

PORTFOLIO COMMITTEE NO. 6 - TRANSPORT

Wednesday 24 August 2022

Examination of proposed expenditure for the portfolio area

METROPOLITAN ROADS, WOMEN'S SAFETY AND THE PREVENTION OF DOMESTIC AND SEXUAL VIOLENCE

UNCORRECTED

The Committee met at 9:30.

MEMBERS

Ms Abigail Boyd (Chair)

The Hon. Mark Banasiak

The Hon. John Graham

The Hon. Shayne Mallard

The Hon. Daniel Mookhey

The Hon. Chris Rath

The Hon. Penny Sharpe

PRESENT

The Hon. Natalie Ward, *Minister for Metropolitan Roads, and Minister for Women's Safety and the Prevention of Domestic and Sexual Violence*

* Please note:

[inaudible] is used when audio words cannot be deciphered.

[audio malfunction] is used when words are lost due to a technical malfunction.

[disorder] is used when members or witnesses speak over one another.

CORRECTIONS TO TRANSCRIPT OF COMMITTEE PROCEEDINGS

Corrections should be marked on a photocopy of the proof and forwarded to:

**Budget Estimates secretariat
Room 812
Parliament House
Macquarie Street
SYDNEY NSW 2000**

The CHAIR: Welcome to the initial public hearing for the inquiry into budget estimates 2022-2023. I acknowledge the Gadigal people of the Eora nation, the traditional custodians of the lands on which we are meeting today. I pay respects to Elders past, present and emerging, and celebrate the diversity of Aboriginal peoples and their ongoing cultures and connections to the lands and waters of New South Wales. I also acknowledge and pay my respects to any Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people joining us today, either in person or watching us over the broadcast. I welcome Minister Natalie Ward and accompanying officials to this hearing. Today the Committee will examine the proposed expenditure for the portfolios of Metropolitan Roads, Women's Safety and the Prevention of Domestic and Sexual Violence.

Before we commence, I would like to make some brief comments about the procedures for today's hearing. Today's hearing is being broadcast live via the Parliament's website. The proceedings are also being recorded, and a transcript will be placed on the Committee's website once it becomes available. In accordance with the broadcasting guidelines, media representatives are reminded that they must take responsibility for what they publish about the Committee's proceedings. All witnesses in budget estimates have the right to procedural fairness according to the procedural fairness resolution adopted by the House in 2018.

There may be some questions that a witness could only answer if they had more time or with certain documents to hand. In these circumstances, witnesses are advised that they can take a question on notice and provide an answer within 21 days. On that point, I will remind witnesses that you may only take a question on notice when you are unable to answer the question unless you have more time or with certain documents to hand. If witnesses wish to hand up documents, they should do so through the Committee staff. Minister, I remind you and the officers accompanying you that you are free to pass notes and refer directly to your advisers seated at the table behind you. Finally, could everyone please turn their mobile phones to silent for the duration of the hearing. All witnesses will be sworn prior to giving evidence. Minister Ward, I remind you that you do not need to be sworn as you have already sworn an oath to your office as a member of Parliament.

Mr ROB SHARP, Secretary, Transport for NSW, sworn and examined

Mr MICHAEL TIDBALL, Secretary, Department of Communities and Justice, sworn and examined

Ms TRUDI MARES, Deputy Secretary, Greater Sydney, Transport for NSW, sworn and examined

Ms CAMILLA DROVER, Deputy Secretary, Infrastructure and Place, Transport for NSW, affirmed and examined

Mr JOOST DE KOCK, Deputy Secretary, Customer Strategy and Technology, Transport for NSW, affirmed and examined

Ms TARA MCCARTHY, Deputy Secretary, Safety, Environment and Regulation, Transport for NSW, sworn and examined

Mr HOWARD COLLINS, Chief Operations Officer, Transport for NSW, sworn and examined

Mr BERNARD CARLON, Chief of the Centres for Road Safety and Maritime Safety, Transport for NSW, sworn and examined

Ms ANNE CAMPBELL, Acting Deputy Secretary, Strategy, Policy and Commissioning, Department of Communities and Justice, sworn and examined

Mr PAUL MCKNIGHT, Deputy Secretary, Law Reform and Legal Services, Department of Communities and Justice, affirmed and examined

The CHAIR: Today's hearing will be conducted from 9.30 a.m. to 12.45 p.m., with a 15-minute break at 11.00 a.m. for morning tea. There are celebrations to my right already at the prospect of morning tea. We're joined by the Minister in the morning and in the afternoon we'll hear from departmental witnesses from 2.00 p.m. to 5.15 p.m., again with a 15-minute break at 3.30 p.m. for afternoon tea. If required, an additional 15 minutes will be allocated at the end of the morning and afternoon sessions for Government questions. Thank you for your attendance today. We will begin with questions from the Opposition. Mr Graham?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Great. Thank you, Chair. Welcome, Minister, and thank you to all your officials for attending today.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Thank you, Mr Graham. It's a pleasure to be here. I have great respect for this process, as you know, and appreciate the opportunity to assist the Committee today.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I might turn first to an issue that we were talking to Treasury officials about earlier in the week. I might ask you to turn to *Budget Paper No. 1*, page 5-11 of the budget papers.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: That's okay. Just ask your question. Just ask the question.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I just want to refer to the budget papers specifically.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Yes. Ask the question and I'm happy to look at it.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Yes. I'll direct you to table 5.3 in the budget papers. Can you see that there?

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Just ask the question, Mr Graham. I'm happy to speak to whatever it is that you have to ask and if I need to refer to the budget paper, I will.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: If you don't have the budget papers here, I'm happy to supply it.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: I have the budget papers. This is budget estimates. Of course I have them.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Great. Okay.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: You ask your question and I can go to the table if you need.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Yes. Well, I'll ask you: What's your understanding of the note that applies to that table—note (a) that refers to capital slippage?

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: I think you might be referring to the \$8 billion. Is that the amount you're referring to?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Yes—that's referred to in the footnote, correct.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: I think that you asked Treasury about that yesterday or the day before in relation to capital projects. What we have in New South Wales is a \$112 billion pipeline of infrastructure, in Transport \$76.7 billion worth of transport infrastructure, and in doing so we have a large pipeline of projects. Obviously those projects are staged and they're at different stages of planning and implementation. I'll ask Ms Drover to speak to the specifics of where each of those projects are, which makes up the component that you're referring to. But there's no surprise in that. It's printed in the budget paper, to recognise the challenges we have with global headwinds, with labour supply challenges, with the issues of securing enough people to build multiple large mega infrastructure projects. There's no surprise there. That amount is recognising that the payment flow— but there's no change to our program. But Ms Drover might speak to the specific—

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Well, I'm happy to come back to Ms Drover in the officials session.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: No, no. I'd like to give a full answer because it's a very important question I know that was raised with you so I'd appreciate that.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: We'll return to Ms Drover for a full answer—

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Yes.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: —in the officials session.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: No, no, no.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: This is our time to question you, Minister.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Well, Mr Graham, I think it's important. You've asked me to come here and I very much appreciate the opportunity to provide fulsome answers to the Committee. With respect, it is a matter for me how I answer a question to the Committee. Ms Drover is here. The officials are here today and I'd appreciate—this is an important question that you quite rightly point to in the budget papers. I think that the people of New South Wales and the Committee should be informed by a fulsome answer from Ms Drover specifically on that.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: I'll take a point of order.

The CHAIR: I'll hear the point of order.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: It is consistent practice in budget estimates that the person asking the question is capable of directing by whom the question is answered. Given that the question my colleague actually asked was just pretty straightforward—what was the Minister's understanding of the \$8 billion slippage— Ms Driver's understanding is fine and we can hear it this afternoon, but the question was very specific as to what the Minister's understanding was. So I just think that we should perhaps set out early on that members are capable of directing the questions to the person they wish to direct the question to.

The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD: To the point of order, Madam Chair: It is not consistent practice. It's actually rather recent practice introduced by Mr Mookhey and Mr Graham that they can cut off the Minister from asking other officials to add substance to the answer they're trying to give. This is an opening question. It's a really important question. Clearly Mr Graham is framing it for his media grab. The Minister wants to add some content to that to make it a proper answer. So it's not a consistent practice; it's only a recent practice. The Ministers bring their officials along. Why do they bother? Why don't they just come by themselves?

The CHAIR: I think I've heard enough for the point of order and I think it's important that we do clarify this straight up. We have a situation now with budget estimates where we have agreed that the Minister only needs to attend in the morning session and we get the chance to speak with the officials only in the afternoon. That means that with a limited period of time with the Minister, which I believe is of benefit to most Ministers, it needs to be the case that, in order for us to actually hear from the Minister adequately, members of the Committee can direct their questions where they're needed. If we could try to adopt that practice here, that would be very useful. But to the extent that you're unable to answer a question, Minister, by all means let the Committee know and we can pick it up with the officials in the afternoon.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Thank you, Chair. If I can add to that though—I think it's important that we have a number of officials here that are ready, willing and able to provide information. I'm not quibbling with your ruling in any way.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: Chair, the witness doesn't have the opportunity—

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Sorry, I was speaking, Mr Mookhey. Mr Mookhey, I was speaking—

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: Point of order: I'll take a point of order. Chair—

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Wow.

The CHAIR: Order! I will pre-empt the point of order. You're absolutely correct. There is not an opportunity for you to contribute on that point, Minister, but let's just get on with it.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Old habits.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Minister, I think the surprise here was that, of the \$30.666 billion in infrastructure announced by the Treasurer on budget day, this footnote reveals that \$8 billion of it wouldn't happen this year. This is just referring to this year's commitments. Do you have any perspective you want to share on that observation?

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Yes, I do. Ms Drover could share detailed perspective on that if you would allow her the courtesy of speaking to the component parts of what is an important question. What I can say is that we've been very clear about our program. It is a note in the budget. It is published. My understanding is that it's noted in the budget papers. If the Committee is interested in further detail about what makes up the component of that pipeline of infrastructure and where projects need to be adjusted accordingly, it is printed as up-front. It's in the budget papers. Otherwise I refer to my previous answer.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I assure you we'll want more detail. One of the reasons I'm asking you about this is because of the answers Treasury officials gave. They said, because the largest part of the portfolio was in Transport, most of these issues will come from the Transport portfolio. That makes sense. Many of them—

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: When you're rolling out \$76 billion worth of infrastructure, there are component parts which we've referred to, clearly, with global supply challenges, with a range of challenges around physically getting people on construction sites. There is a range of ways in which we're seeking to mitigate that. But when you have a very large infrastructure program across New South Wales—M6 in construction and WestConnex in construction, Western Harbour Tunnel—

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: They specifically drew attention to the Roads portfolio.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Yes.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: That's why I want to put these questions to you.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: That's what I was speaking to. That's what Ms Drover is here to assist the Committee with today.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Yes, and we'll speak to those in detail with Ms Drover this afternoon. Given those comments, which projects will be delayed this year out of the Roads portfolio projects that you announced in the budget with Treasurer Kean?

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: That's a matter for the Treasurer in relation to the budget, but Ms Drover can speak to the time lines on specific projects. What we are clear about is that we have a pipeline of projects that we are rolling out. They are transparent about their time lines. Some are in planning; some are in different stages of delivery. That's what you do when you actually deliver eight motorways—delivered or in delivery. Rather than just announcing them and re-announcing them, we actually have a program of delivery works, which Ms Drover is ready, willing and able to talk about.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: This footnote, though, makes it clear that, of the commitments the Treasurer made, more than a quarter won't occur this year. On budget day, the Treasurer knew that.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Mr Graham, we have global supply issues. We have global headwinds. We've been very clear about that. That is a worldwide challenge. Ms Drover can speak to those projects if you're interested in that information.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: But this is not a—

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: I don't know if you're interested in just getting a grab for this evening's news—

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: —budget blowout.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: —or if you're actually interested in the projects. She's very happy to assist and provide answers.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Minister, this isn't a budget blowout. On budget day, Treasury knew, the Treasurer knew and presumably you knew in the Roads portfolio—

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: We've printed it. It's no surprise. It's printed in the budget, Mr Graham. It's printed in there.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: —that these promises would not occur this year. Is that correct?

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: No. There are global headwinds, Mr Graham, and we've printed that in the budget. You can see it. There's no surprise. There's no revelation. There's been a worldwide global shortage and we're very clear about that. But Ms Drover can speak to the specifics of each of those projects if you're actually interested in the substance of the answer.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: But none of these projects have slipped at the moment. We understand that projects might get delayed over the year. On budget day, one quarter of the—

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: You have to ask the Treasurer about budget day, Mr Graham. I'm not the Treasurer.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Well, Treasury points to the—

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: I'm not responsible for budget day.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: —Roads portfolio. That's why we're asking you.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: And we're here with information to provide to you.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: Point of order: Can I, again, take a point of order. It's unusual, but ordinarily members are accused of interrupting witnesses. But in this case for the last three instances in which my colleague has tried to ask a question, he hasn't actually been able to get to the question because the Minister has interrupted.

The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD: I think Mr Graham can handle it.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: I just think that if we can just establish the question and answer format early on, it will make for a much easier hearing for all.

The CHAIR: Order! Yes, I will rule. For the benefit of Hansard, it's next to impossible to record what's happening when everyone is speaking over each other. We're only at the beginning of this session. If we could do question, answer, question, answer, that would be very useful.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: On budget day, one quarter of the capital promises from this Treasurer were not going to occur this financial year. Treasury knew that; the Treasurer knew that.

The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD: I take a point of order myself: This is like the tenth time the same question has been asked.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: We haven't been able to get the question out the door.

The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD: The Minister has given an answer 10 times, wanted to refer to an official 10 times and been told she can't. This is 10 times Mr Graham has asked the question. The answer is that it was acknowledged in the budget papers.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: Chair, again, the time—

The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD: And Punch and Judy over here—

The CHAIR: Order! Enough!

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: Can we just allow the member to actually ask the question?

The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD: You don't have to run a protection racket for John Graham. He's an adult.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Minister, did you—

The CHAIR: Are we done? Sorry, can I just rule on that?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Sorry, yes. Certainly, Chair.

The CHAIR: It is well within a Committee member's rights to ask whatever questions they like, and if you think it's a waste of his time—

The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD: Of the Minister's time, frankly.

The CHAIR: —more fool him, but he's perfectly entitled.

The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD: Things to ask about: the Great Western Highway.

The CHAIR: If we could cease the interjections from the right side of the room, that would be very useful.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Minister, let me ask you clearly: On budget day it was known that a quarter of those projects would not be delivered this year, even though they were promised by you and by the Treasurer. Which roads projects will not be allocated this year?

