

**MINISTER FOR REGIONAL TRANSPORT AND ROADS
HEARING: 1 NOVEMBER 2023
QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**

Question no: 1**Transcript page: Pg 6 (9)**

The Hon. SAM FARRAWAY: When was the meeting with CDC?

Ms JENNY AITCHISON: Sorry, it might have been this October. To be honest, I can't remember. I was looking at the disclosures the other day and I was looking at my October diary. I know there has been a meeting in the past four months, but it may not have been in the past three months.

The Hon. SAM FARRAWAY: Would you like to take that on notice and come back to us maybe later in the day and get your office to check to see when that meeting took place? It is a little bit concerning. You've said you've met with these operators but they're not in the most recent disclosure.

Ms JENNY AITCHISON: But the disclosure you're talking about goes to 30 September. I was obviously checking at the end of each month, as I do, what my meetings were that will need to be disclosed because I try to be ahead on things, and I think that meeting might have been in October.

The Hon. SAM FARRAWAY: Okay. But would you mind confirming what date it is in October?

Ms JENNY AITCHISON: Well, my meetings are all in my disclosures. I'm happy if they want to find the date. That's fine.

The Hon. SAM FARRAWAY: Maybe you could come back to us later in the day and let us know when that took place, if that's possible, Minister.

Ms JENNY AITCHISON: Sure.

Answer:

I am advised:

11th October, 2023.

Question no: 2**Transcript page: Pg 7 (10)**

The CHAIR: We will now go to questions from the crossbench. I will ask a few to begin with. I want to move to the issue of wheelchair-accessible taxis. Does the Government have any idea how many wheelchair-accessible taxis there are in regional New South Wales?

Ms JENNY AITCHISON: Somewhere in the department would have that information. I'm happy to ask Josh to answer that if you want. But we have been getting a lot of feedback, particularly in the wake of the former Government's reforms, about the loss of those taxis in regional areas. We've been working with those communities to improve those services where we've been able to and to try to make a better transition. That is a point of trying to get better transport for some of those regional communities, where people with mobility issues are really struggling.

The CHAIR: I'll get that provided to me at some point in terms of the numbers so not to waste any time.

Answer:

I am advised:

I refer to the response provided by the Secretary in the hearing.

Question no: 3

Transcript page: Pg 8-9 (11-12)

The CHAIR: I want to move to the issue of regional passenger rail and improvement of services for passenger rail. I'm aware of the spend in relation to the new trains and carriages. What additional services, though, in regional New South Wales are expected in terms of country rail? Is the Government looking at any new services, any new stations? Do you have a vision to increase and expand regional rail while you're Minister?

Ms JENNY AITCHISON: Certainly that is something that is on our radar. As I've talked about, the strategic regional integrated transport plans—we want them to be mode agnostic and purpose agnostic. At the moment when we came into government it's very clear that a lot of the transport and roads decisions were made really on an electorate-by-electorate basis and didn't reflect where people needed to go to access health, education, opportunity and jobs. What we're trying to do is look at: How can we better do that? We have put on some temporary additional services in particular areas. We had an incident recently near my electorate where we had a road closed and we actually put on extra services and we encountered a 15 to 20 per cent uplift in people using public transport, particularly rail, in that period. We're keeping that service on for a bit after the road is opened.

The CHAIR: What's that specifically, Minister?

Ms JENNY AITCHISON: Tarro bridge. So that's been something that we've been trying to do there. We had an election commitment about refurbishing and retaining existing fleet, including the XPT. That will be to sort of try to look at how we can do that. I know there have been lots of proposals around the State. I don't want to do a call-out because we're still talking to communities about those services and I don't want to be particularly raising expectations about time frames at this stage but there are ones that are on the table.

The CHAIR: To get a little more specific, there's obviously been the regional fast rail commitment between various regional centres that was on the cards over the last few years, for example. Is there any review or anything concrete that's happening within the department to look at the requirements of regional communities, particularly in terms of those centres that are growing? Is there any review that's taking place around what a modern passenger rail service looks like for regional New South Wales? I get a lot of constituents talking to me about how there are no options, the rail services are crumbling, they used to have a station here and there. Is it your vision as regional transport Minister to improve and increase the network and grow the network in regional New South Wales? What are you doing to do that, if so?

Ms JENNY AITCHISON: Absolutely it is, but it can't be done in isolation of other modes of transport and the purposes of transport. That's why we're doing our regional strategic integrated transport plan. We're looking at how we can better do that. We know that, when we have heavy rail in connections, that can be a real generator of jobs and opportunity and really lift people, particularly in times of economic downturn. There have been numerous studies on that. We want to make sure that we're getting the benefits of all of that. Obviously we can't do everything at once, but the planning has to happen so that we're not just looking at it in a piecemeal way. We want to make sure that the steps we take set up our communities. We've got opportunities post-COVID with the migration to the regions. We've got regional communities that are growing extremely fast that rail may be an answer for. But it may not be an answer for them. It might be bus rapid transit. It might be other forms of transport at the moment. So what we're doing is looking at what

are the transport needs now, what are the options that are available for them and how do we make them go better in the future.

The CHAIR: What's the time line for that and who is undertaking that work in terms of consultancies?

Ms JENNY AITCHISON: We're doing that through the department, so they're working right now on regional strategic integrated transport plans. They were meeting up in the Hunter. I think they're doing some work down south building on the work that was already in progress to tweak that a bit more to meet those goals. Matt can give you more information on it if you want either now or in the afternoon.

The CHAIR: Maybe in the afternoon.

Answer:

I am advised:

The Strategic Regional Integrated Transport Plans (SRITPs) are Transport for NSW's response to the NSW Government's election commitment for the delivery of integrated strategic plans for multimodal transport in Regional NSW, including rail.

The SRITPs are expanding on the work done on the former Regional Transport Plans and Integrated Transport Plans to better reflect the needs of regional communities. They will include detailed evaluations of the communities' transport needs over a 20-year horizon.

They will include investigation of economic opportunities and public transport options to support housing and jobs growth in the regions and will also consider maximising the use of the existing transport network, including rail, road and maritime infrastructure and services. This will include an evaluation of whether public transport services are meeting community needs and serving growth into the future.

Being outcome focused, they will include detailed evaluations of the communities' transport needs now and into the future.

They will include actions and initiatives that are costed to enable funding decisions to be made based on priorities. This will enable actions and initiatives to be investigated immediately after the final release of each plan.

The intention of the SRITPs is to streamline the planning process and provide regional stakeholders and their communities with a greater level of assurance around the short to medium-term transport priorities.

Question no: 4

Transcript page: Pg 9 (12)

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: Moving on, I asked questions of you around the Brig O'Johnston

Bridge a while back. In some of the answers that came back you stated that there's been \$6.48 million expended already under the Timber Truss Bridge Conservation Strategy and then there was another \$19½ million due to be expended. Since I asked those questions, how much of that \$19½ million has been expended on rehabilitating that bridge?

Ms JENNY AITCHISON: On the detail, I think I would have to ask Matt if he would have that information in terms of the dollars.

MATT FULLER: Thank you for the question, Mr Banasiak. Obviously there's been quite a bit of work done on that timber truss bridge. It is the oldest bailey bridge, timber truss bridge that we have in the State. Recently we had some corrective maintenance work when it was struck by a heavy vehicle.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: More specifically, I'm just after the figure. I know the history of it. Do you have a figure of how much of that—

MATT FULLER: I would have to take that on notice as to exactly what we've spent on the bridge in recent times. But obviously, as you point out, there is funding there to do further work on the bridge.

Answer:

I am advised:

Of the remaining \$19.5 million allocated for rehabilitation of the Brig O'Johnston Bridge, \$40,000 has been spent this financial year. The remaining funding will be spent on rehabilitation of the timber truss bridge structure across the next four to five years.

The bridge was closed to all traffic in July 2023 due to damage caused by an oversized heavy vehicle, resulting in detours. Repairs carried out at this time were not funded from the Bridge Rebuilding Program and the bridge was reopened on 11 August 2023..

Question no: 5

Transcript page: Pg 17 (20)

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: I go back to my questions about Brig O'Johnston Bridge, just quickly.

