

Jack D Webster J.P. (Qual)

5 March 1999

Mr Kevin Rudd M.P.
Federal Member For Griffith
653 Wynnum Road
Morningside QLD 4170

Dear Mr Rudd

The thrust of my letter may be seen in the accompanying photographs.

The infant Colony of New South Wales was hemmed in to a narrow coastal strip until a way was found, in 1813, to cross the Blue Mountains to the west.

The first great highway in Australia was from Sydney, over the Blue Mountains, to Bathurst. It was completed 14 January 1815, and was a rough and ready affair built largely by convict labour. Yet it was this road that set the pattern for development of the Colony of New South Wales, and later the Commonwealth of Australia. Bathurst became the headquarters of Cobb and Co. an organisation that provided the first major transport services for freight, passengers and Mail, to all points of the compass. Founded in 1853 it used horse drawn coaches and waggons until these were replaced by the motor vehicle in 1924.

With Federation came the need, if the new Commonwealth was to succeed as a Nation, for better communications and transport within the new country. Telephone lines started to cover the major cities and link the new State together. Telegraph lines crossed the dry inland and connected the country to the rest of the world. Wireless (radio) services were introduced. While the Federal Government initiated services and led the way, private enterprise followed.

Most things can be seen as a two way street, the construction of a rail line from Adelaide to Perth provided much needed transportation and communication; while at the same time the workers were encouraged to deposit their wages in the new "peoples" Commonwealth Bank. With virtually nowhere to spend their hard earned money anyway, the workers were taught to save their money, to transfer it, through the banking system, to wives and families back home. While at the same time the Government recouped some of the taxpayer's money expended on the line by way of income and other taxes.

A very satisfactory situation all-round.

Other great services to the nation have been for example, the Snowy Mountains Hydro-electric Scheme, Act of Federal Parliament 1949, and the Ord River Scheme. Some of these enterprises create immediate benefit, while others may be slow starters, they deliver the goods in the end.

In times of crisis other measures are needed. During the second World War, in 1942, Prime Minister John Curtin established the Allied Works Council; this was an organisation responsible for the conscription and direction of civilian labour. "Manpower Regulations" directed persons to essential industries, and established the Civil Construction Corps, the C.C.C. The C.C.C. was, more or less, a civilian army of construction workers which moved around the country building much needed military camps, aerodromes, and other installations. These "Emergency Regulations" continued for the duration of the war. They showed just what could be done if people really tried.

For the present and future.

During the latter part of 1998 and still, during the first quarter of 1999, many rivers were and are in flood, and many roads and rail lines were and are cut by flood waters.

The time is long overdue for national roads and rail lines to be raised above flood level. In many cases the weather only has to sneeze for some roads to be cut by local flooding, while nearby creeks have hardly risen at all.

This is not a job for local councils, for in most cases the jobs would be too large for the size of their workforce and the equipment available. A temptation would be to provide equipment and funds for extra hands. Then how many "Authorities would be setting priorities, schedules ? .

It may be shown that the C.C.C referred to above, has shown the way, while the "Snowy Mountains Scheme" has set the standard.

This is not simply a question of convenience, it is a question of the necessities of life in peace, and this coupled with the necessity of movement in time of war.

Australia has a great pool of unemployed, not just of unskilled, but of every trade and calling. Dole payments (job search or whatever), is simply a lifebelt thrown to a drowning man, it keeps his head above water, but takes him nowhere, and the nation stagnates.

A Civil Construction Corps would require all manner of trades, professions and skills. Basically those of a small community ON THE MOVE .

Unemployment funds would be renamed "Wages", and a considerable amount of these regained as tax.

If Australia is rich enough to give away many thousands of millions of dollars to overseas countries, then it is rich enough in "knowhow" and money to raise national roads and rails above flood levels.

For any government comitted to "creating jobs", the above is only a start.

In 1932 PER-ALBIN HANSSON was elected Prime Minister of Sweden, his Social Democratic (NOT Socialist) Government was able to lead Sweden out of the Great Depession by a system similar to the above. In 1933 F.D. ROSEVELT was elected the 32nd President of the United States on his declared "New Deal" to create jobs. He led his nation out of the Great Depression with great works in flood control, soil erosion, and forestry. His Policies and abiliy won him an unprecedented fourth term as President, while Per-Albin Hansson initiated a system which has carried Sweden to its prominent position in the world today.

The Dole may put food in a man's mouth, but work puts dignity in his heart.

The legitimate object of government, is to do for a community of people, whatever they need to have done, but cannot do, at all, or cannot so well do, for themselves ——— in their separate and individual capacities.

Abraham Lincoln 1860

The hardships caused by flooded roads and railways has been accepted by generations of Australians; are we to carry this encumbrance into the 21st century ??.

- 1) This is a national disgrace, and has been for 200 years.
- 2) Our pool of unemployment is also a national disgrace.
- 3) The cost to the nation of maintaining (with "dole" payments) is a terrific national burden.