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Mr Graham, it's printed in the budget. You can clearly see we've printed it in there on budget day, as you refer to. Those are questions for the Treasurer. Ms Drover is here to provide detailed information if you're actually interested in the answer. I don't think you are interested in the substance of the answer, but it was printed in the budget papers, and I refer to my earlier answer.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: What's printed in the budget papers in Transport is \$21.3 billion worth of promises, and at least a quarter of those won't happen. Do you know which road projects won't proceed?

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Ms Drover is ready, willing and able to provide an answer to you, Mr Graham.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I'm asking you, Minister. Do you know?

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Ms Drover is able to provide that information if you're interested in the answer.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I'm asking, Minister, about your knowledge. On budget day, did you know that those roads—

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Yes, it was printed in the budget, Mr Graham. We were very clear prior to the budget in saying there are global headwinds, that we have supply chain challenges. That is a global phenomenon, and you can't continue to deliver mega projects if you don't have enough supply or if you don't have enough people to build it. We've had two years of COVID shutdown, so there are challenges that are just a fact, Mr Graham. There's no surprise in there.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Minister, you promised those roads in suburbs across Sydney. You knew they weren't going to occur.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: The budget papers printed on budget day note— [audio malfunction].

The CHAIR: We're back.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: Greetings, Minister. It's a pleasure to see you, and greetings to your officials as well. For the record, we've missed you.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Thank you, Mr Mookhey. We've missed you too. It is such a joy.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: Indeed.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: We have three hours together.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: Yes. Minister, if you don't mind, page 4-18 of *Budget Paper No. 1* makes it clear that you and your Government seem to be the first in our history ever to have to return \$715 million to the Commonwealth because of an incapacity to meet agreed milestones according to Federation funding agreements. Minister, what is your understanding about why your Government has failed to collect this money and why we will now have to wait for a further four years in order to access the funding that's been made available to us over the past 10 years?

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Thank you, Mr Mookhey, for the question and for diligently reading the budget papers. I bring them every year in the hope that people will read them, and I appreciate that I've seen you with your highlighter in your office with the budget papers. Can I just clarify to begin with that it's a misconception to say that money is being returned or not collected. That's not the case. We are delivering these projects and the milestones will continue to be met. Ms Drover can speak to the specifics of how each of those projects—what makes up that funding amount and how that is rolled out. That has been—

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: If Ms Drover does have the specific parts of the Roads portfolio for which we are not collecting the money from the Commonwealth, of that 715, I'd love to hear it. Does Ms Drover know, of the \$715 million, which projects we're not collecting the money for?

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: That's not correct.

CAMILLA DROVER: I might make an opening statement. We're not expecting material delays in the coming year. The Treasury paper that you're referring to is Treasury's paper. I think you'll note that Treasury have already said on the record that they moderate their budgets, their forecast, based on a portfolio basis, not on an individual project-by-project basis.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: Indeed, they did say that.

The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD: That's very helpful.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: They did say that it was on a portfolio basis, but they also indicated that the nature of the Federation Funding Agreements means that it's almost certainly likely to be Roads. The Minister has made extensive reference to your knowledge of these matters. Given that the Federation Funding Agreements apply to projects like, for example, the ones that are to do with the western city that we are building in Bradfield, Minister, is it the case that you're returning money to the Commonwealth because you're behind when it comes to building infrastructure that's required for the second airport?

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: No, it's not the case. The money is not being returned. These are project milestones. When you roll out large infrastructure, there are stages and milestones to that infrastructure. Federal Minister King has also referred to the challenges that we have and the need to look at Federal spending commitments. But these are about project milestones.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: Yes, they are, but—

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: This is not cash being returned. We're not writing a cheque and returning it to sender, Mr Mookhey.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: I have no dispute with you, Minister. They are about project milestones. That is absolutely clear. According to your budget, we are so behind on these project milestones that we won't be in a position to collect this money next year, the year after, the year after that or the year after that. In fact, we're going to have to wait beyond the forward estimates. This is unprecedented. As you rightly point out, I do read the budget papers.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: It's unprecedented when you're building unprecedented infrastructure.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: Minister, if you would let me finish. Having checked all the previous budgets, this is the first time we've had reference to the fact that we've had to return.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: It's not being returned.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: No disrespect, it happens to coincide—

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Can I be clear about my evidence to the Committee, Mr Mookhey?

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: Well, it's money not being collected, Minister. To be fair, you are the first roads Minister ever to find yourself in a position where you, effectively, have to sign a novelty cheque and send it back.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: No, that's absolutely wrong.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: I just want to hear from you, Minister.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Please stay true to the facts. Don't scare the people of New South Wales with your misinformation and your lies, Mr Mookhey.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: Can you explain to us, Minister, which of the—

The CHAIR: Order! We ask questions and then we provide answers. We don't give answers in the middle of questions. If we could try to show that respect. Please go ahead, Mr Mookhey.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: Minister, for which of the road projects are you responsible for, for which you are failing to collect the money that the Commonwealth has provided us?

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Wow! Mr Mookhey, you're just trying to get the grab. You're not actually interested in the—

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: Well, I'm actually trying to get an answer, Minister.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: I'm trying to finish my answer, Chair.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: I'm trying to get an answer, so perhaps if you could just direct your attention to the question. The question is pretty straightforward. Of this \$715 million that your Government is not

collecting from the Commonwealth, can you tell us how much of it is coming from projects for which you are directly responsible?

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Mr Mookhey, the premise of your question is wrong. I'll put that on the record for the benefit of the Committee. There is no cheque being written and returned. That's not how it works. When you deliver infrastructure, you understand that there is a process of project milestones. But, nonetheless, we are delivering city-changing infrastructure, life-changing infrastructure, across New South Wales. Quite rightly you referred to the city of Bradfield and another airport in New South Wales. Right across the State we are delivering improved services, roads and infrastructure to get people across our network where they need to go. This will transform the future of mobility in New South Wales. These include WestConnex, which you referred to, in western Sydney. It includes the M12, which we were out at, pleasingly, the other day.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Minister, you're answering generally now about growth.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: I can answer the question in whichever way I like.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I might direct you back to the underspend question. Is one of the reasons we're returning money—or not collecting money from the Commonwealth, if you prefer that—because the budget paper shows that you've underspent on specific western Sydney growth roads by \$242 million in the last 12 months? Is that one of the reasons?

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: I'll ask Ms Drover to speak about that project specifically, Mr Graham.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: No. Minister, this is really important.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: I'm entitled to answer the question, Mr Graham. I haven't even finished my sentence.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I'm asking about your knowledge of your portfolio.

The CHAIR: Order!

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: You want to get the grab. You're not interested.

The CHAIR: Minister, if you could finish that question—

The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD: She should be allowed to.

The CHAIR: If you could finish the answer to the question. You started. What was the end of the answer that you wanted to provide?

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: I think I forget the question now. Nonetheless, Ms Drover might speak to the specific amount. It's a Treasury amount. It's printed in the budget papers. You can nod your head and shake your head, but the fact is this is not cash going one way and being returned another way. That demonstrates, with respect, a fundamental misunderstanding of how—

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Minister, I'm asking about your knowledge of—

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Can I finish my—

The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD: Point of order: Seriously, Mr Graham, the Minister has been given hardly any chance to answer these questions. They're constantly talked over and constantly interrupted. There were great big editorials before from Mr Mookhey before questions were asked. Give her some time to answer the question.

The CHAIR: Points of order get made through the Chair, not directly to other members. Let's be very clear: When the Minister is answering questions, she is to be allowed time to finish that answer. However, if she fails to be directly relevant to the question that has been asked, it is within a member's rights to redirect the question or to interrupt. Continue, Mr Graham.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Minister, I'm asking about your knowledge of your portfolio.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Yes, absolutely. That's why I'm here, Mr Graham.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: The budget papers show that specific western Sydney growth roads were underspent in the past 12 months by \$242 million. Is that one of the reasons, in your understanding, why this money has not been allocated from the Commonwealth?

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: The Commonwealth has acknowledged, as have we—as we've printed in the budget papers and as we've said publicly—that there are global headwinds and supply challenges. That's

why you can't roll out infrastructure according to time lines. We've been up-front and clear about that. When you have a \$76.7 billion infrastructure time line and project budget, there is a lot of work that—

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: If you know they're going to slip—

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: —is going on.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: —why are you making these promises?

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: The M12, we commenced work on. The Western Harbour Tunnel, we have commenced work on. We have projects—the M6 stage one is undergoing work. The M4-M5 tunnels are being rolled out. Across New South Wales, we have extensive infrastructure that is being rolled out. But when you have global headwinds, which we've been very clear about and have spoken repeatedly about, there is no surprise here. There is nothing—

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: This is a quarter of your—

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Minister King, federally, has said the same thing.

The CHAIR: Order! The Opposition's time has expired for this round. I will ask a few questions before handing over to Mr Banasiak. Can we start on core and cluster?

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Please.

The CHAIR: I understand that the core and cluster funding, or the projects, will be delivered in three tranches, with the first tranche being the so-called shovel-ready projects and the second and third tranches being the bulk of the funding, with the second tranche being open right now. Can I first ask you: When will the people who have put in applications for the first tranche know whether or not they've been successful? Has that already happened?

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Thank you. Can I just recognise the importance of what we heard from the sector that they wanted more refuges. I will get specifically to that tranche, and Ms Campbell might speak to that, but the reason we structured it this way—there are 86 women's refuges in New South Wales. We are seeking to almost double that number, with over 70 more. The reason we staged this as a three-tranche proposition is so that those that were shovel ready and could go now could get out the door quickly. I know your question is in relation to that first tranche, so I will ask Ms Campbell to speak to that. That tranche, of course, has closed, and the second tranche is now open. Those projects that were not successful in the first tranche, we have been very clear about supporting them to reapply in the second tranche. Wherever it is that they need to nuance or change their application to meet the criteria, we will assist them to do so.

The CHAIR: The assumption, then, from your answer, is that they have been told when they've not received the funding for tranche one.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Ordinarily there would be feedback to applicants—Ms Campbell will speak to that—but there will be feedback to non-successful applicants, as there should be, about what they need to do. For example, as I understand it, some may not have partnered with a community housing provider or some might not have met the specifications for the core accommodation which was to ensure that they had a separate kitchen so that they could have self-contained—

The CHAIR: I understand. I'm just trying to get to the bottom of whether—perhaps, Ms Campbell, if you could be quite specific because I have only got limited time with the Minister, but were people informed of the success or otherwise of their first tranche prior to the second tranche being opened?

ANNE CAMPBELL: Yes. With tranche one, expressions of interest opened on 9 May and closed on 30 June 2022. Successful applicants, through that expression of interest process, went into a request for tender, which opened on 29 July and closes on 5 September. Anyone who was unsuccessful in the tranche one expression of interest process has received direct feedback from the department about where they could improve on their application.

The CHAIR: Sorry, just coming to the request for tender then. So we have a request for tender process that doesn't end until 30 September.

ANNE CAMPBELL: The fifth—sorry, 5 September.

The CHAIR: So 5 September. If one of those is not successful, will they—they won't know yet, so they won't know to have put into the second tranche.

ANNE CAMPBELL: No.

The CHAIR: Given that that closes on 5 September and those organisations or individuals won't know whether or not they have been successful, why are we closing tranche two so early?

ANNE CAMPBELL: With the tranche two, we've made accommodation in the criteria for assessing expressions of interest. For example, in tranche two the expressions of interest opened on 25 July and close on 26 August. Obviously, the request for tender for tranche one closes on 5 September. There is also tranche three—

The CHAIR: Sorry, let me stop you there. Minister, we've just heard that people who have put in the request for tender for tranche one won't know until at least 5 September whether or not they've been successful, and yet we still have the expressions of interest for tranche two closing on 26 August.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Yes.

The CHAIR: Will you extend that timetable for tranche two?

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: No is the short answer. We have record funding of \$484.3 million. We want to see that funding get out the door so that we have safe spaces for women. The purpose of having the three tranches is to ensure that we can see success from applicants, but we also know that we need to get on with construction of these refuges. In doing so, the first tranche was to be shovel ready. They will be supported, if unsuccessful, into the next tranches, and there is still the third tranche, where there is the bulk of funding.

The CHAIR: Will you at least put the unsuccessful bids from the tranche one automatically into the expression of interest for tranche two so they don't miss out?

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: No. I don't think we can automatically do anything, but what we are doing is working closely with each of those applicants to identify why their application may have been unsuccessful. They might have been very close, but they might have a component that needs assistance and we are very keen to support them to do that. What I want to do is see success in this. I don't want anyone to fail, and I certainly don't want the money sitting in Treasury. I want it out the door so it can be built.

The CHAIR: But these are projects that have been assessed through the expression of interest process to be acceptable enough to go to an RFT process. You're saying that you want these refuges to be built as soon as possible.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Yes.

The CHAIR: These ones are pretty close, and yet you're denying them the opportunity to be in tranche two if they fail in tranche one just because of a failure to extend the time line by, what, a week?

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Ms Campbell?

ANNE CAMPBELL: I think it's important to note that the funding is over four years. So in 2022-2023, there's \$47.24 million.

The CHAIR: Sorry, you're giving me detail that's not related to the question. The question is: Is that what we're doing here? We're denying some of these almost shovel-ready—they have not quite met it; they're going to go through the RFT process. They then don't succeed, and you're saying, "But they can wait until tranche three," simply because you are refusing to extend the deadline by a week.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: What we want to see is success in all of these applications so that we can almost double the number of women's refuges in New South Wales. This is an ambitious project. I want to see that money out the door. I want to see those safe spaces built. The purpose of having the three tranches is to ensure that we can stage those projects. They might all be successful in tranche two; we don't know that. I am not going to pre-empt the outcome of those stages. But I hear what the sector is saying and I hear what you're saying, Ms Boyd, about ensuring that there is time for applications to occur. I understand that, and I've heard closely from the sector about what we can do to assist them. We are walking beside them throughout this process to ensure success. This is not a one-off. It was deliberately designed with flexibility to ensure—

The CHAIR: I understand, but the sector has told you in no uncertain terms that they would request that there be an extension to this timetable for tranche two. You are saying no, but really we are coming down to a week difference. That seems pretty absurd. Why wouldn't you just extend it to 5 September?

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: We have said we want to make this process as smooth as possible for applicants. We want to be clear about our time lines.

The CHAIR: But you're not because you're not extending it.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Well, those that have been successful, we wanted to make the opportunity for them to get those out the door and literally built, to be done quickly.

