to yourself and the Minister for Infrastructure and Transport.

Thus, I ask:

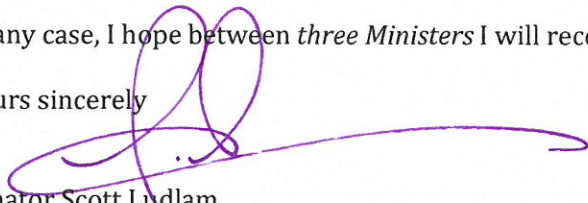
Regarding the commonwealth funding commitment of \$1.2 billion to the Perth Freight Link project;

1. Did the Minister for Finance or the Prime Minister have a copy of the completed business case or cost benefit analysis at the time the funding commitment was made?
2. What specific documentation was in front of government at the time the funding commitment was made?
3. Have you ever seen, or are you in possession of the cost benefit analysis or full business case?
4. Will you uphold the election promise made in 2013 that any project receiving federal funding of over \$100m will be required to have a full cost benefit analysis?

As you are aware, the contentious Perth Freight Link project has been the subject of two highly critical Senate Inquiries, with the most recent recommending that the Australian National Audit Office (ANAO) conduct an audit of the Perth Freight Link project including whether appropriate steps were taken to protect the Commonwealth's interests and obtain value for money.

In any case, I hope between *three Ministers* I will receive a direct answer as soon as possible.

Yours sincerely


Senator Scott Ludlam
Deputy Leader, Australian Greens

Senate Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
ADDITIONAL ESTIMATES 2016-17

Finance Portfolio
28 February 2017

Department/Agency: Finance
Outcome/Program: 2/2.1
Topic: Perth Freight Link

Senator: Ludlam

Question reference number: F29

Type of question: Hansard Proof, F&PA Committee, Page 65, 28 February 2017

Date set by the committee for the return of answer: Thursday, 13 April 2017

Number of pages: 1

Question:

Senator LUDLAM: When the funding commitment was made, did you or Prime Minister Abbott have a completed business case?

Senator Cormann: The process of assessment went through all of the appropriate channels. It was considered in the appropriate fashion.

Senator LUDLAM: I just asked a really direct question.

Senator Cormann: Of course, you have been pursuing, I think, six or seven orders through the Senate now.

Senator LUDLAM: And you have denied all of those.

Senator Cormann: That is not right. We have provided as much information as we could provide without harming the public interest.

Senator LUDLAM: I am not asking for documents here.

Senator Cormann: And, of course, including that part of the business case which could be publicly released and has been publicly released.

Senator LUDLAM: Yes. I understand that. Did you or the Prime Minister at the time, Mr Abbott, have those documents at the time the funding decision was made?

Senator Cormann: I will take on notice what specific documentation was in front of government.

Senator LUDLAM: How could you not know? Did you have a cost-benefit analysis?

Senator Cormann: You are obviously asking me questions now about 2014. I will take them on notice to make sure the answers I provide are 100 per cent accurate.

Answer:

Detailed questions concerning specific documents in front of Government should be referred to the Minister for Infrastructure and Transport and the Minister for Urban Infrastructure as the responsible Ministers.