In your answer when you were talking about rehabilitating the bridge you said pedestrian access is currently not included in that plan. What's the plan for pedestrian access across that section of the creek in the meantime?

Ms JENNY AITCHISON: To that level of detail I would have to refer to my colleague.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: Mr Fuller, do you have that detail to hand?

MATT FULLER: I don't have the detail on pedestrian access. Perhaps this afternoon in the session we

might be able to provide more information.

Answer:

I am advised:

The existing Brig O'Johnston Bridge does not have facilities for pedestrian access, beyond sharing the existing 2.8 metre single travel lane.

Question no: 6

Transcript page: Pg 17 - 18 (20 - 21)

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: I will direct all my freight questions to her then. Just picking up on your answer there, you spoke about heavy vehicle rest stops. We heard in the inquiry into heavy vehicles a few weeks ago, particularly from the Transport Workers' Union, that they did a bit of research on heavy vehicle rest stops based on the map that's provided by your department, and they found that 50 of those heavy vehicle rest stops

were actually missing. They couldn't be found. My first question is how often is that map updated on your website.

Ms JENNY AITCHISON: To the specifics of that, I think you probably need to go to the bureaucrats at the end, but I am very concerned obviously around heavy vehicles and fatigue. One of the things of being a tourist coach operator for such a long time was that I do understand the importance of managing fatigue in that task. I note the former Labor Government actually put in a bus facility that's still used down at King Street Wharf. There was never anything done in the next 12 years for freight operators.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: Does it concern you that 50 heavy vehicle rest stops have disappeared into the ether?

Ms JENNY AITCHISON: Absolutely. I have directed the department to have a look at that particularly, and to look at any Federal opportunities. There's Federal funding at the moment, and we've been progressing that. I know that's something the former Minister promised to do but it didn't seem to progress. We're getting on with it.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: Through you, Minister—I'm assuming it's to Mr Fuller—how often is that map updated?

MATT FULLER: The map is updated on a regular basis. I would have to take on notice exactly what time frames, but I certainly appreciate and understand what you've said in terms of the fact that there have been some inaccuracies and apologise for that, because that's something that we've been working very closely with industry on recently.

Answer:

I am advised:

Transport for NSW advises the NSW Rest Areas Map is updated as required.

Work has started to update the classification of rest areas in NSW to meet Austroads' Guidelines for the Provision of Heavy Vehicle Rest Area Facilities.

I am concerned about your statement that 50 rest stops are not listed on the website, can you please provide this information to TfNSW so the information can be cross checked?

Question no: 7

Transcript page: Pg 19 (22)

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: I will put it to you: How do you respond to the fact that none of the rest stops meet the Austroad guidelines? I note that there's different types of rest stops, but the assertion or the evidence we received during that inquiry was that none of those rest stops, no matter what category they are, actually meet the standards. How are we building things that don't meet the standards?

MATT FULLER: I would have to take that on notice and seek some further information on what you refer to, because my understanding is we are building to Austroads standards, particularly in new builds. If I think about some recent examples underway on the Pacific Highway, we've got an example between Narrabri and Moree at the moment on the Newell Highway that I know is being built to classification 5 rest area under the Austroads guidelines. I would appreciate more information just to say that there's none that meet Austroads guidelines. I'm not sure that would be the case.

Answer:

I am advised:

The Austroads guidelines were released in 2019 to assist in managing heavy vehicle fatigue.

In 2022, a Transport for NSW audit was completed on the State Road network within the Regional and Outer Metropolitan area based on the Austroads guidelines. The audit identified 876 existing rest stops in total, including formal and informal rest stops. A breakdown of the 876 rest stops identified:

- 520 existing rest stops were compliant, and
- 356 existing rest stops were not fully compliant, due to deficiencies in parking capacity, or lighting, or toilets, or tables and bins etc.

The Transport for NSW Heavy Vehicle Rest Stop Improvement Program utilises the Austroads guidelines in the planning and delivery of both new heavy vehicle rest stop opportunities and upgrades to existing rest stops.

Question no: 8

Transcript page: Pg 19 (22)

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: Minister, how often are road construction contractors audited by your department for compliance?

Ms JENNY AITCHISON: I would have to take that question on notice. I don't know the exact

operational details. I will give it to Mr Fuller to answer. He might know.

MATT FULLER: I don't have that number off the top of my head. I would have to take it on notice or perhaps ask Ms Drover in terms of other contractor assurance activities. What I can say more broadly, though, is that we do have a range of assurance activities that are undertaken with our contractors, whether they be long-term contractors or construction contractors. We have, in a number of cases, independent verifiers. We have our own quality assurance project inspection teams that go out and undertake work, whether that be for safety, environmental considerations and also other commercial responsibilities. Ms Drover, perhaps you've got other items you could add to that.

CAMILLA DROVER: Thank you. I can add to that. There are also pre-qualification schemes that contractors have to be part of before they even get the right to put expressions of interest and tenders in. We have the contract performance scheme, which we review contractors' performance in delivery. As Mr Fuller said, there's a whole lot of other checks and balances that occur, right from pre-procurement through to procurement and then into delivery.

Answer:

I am advised:

Transport for NSW monitors contractors throughout each project via a range of measures, including through commercial representatives allocated to projects who monitor compliance with contract provisions, in partnership with the project team.

Performance reviews of contractors are also carried out through the preparation of a Contractor Performance Report (CPR). These reviews are generally carried out quarterly.

Additionally, Transport for NSW procedures for Major Road Infrastructure Contracts require integrated audits to be carried out around three months after the commencement of site work and further audits at six monthly intervals. Design consultants for Design and

Construct Contracts are also audited to ensure compliance with Transport for NSW design standards.

Transport for NSW continually engages with contractors to raise and address issues, audit performance and non-conformances, and ensure lessons learnt are aggregated. This work is also considered in conjunction with CPRs during the assessment for prequalification of future contracts.

Question no: 9

Transcript page: Pg 21 (24)

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: Can you on notice provide how many times Tamworth Regional Council has been assessed as part of its delivery of roads in the last five years and how many times they have

failed to meet the standards expected by your department?

MATT FULLER: I'm happy to take that on notice. Just to clarify, could I ask—is that in relation to

work they undertake on the State road network?

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: Both, State road network and whatever they're doing as local

maintenance.

MATT FULLER: Generally speaking, what I would say, just to qualify, is that our assurance activities

would be undertaken on the State road network and/or in situations where there may have been funding that had specific conditions associated to it.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: Just on those two conditions.

MATT FULLER: Sure. Happy to provide that.

Answer:

I am advised:

Work carried out by Tamworth Regional Council on the State Road Network is undertaken via Council's Road Maintenance Council Contracts.

Tamworth Regional Council is pre-qualified as part of the Road Maintenance Council Contracts program. The core objective of this program is to deliver a serviceable and sustainable State Road network allowing for the safe and convenient movement of people and goods and establishes a collaborative contractual relationship between Transport for NSW and the Council.

Transport for NSW's Road Maintenance Council Contracts program audit in August 2020 included Tamworth Regional Council. Tamworth Regional Council was awarded R2 pre-qualification in August 2021. As part of this process, the Council's management plan was independently reviewed.

Transport for NSW carried out an audit of Tamworth Regional Council's routine services component of their Road Maintenance Council Contracts in July 2022.

Question no: 10

Transcript page: 24 (27)

The Hon. SAM FARRAWAY: Are these 506 weekly bus services in your electorate of Maitland as well?

Ms JENNY AITCHISON: I can't remember. I think there were some in Port Stephens, from my memory. Sorry, we're just going back. There have been a lot of services. I don't know that there were any in mine,

to be honest, looking at them. No. They were operated by Hunter Valley Buses, but more into Port Stephens, Charlestown, Lake Macquarie, Newcastle, Cessnock and Wallsend.

The Hon. SAM FARRAWAY: You mentioned some shares in an earlier—do you have any questions to follow on with this?

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: You're absolutely sure that there were none in your electorate, or you don't know?

Ms JENNY AITCHISON: No, I can't say I'm absolutely sure.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Could you take that on notice?

Ms JENNY AITCHISON: Yes, absolutely. I can take that on notice.

Answer:

I am advised:

The additional 506 weekly bus services in the Hunter region do not service or traverse the Maitland electorate.