The CHAIR: Minister, this is your opportunity to provide—

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: I'm not going to—

The CHAIR: On the face of it, this looks really very, very odd that you would be having this overlap in time frames that then denies people who are unsuccessful in tranche one to go into tranche two.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Not at all.

The CHAIR: I'm giving you the opportunity to explain why that one week won't be given.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Ms Boyd, that's why we have a third tranche so that we can support those entities.

The CHAIR: That doesn't explain—

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: I understand what you're saying, and I understand potential concerns. But this is record funding. This is almost half a billion dollars to double the number of women's refuges in New South Wales.

The CHAIR: No-one's saying that it's not. But it's not really relevant to the question.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: If we can assist them in tranche three, that's exactly what we'll do.

The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD: Congratulations.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Tranche three will be later this year. This is a four-year program.

The CHAIR: If you're unsuccessful in tranche two, will you be denied the chance to go into tranche three because there'll be some similar weird overlapping?

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: No.

The CHAIR: So the tranche two—

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: We want to see success. There's no conspiracy here. We absolutely want to see success.

The CHAIR: I'm not saying there's a conspiracy; I'm saying that there's a strange administrative decision that's been made by you and your department that the sector has very reasonably asked to be changed—

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Yes.

The CHAIR: —and your answer really is just, "That's just how it is."

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: I'm accused of moving too quickly in a number of things and not fast enough in other things. We want to see all of them applied.

The CHAIR: Again, not directly relevant to the question.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Sorry, my point is, with respect—I wasn't being trite. My point is by the end of this year we want to see these applications with certainty and with success. So in getting half a billion dollars out the door, my aim is to have these projects either starting construction or through that process by the end of this year so that they have certainty, so we can get on with the job of providing safe spaces for women and their children to recover.

The CHAIR: In terms of the 75 new refuges which, again, no-one's saying isn't a great thing—it's a great thing—I understand that when we add in those new refuges over the next, hopefully, four years for them to get up to scratch or to be constructed, plus the number of new case management specialists in the WDVCS—which, again, the sector is very grateful for—we could need more than 425 new specialist domestic and family violence staff over the next four years.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Yes.

The CHAIR: What investment into workforce development is the New South Wales Government making to ensure that staff are actually there?

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Thank you. It's an excellent question, and it's something we've heard clearly from the sector, like in all sectors—that we need people. It's great to build these refuges, but we need people to service them, provide those services and provide those wraparound supports on the ground. We've heard that and so a component of this is specifically for capacity building in the sector, particularly in

Aboriginal-controlled community organisations. So we specifically have funding to that. Ms Campbell can speak to the specifics of that funding.

But we have heard from the sector they need support to increase the workforce and to support those who are there. We know that during COVID people left the sector, as they did in many jobs and many roles. We need to do more to ensure that there are people there to support and provide those services. That is a component of this funding, very specifically. Also, in relation to Aboriginal applications, I just want to make the point for the Committee's benefit that we also have support for those Aboriginal organisations to apply, to support them for tender writing, to upskill them to ensure success in that sector.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: Welcome, Minister. I might just do some follow-ups from our previous estimates. We were talking about the domestic violence assessment tool and you spoke about a trial that was going to commence this year. Has that trial commenced?

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Sorry, Mr Banasiak. I enjoyed very much our time last time, but you might just remind me of the specifics of the trial because there are a couple on that.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: Yes, there was the assessment tool that was being revised down to just five predictive questions—

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Yes.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: —rather than the longwinded interrogation. Has that trial commenced for the use of that assessment tool?

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: I think it might be a matter for implementation by police. But Ms Campbell might have something to add to the issue. She's nodding, so she does have an update on that.

ANNE CAMPBELL: Thanks, Minister. I think this is in relation to the risk assessment tool.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: Yes.

ANNE CAMPBELL: Legal Aid NSW and the NSW Police Force are in the process of redesigning what's called the DVSAT, used by support services and the police. The redesign is due to be completed by the end of 2022, and both organisations will consider the findings from a recent BOCSAR study into the redesign of that tool.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: So the information you gave me last time was incorrect. You said the trial of that new tool was going to commence in 2022.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: I think the evidence is that it's ongoing.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: So now you're telling me it's going to be when? When will the trial begin?

ANNE CAMPBELL: My advice is at the end of this year.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: End of this year?

ANNE CAMPBELL: Yes.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: How long will the trial go for?

ANNE CAMPBELL: I'd need to take that on notice.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: Maybe, perhaps on notice, what are the reporting mechanisms for that trial? What are the metrics in terms of how it will be assessed and evaluated?

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: We may be able to get that information for you today, Mr Banasiak. If we can, we'll endeavour to do so. If not, we'll get it to you as quickly as possible.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: No problems at all. I might just go over to Transport now. As far as it relates to your Transport portfolio, are you familiar with the Future Transport Technology Roadmap 2021-2024?

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: I haven't memorised it but I am probably familiar with it.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: I'm shocked! To your knowledge, how much of the budget has been allocated to delivering that road map?

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: I might ask the secretary to speak to the delivery of the road map allocations.

ROB SHARP: Thank you. Yes, there is a large number of initiatives in there but I'll have to pass to Mr de Kock.

JOOST DE KOCK: Thank you for the question. We did publish that road map over a year ago and have got a large number of initiatives in there. Quite a few of these initiatives are underway and they are in a different stage of funding. We've received funding for a variety of projects in the last budget as well as over the last years.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: You don't have a total dollar figure in terms of how much this will cost?

JOOST DE KOCK: I don't have a total dollar figure at my fingertips here of how much it will cost altogether. But most of those projects are either underway or planned, and we actually request funding on a case-by-case basis for some of those.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: Okay.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: And some of the trials have commenced, and other work has commenced in that space. It's a plan.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: Sure.

JOOST DE KOCK: Absolutely. Many of the projects are well underway, and obviously the Opal Next Generation project that was announced in the budget is a key part of that as well.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: Can I go to some specific parts of the budget? One in particular is the Mobility as a Service, which obviously largely will be beneficial to the metropolitan areas. It talks about including rideshare and on-demand services as part of that but there's really no mention of the other arm of point to point, which is taxis.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Yes.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: Are taxis included in that Mobility as a Service project?

JOOST DE KOCK: Thank you for the question. I think Mobility as a Service is very important concept to make it easier for customers to get to their destination. We did launch our Opal+ pilot a few months ago. That includes other providers, including rideshare and taxis, as part of the pilot so people cannot only move in a multimodal journey on the public transport network but also with the third-party providers. That is a pilot that we're currently undertaking and that's only just been launched a few months ago, so that is still in train.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Can I note on that, it's an important part that taxis play, particularly in mobility. We have seen over many years the important role that taxis do play and I recognise your question. But a lot of that work is within Minister Elliott's portfolio. We will provide to you whatever we can today, but I'm just flagging that a lot of that is within Minister Elliott's responsibility.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: Yes, sure. I will probably follow up with Minister Elliott. Obviously as it relates to your portfolio though, Minister, one of the other projects was about improving freight efficiencies. You would agree that getting less trucks on the road or perhaps making their journeys a lot easier is beneficial for all road users. Where are we up to with that strategy, where it says "More efficient freight through technology", especially the development of a freight community system?

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Through that future plan?

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: Yes.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Freight essentially is Minister Faraway's responsibility, but you're quite rightly pointing out that the purpose of our roads network and extensive network is to get trucks off local roads, return those local roads to communities and free up congestion. That's why we have a lot of that in place.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: Two of the real choke points are actually probably more a part of your portfolio. We have got Port Botany; that is a metro road in and around that. You have also got Port Kembla, Wollongong—

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Yes.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: That's where the two major choke points are. Your own transport forecasts in terms of Port Botany show that it's running above capacity now, and with the forecast for 2036 it's beyond coping. I'm interested to know how technology is going to fix that.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Mr de Kock might speak to that specifically, but in relation to freight it is Minister Faraway's responsibility. I recognise the location, and that's why we have infrastructure like Sydney Gateway and others at those locations to free up that local traffic and get it off those roads. Obviously a priority for us—and we saw it in COVID—is the importance of freight getting what we need, supply in particular, through to where we need to go. Minister Faraway does look after freight as a whole while I do have Roads. I am not splitting hairs; I am saying to you that we want to assist and provide the information as far as possible. I don't know if Mr de Kock has anything to add.

JOOST DE KOCK: Yes, thanks Minister. As you mentioned, freight is really important. It's about \$66 billion in economic terms, and technology plays an important role to improve freight. You mentioned a couple of specific projects, including the Freight Community System. Work has progressed on that to develop the strategic business case for that. That's actually an initiative trying to be able to clear and allow industry to share information along the supply chains to make it more efficient. That project has completed the strategic business case and has engaged with industry on that. There's also work on thinking about automated access for heavy vehicles and so forth. There's a number of initiatives that are underway in that space to improve freight efficiencies.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: Is that project being delayed—and I know I'm stretching the friendship on the metro. Is it being delayed because a lot of these intermodals are actually delayed in their development? Noting that one of the major ones up in Tamworth has now been announced to be delayed, is that going to delay this Freight Community System?

JOOST DE KOCK: No. That's the Freight Community System. As I mentioned before, we are just working on the strategic business case. The next step will be then to move on to the next stage, which is the final business case. So there's still work in progress and more work to be done on that front.

The CHAIR: I might just ask about ReINVEST, which I know that you and I have had discussions about in the past, Minister. As you know, \$7.1 million was given to the researchers for the ReINVEST trial. I understand the funding for that trial has finally been cut, which is of great relief to anyone who was paying attention to it. After I and a number of others brought our concerns about the trial to the AG's attention and after the head of BOCSAR herself said that it would be throwing good money after bad, the Government did fund in the 2020-21 financial year an additional \$1.2 million to that project, in order to finally get some sort of scientific results out of it. I want to ask you if we did have any final results out of that project.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Thank you. That's an excellent question. I recognise your advocacy. We have spoken about this. I just note that funding was provided to the University of New South Wales to fund research into a project trial, serotonin reuptake inhibitors, which is a class of antidepressant, which seems or is posited to be effective in reducing offending in male impulsive repeat offenders for domestic and family violence, so that study was undertaken. I'm not sure the funding was cut. I think the funding completed and has finished. That is at the end of that stage. Ms Campbell might speak more to that. But we will make an evidence-based decision on the future of ReINVEST, following an outcomes evaluation which is due later this year. As you quite rightly recognise, we should have a scientific evaluation of that program to see if the success of that warrants any future investment—

The CHAIR: So we don't have it yet is what you're saying. We don't know, because the results were looking pretty shaky.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: No. Importantly, that will consider the perspectives of victim-survivors in that assessment, which is a critical component, in my view. But I don't know if Ms Campbell wanted to add to the staging of that.

ANNE CAMPBELL: No. It's not due till the end of the year, which is your question. The funding completed in June of this year.

The CHAIR: Did they end up getting any actual significant number of participants in order for them to do anything close to approaching a scientific trial?

ANNE CAMPBELL: I'd need to take that on notice, but I think it came very close.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: Minister, how much in revenue will we collect next year from the harbour tunnel when the concession reverts back to public ownership?

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Thank you, Mr Mookhey. The concession ends in August, so not next year.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: Next week, so the coming financial year.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Yes. I'll take that on notice, the specifics of the value. It is a hypothetical because we don't know what the volume might be in the future.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: Well, it's not a hypothetical, because it's been written into the budget, so it can't be hypothetical, Minister. It's on page 4-20—

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Sorry. If I could just clarify that, Mr Mookhey—

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: You can in a second, Minister. If you turn to page 4-20—

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Sorry. Could I just clarify that point before we move on?

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: You can in a second. Let me just ask the question. Minister, your budget says that we'll be collecting \$164 million in road tolls, which is up \$30 million from last year. That covers the harbour tunnel and the Harbour Bridge.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: On those specific projects?

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: That covers the harbour tunnel and the Harbour Bridge. Of that \$164 million that you've disclosed in the budget, how much of that \$164 million is coming from the bridge and how much of it is coming from the tunnel?

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: If I can revert to the earlier part of your question, I submit that my evidence to the Committee is that that is a hypothetical because you asked in your question how much we would collect at a future time. I can't hypothecate about that. There might be something, like a global—

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: Okay, Minister.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Can I finish?

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: I accept that, but perhaps you can explain—

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: May I finish my answer please?

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: No, Minister, because you are not being directly relevant.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: I actually am.

The CHAIR: Order!

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: Minister, can you just tell me then, what do you expect to recover of that \$164 million from the harbour tunnel and the Harbour Bridge?

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: I'll take it on notice, Mr Mookhey.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: Minister, your Government said that in 2020, it collected \$42,912,987 from the harbour tunnel. In the last decade, the average amount paid by harbour tunnel users is around \$45 million. Can we expect to be collecting around \$45 million next year?

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: I don't know, Mr Mookhey. It's a hypothetical. It's in the future. I don't have a crystal ball, as much as I'd love to. There are obviously projections that are around. That is a question for Treasury. I've said that I will take it on notice, but I can't guess into the future.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: Do any of your officials know?

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: They're Treasury forecasts, Mr Mookhey.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: No, they're actually not. We checked with them and they said that they got it from you and your department. So, Minister, you might not know.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Nonetheless, they're forecasts.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: Let me just finish. Minister, you are responsible for collecting the money. It surprises me that a person as detailed as you wouldn't know a really basic question—

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: I didn't say that I don't know. Please don't mischaracterise my evidence, Mr Mookhey. I did not say to you that I didn't know.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: You can respond when I finish the question.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: I said that it's conjecture. It's a hypothetical because it's in the future.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: Then perhaps you can give us the forecast. It's not an unreasonable question for the roads Minister to tell us—

The Hon. CHRIS RATH: Point of order—

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: —what exactly are we expecting to—

The CHAIR: Order! I will hear the point of order.

The Hon. CHRIS RATH: The Minister has already taken this question on notice, and the Hon. Daniel Mookhey keeps pursuing the point. So I think that perhaps the member should move on, given it's already been taken on notice.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: To the point of order: This is literally a question about the budget estimate in the Minister's portfolio. It's reasonable for the member to ask this question.

The CHAIR: There is no point of order on the basis that it is entirely within a Committee member's rights to ask a question over and over if they so choose and they feel that that's a good use of their time, so long as they're not badgering the witness. The Minister is more than capable of defending herself in this circumstance. If you could go ahead, Mr Mookhey.

The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD: Point of order: On that ruling, if a member takes a question on notice, that's the end of the debate on that particular question.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Don't canvass the ruling.

