

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE – DEPARTMENT OF INFRASTRUCTURE AND REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The Hon. PAUL GREEN: Your submission on page 3 states:

Contributions to the Productivity Commission's report have "emphasised the importance of connectivity ..."

What are the possibilities of telecommunications in regional areas, given some of the challenges? And do you have any comments on the opportunity of the very fast train linking Sydney with regional areas?

Ms PEARSON: On telecommunications; that is a whole different department to us.

The Hon. PAUL GREEN: I note that you said you may not be able to answer all our questions.

Ms PEARSON: Trains; that is an area within our department. We could take that on notice. I do not work in the rail area. That is the trouble with infrastructure development, they break that up into different areas such as rail and all sorts of modes of transport. I do not actually look after those areas but I am happy to take any questions on notice.

The Australian Government committed \$20 million in the 2017-18 financial year to progress business cases for faster rail connections between major cities, including Sydney and surrounding regional centres. Proposals are currently being assessed by the Department of Infrastructure and Regional Development.

The Hon. PAUL GREEN: Your submission also states:

... when looking at business and trade factors, the inquiry might look at local business demography for regions outside of Sydney; the reach of tradable and non-tradable businesses; ...

Can you take the Committee through that?

Ms PEARSON: In terms of tradable and non-tradable?

The Hon. PAUL GREEN: The opportunities that exist for regional areas.

Ms PEARSON: Which paragraph are you talking about?

The Hon. PAUL GREEN: Page 3, "Measuring connections", the third paragraph, "the inquiry might look at local business demography".

The CHAIR: Take a minute to have a look at it. The Hon. Paul Green is not trying to test you.

Ms PEARSON: It is just this submission came from all different parts of the department. Unfortunately that paragraph did not come from my area but I will see if I can interpret as well as I can.

The Hon. PAUL GREEN: I will not refer to the submission if that is the case. You may take the question on notice. I will ask you something you might know about; migration and decentralisation.

The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) releases the *Counts of Australian Business, including Entries and Exits* data and includes counts of businesses by industry, employment size and turnover size. Using this data, it is possible to gain an understanding of the business demography within regions outside of Sydney, as well as regions within Sydney.

Businesses produce a range of tradeable and non-tradeable commodities. The level of export and import of commodities can be affected by domestic developments and international competition. At present, ABS does not produce data that analyses the export and import of commodities at the regional level. However, this could potentially be an area the Inquiry can explore.

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The Hon. WES FANG: What do you see as the key sectors for development, particularly in this region that we are in now?

Ms WALL: Unfortunately, I have not seen a plan or been given any information in regards to the Palerang area.

Ms PEARSON: I can take that on notice and see if we can find something for you within the department.

The Queanbeyan-Palerang region is represented by Regional Development Australia (RDA) Southern Inland.

RDA Southern Inland recently published the *Regional Development Australia Southern Inland Strategic Plan 2017-2020* (the Plan). The Plan provides an analysis of the region's economy, key employment sectors, and key sectors for development. The Plan can be accessed online at www.rdasi.org.au.