Question no: 11**Transcript page: 24 - 25 (27 - 28)**

The Hon. SAM FARRAWAY: You sold some shares in, did you say, Helloworld?

Ms JENNY AITCHISON: I'll be very clear on the record so that you've got this, because I understand there have been a lot of your own concerns and you seem to have this issue. I left that business some nine years ago when I was elected to Parliament. Either shortly before or shortly after I became the shadow Minister, even though it was not a requirement, I decided it was time for me to divest myself of any shares in the business. Then my husband sold the business in November 2016. It had been a Helloworld franchise as well. It was a very mixed tourism business. I can't remember now, because it was about 2009 or 2010, but there were some shares that came when we took on the franchise, and they couldn't be sold with the business because of a caveat that had been put on there by Helloworld. They remained in that company, which my husband was the sole director of.

The Hon. SAM FARRAWAY: Award Winning Tours? That company?

Ms JENNY AITCHISON: Yes. They just sat there. I don't know if you look at the stock market, but apparently travel shares haven't been doing too good.

The Hon. SAM FARRAWAY: Minister, when were those shares sold?

Ms JENNY AITCHISON: I think they were sold after I did my disclosures. The Premier said that they should be sold, so they were sold—I think at a loss, to be honest, but I don't know.

The Hon. SAM FARRAWAY: Can you take that on notice and maybe come back to us? Can you maybe check and come back to the Committee?

Ms JENNY AITCHISON: What do you want me to take on notice?

The Hon. SAM FARRAWAY: When were those shares in Award Winning Tours sold?

Ms JENNY AITCHISON: No, not the shares in Award Winning Tours, the shares in—

The Hon. SAM FARRAWAY: In Helloworld.

Ms JENNY AITCHISON: —in Helloworld that were held by the proprietary limited company Award Winning Tours.

The Hon. SAM FARRAWAY: If you can find out when they were sold Minister? Can you take that on notice?

Ms JENNY AITCHISON: I can do that.

Answer:

I am advised the Helloworld shares were sold on 29 May 2023.

Question no: 12

Transcript page: 30 (33)

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: I might just pick up where I left, talking about roads being built in our regions in adherence to certain guidelines. Minister, how much money has the State Government committed to the Country Road roundabout that was completed just recently?

Ms JENNY AITCHISON: Sorry? The Country Road roundabout?

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: The Country Road roundabout in Tamworth. It's just on the outskirts.

Ms JENNY AITCHISON: Rangari Road? No, the other one.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: The big roundabout outside of the airport.

Ms JENNY AITCHISON: Yes, Goonoo Goonoo. Sorry, you just said "country roundabout" first so it took me a while to get up there.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: It's colloquially termed as the Country Road roundabout, but it's off Oxley Highway and Country Road intersection.

Ms JENNY AITCHISON: I don't have the exact figure on that, but I'm sure someone can help me with that.

MATT FULLER: We would have to take that on notice, Mr Banasiak, and check on the grant that was provided.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: Yes. It was originally stated \$4,056,700, but in March this year the council said that they had incurred an additional cost of \$2.4 million. I'm wondering whether they have sought to recoup some of the additional funds through the State Government at all.

MATT FULLER: I'd have to take that on notice. I don't have that detail on hand.

Answer:

I am advised:

The project was completed in October 2022 and funded by the Australian Government Heavy Vehicle Safety and Productivity Program (\$4,532,000), the NSW Government's Restart NSW – Growing Local Economies Program (\$4,056,700) and a Tamworth Regional Council contribution (\$954,200).

[Country Road Roundabout complete | Tamworth Regional Council \(nsw.gov.au\)](#)

Question no: 13

Transcript page: 31 (34)

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: Okay. Do you have to hand as to who designed this roundabout? I note

that council built it, but was it Transport for NSW or the council that designed it?

MATT FULLER: I'd be happy to take some further information on that and come back in the afternoon session, if that's available. If it is a council-owned asset and a council project—

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: It's on a State-owned road, but they were the ones that built it. I'm just wondering who actually did the design of the work.

MATT FULLER: We can take that on notice and see if we've got that detail to hand.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: Okay. While you're taking that on notice, can you take on notice as to why, when it was designed, no consideration was given to the Austroads guidelines part 4B where it states, "Don't do dual-lane, five-leg roundabouts, because they increase the risk of confusion and accidents"?

MATT FULLER: We can take that on notice. It's probably fair to also say, in relation to standards, that they're generally guides. We use those to guide design and elements more broadly. There are logically nuanced decisions taken in different environments at different stages. But on that particular roundabout, we will be happy to take that on notice.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: I want to understand why we go outside those guides or why we make nuanced decisions when those guides are pretty clear when they say, "Don't do it; it increases the risk." Why would you do something that increases the risk? I note this is not the only five-leg, dual-lane roundabout that we're having problems with at the moment. The Oak Flats interchange has been a festering sore ever since it was built. That is also a dual-lane, five-leg roundabout. We're grappling with how we fix that mess. I'm trying to understand why we go down the route of building things that are outside the guidelines, that are outside the recommendations, when those guides are telling us, "Don't do it, because it increases safety risks."

MATT FULLER: I note your question. I guess there can be a range of reasons why we might seek to challenge standards for innovative solutions. There are environmental considerations. There are a range of things that come into play when we assess standards as a guide. But on those two roundabouts—five-leg, dual-lane— we'll take that on notice and see if we've got some information for you.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: With this specific roundabout, can you take on notice as to whose suggestion it was to place it in the location that it was put in? I think that has a lot to do with the cost blowout. It was essentially placed in a creek. Then you wondered why you kept having to dig it up and rebuild it because it kept getting washed away. That might be a contributing factor to the cost blowout. I'm just wondering who was making that decision to place it in a creek. It seems pretty silly.

MATT FULLER: Sure. I'm happy to take that on notice.

Answer:

I am advised:

The project was constructed in accordance with the terms and conditions outlined in a Works Authorisation Deed by Tamworth Regional Council as the developer of the Global Gateway Park.

The roundabout was designed by Tamworth Regional Council in accordance with Austroads standards and endorsed by Transport for NSW.

Additional safety and movement measures were designed and constructed for the intersection, including additional slip lanes, long merge lanes (approach and exit) and reduced speed limits.

Question no: 14

Transcript page: 31 (34-35)

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: With your permission, Minister, I might call up Anthony Hayes. He answered some questions at the last estimates on Wee Waa High School. I wanted to see if I can get an update on that.

ANTHONY HAYES: On which one, sorry?

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: It was the Wee Waa High School, the new school that was being built out there. There were some concerns over, more specifically, the transport element of it in terms of the road, the crossing and the kiss and drop section being put in. I know your department objected to the original proposal of a crossing across the Kamilaroi Highway, understandably. You put forward some other suggestions where you would have a drop-off zone installed on a more local road, George Street. I'm just wondering whether you had any progress as to progressing?

ANTHONY HAYES: I'm sorry to say I'd have to take that on notice. I don't have anything top of mind immediately, but I can come back to you quickly with an update. My apologies.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: That would be good. While you're chasing that update, maybe whether you have an update on a time line for work. I believe the school build, as it stands, is delayed in its building. I'm just wondering how far that's pushed back your side of things. I imagine the kiss and drop and the road stuff would come after the physical build of the school.

ANTHONY HAYES: Happy to take that on notice.

Answer:

I am advised:

Transport for NSW received a request for a pedestrian crossing, not a children's crossing, at the new high school. School Infrastructure NSW also submitted an application for the new school which included a pedestrian crossing.

Through early engagement, Transport for NSW identified the projected number of students provided with the request were not sufficient to warrant a pedestrian crossing (i.e. marked pedestrian crossing or zebra crossing) on a State road.

Under Transport for NSW's policy, children's crossings are not installed on highly trafficked or State roads. The policy also outlines that children's crossing are not installed outside of high schools.

It is acknowledged there is a primary school opposite the site of the new Wee Waa High School but does not expect this will generate a need to cross the road to the high school.

Transport for NSW will continue to work with School Infrastructure NSW and reassess the request once the new high school is open to determine if the number of students warrants a pedestrian crossing. It should be noted that the installation of a pedestrian crossing would impact the amount of on-street parking available at that location.