The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD: I took a point of order.

The CHAIR: I will remind the witness, although I don't think she needs reminding, that she could answer in exactly the same way to those questions that are being asked in exactly the same way. It is completely within your rights. Continue.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: Minister, over the forward estimates, in 2024-25 to 2025-26, there's an astonishing jump in the amount of money we expect to collect from the Harbour Bridge and the harbour tunnel. It goes from \$177 million to \$227 million. That is roughly an increase of about 25 per cent.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Twenty-eight per cent.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: Twenty-eight per cent. Is that because that's when you intend to introduce two-way tolling on the Harbour Bridge?

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Absolutely not, and it's offensive that you would scare the people of New South Wales into such a ridiculous and terrifying campaign of lies. We are on the record, Mr Mookhey, of saying we will not do so. We're not going to sell the Harbour Bridge. We're not going to sell the harbour tunnel. We're not going to privatise these assets. We will not be introducing two-way tolling. And you might tell the people of New South Wales what your policy is, what you are proposing to do, because no-one has heard from you what you are doing. All you are doing is throwing stones and scaring people.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Minister, can I ask what are the budget assumptions that underlie that 28 per cent jump in toll revenue from these two roads?

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: I've taken that particular question on notice, but Mr de Kock might speak to the specifics.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: We will come to that.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: You haven't taken it on notice, because we haven't asked it.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: If you want the information you've just asked for, if you are genuinely interested in an answer to the question you've asked, rather than a scare campaign, Mr de Kock is here and is available to provide information.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I'm interested in your understanding, Minister. What is your understanding of the policy assumptions that lie behind a 28 per cent jump in toll revenue from these two roads?

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Mr de Kock is here to provide that information.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: Minister, have you been briefed? Have you actually paid attention to what's happening here?

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: I find that offensive.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: I'm sorry you are offended.

The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD: Withdraw that.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: I take these portfolio responsibilities incredibly seriously.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: I won't be withdrawing it.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: And for you to be so dismissive about matters that affect the people of—

The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD: Point of order—

The CHAIR: Order! I will hear the point of order.

The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD: We know that we have to treat witnesses with respect and with regards to the protocols that the House has adopted for Committee hearings. To tell the Minister she is not listening and that she hasn't been briefed—the Minister has now indicated she's offended by it. I think Mr Mookhey should be pulled back in line and have a more civil debate.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: To the point of order—

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: I understand—

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: I didn't say. I asked.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: I'm happy to answer.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: I asked. I didn't say.

The CHAIR: It was not an assertion. It was a question. There is no point of order. Please continue.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: Minister, the question is have you been briefed as to why there is a 28 per cent jump in toll revenue from 24 to 25 and, if you have, can you give us your explanation as to why all of a sudden we're expecting to collect this additional \$50 million that year?

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Thank you, Mr Mookhey. When you build large infrastructure and you deliver it and it comes online, that will add additional revenue. The reason for that increase—and I have been briefed and I am across my brief, despite what you might like to say—is the M6 will come online. So the M6 is a major infrastructure project in the south of Sydney. Ms Drover might speak more specifically to that. It's anticipated that that will be included. There's no scare campaign here.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: I appreciate the answer.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Ms Drover might speak to the specifics of that.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: No, no. I will hear from Ms Drover. I appreciate the answer, but your evidence is that, in addition to people having to pay the toll on the M6, you're also expecting to gather another \$50 million in ancillary revenue on these two roads as well.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: No. That's not what I said.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: But that's the implication of what you're saying.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: But that's just wrong.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: But I'm giving you the opportunity to respond.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Well, it's not an implication. I'm here to give evidence to the Committee.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: Minister, just allow me to ask the question and then you can respond.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Please don't misconstrue my evidence.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: Minister, you have more than ample opportunity to correct me.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Mr Mookhey, you are misconstruing my evidence—

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: Minister—

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: —and I am entitled to correct that.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: —it is clear that your Government, which is collecting more in tolls—

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: You're just not interested in the truth.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: —than any government in our history, now says that you expect to collect another \$50 million from Harbour Bridge and harbour tunnel users after you introduce another tollway to Sydney.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Mr Mookhey, you are just wrong.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: Can you explain to me—

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: I know it's hard for you to take.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: —is there likely to be other additional tolls paid, as a result of the M6 project, on privately owned toll roads?

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Mr Mookhey, what you're clearly doing is running a scare campaign. What we are doing is considering how we provide infrastructure for the people of New South Wales to get across our roads network. The M6 stage one is exactly what we're doing. Ms Drover can speak to the specifics about the tolling information.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Minister, one of the reasons we're asking—

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Yes, but you're just wrong.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: —about these projects in particular is because the Opposition has made clear that toll revenue from the harbour tunnel and the Harbour Bridge will be kept in public hands.

The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD: Point of order: It's not about your policies. It's about the Government's budget.

The CHAIR: There is no point of order.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: It's nice to finally see a policy from you.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I'll put the question again. One of the reasons we're asking is the Opposition's made clear that toll revenue from the harbour tunnel and the Harbour Bridge—

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: As have we.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: —will be kept in public hands. Will you rule out privatising—

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Yes.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: —toll revenue—

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Yes.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: —from these streams?

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Stop your scare campaign.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: At any point in the future—

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Stop your scare campaign.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: You'll rule out privatising—

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: The other reason for increases in toll revenue is post-COVID we've had two years, almost, of shutdowns and people not being able to drive their vehicles. There's been a significant increase in use of our fantastic motorway—

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: So you're committing—

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Can I finish my sentence, please?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: You're committing the Government—

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: May I please finish my sentence?

The CHAIR: Order!

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: —to ruling out the privatising of this?

The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD: Point of order—

The CHAIR: I don't think I need to hear the point of order. Please allow the Minister to answer that question.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Mr Graham, what we have in New South Wales is a comprehensive roads network together with a comprehensive road relief program—40 per cent relief across all toll roads across all of New South Wales—putting more money in the pockets of more motorists more often.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I'll draw you back to the question, Minister.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Well, you spoke about increases.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: You're now answering about toll relief. I'll ask you to be directly relevant. I'll draw you back to the question. You're committing the Government to ruling out privatising these toll revenue streams—

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: I've already done that.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: —on the bridge and the tunnel for this term and the next term. You're ruling that out.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: We're not privatising the Harbour Bridge. You don't need to run the scare campaign. We're not privatising the tunnel, and we've put that on the record before today.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Even as part of a business case—

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: It's no surprise. We've put that on the record.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Even as part of a business case for building the Western Harbour Tunnel and Beaches Link, you're ruling out privatising these toll revenue streams at any point?

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: I can't be any clearer, Mr Graham. Your scare campaign is not something that's necessary.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: One of the reasons I'm asking, Minister—

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Why don't you be clear with the people of New South Wales what you will do? We know that you won't build the Beaches Link.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: —is that Transurban has updated the market saying this is a future market opportunity for them—

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: I'm not here to—

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: —to purchase these—

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Third parties do commentary all the time. The McKell Institute comes up with ideas about congestion tax—

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Well, this is a market update.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: —and other strange ideas all the time. It's not for me to run a commentary—

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: That's why I'm asking you—

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: —on third-party stakeholders. I've been very clear about it. The Premier has been clear about it. I can't be any clearer.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: Minister, I do appreciate you ruling out the future privatisation of the harbour tunnel and the Harbour Bridge. Can you rule out the future privatisation of the Western Harbour Tunnel?

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: We have made—

The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD: Point of order: Is it the business of this Committee to get the Minister to rule out things future governments might do?

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: No, it's a policy question.

The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD: Mr Graham acknowledged that—

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: That is not a point—

The CHAIR: That's not a point of order. That's commentary from the sidelines. If we could cease the interjections—continue.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: Minister, I do appreciate you ruling out the privatisation of the Harbour Bridge and the harbour tunnel. Given you've now ruled out the privatisation of the Harbour Bridge and the harbour tunnel, can you rule out the privatisation of the Western Harbour Tunnel?

The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD: This is ridiculous.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: What you quite rightly recognise—thank you, Mr Mookhey, for the question—is that we are building a historic third harbour crossing in the Western Harbour Tunnel. What a magnificent project. Some 90 years ago we built the Sydney Harbour Bridge; 30 years ago we built the harbour tunnel. We are now providing a third harbour crossing for the people of New South Wales.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: But will you privatise it?

The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD: We deliver.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: But will you privatise it?

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: We know you won't do it.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: Are you going to privatise the Western Harbour Tunnel?

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: No, we will not privatise the Western Harbour Tunnel despite your scare campaign. I can absolutely rule that out, Mr Mookhey.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Are you're referring there to the Western Harbour Tunnel or its toll—

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: I'm very clear on what I'm referring to.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: —revenue streams?

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: We are not privatising the Western Harbour Tunnel. We are not privatising the Sydney Harbour Bridge. I don't know how more often I can say it to you.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: Can you also confirm that you're not privatising the toll revenue streams from those roads?

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: I refer to my previous answer.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: I'm sorry but your previous answer didn't cover that, Minister, so I'll just ask you again. I appreciate you ruling it out. Can you just rule out privatising the revenue streams from the Western Harbour Tunnel, the harbour tunnel and the Harbour Bridge?

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: The New South Wales Government has announced that the Western Harbour Tunnel will not be tolled, but the proposed toll level hasn't yet been determined—sorry, it will be tolled but we haven't determined the level of that. It hasn't been rolled out yet. The Warringah Freeway will be upgraded as part of that program. What we are doing is building large infrastructure to get people across New South Wales. What we have in the meantime is a comprehensive—

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Minister, I'll stop you there. That's understood.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: —toll review underway.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: You're giving quite a different answer there. I'll ask you to answer the question my colleague asked: Will you rule out these—

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: You're just trying to get a grab. I've answered this question—

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: No, we're trying to get an answer.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: —I can't tell you how many times. You're just trying to get a TV grab. You're not interested in the answer.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: Minister, it's a really straightforward question. You've just ruled out privatising the harbour tunnel and the Harbour Bridge.

The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD: The Opera House.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Yes.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: I appreciate that, as I've said.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Yes, can't be any clearer.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: So if you could just be as clear—can you rule out privatising the toll revenue streams from the harbour tunnel, the Harbour Bridge and the Western Harbour Tunnel?

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: I refer to my previous answer. As I said—

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: Minister, you're leaving an impression that there's a gap there.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: It's very clear.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: You're leaving an impression that you're maintaining a—

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: I refer to my previous answer.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: Just let me finish asking the question.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: You've asked the same question three times and I've answered it the same way three times.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: Look, perhaps we can just put this beyond any doubt because you are seemingly drawing a distinction between—

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Well, as the Chair has ruled, I'm entitled to answer the question.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: Minister, again, perhaps if you could just allow me to ask the question, that would—

The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD: She has answered.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: —allow for a smoother hearing. Minister, you're drawing a distinction. That's the impression you're leaving. So you have the opportunity to be crystal clear—

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: We are not privatising the Western Harbour Tunnel. We are not privatising the Harbour Bridge. We are not privatising—

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: I'm asking you, Minister, so that you can be crystal clear—

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: —the bridge or the harbour tunnel.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: Are you ruling out—

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: We're not privatising the Opera House. I can't be any clearer, Mr Mookhey.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: —privatising the concession streams and the revenue that arises as a result of the harbour tunnel.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: I can't be any clearer, Mr Mookhey. What is your party offering? What is it that you're going to—

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: Well, I can guarantee we're not.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Minister, you haven't—you're drawing this distinction here.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: And I've been clear about that as well. I've been absolutely clear.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: So, Minister, do you know what the—

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Just a scare campaign, Mr Mookhey. You and Mr Graham don't have a policy.

The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD: It didn't work in the last election.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: You don't have an alternative. We have a comprehensive toll review being undertaken, led by Treasury, supported by Transport for NSW, with subject matter experts who will—

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Minister, if you want you can rule this out right now.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: —look at all tolls across New South Wales.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: You can rule out privatising the toll revenue—

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Mr Graham, there are no plans—

The Hon. CHRIS RATH: Point of order—

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: I've answered your question, Mr Graham.

The CHAIR: Order!

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Are you refusing to do it?

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: You don't need to yell at me.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Why are you refusing?

The CHAIR: Order! We cannot yell at witnesses; we're asking questions.

The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD: Stop badgering.

The CHAIR: If we could have a little bit more of an orderly discussion—I will acknowledge, though, that the Minister has not answered the question that has been given to her already. She answered quite a different question—if you could now repeat your question and see if we can get an answer.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: Minister, I will try one more time. Can you guarantee that you will not be privatising the revenue streams from the harbour tunnel, the Western Harbour Tunnel and the Harbour Bridge?

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Mr Mookhey, I've said it before and I'll say it again: There are no plans.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: Can I ask you how much money—

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Tell us what your plan is.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: We're not going to privatise it. We can give you that commitment.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: There we go. We're in furious agreement.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: Minister, how much money do you expect us to have to borrow to build the Western Harbour Tunnel?

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Ms Drover might speak to the specifics of that. The first part of that has been avoided, and the second part is under tender at the moment. But Ms Drover might speak to that.

The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD: Be careful about the answer if it's commercial in confidence.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: Does Ms Drover know how much you're borrowing?

CAMILLA DROVER: The budget for the Western Harbour Tunnel, which is being directly delivered by Transport for NSW, comes from Treasury. Treasury's borrowing requirements et cetera I'm not privy to, but the funding for the Western Harbour Tunnel comes from Treasury.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: Yes, indeed it does.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Can I add to that specifically, though, Mr Mookhey, if you are interested—

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: Perhaps, rather than add to it, you could just answer it. The question was: How much money are you intending to borrow to build the Western Harbour Tunnel?

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: I can note that a \$722 million contract has been awarded to build stage one of the project, which includes 1.7 kilometres of tunnels from Rozelle to Birchgrove. That stage is a joint venture between John Holland and CPB. The balance of your question relates to the Treasurer and to Treasury, in terms of borrowing, Mr Mookhey.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: What is the estimated total cost of building the complete Western Harbour Tunnel?

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Ms Drover might speak to that, but we've allocated, over four years, \$558.5 million in capital expenditure.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: Yes, I know what's been allocated, but I'm just interested in what the actual estimated—

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: I'm trying to finish my sentence, Mr Mookhey.

The Hon. CHRIS RATH: Point of order—

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: I'm just asking for direct relevance.

The CHAIR: I will hear the point of order.

