



Media Release

Senator Alan Eggleston

Liberal Patron Senator for Swan

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Australians Deserve Tangible Return from Telstra Sale: Senator

Liberal Senator Alan Eggleston has called for a significant proportion of the money generated from the Telstra sale to be spent on Australia's national infrastructure.

Senator Eggleston said that it was logical for the Australian public to receive a tangible return from the sale of an asset which has been developed through public funding.

The Senator said the Business Council of Australia had released a report earlier this year on Australia's infrastructure needs which focused on rural and urban water, energy and greenhouse and freight and urban transport.

In April this year the Committee for the Economic Development of Australia released a report entitled "Infrastructure: getting on with the job" which showed a steady decline had occurred with expenditure on infrastructure from around 7.3% of GDD in the 1970's to 3.6% in 2002-03.

"The Great U.S. Interstate Highway system was developed by President Eisenhower because he realised that it took over 3 weeks for a convoy of army trucks to travel from the east to the west coasts of the United States," the Senator said.

"There are similar, glaring deficiencies in Australia's national infrastructure and using the proceeds from the sale of Telstra will provide an opportunity for some of these to be corrected."

"For example, the National Highway system connecting capital cities needs to be substantially upgraded to two lane dual carriageway standards."

"There is also a need for improvement in east-west road links such as the Tanami Desert Road from Alice Springs to the Kimberley."

The Senator said consideration should be given to a mixture of direct Federal funding as well as investment from the proposed future fund for infrastructure.

Senator Eggleston said that bold vision was needed to correct Australia's infrastructure deficiencies and the opportunity presented to use a substantial proportion of the sale of Telstra for this purpose should not be missed.