Additionally, Transport for NSW has provided a number of alternative solutions to address crossing the highway safely and will continue to work with Schools Infrastructure NSW to provide a resolution.

Question no: 15**Transcript page: 33 (36)**

The Hon. SAM FARRAWAY: With regard to the Coffs Harbour bypass project, is your agency preparing a new noise assessment on the variation to the project since the EIS was signed off?

Ms JENNY AITCHISON: I would have to get exact information on that. I've met with those proponents

and I've had discussions with the department about it, but I would want to give you the exact update of where we're up to. Mr Fuller?

The Hon. SAM FARRAWAY: I will come back. I have Mr Fuller all afternoon and I think we have

some additional representatives coming.

Answer:

I am advised:

Transport for NSW advise, in accordance with the Coffs Harbour Bypass project's Conditions of Approval, an Operational Noise Report is currently being prepared as part of the detailed design phase of the project.

Question no: 16**Transcript page: 40 (43)**

The Hon. SAM FARRAWAY: I would say to both the Minister and Ms Ward that we only need one person speaking at a time. I am going to ask a question, Minister. I just tabled an article from The Daily Telegraph. This is from 27 June 2023. It's regarding the Regional Apprentice and University Student Travel Card. Given that the journalist is not a university student or an apprentice, how did he obtain the card?

Ms JENNY AITCHISON: My understanding is that he was given it by Transport for NSW to test, because you had made public statements that were incorrect on the record in Hansard that it was not possible to undertake fraudulent behaviour with the card. So we asked—

The Hon. SAM FARRAWAY: To redirect—because you've just answered the question; you've just said Transport for NSW issued this card to James O'Doherty from The Daily Telegraph.

Ms JENNY AITCHISON: No, not issued to. I think that was where it came from. I would have to—someone in my office, I think, but I can't remember exactly who.

The Hon. SAM FARRAWAY: So did your office provide a briefing note to the journalist?

Ms JENNY AITCHISON: I'm not sure. We spoke to the journalist—I can't remember, to be honest.

The Hon. SAM FARRAWAY: Can you take that on notice for us, please?
 Ms JENNY AITCHISON: I'm happy to take it on notice.

Answer:

I am advised:
 The journalist was briefed verbally.

Question no: 17**Transcript page: 40 (43)**

The Hon. SAM FARRAWAY: How did a journalist who is ineligible for the card get a card to use?
 Ms JENNY AITCHISON: It was given to him.
 The Hon. SAM FARRAWAY: By who?
 Ms JENNY AITCHISON: I will have to take that on notice.

Answer:

I am advised:
 A member of my ministerial team.

Question no: 18**Transcript page: 41 (44)**

The Hon. SAM FARRAWAY: So, effectively, have you allowed taxpayers' funds to be used for a journalist to go and get some lollies, a soft drink and a packet of cigarettes?
 Ms JENNY AITCHISON: Look, my understanding was that I would be paying that money back.
 The Hon. SAM FARRAWAY: Have you paid that money back, Minister?
 Ms JENNY AITCHISON: I can't tell you off the top of my head because I'm not sure whether that has gone—
 The Hon. SAM FARRAWAY: Can you take that on notice and come back to the Committee?
 Ms JENNY AITCHISON: Yes, I will check that. If I have not, if there has been an oversight—because it has been a pretty busy couple of months—I will definitely be paying that back. But that was always the intention.

Answer:

I am advised:
 The money has been paid back to Transport for NSW.

Question no: 19**Transcript page: 43 (46)**

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: So you put this process in place, in doing so, knowing in advance that it wasn't within the guidelines—as in, it wasn't a senior or an apprentice. Knowing that that was not within the guidelines, was there probity around this arrangement, or a written agreement around the repayment of the funds?

Ms JENNY AITCHISON: I'm not aware of that.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Is that a no? There was none?

Ms JENNY AITCHISON: I'm not aware. I will take it on notice.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: No probity, no written agreement. Was there a briefing note to say, "We will put in place this process and we will ensure the money is repaid"?

Ms JENNY AITCHISON: Ms Ward, I can't remember exactly at that time.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Will you take that on notice?

Ms JENNY AITCHISON: I just said I can't remember exactly where that process was. I do know that it was discussed with the department, with the former acting secretary—what was happening.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Will you take it on notice?

Ms JENNY AITCHISON: There was clarity around what was happening. So yes.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: So will you take it on notice to produce any advice given about this very serious matter that you had concerns about and the process you put in place to address your concerns? You won't?

Ms JENNY AITCHISON: If you want it, I can.

Answer:

I am advised:

I am advised Transport for NSW has a number of test cards used for practical and probity testing at retailers. Using these cards, tests were conducted at retailers, with products purchased that were both inside and outside the scheme's parameters. As they are test cards, they do not have the same guidelines as user cards. One of the test cards was provided to my office for testing and funds spent on it have been paid back to Transport for NSW.

Question no: 20

Transcript page: 48 (51)

The Hon. SAM FARRAWAY: When was Transport for NSW made aware that there were fraudulent claims or purchases with the Regional Apprentice and University Student Travel Card?

LEWIS CLARKE: I'd have to take the details of that on notice. What we do know is over time, especially at the early days of the regional seniors travel card, there were changes made by certain retailers to their merchant category to allow purchases to be made when they would not otherwise have been. In terms of the risk with service stations, we've not been specifically made aware of people purchasing products that they should not have done at service stations, but the risk of that happening is a feature of the scheme—

The Hon. SAM FARRAWAY: Just to home in on that point of your answer, Mr Clarke, you're saying that Transport for NSW—your department—has not had concerns raised directly with it around non-fuel-related purchases at service stations?

LEWIS CLARKE: No, I'm not sure that's what I did say or intended to say. Transport for NSW is aware that there is a risk when using either the regional seniors or the regional apprentice card that purchases other than fuel can be made at service stations. To the extent I'm aware, we have not been—nobody has told us that non-fuel purchases have been made at service stations, but it's a risk. The purchases that are made at service

stations are effectively unknown as to whether they're fuel or whether they're something else non-fuel related.

The Hon. SAM FARRAWAY: Mr Murray has given us some information around test cards. How many test cards do you have for the regional seniors travel card?

LEWIS CLARKE: I would have to take that on notice. There's a number of test cards, as Mr Murray indicated, part of the preparation—

The Hon. SAM FARRAWAY: Mr Clarke, you don't know how many test cards you have for the regional seniors travel card?

LEWIS CLARKE: I don't know off the top of my head, no. I'm happy to take it on notice.

The Hon. SAM FARRAWAY: Thank you, Mr Clarke. The Regional Apprentice and University

Student Travel Card: This was a program rolled out in February of this year and within months suspended. How many test cards did your department have available for testing?

LEWIS CLARKE: Again, I'd have to take that specific question on notice.

Answer:

I am advised:

This matter was identified as a potential issue in May 2020.

There were 22 test cards in total for both Regional Travel Cards, 10 cards with a total of \$2,500 loaded.

Question no: 21

Transcript page: 48 (51)

The Hon. SAM FARRAWAY: Mr Clarke, when did Minister Aitchison's office request a test card for usage?

LEWIS CLARKE: I'd have to double-check the date on that and come back to you.

The Hon. SAM FARRAWAY: Do you know, Mr Murray?

JOSH MURRAY: No, I'm not aware. I'm happy to provide that information. I should just say, in regards to the risk factors that Mr Clarke has identified, certainly in the briefings provided to me the problem with the cards is a lack of visibility. While we know that these transactions have all occurred, 95 per cent or 96 per cent of all transactions occurring at service stations, that is the only detail that is provided in the accounting for the cards. The risk and the transparency does not match up.

Answer:

I am advised:

Transport for NSW advise the test card was sent to the Minister's Office on 8 June 2023.

Question no: 22

Transcript page: 49 (52)

The Hon. SAM FARRAWAY: What data have you supplied to Minister Aitchison's office on non-fuel-related items that have been purchased using the card?

LEWIS CLARKE: I would need to double-check. But I'm fairly sure we gave them information on some of the areas where cards were misused, for example, merchants

changing the merchant code on their terminal to be a service station when in fact they weren't. We have some information available on that.