The Hon. CHRIS RATH: I think this is going to be an incredibly long day if the members of the Opposition continue to interject and interrupt the Minister when she's in the middle of answering the previous question.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: To the point of order: We've really had repeated attempts to slow this down by the members of the Government. I'm just indicating that they are almost guaranteeing a supplementary estimates hearing in this portfolio.

The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD: We look forward to it.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Is that a threat?

The CHAIR: Order! I think that there are interruptions on both sides, both from the Minister and from questioners. If we could be more respectful of Hansard, I would appreciate it. If we could also stop the non-point-of-order interjections from the Government members, that would be very useful.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Mr Graham, I'm very happy to answer questions about this Government's record investment in transformational infrastructure across New South Wales—eight motorways in delivery. I'm very happy to stay with that.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: I'm glad you're happy about it, Minister, but then perhaps you can express your joy by answering this question: What exactly is the estimated total cost of building the complete Western Harbour Tunnel?

The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD: Isn't this an issue of tender?

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: As I was starting to say, in the 2022-23 budget, \$558.5 million in capital expenditure, \$4.1 billion over four years across multiple outcomes to commence major construction activity for Western Harbour Tunnel to deliver the first stage of the tunnelling works for a new crossing of Sydney Harbour itself. That package will include the 1.7 kilometres. Obviously, the second and supplementary part of stage two of the western harbour crossing is commercial in confidence because that is subject to a tender process, but Ms Drover might speak more to that.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: Does Ms Drover know the estimated total cost of the complete harbour tunnel?

CAMILLA DROVER: As we've said at previous budget estimates, we're focused on tendering the whole of the Western Harbour Tunnel. As the Minister said, we're in tender evaluation for the second and last package for the Western Harbour Tunnel. When we've done that tendering, we will confirm the project with respect to budget.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: Does Ms Drover know when the tender finishes?

CAMILLA DROVER: We're in tender evaluation at the moment, so tenders are in. We anticipate awarding that contract by the end of the year.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: Minister, when do you expect to be making the final investment decision?

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: There's obviously a process to be undertaken which is a gateway process through Infrastructure NSW, which we have with all large infrastructure projects. That's no surprise. That will depend on the outcome of the tender evaluation, but we should have something by the end of the year, I would anticipate.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: What's the benefit-cost ratio of the harbour tunnel as you currently understand it?

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: That would be subject to the business case, and that's obviously subject to commercial in confidence. Ms Drover might speak to that. If we might finish, Ms Drover might add to that.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: Before she does, the last summary that was published by Infrastructure NSW showed it was at 1.6 at a much lower cost base than now. Is it still a net positive?

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: So will you stop work on the Western Harbour Tunnel, Mr Mookhey? Is that what you're saying—we shouldn't build it? Is that what you're saying?

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: No, I'm just trying to understand the cost-benefit ratio here.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: What is that based on?

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: Minister, this is not a particularly complicated question. It's based on what's publicly been released, which was in 2018. It's four years later. Given that you were meant to make the final investment decision on this particular project—and to be fair to you, that wasn't your fault. It was meant to be done by one of your predecessors.

The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD: Point of order, Madam Chair—

The CHAIR: I'll hear the point of order.

The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD: We have a set amount of time; the time is over.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: The Chair was—

The CHAIR: I was being very generous with the time.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: You did take a minute of ours.

The CHAIR: Yes, and I did take a bit of theirs, if they want to just finish this question.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: I was going to finish the question by saying: Minister, the business case was finished back in 2018, and it's been four years since. It's not your fault; I accept that. But what exactly is it right now? Has it been updated at all, or are we still relying on the 2018 figure?

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Mr Mookhey, what are you basing your updated costs on?

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: I'm basing it—we went through this last time, Minister. It was on the Infrastructure NSW website, the summary of the business case that was published at that time.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: And that is presently in the tender evaluation process. I'm not able to, as much as I'd love to, provide that information.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: It's a separate process about what the benefit-cost ratio is. It doesn't involve the tender. That's been established. All I'm asking you is: Has it been updated?

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Mr Mookhey, when you roll out large infrastructure, as we're doing with eight motorways—constructed or in construction—there is a process involved. Ms Drover can speak to that. But the point is that's entirely separate to me. That's in tender evaluation. That is a matter for Ms Drover and the tender evaluation panel to ascertain. It is commercial-in-confidence, as it should be for those tenderers to provide the best possible opportunity to build this at the best cost to deliver value to taxpayers.

The CHAIR: I will pick up on the Opposition's questioning because I want to get absolute clarity on what you are saying about the Sydney Harbour Tunnel and bridge. Is your Government ruling out entering into a contractual arrangement in relation to the toll revenue from the Sydney Harbour Tunnel and/or the bridge with Transurban?

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: I cannot be any clearer: We are absolutely not doing that. The scare campaign needs to stop.

The CHAIR: It can stop if you clarify it, which you've now done.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: The answer is yes. I've done that multiple times.

The CHAIR: That's great. Thank you.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: I don't know how many more times I can say it.

The CHAIR: Can you do the same in relation to the Western Harbour Tunnel?

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: In relation to what aspect?

The CHAIR: Can you rule out entering into a contractual arrangement with Transurban in relation to toll revenue from the Western Harbour Tunnel?

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: There are no plans to do so.

The CHAIR: No plans?

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: No.

The CHAIR: Can you rule it out?

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: There are no plans to do so at this time. I think that's ruling it out.

The CHAIR: Have you had discussions with Transurban about a broader network distance-based charge on our toll roads?

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: No. As you'd know, Ms Boyd, having chaired the road toll inquiry in the upper House—and I welcome that work—there is a comprehensive toll review underway, led by Treasury and supported by Transport for NSW, that is being done by the subject matter experts. They will look at the opportunities to provide a fairer, more equitable system. They are engaging with stakeholders as part of that review. I'm sure that they probably have engaged with them and a number of other stakeholders in that process, but that is separate to me.

The CHAIR: With the tolls review, we heard some really upsetting evidence from people who had been burdened with administration tolls, particularly in relation to roads they had travelled on that are currently operated by Transurban. The evidence that we heard made it very clear that there were a lot of circumstances where people were being charged one amount of tolls that they hadn't paid and then there were sometimes three times as many administration fees on top of that. In the committee we had very frustrating and conflicting evidence. We need to get to the bottom of why those admin fees were set the way they were. We came out with a very clear recommendation that those admin fees should be slashed down to a maximum of \$2.20 per toll. Is that something that you will act now to legislate?

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: I thank you for the work done on that comprehensive inquiry. I'm a supporter of upper House inquiries because they do provide the opportunity for these issues to be explored. We will provide our response to that by the due date as a Government response. That is something that I need to work through. I've read the recommendations and I thank you for the work in that space. What I would say in addition is we have a comprehensive toll review being undertaken, which will look at all the opportunities we have for greater equity and greater fairness. I'm taking on board your point. That will consider all those issues and I welcome that.

The CHAIR: Going back to the other part of your portfolio responsibilities, I will start by asking about the Women's Safety Commissioner role that you announced as part of the recent budget. Congratulations.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Thank you.

The CHAIR: I know that's something you've wanted to set up for a while.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Yes.

The CHAIR: What exactly will the Women's Safety Commissioner do?

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Thank you. I was pleased that the Premier and Treasurer backed me in and supported that important initiative to have a Women's Safety Commissioner. It's something that I'm very excited to have as a key part of our response to keeping women and children safe and preventing domestic and sexual violence in New South Wales. That was, as you rightly recognised, something that was included in the budget. My vision for that is for someone to bring together our policy in this area across government. We know that this is not just in one silo; this cuts across police, homelessness and housing, and health. Our response is multidisciplinary, as it should be.

My vision for this was that we should—and we do work cooperatively with the Attorney General with each of the entities that have input, importantly, to wrapping around victim-survivors at this time. But to have a person in there who is the point person for comprehensive policy coordination—and Mr Tidball might speak further to that. I'm really pleased that we have that so that we can ensure that we have leadership and oversight in New South Wales in our policy and our programs, importantly. We have a number of programs and a very ambitious plan to roll these out. They will propose reforms to improve services and systems on domestic and family violence, provide advice and provide that cross-sector support against whole-of-government policy so that we are coordinating this and working together so we can develop comprehensive policy and improved outcomes for women in New South Wales. Mr Tidball might speak to that.

The CHAIR: I will come back to Mr Tidball this afternoon. Just on that, though, what I'm hearing is it is about coordinating policy, monitoring programs, coordinating cross-sector initiative et cetera. That all sounds like a very worthy position. Will the commissioner be independent from the Government?

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: It will be deliberately within—and Mr Tidball will speak to the process because I'm not across the public service components. But it would be important, for the Committee's information, to understand that. What was important to me is that those functions of the Women's Safety Commissioner sit alongside and within the Department of Communities and Justice in an executive director role. They are best placed to work across government if they are within government so that they have that responsibility and remit and they're already in there. That role will be supported by staff from the Women, Family and Community Safety

directorate. They're right within the directorate there. They all have vision across each of the government departments, and this reflects our record spend for women and the prevention of domestic and family violence in New South Wales. I'm really pleased that we're committed to this significant work, and this will lead our response. Mr Tidball might speak to where that will sit specifically.

The CHAIR: Again, I will come back in the afternoon, because I do have limited time. What I'm hearing is it's not independent from government; it is within DCJ. We'll come back to work out exactly what that looks like. Have you committed funding to that role?

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: That will be internally, so Mr Tidball is best placed to speak about that because it is an internal operation.

The CHAIR: I will ask Mr Tidball. Has funding been allocated to that role?

MICHAEL TIDBALL: Yes, it has.

The CHAIR: How much?

MICHAEL TIDBALL: It is an SES band 2, so it would be the amount of an SES band 2.

The CHAIR: Okay. Thank you. Beyond funding the new task force, what funding and initiatives have been dedicated to New South Wales—

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Sorry, what new task force? The commissioner?

The CHAIR: No, sorry. I've moved onto a completely different thing. I'm now talking about Respect@Work.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Oh, right. Good. Okay. I will catch up.

The CHAIR: Beyond funding the new task force, what funding and initiatives have been dedicated to implement the Respect@Work recommendations, particularly in light of the high levels of sexual harassment and violence reported in the New South Wales Parliament and workplaces?

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Thank you. I note that does fall—I'm happy to assist wherever possible, but that is within Minister Dominello's remit in relation to fair work and the fair work ministry. I'm happy to pass on those questions or take it on notice for referral to him, noting that Respect@Work and the report—the Minister for Women, Bronnie Taylor, has been leading our whole-of-government response to the Australian Human Rights Commission's Respect@Work report. The Attorney General has led the response to some aspects of that, and this is why it's multidisciplinary across government, throughout the meetings of the attorneys-general. I note, in relation to the budget, if I can advise the Committee that, in terms of the allocation for SafeWork, the New South Wales Government will invest \$9.7 million over four years for SafeWork to establish a Respect at Work Taskforce to educate employers across New South Wales on their obligations to provide safe workplaces. That was a component part of the \$100 million we put into the budget, including the task force.

The CHAIR: As I'm sure you're aware, Victoria has implemented their sort of "no wrong door" policy called Orange Door—

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Yes, Orange Door.

The CHAIR: —when it comes to sort of ensuring that effective inter-agency communication.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Yes.

The CHAIR: I know that when you and I were part of the joint select inquiry into coercive control we really looked at the need to have that—the idea that you could just tell your story once, go somewhere where you then didn't fall through the gaps.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Yes.

The CHAIR: On the weekend I was in Albury, and I was hearing from a GP who lives and works across both Albury and Wodonga. She was saying that when she has somebody who lives in New South Wales come to her with a domestic violence issue, she can't sleep at night because she knows that that person, even though she has referred them on to one place, may not have actually found the help they need; whereas when she gets a Victorian patient, she is quite confident that, regardless of where she has been directed, she will get the help that she needs because of that Orange Door. What has the New South Wales Government been doing to try to develop a similar program?

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: We have a program that's called Safer Pathway—and Ms Campbell will speak to that specifically. That is a multi-agency response system. We just don't call it "Orange Door", but it's there. That has also received additional funding in the last budget of \$43 million to increase—

The CHAIR: With respect, that's not the same thing. That's not what we were talking about when we were doing the joint select inquiry, and it's also not the same as what Victoria has.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Yes. What I can speak to is what we do have. The intention, as I understand it, unless Ms Campbell has something to add, is that this is our multi-agency response, which has key components in it to ensure that we are drawing together each of those responses—the DVSAT assessment tool, which we have spoken about, to identify the level of threat at the time to victims. It then goes to a central referral point, which at the time—anyway, I will move on. There was additional funding for a central referral point to electronically manage and monitor those referrals, so to specifically send them through so that we can understand. They are primarily from the NSW Police Force—Ms Campbell can correct me if I'm wrong on this—and there has been, clearly, a budget boost for this program to ensure that it has what it needs. But that also includes the WDVCSes that you recognised.

The CHAIR: I understand. Again, I understand all of those other programs, but there was a clearly identified need for us to have a more coordinated response on the ground—

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Yes.

The CHAIR: —when it comes to domestic and family violence, and as part of that committee work we looked at the model in Victoria. I am still hearing, as of last weekend, the absolute massive difference—

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Yes.

The CHAIR: —between what a victim of DV can experience when they're in Victoria versus New South Wales. What are we doing in New South Wales to create a similar system?

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: So a couple of things: At the time we conducted that inquiry together—and I have had the privilege of working with you on that—I was not the Minister for Women's Safety and the Prevention of Domestic and Sexual Violence. I now have a much greater depth of knowledge of this portfolio area. Your question was "What do we have?" and what we have is Safer Pathway. Safer Pathway is specifically there. But I'm happy to look at all options, Ms Boyd.

The CHAIR: To clarify, that was not my question.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Okay. I'm very happy to look at all options to provide additional supports to get women and their children where they need to be and get those supports to them. I'm always happy to look at those opportunities. I'm pleased that we could secure more funding for what our program is in existence, which is Safer Pathway, but Ms Campbell might speak more about how that is comprehensive.

The CHAIR: Sorry, with respect, it's not comprehensive. You know that and I know that. What we have in New South Wales is not the same as what they have in Victoria. What we're ending up with is people being referred to one service; if they can't get into that service, they're just falling through the cracks.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Which is why we have the tool there to ensure that that is monitored and it is followed up. So there's a central referral system, which is there—the central referral point to electronically manage and monitor referrals, primarily from the NSW Police Force. That's why we invested more money to make Safer Pathway a more comprehensive program, recognising that we can always do more to ensure that that is not the case. I absolutely hear you: We can always do more in that space.