Here now is a God sent opportunity to

- A) lift the nation out of the "flood and bear it syndrome",
- B) Give the unemployed WORK, (create jobs).
- C) Make unemployment relief payments ("dole") WORK, and change three burdens into three assets.

It would appear to me that our current government is more interested in creating a favourable impression in the eyes of the world than in the eyes of our own people.

There are thousands upon thousands of the signs, shown in the attached photographs, on our roads and highways, lets get rid of them.

Yours truly



Jack D Webster J.P. (Qual)

Letters from Ministers' offices removed here

Jack D Webster J.P.(Qual)

9th September 1999

The Honourable Paul Braddy MLA
Minister for Employment, Training
and Industrial Relations
GPO Box 69
BRISBANE Q 4001

Dear Minister,

RE raising roads and rails above flood levels.

Thank you for your letter of the first instant. Thank you also for the information you supplied regarding State Government programs for the unemployed and job creation schemes.

My letter to Mr. Rudd, Federal Member for Griffith, was primarily directed towards the raising of roads and rails above flood levels nationally, using an organisation similar to the "Snowy Mountains Scheme". Such an organisation must be commanded by a professional Engineer, ably assisted by other professionals, with a core workforce of plant operators, drivers, clerks etc.. Any unskilled unemployed would require training in some form.

I am mindful that most State Roads are the responsibility of local Councils. Most if not all Councils would lack the necessary extra infrastructure required to carry out this work; particularly with rail lines.

Using unemployed as an initial source of personnel to establish a "Roads and Rails" Authority along the lines of the "Snowy Mountains Scheme" would give these persons, not only an opportunity of job training with employment, but relatively long term employment. For LONG TERM is just what such a scheme will entail.

The "Snowy Mountains Scheme" is a prime example of co-operation between Commonwealth and State Governments to authorise, fund and basically oversee a project for primarily State benefit. There have been other schemes, and will be again.

The proposal for raising roads and rails above flood levels is one which will benefit all States and the Commonwealth in such matters as transportation, communication, national emergencies and defence.

The life of a road is dependant not only on the traffic it carries, but primarily upon its method of construction and freedom from mechanical (overloads) and water damage. No doubt Main Roads Departments in many States would have in place a stratagem of raising roads above flood levels whenever major repairs and reconstruction/relocation works are called for.

The proposal for raising roads and rails above flood levels is not aimed at any one State, but all States. It is a national problem. The State in which this proposal commences will long be remembered. Should Queensland take the lead, New South Wales may no longer be able to call itself the "Premier State".

As with the "Snowy Mountains Scheme", this proposal has met its detractors, its knockers. The total cost may appear at first to be frightening, however it should be remembered that once approved (and THAT takes time) the scheme would take many years before its completion could be celebrated, thus illuminating the annual cost in a white — NOT red light.

From my work experience, until retirement, with the New South Wales Government Railways, Commonwealth Department of Works and Housing (Roads and Aerodromes Section) together with 24 years University of Queensland staff including membership of the 24th 25th 26th Senates I know that the proposal will work. It will not only work, but like the 6/8 lane highway to the Gold Coast and Brisbane Airport's parallel runway, it will happen.

Yours sincerely



Jack D Webster

JACK D WEBSTER J.R. (QUAL)



2-01-04

Mr. Lawrence Springborg M.P.
Level 6
Parliament House Annex
Alice Street
Brisbane

Dear Mr. Springborg,

The newspaper clippings refer to a proposal which was submitted to my local Federal member Mr. K Rudd in 1999, attached.

The proposal has been viewed by some as a "work for the Dole scheme". This was never my view. The scheme is simply a proposal to unite a project with an apparent supply of suitable personnel, and get on with it.

This is not something that can be achieved in a day, a year, maybe not even in 20 years. It is however, a plan to eliminate as much as possible, a re occurring brake on Australia's progress and economy. It is not a plan to jump in with a GUNG HO approach to complete in record time. Not in peace time anyway. It is plan which may be initiated along similar lines to the Airlines when replacing aging aircraft, or the R.A.N. when replacing ships, neither replaces their fleets en masse.

The Ghan Rail Line in South Australia was, a little while back, re-routed due to recurrent flooding. The line has at long last been extended to Darwin.

The attached proposal should be viewed as something to be well planned with regards to finance and execution.

Since this proposal embraces both community service and defence, it necessarily requires co-operation between State and Federal Governments.

When rail lines are lifted above flood levels, freight would be carried by rail instead of road, (where not yet lifted above flood levels), and thus increase State revenue. The Defence advantage is obvious.

Flooding is a national phenomenon occurring at irregular intervals. We tend to forget floods in dry years, but it is not a problem that will go away by forgetting or ignoring it.

This 2004 is a year of fairly close State and Federal elections. This is also a time in this year when such a proposal should appeal to the Public. Everyone must eat. Lots of people drive motor vehicles, food and fuel are both items carried in great quantities-----but not if the road and/or rails are flooded. The Defence advantage is VERY obvious.

Perhaps if Queensland leads the way, P.M. John Howard may also see the Political advantages in 2004.

I leave it with you.

Yours sincerely



Jack D Webster

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