Answer:

I am advised:

Information around spend by merchant category for both schemes, which includes spend on non-fuel items, has been provided to the Ministerial office. Advice around risks of card misuse relating to the scheme and examples of where misuse has been detected has also been provided.

Question no: 23**Transcript page: 50 (53)**

The Hon. SAM FARRAWAY: With regard to the understanding that you had around the Minister's office—or the Minister herself—possibly covering or reimbursing for those costs, is there an email, is there

anything in writing to confirm that?

LEWIS CLARKE: I would need to double-check.

The Hon. SAM FARRAWAY: Would you be able to take that on notice, Mr Clarke, and see if we've got an answer before the end of estimates today?

LEWIS CLARKE: I can certainly take it on notice. I can't commit to whether we can provide it today.

The Hon. SAM FARRAWAY: I think from your previous answer, we don't have the definitive date of when that card was sent to Minister Aitchison's office, correct?

LEWIS CLARKE: Correct.

The Hon. SAM FARRAWAY: That's fine. I'll take that you'll take that on notice.

Answer:

I am advised:

The test card was sent to the Minister's Office on 8 June 2023.

Transport for NSW received an email from the Ministerial office on 10 August 2023 with regards to reimbursing the costs.

Question no: 24**Transcript page: 50-51 (53-54)**

The Hon. SAM FARRAWAY: Was Mr Host made aware of the issuing of a test card to Minister Aitchison's office?

LEWIS CLARKE: Not that I recall. You should double-check with Mr Host.

The Hon. SAM FARRAWAY: I will do that later in the day. How was it issued to the Minister's office? Was it mailed? Was it taken over there in person? How was it sent to the office?

LEWIS CLARKE: Again, I'd have to double-check, but I can do that.

Answer:

I am advised:

A card was provided to the Ministerial office via courier on 8 June 2023.

Question no: 25

Transcript page: 51 (54)

The Hon. SAM FARRAWAY: Do you remember who in the Minister's office requested the test card?

LEWIS CLARKE: I do. I'm not entirely clear on the protocol of sharing other people's names.

The Hon. SAM FARRAWAY: You are under oath, and I'm asking you a question regarding a program that has been axed and was part of the budget papers and the money redirected, so I think it's important to note who requested that, Mr Clarke. I'll ask again: Who in the ministerial office requested the test card on behalf of Minister Aitchison?

The Hon. Dr SARAH KAINE: Point of order: I'm a little concerned that we might get into naming individuals, not because that's out of the bounds of this forum but there have been very heavy suggestions by Mr Farraway earlier that there is somehow something fraudulent in this behaviour. It would cast aspersions on that individual at this time if we were to disclose that in this open forum. I'm sure there are other ways to have that information presented to the Committee that is not aired publicly.

The CHAIR: I have heard the point of order. At this point, in terms of naming individuals, what is recommended is to provide anything like that on notice. The Committee can then make a decision as to the way to proceed with those individual names.

LEWIS CLARKE: Thank you,

Chair. The Hon. SAM FARRAWAY: Was the test card that you arranged to be issued to Minister Aitchison's office returned? LEWIS CLARKE: It was, yes. The Hon. SAM FARRAWAY: When was it returned? LEWIS CLARKE: Again, I would need to go away and double-check that.

Answer:

I am advised:

The card was returned to Transport for NSW on 18 August 2023.

Question no: 26

Transcript page: 53 - 54 (56-57)

The Hon. SAM FARRAWAY: I go back to Mr Clarke, if he could come back to the table. Do you keep

a record of all the test cards that are issued?

LEWIS CLARKE: I personally don't. I would imagine my team does.

The Hon. SAM FARRAWAY: Could you take that on notice, if that's the case? Do you have a log system around who is issued the test card and when it's issued and when it's returned?

LEWIS CLARKE: I would have to double-check. I would think it unlikely in that level of detail. As I mentioned earlier, we generally have a pool of test cards which are able to be used for a group of individuals. There's certainly a level of control over those. The specifics of that, I don't know.

The Hon. SAM FARRAWAY: When you say "level of control", could you elucidate what that level of control is?

LEWIS CLARKE: I would have to take the detail on notice.

The Hon. SAM FARRAWAY: Do you keep and track what the balance of the test cards are?

LEWIS CLARKE: I would imagine we do, but we'd have to take that on notice.

The Hon. SAM FARRAWAY: Even with test cards, Mr Clarke, that perhaps your own team use to test the program, how do you know what the balance is?

LEWIS CLARKE: I think my answer was probably I imagine we do, but I would have to double-check. Obviously, for the purposes of reconciling the test transactions have worked, and that we undertook a transaction here and it was assigned to the right merchant code and being able to do that, we would have those records. Yes.

Answer:

I am advised:

A log is kept of all test cards, each card and spend is tracked.

Information on transactions spent on test cards is available and transactions are reconciled to balances as testing completes..

Question no: 27

Transcript page: 54

The Hon. SAM FARRAWAY: Have your team actually tested the card to see if you could buy non-fuel-related products with it?

LEWIS CLARKE: Almost definitely, yes.

The Hon. SAM FARRAWAY: When was the first time that this occurred in your own internal testing?

LEWIS CLARKE: I would have to go away and validate that.

Answer:

I am advised:

This issue was identified as a potential issue in October 2019, before testing began. This was also confirmed during testing in late January 2020.

Question no: 28

Transcript page: 55 (58)

The Hon. SAM FARRAWAY: If non-fuel-related purchases are made, what happens with the goods? Are those goods returned to Transport—to your department—and are receipts logged with your department on what the test card was used for?

LEWIS CLARKE: As I mentioned earlier, I would need to check the details of that, but there's certainly a need to be able to reconcile transactions in some instances. But there's a variety of things that test cards might, outside of this scheme, have been used for, in my experience, over a number of years.

Answer:

I am advised:

Receipts of purchases on Regional Travel test cards were recorded during Transport for NSW testing. Purchased goods would normally be destroyed, where possible.

Question no: 29

Transcript page: 55 (58)

The Hon. SAM FARRAWAY: How much has been budgeted or expended on both the travel cards as test cards?

LEWIS CLARKE: I don't have that information to hand.

The Hon. SAM FARRAWAY: Would you be able to take that on notice, Mr Clarke?

LEWIS CLARKE: I can take that on notice, yes.

Answer:

I am advised:

There were 22 test cards in total for both Regional Travel Cards, 10 cards with a total of \$2,500 loaded. However only \$208.53 was spent (\$2,052.67 returned). One card remains active with a balance remaining of \$238.80.

Question no: 30

Transcript page: 57 (60)

The Hon. SAM FARRAWAY: So I would like to ask you again, because I think you need to clarify this, Mr Clarke. You said that a previous Minister was issued with a test card with cash loaded on it. Is that correct?

LEWIS CLARKE: So I—

The Hon. SAM FARRAWAY: I'm more than happy for you to take it on notice, if needed.

LEWIS CLARKE: No. Hopefully what I said is that we have been asked by previous Ministers' offices to make test cards available for purposes such as, for example, maybe providing a demonstration for media that a card works.

The Hon. SAM FARRAWAY: Okay. When you request a card from Westpac, are they under the assumption that only Transport for NSW employees are there using the test cards? Are they aware that third parties could be possibly given the test card to use?

LEWIS CLARKE: I wouldn't know what Westpac are and aren't aware of. I would certainly be surprised if there was a restriction on people that could do testing. It's not uncommon for some elements of testing to be outsourced as a general thing, so I wouldn't imagine there was a restriction.

The Hon. SAM FARRAWAY: Mr Murray, does it concern you that a test card was issued to a journalist?

JOSH MURRAY: Mr Farraway, I think we've given an indication today that we'll come back with a range of additional details. Mr Clarke has said that he doesn't have with him the number of cards or the dates on which cards may have been provided. I think it's best if we take that on notice and give you those details.

The Hon. SAM FARRAWAY: I'm happy for that to happen

Answer:

I am advised:

I refer to the response to Question on Notice 29.

Question no: 31

Transcript page: 60 (63)

The Hon. SAM FARRAWAY: Mr Fuller, how many recommendations were completed from the priority round of the reclassification review, because we heard earlier today that zero roads had been transferred? That is actually incorrect, isn't it?