The CHAIR: When we look at recommendations 14 and 15 coming out of that inquiry, which were looking at the Victorian model and recommending that we have something similar, the Government then responded—when was it? It must have been the end of December—saying that it supported those recommendations. Are you now saying that those recommendations were not necessary—

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: No, that's not what I'm saying.

The CHAIR: —or that the Government is not working on implementing them?

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: No, what I'm saying is that we will always take on board opportunities for us to expand the program. What we have in place is Safer Pathway. That is a program that has been given additional funding. I think we're on the same page, Ms Boyd, about the need to provide a comprehensive response once the referral is done. We don't want anyone falling through the cracks. That is absolutely agreed. Additional funding has been provided so that we can ensure we have that comprehensive follow-through with those referrals, but Ms Campbell might speak to how we're implementing that.

The CHAIR: Sorry, Minister, with respect, that's not what the recommendation was. It wasn't "Let's give more funding to Safer Pathway." The recommendation was "Let's have a service similar to in Victoria"—

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Yes, what I'm saying is we have the—

The CHAIR: —which we haven't done.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: The starting point is Safer Pathway. We have, as part of Safer Pathway, a "no wrong door" policy—we just don't call it "orange door". We have a policy that says, "Whatever avenue you come to us in, we will wrap around you and we'll provide a referral." That is part of this, but Ms Campbell can add to this, specifically on the—

The CHAIR: Minister, are you saying then that—

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: It's a part of this program. We just don't call it that.

The CHAIR: I understand that that's your answer to that, which is curious, given that the Government endorsed the recommendation that we establish an Orange Door style—

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Yes, there should be a "no wrong door" policy: that there should be a way in which once you come to us, no matter the agency, no matter how it is—mostly through police referral—then that system comes into place. We were speaking about this the other day.

The CHAIR: We can talk about this later with Ms Campbell. But, Minister, this is not what's happening right now. If you're a victim of domestic and family violence, you are falling through the cracks in New South Wales and you're not in Victoria because we don't have the same system as in Victoria. So either we're intending to have that system in the future and we're progressing towards that or we're not. But what I'm hearing from you now is that you don't think that there is a difference between New South Wales and Victoria when it comes to this, which is just not correct. Is your evidence that we have the same system, that basically if you go to somebody in New South Wales you will not fall through the cracks because there will be a comprehensive inter-agency response?

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: A comprehensive wraparound support. Once you come through whatever door it is, whatever agency, through whatever means, we have Safer Pathway with increased funding for that very reason: to ensure that we are identifying the level of threat—we have the assessment tool—that we have a statewide network of service providers, that we have the central referral point. That is another thing that we spoke about. That is there to manage and monitor referrals, wherever they come from. They primarily come from the police force. But we have that in place, and we have safety action meetings. That's the first thing that happens as soon as it's assessed that that is required. Those all fall into place. That operates statewide. We're always happy to consider further opportunities. I'm always looking at ways that I can secure more funding, as I did in the last budget, to ensure that women and children—victim-survivors—who come to us in that critical time have the wraparound supports that they need, they are followed through. If you have specific cases, Ms Boyd, I'm very happy to have a look at them. If there are specific examples of where someone hasn't received a follow-through or a comprehensive response—

The CHAIR: I do encourage you to speak to the sector—

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: I do regularly.

The CHAIR: —and to speak to pretty much anybody.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Yes.

The CHAIR: Sorry, I'm finding it extraordinary that that is your evidence. Can we talk about the NSW Sexual Violence Helpline?

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Yes.

The CHAIR: As you know, one in three calls to the NSW Sexual Violence Helpline have been going unanswered. I do know that the phase two National Partnership Agreement funding has plugged that hole for the next 12 months. What is going to happen after that?

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: I would state at the outset that it is extremely important that victim-survivors, when they have experienced a sexual assault, have a service to turn to immediately. That is our starting point. To that end, that service is funded by NSW Health. I think we did deal with this last time. There's ongoing funding to ensure that that is funded. That is annual and that is repeated. So there's annual funding for that service for the delivery of the NSW Sexual Violence Helpline. That is in addition to online counselling that is provided for anyone in New South Wales who has experienced sexual assault, along with their supporters.

NSW Health provided funding to Full Stop Australia to deliver the NSW Sexual Violence Helpline for nearly 50 years and provides over \$1.5 million annually—

The CHAIR: Sorry, if you could just answer the question, though. We have limited time. I don't need to know all the information about the helpline. We are all very well aware of what that is. You have been funding, as a standard amount of funding, an amount that leaves one in three calls going unanswered. There has been a funding plug through the NPA, which is great. Will you give a commitment to Full Stop Australia that, going forward, they will continue to have that funding?

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: I'd make two points on that, maybe three. The first is that that funding has been provided annually through NSW Health. They get that annual funding. As you rightly recognise—

The CHAIR: Yes, but insufficient levels have been provided.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: —the additional funding from the National Partnership Agreement was approved by the Commonwealth in June this year. That was allocated. There was \$20 million—

The CHAIR: Again, you're telling me things I already know. I want to know what happens after.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: I have invested an additional \$1 million from the funding that I have this year.

The CHAIR: What happens after?

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: I can't provide a hypothesis about future budgets. I will always be an—

The CHAIR: No. So we're just plugging it for a small period of time. This is not—

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: An additional \$1 million—

The CHAIR: This problem is not going to go away.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: An additional \$1 million has been provided. It is my intention to always advocate for more funding in future budget rounds. I can't guarantee—I'm not the Treasurer, I'm sorry—but I will be an advocate. That is my job. I'm the dedicated Minister for Women's Safety and the Prevention of Domestic and Sexual Violence. I will be advocating every day for additional funding for these services, particularly at a critical time when someone comes forward.

The CHAIR: Thank you. That does bring us to morning tea, which will make Mr Mallard very happy.

The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD: Little lunch.

The CHAIR: Little lunch for Mr Mallard.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Sorry, I should clarify for the Committee that it's \$1.2 million, not \$1 million.

The CHAIR: Thank you. We will be back at 11.15 a.m.

(Short adjournment)

The CHAIR: We are back. I trust you all had a lovely tea break. We will start again with questions from the Opposition, and Ms Sharpe.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: Hello, Minister.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Hello, Ms Sharpe.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: Can you let me know when the New South Wales Domestic Violence Death Review Team report will be released?

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Yes, I understand that is still progressing. Ms Campbell might speak to the specifics of when we can expect that. I know we are expecting—

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: My understanding was that it was supposed to be out by June.

ANNE CAMPBELL: My understanding is it was delayed.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: Why was that?

ANNE CAMPBELL: I don't have the—the whole-of-government response was sent to the State Coroner and my advice is that they needed a bit more time. I'm happy to take it on notice, Ms Sharpe.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: Just to be clear, the report will come out but the Government response is coming out at the same time? Is that the reason for—

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: I have some information which might assist. I'll just try to find the specifics for you. I'm advised that the Domestic Violence Death Review Team requested more time. That's the advice that I've received. As you recognise, the report was tabled on 24 March reviewing the 53 cases and setting out the recommendations. We supported those in full or in principle. Anne can speak to the delay in the response, but I understand that's being run by the Coroner's Court or by the Coroner.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: Okay. Obviously we're keen to see it.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Yes.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: Minister, I understand that Ms Boyd asked some questions about the rounds for the new refuges. The name "core and cluster" is unfortunate, so I'm going to—

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: We need a better name, I agree.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: —talk about the new refuges plan, I think.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: We are trying to come up with a better name.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: Yes, I hope so.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: I think "home and hub" was one that was posited, which I think is more positive.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: Yes, I think that would be great. Just to be clear, how many EOIs were received in tranche one?

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: I'm not sure if we're releasing that information publicly given that the second round is—

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: I'm not asking who they are. I'm asking how many people actually put in an EOI?

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Yes. I think—

ANNE CAMPBELL: I'm not sure if I can answer that, but I am happy to take that on notice and come back to you.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Just given that the process is underway and we're encouraging those to continue to apply—we would love to have hundreds and hundreds, clearly, but I think given it's currently in process I'm happy to take it on notice if we are able to provide that information. Certainly I'm happy to do so if we're able. I just don't want to jeopardise the other rounds if there's any delicacy or—

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: With respect, Minister, I don't think you're jeopardising any rounds by telling people how many people actually applied. The point that I'm trying to understand here is that it's a very truncated process. You are aware that there have been concerns raised from the sector in relation to the process?

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Yes. I engage regularly with the sector and I've heard, specifically in relation to this program, the concerns that it's happening too quickly. That is something that I've heard consistently across the sector. However, I would say that when you're rolling out record infrastructure of almost half a billion dollars and you're seeking to double the number of refuges in New South Wales that that is something we are keen to do. That's why we have the three tranches, so that those in the first tranche that are ready to go and that are shovel ready can occur and we're not held up by only having one open and close.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: I'm not trifling with you about that issue. I do think it's not an unreasonable question, to understand how many people. I'm not asking you how many tenders you let in. If you're able to tell me that, that would be useful. But I'm assuming you're not going to do that. I am interested, though, in how many people applied in the first round—the point being that everyone wants to see these refuges open. We know that infrastructure is under immense pressure across the entire sector. This is a complex project, finding land to actually build new housing. There are concerns from the sector that the rushing through is actually not going to deliver the refuges in any reasonable time. That's why I'm asking.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: That's an excellent question. You've quite rightly recognised the challenges we have in delivery of a very large program, but that's why we have the three tranches in place. There are a number of applications, I can assure you, in the first round. I'll take on notice whether we can provide the specific number, but I'm assured there was a number of applications, which is pleasing. We would encourage

those to continue through. I've heard from the sector about the constraints, which is why a component part of the funding is capacity building in the sector and specifically in Aboriginal communities and controlled organisations so that they can be successful in their applications, be supported in tender application, tender writing, to see success.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: Is this in place for tranche two?

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Yes.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: How much money of the program is being spent on the support work to getting these up and running?

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: I think it's about \$4 million. I'll find the specifics for you in just a moment. It is about \$4 million in capacity support and the delivery of that. Ms Campbell, did you have that number to hand?

ANNE CAMPBELL: Yes. The program's being jointly administered by Homelessness NSW, Domestic Violence NSW and the Aboriginal Community Housing Industry Association. Organisations are able to apply for grants for up to \$20,000 to engage or approach professional services for activities such as tender-writing support, procurement advice, support to design tender applications, including relating to financial advice, training and legal advice for contract negotiations.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: Can I just be clear? Was that put in place for tranche one? Or has it only been put in place for tranche two?

ANNE CAMPBELL: Tranche two.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: So you realised there was a problem in tranche one in terms of people getting this sorted out.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: No, I wouldn't say "realised a problem". The idea of tranche one was always to try and assist those that were ready to go, that were shovel ready or had existing premises—

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: How many are ready to go, Minister?

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Those numbers are, obviously, in the process of being assessed. So I'd say a number—

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: You announced the money in October last year?

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Yes. Record funding.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: Almost 10 months later, you can't tell us how many are going to be ready to go.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: A number have been successful. I'm pleased about that. The idea of that tranche was always to support those that are relatively quick to provide safe spaces for women, as quickly as possible, and to allow the others the time to put in applications and support them to do so, to see success.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: How much funding has been allocated for tranche one?

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: I have to take that on notice, unless, Ms Campbell, you have it to hand.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: Can't tell me?

ANNE CAMPBELL: I can tell you in the budget, in the forward estimates for this financial year, \$47.24 million.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: Forty-seven million of what? Four hundred and eighty-three.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: That's for the whole program.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: It's about that.

ANNE CAMPBELL: Four twenty-six.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: Yes. So about 10 per cent's been allocated for tranche one.

ANNE CAMPBELL: That's correct.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: You're not providing an extension for tranche two to get this sorted out?

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: There's sufficient funding in each of those tranches. We want to see the record \$484.3 million out the door.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: But, just to be clear, there's \$47 million?

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Yes.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: It was announced last October?

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Yes.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: And you can't tell me how many projects or when's the first door going to be opening, what's the time frame for this.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: I've said we'll endeavour to get that information to you. There are, obviously, planning issues and implementation, as you rightly recognise, around that. But we want to see success in providing these safe spaces for women and their children. We're keen to do that. The point was that we wanted early success from those projects. We wanted those—

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: Terrific. Obviously, land is a really big issue, and the planning process is very complicated. What discussions have you had with other Ministers about this process? Have you considered talking to the Strategic Lands board to actually identify land that would make it easier for organisations to get access to and build refuges on?

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Yes. Ms Campbell will speak to that more, but we have partnered with Land and Housing Corporation. We are keen to look at opportunities where there is existing government land that might be available. We also have set up a link—

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: Is there an active process do that?

ANNE CAMPBELL: I'm happy to answer that. Yes, we've been really active with the Department of Planning and Environment. Also, we've spoken with Crown Solicitor's. We've launched a register of interest for organisations who want to participate in the expression of interest. We can assist them in terms of linking them with government assets, Land and Housing Corp.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: Terrific.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Can I also just add to that, in answer to answer your question, Ms Sharpe, I have spoken also with Minister Anderson in relation to Crown lands and other opportunities. He's very keen to support this program as well.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: Could you take on notice and give us an idea of how many locations you've been able to identify that are on government land?

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: I'll take it on notice, yes.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: Obviously, there are very complex DA issues when you've got to deal with local government. These projects will have to go through a local DA process?

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Yes, but we've had some applications, as I understand it—I don't have every specific one. But the idea was for those that could partner, and make the application, together with councils, to do so. Those that were shovel-ready—for example, refurbishments where they were ready to go—the council would be supportive of those at the outset. But obviously there will always be ways in which we will try and support them to get those through councils, and council have been supported as well from the initial feedback I've had. Ms Campbell, did you want to speak to the council—

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: Do you know how many councils are in the EOI, have been able to partner or are working through that?

ANNE CAMPBELL: I'm happy to take that on notice, Ms Sharpe.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: Great. Thank you. I just wanted to check the number of consultations that are currently in play for the women's sector and, particularly, domestic violence and sexual assault.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Sorry, what do you mean by consultations?

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: The sector at the moment—the Government's currently out consulting on the Crimes Legislation (Coercive Control) Bill.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Yes. I know where you're going.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: The New South Wales domestic and family violence plan.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Yes.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: The New South Wales sexual violence plan.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Yes.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: They're participating in the core and cluster tranche two tender process?

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Correct.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: At the same time they've got decreased availability of staff due to COVID?