MATT FULLER: I think perhaps what the Minister was referring to is since the priority round. What she was talking about this morning was our intent now to move road reclassifications into business-as-usual activity. The priority round was an isolated round that occurred earlier.

The Hon. SAM FARRAWAY: So there were 37 recommendations. How many were implemented prior to the election?

MATT FULLER: I might ask Ms Heydon to update. I don't know if she's got the exact, up-to-date figures, but I think we're pretty close to all of them being reclassified.

The Hon. SAM FARRAWAY: Or transferred.

CYNTHIA HEYDON: Thank you for that question. Let me just get into my notes. What I can say is that for those recommendations that were actioned up to March, 33 of the 37 endorsed recommendations have been implemented. That has resulted in 62.6 kilometres coming under State authority or responsibility.

The Hon. SAM FARRAWAY: Have the remaining four recommendations been delivered as of today?

CYNTHIA HEYDON: No, they have not been implemented as of today.

The Hon. SAM FARRAWAY: What are those four recommendations that are left over? I am happy for to you take it on notice.

CYNTHIA HEYDON: I might have to take it on notice.

Answer:

I am advised:

As per the response provided by Ms Heydon in the hearing (transcript page 61), the four recommendations that have not been implemented are:

LGAs	Road Name
Ballina	Ross Lane, Tamarind Drive, Tintenbar Road, Teven Road, Tuckombil Road, Rifle Range Road, Lismore Road
Clarence Valley	Armidale Road
Narromine*	Tomingley to Eumungerie via Narromine
Kempsey, Armidale	Kempsey - Armidale Road

* Transfer already implemented for Dubbo and Gilgandra portions of this road in March 2023

Question no: 32**Transcript page: 60-61 (63-64)**

The Hon. SAM FARRAWAY: I'm happy for Mr Fuller or Ms Hoang to answer this. With regard to

page 30 in Budget Paper No. 03, the regional roads fund, would you be able to confirm for me how much from the regional roads fund—which is a \$340 million fund in total that's been announced by the Labor Government—is to be spent in the current financial year, 2023-24?

MATT FULLER: I think Budget Paper No. 03 refers to the capital amount that Minister confirmed this

morning. In terms of the regional roads fund in the 2023-24 budget, we have \$28 million in opex and the capital amount is outlined in Budget Paper No. 03, as you say.

The Hon. SAM FARRAWAY: I've left them in my office, but that was the note I've written down here.

MATT FULLER: There's a range of projects outlined in Budget Paper No. 03: Bulli bypass investigations, \$1 million; Gosford bypass, \$1 million—

The Hon. SAM FARRAWAY: Mr Fuller or Ms Hoang, I'm looking just for the dollars. How much of the \$340 million for the regional roads fund is to be spent over the next four years?

MATT FULLER: I might have to take the full amount on notice. As you say, Budget Paper No. 03 outlines the capital. I have the next 12 months on opex and we can come back on the remainders.

The Hon. SAM FARRAWAY: If you're taking it on notice, Mr Fuller or Ms Hoang, would you mind breaking down the rollout of that fund for the next four financial years?

MATT FULLER: Sure.

The Hon. SAM FARRAWAY: Ms Heydon, whilst you're still there—

CYNTHIA HEYDON: I've also got the answers for you on those four roads. It's the balance of the regional road in Narromine, the regional road in Ballina shire, Clarence Valley, and Kempsey shire and Armidale regional road.

Answer:

I am advised:

\$234.6 million of the \$334 million Regional Roads Fund is allocated to be spent over the next four years, through a combination of allocations to Councils for works on local or regional roads and funding allocated to Transport for NSW for state road commitments.

Question no: 33**Transcript page: 61-62 (63-64)**

The Hon. SAM FARRAWAY: Ms Zycki, I want to go to the Coffs Harbour bypass. You probably know why you're here. With regard to the bypass, is your agency preparing a new noise assessment on the variation to the project since the EIS was signed off?

ANNA ZYCKI: Through the course of the project we do a number of noise assessments at different stages, depending on what the issues are. We also do additional noise assessments around changes to design and other features of the project.

The Hon. SAM FARRAWAY: Ms Zycki, have any additional assessments been carried out?

ANNA ZYCKI: There have been a couple of additional assessments based on different issues that have arisen and that will continue through the course of the project.

The Hon. SAM FARRAWAY: When was the most recent assessment carried out?

ANNA ZYCKI: I'd have to take that on notice.

Answer:

I am advised:

Please refer to the response to Question on Notice 15.

Question no: 34

Transcript page: 65 (68)

The Hon. SAM FARRAWAY: Mr Host, were you aware that Minister Aitchison's office had made an offer to reimburse the cost?

RICHARD HOST: I really can't recall.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: If you can't recall, will you take it on notice to check?

RICHARD HOST: I'm happy to take it on notice, but I'm erring on the side that I was not aware of this.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Just to give you the opportunity to properly check.

RICHARD HOST: Yes, I'm happy to take it on notice. Thank you.

Answer:

I am advised:

Mr Lewis Clark received an email from Minister Aitchison's office on 10 August 2023, asking to repay what was spent on the trial Regional Apprentice and University Student Travel Card.

Question no: 35

Transcript page: 66 (69)

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: In the circumstances where delegation was made—for example, to a journalist, in this case—what would be the requirements for procurement around that delegation?

RICHARD HOST: I would prefer to take that on notice because, again, I don't have enough of all the details to answer, for this particular circumstance.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Thank you. In doing so, could you also provide to the Committee, if you're not able now, about what probity measures might have been put—would be expected to be put in place under the existing policy?

RICHARD HOST: I'd be happy to.

The Hon. SAM FARRAWAY: Mr Clarke, I want to return to the request from Minister Aitchison's office to you for a test card. I don't want the name because I think we've got a process there, but was it a media adviser that requested—

The Hon. Dr SARAH KAINE: Point of order—

The Hon. SAM FARRAWAY: I'm asking for the position. I'm not asking for the person's name.

The CHAIR: Yes, Dr Kaine?

The Hon. Dr SARAH KAINÉ: The point of order is that by naming the position it's going to be very easy to identify the person in the office. If we go to the protocol we established earlier, it would be preferable.

The CHAIR: I uphold the point of order. I request that the member not go down the path of what role, what position, to the point where it would be essentially naming the individual. It will be provided on notice, is what we're being assured.

Answer:

I am advised:

Cards used for testing are not subject to the terms and conditions which are placed on customers applying for the cards. This is to allow for a wide variety of test cases to be executed.

Question no: 36

Transcript page: 67-68 (70-71)

The Hon. SAM FARRAWAY: Has the New South Wales Government committed to the construction

of a full connection to the Muswellbrook bypass at Coal Road, which would provide a link directly to Muswellbrook town centre?

CAMILLA DROVER: Given the amount of Federal funding in that project or proposed to be in that project, we would need to await the outcome of that Federal review.

The Hon. SAM FARRAWAY: I think Muswellbrook Shire Council have really called for that connector at Coal Road. You can't give any certainty to that being a part of the overall project until the Federal Government's infrastructure review is completed. Is that correct?

CAMILLA DROVER: I think that's my understanding. Maybe my ROM colleagues could confirm that, but that is my understanding.

The Hon. SAM FARRAWAY: Ms Zycki? You're pretty across this.

MATT FULLER: I can add to that just to clarify that, although—exactly what Ms Drover said—it is subject to the Federal infrastructure review, in April 2021, after the public display, connections to Coal Road were added to the project. But I think the overall scope of the project is being reviewed and that's something that we will need to reconfirm following the infrastructure review.

The Hon. SAM FARRAWAY: Has Transport for NSW commenced any property acquisitions for that project?

CAMILLA DROVER: I would need to take that on notice to confirm.

The Hon. SAM FARRAWAY: Can the project be completed by the original date of 2027 or will it have to be revised due to the Federal Government's infrastructure review?

CAMILLA DROVER: It will obviously depend on when we get a definitive answer and the funding for the project. So, yes, it will depend on that timing. In terms of property acquisition, I suspect we have if we've started early works. But, as I said, I will go away and confirm that.

MATT FULLER: Ms Drover, I could add that there are definitely property acquisitions that are underway. Muswellbrook Coal Company actually owns about 80 per cent of the alignment. Given that many of the acquisitions are partial acquisitions—i.e., there is no displacement of landholders—I think the property team is well advanced. We can provide those accurate numbers.

Answer:

I am advised:

Yes, Transport for NSW advises it has commenced property acquisitions for the Muswellbrook Bypass project.

Question no: 37**Transcript page: 68 (71)**

The Hon. SAM FARRAWAY: When did the EOI close, Ms Drover?

CAMILLA DROVER: I think it was either the end of Q1 or early Q2 this calendar year. I can take on

notice exactly the timing of that.

The Hon. SAM FARRAWAY: When was the original scheduled date or time line to go to market with

the shortlist of tenderers?

CAMILLA DROVER: I know we started the EOI process earlier this year but I have to come back to

you with exact dates on that project.

Answer:

I am advised:

An expression of interest (EOI) for the Muswellbrook Bypass was issued on 23 March 2023 and the closing date for submissions was 20 April 2023.

An evaluation of all applications made by interested parties was completed by 8 June 2023 and Transport for NSW intended to issue a tender to the shortlisted parties in late July 2023. In June 2023, the formal endorsement of shortlisted tenderers was placed on hold due to the Australian Government's Infrastructure Investment Program Strategic Review.

Following the outcome of the Infrastructure Review, the NSW Government has committed to the delivery of the Muswellbrook Bypass and Transport for NSW continues to utilize available funding for planning and early stage project development to ensure the project is shovel-ready.

Negotiations for property acquisition, development of some of the more technical elements and developing telecommunication relocations continue..

Question no: 38**Transcript page: 69 (72)**

The Hon. SAM FARRAWAY: Are you able to take on notice the number of submissions received for

the Committee and the number in favour of the project and the number opposing the project?

CAMILLA DROVER: I can take on notice the number received. It's not always clear whether

respondents are in favour or not. Sometimes they are more comments. But I can take it on notice and see what information we can bring back in that regard.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Thank you for your attendance today, Ms Drover. On the 90-day review,

could you let the Committee know how many projects and what quantum of funding is on hold? You alluded to some other projects. Is it possible to give an answer on the funding that's on hold and the number of projects as a result of the 90-day review? If you need to take it on notice, that would be very understandable.

CAMILLA DROVER: The vast majority of all the projects in New South Wales that had Federal

funding are subject to that review. There were a couple of exceptions that were very well advanced, like the Singleton bypass. You would be aware that there were a couple of other projects that were subject to the review but, again, they were well advanced. One we awarded just a couple of weeks ago was the Jervis Bay intersection project. We were able to communicate with the Feds and get their agreement—

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: It was saved.

CAMILLA DROVER: —to say it was okay to proceed and award that contract, and their funding

would be there for us. In terms of the number that are subject to that review, I don't have an itemised list but we could take that on notice and bring that back for you. But it was the vast majority of projects with Federal funding in New South Wales.

Answer:

I am advised:

One hundred and twenty-four submissions were received during exhibition of the Environmental Impact Statement. Of the 124 submissions received, 104 submissions were from individual community members, 14 submissions were from community groups and six were from key stakeholders. Advice was also received from 16 NSW Government agencies.

Information around the outcome of the Australian Government's Independent Strategic Review of the Infrastructure Investment Program is publicly available on the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications and the Arts website.

Question no: 39

Transcript page: 70 (73)

The Hon. SAM FARRAWAY: I'll go back to Great Western Highway. This one may be for Mr Fuller. How much road freight is currently being transported on the Great Western Highway?

MATT FULLER: I would have to take the exact number on notice and go back and ascertain from the traffic studies that we have undertaken.

The Hon. SAM FARRAWAY: Also, could you take on notice how much road freight is forecast to be transported on the Great Western Highway by 2035? I don't expect you to have that answer on hand. Can you advise—you may have to take this on notice as well, unless Mr Weeks or someone could answer—how many heavy vehicle incidents or accidents there have been on the Great Western Highway this year, and how many road closures they have caused?

MATT FULLER: I think that's something that we'd like to take away and get the details.

The Hon. SAM FARRAWAY: Also, how many times has the highway been closed due to weather over the last 10 years? I'm more than happy—it's quite an extensive one—for you to take that on notice.

MATT FULLER: Sure. I think with that, we would be happy to take on notice any closures that go

back and ensure that we have records of those, whether that covers the full 10-year period or how far back. We'll endeavour to take that on notice, yes.

Answer:

I am advised:

Yes. Transport for NSW advises this information is publicly available on its website.

Question no: 40

Transcript page: 70 (73)

Can you advise—you may have to take this on notice as well, unless Mr Weeks or someone could answer—how many heavy vehicle incidents or accidents there have been on the Great Western Highway this year, and how many road closures they have caused?

MATT FULLER: I think that's something that we'd like to take away and get the details.

The Hon. SAM FARRAWAY: Also, how many times has the highway been closed due to weather over the last 10 years? I'm more than happy—it's quite an extensive one—for you to take that on notice.

MATT FULLER: Sure. I think with that, we would be happy to take on notice any closures that go back and ensure that we have records of those, whether that covers the full 10-year period or how far back. We'll endeavour to take that on notice, yes.

Answer:

I am advised:

Yes. Transport for NSW advises there have been 388 incidents involving heavy vehicles across the entirety of the Great Western Highway in 2023. Of those incidents, 139 incidents resulted in a single directional closure, and in three instances of the closures in both directions.

Transport for NSW incident logs do not record weather as an incident type and as such cannot accurately reflect the number of closures along the Great Western Highway due to weather.

Question no: 41

Transcript page: 70 (73)

The Hon. SAM FARRAWAY: On what date did Minister Aitchison's office request a copy or request that the former Premier or the former Government release that report to the new Minns Government?

MATT FULLER: Ms Heydon, I don't know if you have that information. I know it was some time ago. Perhaps we might have to check the exact date.

CYNTHIA HEYDON: We will have to come back on notice just to confirm the dates. What Transport did was seek advice and request from the former Premier to be able to share that report with the new Government, which was provided. What we are currently doing is looking at if and how we can release that publicly.

Answer:

I am advised:

Please refer to the response to Question on Notice 42.

Question no: 42**Transcript page: 71 (74)**

The Hon. SAM FARRAWAY: Did Transport for NSW specifically request that that report be made public?

CYNTHIA HEYDON: I will have to take on notice as to what the specific request was.

The Hon. SAM FARRAWAY: Can you also tell us—you may need to take this on notice, unless you know, Mr Fuller or Mr Murray—on what date the report was delivered to the new Minns Labor Government, and on what date Minister Aitchison's office was provided with a copy?

MATT FULLER: We can take that on notice, certainly.

Answer:

I am advised:

Transport for NSW made a request on 6 June 2023 to the former Department of Premier and Cabinet to seek the approval of the former NSW Government to release the Regional Road Transfer and Road Classification Review Final Report to the new Government.

The report was provided to Minister Aitchison and Minister Graham's offices on 29 June 2023.

Subsequent advice was sought from TCO on 11 September 2023 on making the report public.

Question no: 43**Transcript page: 72 (75)**

The Hon. SAM FARRAWAY: Which three local government projects are not going to be funded? Or have they just not yet been approved under the criteria?

MATT FULLER: They've not yet been approved. Whether or not they are able to be funded, we would

have to come back, because, as I said, we're undertaking a continued and ongoing review of all of the projects to either get them to a stage where we are very certain they will have

the eligibility attached to them or otherwise. In the event that they aren't, we'll be looking at options as to how we—

The Hon. SAM FARRAWAY: Which three projects are they?

MATT FULLER: I would have to come back to you on the three projects specifically.

The Hon. SAM FARRAWAY: Are there any transport projects—we've had nine of 24 approved. The remaining non-approved transport projects—is it a matter of an approvals process or do you have concerns that they don't meet the criteria?

MATT FULLER: We are doing a thorough assessment to either ensure that they do meet the criteria

or look at alternatives if those projects are at risk.

The Hon. SAM FARRAWAY: Are you able to supply—on notice, because I don't expect it now—those transport projects that are, at this stage, not funded?