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: I'm sure.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: And we've got increased rates of domestic violence reporting and sexual assault rates. How and what are you able to do to try and make this more sustainable for the sector? Let's understand, most of the sector are not paid people who do advocacy. They're people actually running refuges and dealing with survivors walking in the door in increasing numbers. How can we make this better, Minister?

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Yes. I've heard that from the sector. This is a Government that prioritises women's safety. That's why we have a dedicated Minister for Women's Safety and the Prevention of Domestic and Sexual Violence. We do have an ambitious program to provide priority support, not only of our services—

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: I'm not talking about the program. I'm talking about how you actually support the sector who are doing the actual work that you are providing funding for, which we're very happy about, to do their jobs. I'm hearing, and our shadow Minister is hearing, of massive burnout and the number of requests coming from government to ask them to tell them what they think, when they're actually just trying to deal with the people coming in the door.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: In relation to the national plans, I note the national plan was delayed. There was obviously a change of government and we have met with the Ministers around the country to work on that. The two State national plans—the sexual violence and domestic violence, and the Aboriginal plan—are all being consulted on so that we can try and achieve consistency with the national plan. The department has roundtables—

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: Minister, thank you. I'm asking you about any attempt to try and bring this work together or is it just the way it is, and nothing is going to be able to make it easier? Is there the ability to bring the sector together and deal with all of those issues in one go and to actually try and streamline any of the process? You have some sort of ministerial advisory committee, I assume?

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Yes.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: I think it's coming to a critical point for these workers in terms of their ability to do their job.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Yes, thank you. This is a priority of our Government. That's our starting point. That's why we are not only having record funding but ensuring we have a broad legislative program to follow through. We heard from the sector that they wanted comprehensive investment in refuges. That's why we have those. The national plan—we want to get that alignment. I meet regularly with the sector through the council.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: Minister, what I'm asking you is: Realising that there are all of these consultation things happening, and everyone wants consultation; we talk about this constantly—

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Yes.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: Is there any way or anything you can do to bring the various consultations together to streamline the process for the coalface organisations that are doing this work?

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Yes.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: They are overwhelmed by requests from the Government to tell them what they think, and we know what they think. They need more resources to actually get more people into the jobs and more housing.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Yes.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: But they're being asked all the time what they want. We know what they want. How can you streamline and at least lift the burden of consultation on them because they have been telling us the same thing for the last 20 years?

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Ms Sharpe, I appreciate the input from the sector. It's critical and it's vital to our success in New South Wales, with such a comprehensive program, that we hear and engage with the sector regularly. We do so through ongoing round tables, meeting with them to set out what the program is in relation to core and cluster, in relation to a number of the programs to assist.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: So you're asking them to come to more meetings. They're being asked to come to each briefing.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Well, no, that is to have an engagement process where they all come together. They can attend that remotely. We have regional round tables as well to ensure that that engagement is occurring so that we can hear comprehensively not as a one-off but as an ongoing engagement opportunity with the sector because we know that is vital to success. We're also funding capacity building in the sector because we've heard exactly what you've said about the need to support a bigger workforce. So funding has been allocated to that—secured and allocated—and has been rolled out as part of the core and cluster program to ensure that we see success, but we also build up the sector in that area. I meet regularly with peak bodies and continue to have regular stakeholders—

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: I'm not arguing you don't meet with them. I'm actually arguing that perhaps you're over-meeting with them.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: I'm happy to hear that.

The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD: You can't win.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: No, no, no. You're missing the point here. In a refuge there is actually very few staff and they're dealing with people who are actually coming in while at the same time they're being asked to go to roundtable meetings and other meetings. I'm just asking whether there's any possibility, Minister, that you'd consider with your department to find a way to lift the burden? We want quality consultation. Do they need to have as many meetings? Can we not align some of the consultation so that they can be done at once, rather than doing four or five separate tranches at the same time when people are out trying to find land to actually build new refuges?

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: I do meet regularly with the peak bodies for that very reason, Ms Sharpe, because I know that not every frontline service has the time to be able to meet. That's why we have the peak bodies in place and I meet regularly with those so those views can be comprehensively put forward. We have the domestic violence council, which I meet with and which has representatives on it. The Domestic and Family Violence and Sexual Assault Council meets regularly so that we can have those updates. They meet with the peak stakeholders in the sector, including the Country Women's Association, the sexual health group, ACON—

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: Okay. Thank you. As I said, I'm not being critical of who you're meeting with. I'm asking about whether you can make it easier for the sector.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Sure, and I understand that, Ms Sharpe. I understand the motivation. It's key that we work closely with the sector to see success in this area. They're not just meetings: they're ongoing engagement with the department so we can see success in this area. Can I thank all of them for their input and their feedback. This is a comprehensive program because we've heard the sector say that they need more physical buildings, they need more resources and they need more people in the capacity-building sector, particularly in Aboriginal-controlled organisations to see success. That's why we're trying to cover a number of issues at the same time—so that they can focus on those, we can get a response on the legislation, we can get a response on the plans, we can get those aligned and we can get on with the job of providing more homes to keep women and their children safe.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: Minister, on the announcement of the 75 new domestic and family violence refuges, it's been suggested that there's going to be need for more than 425 new domestic specialist and family violence staff to deal with those. What's the workforce planning strategy for this?

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: As I've indicated, Ms Sharpe, we have, as part of that funding, capacity building built into that and funding for that, but Ms Campbell might speak to that.

ANNE CAMPBELL: I'm happy to. I think I mentioned it earlier. We've got a core and cluster capacity and capability building program, so we're working really closely with DVNSW in terms of looking at a workforce strategy for the workforce.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: As I said, I've been advised that, if you've got 75 new refuges, there are probably 425 new specialist staff required. Is that number accepted by the department or yourself, Minister?

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: I don't know what that's based on, but I'm happy to accept that we certainly do need a lot more workforce in this space. That's why we're supporting that with funding and with programs as a part of this program.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: I'll tell you what it's based on. It's based on five staff per refuge plus WDVCS—two on site—and that's considered a conservative estimate. Is that something that's kind of broadly agreed?

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: I'd have to take that on notice. I don't know the analysis of that, but I certainly agree with the principle that we need more capacity in the sector for sure. We've seen during COVID, as in all workforces, people decide to change careers or change what they're doing. They've simply had enough. It's something we absolutely recognise and we're working closely and we have funding to support that.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: Minister, the coercive control bill is coming to Parliament in the spring session, is that right?

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Yes.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: You'd be aware that there are concerns about the need for education programs in the lead-up to that?

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Yes.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: Can you give us an update on where that is up to?

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Where the legislation is up to?

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: Education campaigns in relation to this.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Sure. I note, of course, this is being led by the Attorney General and while I was privileged to chair the inquiry, it is primarily led by the Attorney General. I understand he spoke to this during his estimates, but I can indicate that the absolutely critical part of the success of this coercive control legislation and implementation to criminalise the pattern of behaviour which is coercive control is education in the sector and the implementation period. So, knowing that after assent—

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: Is that going to be rolled out?

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: —we have a 12 month period, at least, for implementation. Once it is—sorry, not assented to. Once it passes as legislation, there is importantly the implementation period, where we know—the success of this is based on international examples where Scotland learned from the example of Wales and England—that implementation is key. That is not only education of the police force and frontline services about how to accurately record a pattern of behaviour—that is a difficult challenge. Now, the necessity is to ensure that we're providing that education and training to police, because it's not an incident-based response. It's not literally turning up to a scene and recording. Properly recording evidence to reflect the context of a pattern of behaviour which we know precedes domestic violence homicide is an important component. We know that; we recognise that. I'm advised that the Department of Education will review the school programs about respectful relationships. We've seen our consent laws also passed. Education has been key about that. I understand that they will also include education about coercive and controlling behaviour.

The CHAIR: Minister, you said before that you have been meeting with the peak bodies within domestic and family violence services. How many times have you met with DVNSW in the, say, first six months of the year?

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Multiple times. As a priority, my diary is obviously published quarterly so those meetings will be in there. As I say, it's a priority to meet and hear from them and ensure that we are listening in an ongoing way. I have regular roundtable meetings with the peak domestic and sexual violence stakeholders as part of the domestic and family violence and sexual assault council. I hold quarterly meetings with the corporate leadership group from a range of public sector companies.

The CHAIR: Okay. In relation to DVNSW, I'm just looking at your ministerial diaries. You've got one meeting down on 13 June. I don't see any other meetings just with DVNSW in those first six months.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: I've had many. I can assure you I've had many meetings. Some are online. In fact, a number have been online due to the availability of DVNSW. We meet very regularly.

The CHAIR: So your diary is just not up to date—these disclosures?

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: I'd have to clarify that. It might have been in the first—I'd have to clarify that.

The CHAIR: Perhaps you could come back to me.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Yes, but we've had many meetings.

The CHAIR: There's also a couple of so-called roundtables that you've put in here in your disclosure summary. But when we look at what they are, they're not necessarily roundtables. So, for instance, the meeting on the seventeenth of the third was a regional forum that DVNSW had organised and it was an online event that people could dial into.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Which I attended.

The CHAIR: Did you attend in person?

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: No, it was online.

The CHAIR: It was also in person. But no? You attended online?

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Yes, as did many participants.

The CHAIR: Did you speak?

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: I believe so; I'll have to check.

The CHAIR: Okay. I note that I'm actually put down as attending that and I was an apology, so maybe your disclosure summary needs to be updated.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: I'm not responsible for running those meetings. They're organised through the department, which kindly convenes each of those councils. I've just been accused of meeting too often, and I'm now being told I don't meet often enough. I'm very happy to meet as often as is necessary and particularly through those peak bodies and the great work of DVNSW, noting that we do meet regularly. I met on a Sunday night via Zoom because we had important matters to work through. I am available. I hope that my attendance at those, wherever possible, gives the opportunity. But I also have ensured at the last couple of council meetings that I've attended—you asked about speaking. I made a point at the last one of not speaking, because my purpose and my role is to listen to the sector.

I was very clear about that on the last occasion, and I'm grateful for the input of the sector. I'm very happy to meet as often as I possibly can, knowing that they have a job to do and I have a job to do, and they do feed through to the department. Those round tables—they're not "so-called round tables". The point of them is to really make sure that we're offering the opportunity to hear from them and also outline our vision as we go along.

The CHAIR: I guess my point there is that they're not round tables, because in that one, as you say, you did not outline any vision. There was no backwards and forwards; it was simply a presentation that you happened to dial into.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: I don't think that's fair, Ms Boyd.

The CHAIR: And then the one on 16 February is also described as being a round table but was actually a strategic plan launch by DVNSW.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Which is very important. The strategic plan launch is in here.

The CHAIR: No, but this is disclosure.

The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD: I doubt the Minister writes out the description.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: Well, she's supposed to adhere to the disclosures. It's not an unreasonable question.

The CHAIR: Yes.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Absolutely. What I'm saying is that I know that I've attended a number of meetings with DVNSW. We have regular meetings scheduled; we have the regular council meetings. I've just been told that I meet too often and I'm detracting from the sector doing its work. Now I'm told I don't meet often enough.

The CHAIR: Some of us do read your disclosure summaries, and we read all the Ministers' disclosure summaries.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Of course, that's why we have them. It would be great if everyone in Parliament disclosed their diaries.

The CHAIR: That's fine; I'm very happy to. Mine would be disclosed as attending a webcast, not as being part of a round table with a number of organisations.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Sure. Ms Boyd, can I just indicate also—and I don't think it's included in the diary disclosure, because that relates to meetings I attend—my office meets with them fortnightly.

The CHAIR: Okay. Also in your disclosures for the first six months are that you met with either Transurban or Transurban-related entities. Are there more of those meetings that haven't been disclosed as well?

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Sorry, if I can be clear about my evidence, I'm not saying that my disclosures are inaccurate. What I can say is during the time that I have served in this portfolio I have had multiple meetings with DVNSW. I, to be clear, have had many more than one meeting with DVNSW, so I don't accept that there's anything misleading in my diary disclosures. I'm happy to check them and check whether it's an online meeting or whatever it is, but I can say comprehensively I'm very pleased to meet with the sector as often as I possibly can. My office meets regularly, every fortnight. I know that we have a comprehensive program with the department to engage particularly on programs like the national plan, like our State plans, like core and cluster, to ensure that we are engaging on each of those issues, and like coercive control will be rolled out during that—

The CHAIR: I would suggest that you go and double-check your disclosures, because it's in everyone's interests for them to be as accurate as possible.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: There will be subsequent meetings since 1 July. I think that disclosure is up to 30 June, so there will be subsequent meetings after that.

The CHAIR: Yes, understood. Are you saying, then, that you've only met DVNSW once in the first six months of the year, as is disclosed in the summary?

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: That is probably accurate, yes. That's not to say that my office didn't meet with them regularly.

The CHAIR: No, but you personally met with them once in six months, the peak—

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Yes, certainly, that's probably accurate. But my office meets regularly with them, and we do as part of the council as well, so I don't know if you're including the council meetings as well.

The CHAIR: I think there's two of those.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Yes.

The CHAIR: Moving on, at last estimates we talked about the funding that was coming from the Federal Government for tranche two of the national partnership agreement where funding was being given from the Federal Government to the State Government in relation to family and sexual violence.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Yes.

The CHAIR: We now have the tranche two list of recipients—which is great, thank you. But what we don't have is the amount of funding that is going to each of those organisations. I will pick up with the officials later this afternoon in relation to how much is to be given to each of them. But why were no numbers presented when this information was released?

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: I note that the second phase of the agreement was approved by the Commonwealth in June this year. So \$20 million was allocated to 16 initiatives to support sexual violence service delivery, victim-survivors of domestic and family violence, and men's behaviour change and Closing the Gap programs. Included in those were pilot projects for hearing support to women.

The CHAIR: With respect, we've got limited time. I've got the list.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Certainly.

The CHAIR: I just want to know why the amount of funding to each of those organisations was not specified.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: I'm advised that that is common practice for these. Ms Campbell might like to add to that, but my understanding is that is a common practice. It was the same in the previous year when the Attorney General managed the first part of this funding.

The CHAIR: Ms Campbell, other than it being common practice, is there any reason for it?

ANNE CAMPBELL: I think it's common practice, but I'm happy to take that on notice and come back to you.

The CHAIR: Thank you. We'll pick it up again this afternoon. Minister, I've spoken with you many times about the Illawarra Women's Trauma Recovery Centre.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Yes.

The CHAIR: As I'm sure you know, they were very pleased to get \$25 million in funding from the Federal Government, which covers the operating costs of that centre.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Yes.