MATT FULLER: We can take that on notice, yes.

Answer:

I am advised:

The three local government projects not being funded under the Regional Roads and Transport Recovery program include the Betterment of ARC Unsealed Road Drainage (Armidale Regional Council), Betterment of Bell Street Bridge (Muswellbrook Shire Council) and Betterment of MR145 Woodburn-Coraki Road (Richmond Valley Council).

Under further assessment, these first two projects outlined above did not meet the Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements, and the remaining project secured funding under another Australian Government initiative.

Transport for NSW is working with Armidale and Muswellbrook councils to confirm next steps.

Transport for NSW is also working with Australian and NSW Government agencies, including the NSW Reconstruction Authority and the National Emergency Management Agency, to explore options related to State projects.

Question no: 44

Transcript page: 73 (76)

The Hon. SAM FARRAWAY: What was the date that they advised Transport that they wanted it reviewed?

MATT FULLER: I would have to go back and check that, but it was soon after the establishment of

the Reconstruction Authority in going back and doing due diligence on all of the programs that they had responsibility for.

The Hon. SAM FARRAWAY: Are you able to take the date on notice for me?

MATT FULLER: I would have to take that on notice, yes.

Answer:

I am advised:

Minutes of the Transport for NSW / NSW Recovery Authority discussion meeting on the Regional Roads and Transport Recovery Package held on 10 March 2023 noted the requirement for the review.

Question no: 45**Transcript page: 73 (76)**

The Hon. SAM FARRAWAY: I accept that, Mr Fuller. Just to redirect the questions, has Lansdowne Road in the MidCoast local government area had its deeds approved?

MATT FULLER: I'm just checking to see whether I've got that information. I don't know that I do.

Ms Heydon, do you have that information?

CYNTHIA HEYDON: We will have to confirm whether that's one of the ones that has been executed.

MATT FULLER: I think we might have to—

CYNTHIA HEYDON: I'm fairly certain that's one that has been issued.

Answer:

I am advised:

The funding deed for the Betterment of Lansdowne Road Pavement Upgrade was issued to the Mid-Coast Council on 13 October 2023.

Question no: 46**Transcript page: 73 (76)**

The Hon. SAM FARRAWAY: The second one I have for you is the Yamba off-ramp, which would be a Transport for NSW—well, it's a State highway. Is it part of the 24 that are not yet approved?

MATT FULLER: We'll take it on notice and provide the information back.

Answer:

I am advised:

The betterment of HW10 Pacific Highway - Yamba Off-Ramp is under review.

Question no: 47**Transcript page: 75 (78)**

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Mr Murray, are you aware of the Premier's social media post, "Can you spot the hidden speed cameras?"

JOSH MURRAY: I'm not aware of the post.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Can I ask you to take that on notice, if we provide a copy? I can't provide it; it is on my phone. This seems to be a social media post that doesn't seem to treat road safety particularly seriously.

Answer:

I am advised:

I refer you to the response provided by the Secretary in the hearing.

Question no: 48**Transcript page: 77 (80)**

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Have the enforcement hours for mobile speed cameras changed in the past nine months?

BERNARD CARLON: The policy with regard to the 21,000 hours of allocation of enforcement across the whole of the network per month—and that's an on-average figure—can be affected by different inputs. For example, during the significant flood periods last year—

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Sorry, if I can redirect that: Are the enforcement hours down in the past nine months or not?

BERNARD CARLON: I would have to take that on notice.

Answer:

I am advised:

I refer to the response provided by Ms Webb in the hearing.

Question no: 49**Transcript page: 80 (83)**

The Hon. SAM FARRAWAY: Is this something that Mr Weeks' team would normally control around that response and that triaging of that process?

MATT FULLER: Mr Weeks' team account for those events, yes, but then they share those with myself and, where appropriate—

The Hon. SAM FARRAWAY: I don't understand the point that you've made about Minister Aitchison

because, as the former Minister, I received those.

JOSH MURRAY: Can I maybe just suggest—that's why I asked the question as to which alerts. The organisation has got a number across Regional and Outer Metropolitan, Greater Sydney, Traffic Management Centre and the Rail Operations Centre. Perhaps these questions are for the Minister rather than for this team because we also receive a number of alerts that allow us to do our job.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: As the secretary, though, I am asking you because this is a report that obviously goes to a number of your team. It was surprising to me—and perhaps, Mr Fuller, you might want to take it on notice or consider the veracity of that evidence because I know I received it during my time. Mr Farraway received it. Mr Elliott received it. Mr Stokes received it. We all received incident reports with that triage information and with the incidents that occurred and hopefully there was a "nil killed" notation. On very few occasions I found out from 2GB before I got the text, in which case I would send the text to others. But I'm not sure of the accuracy of that statement. I just wanted to give you the opportunity to check on that—that that's accurate—because I do believe that, in fairness, other Ministers have regularly received that information on a daily basis, including, sadly, the road toll. I'll invite you to consider that opportunity.

MATT FULLER: Sure. I'm happy to do that. I was referring to a specific incident report that comes through our team and is specific to the regional area.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: It's a serious matter, isn't it?

The Hon. SAM FARRAWAY: When was that set up, Mr Fuller?

MATT FULLER: I'd have to go back and check but it's been in place for some time.

Answer:

I am advised:

Transport for NSW advises a process for escalating serious and fatal incidents was re-established at a meeting held with the Minister for Regional Transport and Roads on 6 April 2023.

Question no: 50

Transcript page: 81 (84)

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Thank you, Ms Drover. It's about road works. I have, in fairness, put it in general terms to the Minister, who was very helpful at the time, but I just wanted to get an update on the works being done around the M1 and the road between that and the Hexham Bridge. There seems to be some community concerns around what is being done there. I can give more details, if needed. Can you perhaps update the Committee on what is happening there? There seems to be concern about the appearance of nothing happening and significant road delays.

CAMILLA DROVER: I may need some further details, but we have awarded three packages in that precinct. There's the M1 to Raymond Terrace project, which is being delivered in two packages—Black Hill to Tomago, which is about 10 kilometres; and then there's a Heatherbrae package, which is about five kilometres. Then beyond that is the Hexham Straight project, which is an alliance, which has also been awarded. That's a brownfield project, so it is probably more likely to be causing some disruption on the network. The M1 to Raymond Terrace packages have been awarded—they were awarded late last year—but they're only in the very early stages of their delivery and we haven't substantially commenced on site yet. That's imminent. It's probably the Hexham Straight, but I probably need more details of exactly what the disruption is.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Can I give the information I have and ask if you can take it on notice and give us an update? The concern is that it's the stretch of road between the end of the M1 and Hexham Bridge. It sounds like it's the Hexham Straight.

MATT FULLER: It may also be the Tarro bridge works, which have been the subject of critical work over the last few weeks.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: It could well be, yes. The concern is that the delays in traffic are in both directions as one lane is closed. I have, in fairness, put this so you may be across it. It seems to be that there is non-existent roadwork, so the concern is that there is nothing going on there but there are delays at that particular project—no roadworks, no equipment and no signs. If we could get an update on where that's at and what the prospect is for those delays being caused by the closure of the lane, that would be helpful.

JOSH MURRAY: Absolutely. Those lane closures have recently been alleviated through the process of work that's being undertaken by Transport for NSW. It has been substantial disruption for motorists through that area, but we have been working very hard with local members, councils and the trucking industry because of the significant impact.

Answer:

I am advised:

All lanes on approach to Tarro Bridge and the bridge itself were reopened to traffic on 30 October 2023 without restrictions.

Question no: 51

Transcript page: 82 (85)

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Of course. Thank you. When will those investigations be finalised?

SAM KNIGHT: We're just starting the modelling work now. We're just about to kick off down that process. I'm not sure how long that will take. It will probably be a six- to 12-month process. But we do plan to go out to the community before Christmas.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Before Christmas you'll go out for consultation?

SAM KNIGHT: Yes, for some initial—

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: How long do you anticipate the time line to be for the whole of the investigation process?

SAM KNIGHT: I don't know how long that will be. I might need to take that on notice.

Answer:

I am advised:

Transport for NSW expects the investigation phase to take around 18 months.