The CHAIR: But they still need money for the land so that they can have somewhere to operate out of. They've been asking the State Government for a very long time. Why was that not included in the budget?

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: You quite rightly recognise an innovative program. I did meet with them in Parliament, as did Minister Hazzard. So I've met with them and also spoken with you directly about that. I understand that they have sought funding for the land. NSW Health has provided \$50,000 to them to support them to develop a business case.

The CHAIR: That was last year. They've already had that.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Yes.

The CHAIR: They redid the business case. They put it in and then the Government has ignored it.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: I don't think that's fair. The Commonwealth budget, obviously—

The CHAIR: A year ago.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: I can't comment on this year's budget in relation to decisions made by the ERC. Those decisions have been made by the Expenditure Review Committee, in relation to that part of your question. I note that they are seeking further funding to build that building. Minister Hazzard has written to our Federal counterpart following our meetings with them regarding the capital components of the proposal to see if there's opportunity for part of that to pivot to services as well. So we have made those representations. I understand that we await the Federal Government response. I welcome the opportunity to work with our Federal colleagues to try to see if we can progress that.

The CHAIR: Can I clarify that? So you're saying that instead of the New South Wales Government providing the funding for the centre to be able to operate, the State Government has asked the Federal Government to instead divide its amount up so that it can pay for the buildings and the operating costs, thereby leaving the centre pretty much worse off?

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: No. We have met with them. We have advocated for that and funding has been provided for the business case. So we are committed to providing support. That has been done through Minister Hazzard. We have advocated with our Federal counterparts for some of that capital funding to be available for service provision.

The CHAIR: I don't think you understand the—no, I take that back.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: We're waiting to hear back from them, Ms Boyd. They're ongoing discussions.

The CHAIR: You keep referring to the business case, which is old news. It was two years ago.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: But that was provided by the State Government.

The CHAIR: They were asking for funding for the operating costs and the building costs. They did that. They got the \$50,000. They provided the business case, as required. They had the support of local universities. They've got the support of all the things. They put that in. They didn't hear back for ages. We've had this in budget estimates over and over—admittedly, when you weren't the Minister in charge of this particular area. But, let me assure you, we had all of that. They waited for a very long time. Finally, the Federal Government stepped in and gave them a \$25 million funding guarantee over five years.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Yes.

The CHAIR: The sector was delighted. Then they came to the State Government and said, "Great. We've got this. Can we just have the money for the building? We've got this great, wonderful situation where

we've got somebody to hold on to a particular site for us at a particular price. We just need that funding. Instead of you advocating for it in the budget, you've written to the Federal counterparts to get them to instead split that funding so that now it won't go for five years because some of it will be used for a building. Is that correct?

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: In relation to the past budget expenditure review process, I can't comment on that. It's obviously Cabinet in confidence. What I can say is there is a number of competing interests in this area for funding. What was funded was \$700 million of funding for services. It's important that we continue that. I will always advocate for more funding; that is my job. I don't think it's any surprise that I will be vigilant about that, but I can't talk about the decision-making of the ERC process. What I can talk about are the steps that are being taken. There are always competing interests in this area.

The CHAIR: Did you advocate for the \$30 million in streetlights that went into the budget?

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Safer cities—are you referring to the Safer Cities Program?

The CHAIR: The \$30 million for anti-street harassment infrastructure, which I understand is effectively streetlights that should have been funded by Infrastructure rather than through—

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: I wouldn't be dismissive of that work. I think it's important work, particularly where it was launched in Parramatta, where there was a murder of a woman in that particular park where lighting and CCTV would have potentially prevented that homicide. Nonetheless, Safer Cities is an excellent program supporting CCTV and lighting in areas to make safer areas for women. Nonetheless, that work has been—

The CHAIR: Sorry, let me stop you there. The idea that streetlights are somehow all about safety for women, as opposed to safety for people in general, that is not an evidence-based assertion. It is not something that the DV sector was calling out for. Of course we need streetlights, but that's an Infrastructure issue. Why has that been dressed up as being about women's safety when, at the same time, we're not funding something as groundbreaking as the Illawarra trauma centre?

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Ms Boyd, that work was being led by Minister Stokes as part of the cities and communities infrastructure work, so you would have to ask—

The CHAIR: You would think it would then be an Infrastructure spend rather than a spend for women.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: It was led by Minister Stokes.

The CHAIR: What's your view on the way that was presented in the budget in terms of it reinforcing the idea that women are most at risk when they are out on the streets, as opposed to at home, where we know that the most women are actually killed by their current or former partner?

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Ms Boyd, my personal view is that whatever we can be doing to prevent further violence towards women, we should be doing. There's a range of initiatives across government to do so. We have heard from women that they don't feel safe at night walking through a dark park where there was previously a homicide.

The CHAIR: But your Government—

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Whatever we can do to assist and provide additional support and safer areas to make communities—what is, during the day, a beautiful park, where I saw people—

The CHAIR: Your Government made a choice—

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: —riding and cycling and walking—

The CHAIR: —to fund streetlights and to dress it up as something for women, as opposed to people in general, and made the choice not to fund a trauma centre that would help thousands of women get back on their feet after having been victim-survivors of domestic violence. That was a choice.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: There are a lot of competing interests and budget processes to make choices. I wasn't part of the ERC decision; I can't comment on it. What I can say is I am an advocate for the sector. In doing so, the women's economic review, headed by Sam Mostyn, heard that women were catching taxis 500 metres down the road from the train station because they didn't feel safe walking through a park. Whatever we can do to support women in their communities to not have to catch a taxi home because of a dark park at night is an excellent initiative. I don't think it's about comparing one to the other.

The CHAIR: I'm glad you raised that because that group of people that was put together for the purpose of working out how to—I don't know, they came up with streetlights and whatever else they came out with. Why do you think that group of people was put together instead of the Treasurer listening directly to experts in the

sector who have been calling out consistently for funding for particular things for the past 20, 30 and 40 years? Why did we not listen to them and instead put together a hand-picked group of people who then came out with streetlights?

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Ms Boyd, I would point out, respectfully, that Maha Abdo was on that economic review. She is very much involved in women's safety in her community. I wouldn't be dismissive of that group. That was a group—

The CHAIR: I'm not dismissive of that group.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: —of women who informed that. You'd have to ask the Treasurer about the process of putting that group together. I think it's somewhat disrespectful to those women who participated in that economic review. Can I recognise the work of the Treasurer—

The CHAIR: I appreciate the—

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: —who asked women to inform his budget, which is a first in New South Wales and nationally.

The CHAIR: I appreciate the deflection and the attempt to make it sound like I am somehow disrespecting the women on that group. What the Government was doing was disrespecting the experts in the sector for not having listened to them for 30, 40 years.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: But, Ms Boyd, that's my job. I'm here to listen to the sector. That's my dedicated role. That's why we have a specific Minister for Women's Safety and the Prevention of Domestic and Sexual Violence. I listen to those women. I advocate for them, and \$700 million in the budget to support women's safety is a significant investment in the sector.

The CHAIR: What message—

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: This is a budget that is focused on women. It is absolutely focused on listening to women and ensuring that we prioritise programs. I am sorry, but I think that supporting lighting for women is an important component. Please tell me that you're not saying that's not important.

The CHAIR: Supporting lighting for human beings.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Yes, for safer places—

The CHAIR: So it's an infrastructure component. When we build a new road, we build new lights. The idea that then we've made it unsafe—

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Because we know sexual assaults can occur in those circumstances, and we want to prevent them.

The CHAIR: So because we've made a road unsafe by not putting the lights in the first place and because women are disproportionately less safe than men—

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Ms Boyd, that's a philosophical policy discussion.

The CHAIR: —we therefore, when we fix that infrastructure problem, decide that it's for women.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: I think we can walk and chew gum. I think it's important that we find ways to provide safer cities, safer workplaces, safer opportunities for women to come forward—

The CHAIR: But you're not walking and chewing gum because you are funding those things and failing to fund the really vital things that the—

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Women walking home at night, and we heard that they are catching taxis, Ms Boyd. I don't think it's fair to characterise that as less important or more important. I think it's important that, as a government, we listen to communities.

The CHAIR: No, I'm just not characterising this is something for women.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: That's exactly what was done through their economic participation work.

The CHAIR: Okay. So we're not going to fund, presumably, then, the Illawarra Women's Trauma Recovery Centre. Is that what you're saying—that's not going to happen because we're waiting for the Federal funding?

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Ms Boyd, that's not my evidence to the Committee. My evidence is the work that has been done so far, the advocacy that has been done by Minister Hazzard and I to speak to our Federal

counterparts—I will always be an advocate in the next budget process for more funding. I have met with the Illawarra women's trauma centre. I am keen to understand how we can assist them. I'm always there to try and be a strong advocate, with a number of competing interests in the budget process. That's my job. That's what I'm clear about.

The CHAIR: What message do you think it sends to women when we put the portfolio of prevention of domestic violence and sexual assault in with Metropolitan Roads to the same Minister?

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: That you have a capable Minister that is doing her darndest to try and make people of New South Wales—improve the lives of people in New South Wales, and we have record funding to back in both portfolios.

The CHAIR: Would you have preferred to have just had one of those portfolios?

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: That's not a matter for me. I don't make those decisions.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: That's not her choice.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Minister, thanks for your answers to the Committee. I think we did get somewhere in the end on those questions about the Sydney Harbour Bridge and the Sydney Harbour Tunnel. I just want to clarify one additional detail. You have ruled out privatising the toll revenue from the Sydney Harbour Bridge and the Sydney Harbour Tunnel. You have indicated that the Government has no plans in relation to the toll revenue privatisation of the Western Harbour Tunnel. You've ruled out two-way tolling on the Sydney Harbour Bridge and the Sydney Harbour Tunnel.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Yes.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Will you now rule out two-way tolling on the Western Harbour Tunnel?

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Well, there will be a toll. We haven't determined what that toll will be, Mr Graham. That hasn't been determined yet.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I'm not asking about the toll. I'm asking about the situation you've just ruled out on the Sydney Harbour Bridge and the Sydney Harbour Tunnel. Are you ruling out—

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Those existing arrangements will stay in place for those entities, which is also your policy.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: So you're not ruling out two-way tolling on the Western Harbour Tunnel, as I understand that answer.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Well, there's no need for another scare campaign. What I'm saying—and Ms Drover might add to this—is this is still in the tender stage, and what we have been clear about is there will be a toll on that motorway. This is how you pay for large infrastructure when you're building eight motorways, delivered or in delivery, and you have \$76.7 billion worth of transport infrastructure. But Ms Drover might speak specifically to the Western Harbour Tunnel.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Minister, you have been relatively clear in the end in these other matters. You have ruled out two-way tolling on the Harbour Bridge and the Harbour Tunnel.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Because they're in existence.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: In relation to the Western Harbour Tunnel—

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: They're in existence.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Yes. So you're drawing a different position here—you're not ruling it in or ruling it out.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: There will be a toll on the Western Harbour Tunnel, and that has yet to be determined.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Yes, including—

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: It hasn't been determined.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: —whether it's one-way or two-way. That's yet to be determined.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Yes, it hasn't been determined, Mr Graham.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: In relation to the M6, will that be two-way tolling on the M6 or are you ruling that out?

The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD: You're just jealous because we're building these things. You guys didn't build anything.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Minister?

The CHAIR: Order!

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: Quiet in the cheap seats.

The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD: I was invited to interject.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: The M6—Ms Drover can add to that.

CAMILLA DROVER: For many years we've announced the tolling regime for the M6 stage one. It aligns with WestConnex, so it is two-way tolling. It's distance-based tolling. There's a flag fall and then a distance-based component.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Minister, will you rule out, in the way you have for the Sydney Harbour Bridge and Sydney Harbour Tunnel, privatising the toll revenue from the M6 tollway?

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Mr Graham, I'm happy to answer your questions and assist, but future policy is something that is subject to our toll review. I can rule out—we've already previously ruled that out, so that's on the record; I'm not revealing anything new. But what I can say is we also have in place a comprehensive toll review, which is being undertaken, of all of our toll roads to establish equity across all of the toll programs, which have evolved over time under your government and ours.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Minister, I know this is a point in time. I think it's fair for you to make the point that this is a point in time. I'm asking—

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: We've ruled it out.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: You've ruled out privatising the toll revenue from the M6 toll roads.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: M6 toll revenue is for maintenance and operation of that toll road, as are the tolls on the bridge and the tunnel. With a 90-year-old heritage-listed bridge, there's obviously comprehensive maintenance.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I understand those things but, as I understand it, you've just ruled that out.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: It's not revenue. It's not just revenue; it goes to maintenance and operations of those large infrastructure projects. That's my advice on M6.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Minister, what's the budget allocation for this financial year for planning for the Beaches Link toll road?

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Beaches Link has been allocated. I'll find that number for you, Mr Graham. I'm sure you have it in front of you.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: It's page 5-50 of *Budget Paper No. 3*, if that's of help.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Ms Drover, do you want to speak on that first? We've allocated \$60 million in the 2021 New South Wales budget for Beaches Link, as you know—page 134. That is obviously part of—

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I'm asking for the allocation for this financial year.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: That is obviously part of the whole of the Western Harbour Tunnel project.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Yes. I'm asking you about the Beaches Link planning allocation for this financial year.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Ms Drover?

CAMILLA DROVER: It's \$1 million for this financial year, and there's another nearly \$9 million for the following financial year.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: So for this 12 months, I think \$1,050,000 is allocated. Minister, in the roads budget, \$1 million of planning money is the equivalent of the loose-change drawer in the car. It's a tiny amount of money in the roads budget.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: How would you know? You never built anything.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: What are you planning to do with that million dollars for the Beaches Link road in this financial year? What will actually happen?

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Noting that that part of the project, which is the third part of the Western Harbour Tunnel Warringah Freeway upgrade, is part of that entire project, but those allocations that you refer to are obviously a matter for the budget and for Treasury, and so part of that work is being undertaken. Noting that we have had—Ms Drover might speak to the allocation of that. But that will be to assist with the investment decision and making acquisitions of property, which I understand Ms Drover can speak to.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Thank you. I accept that answer. Minister, in relation to the INSW advice about this, they were very clear. To quote:

Faced with these realities—

that is the funding issues—

Infrastructure NSW recommends reconsidering the timing and sequence of a number of large, complex projects that are not yet in procurement.

These include Beaches Link. Minister, when you think about this advice, do you accept or reject that advice from Infrastructure NSW?

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: I very much respect Infrastructure NSW. It was established by a Liberal government to ensure that large projects were managed, have gateway processes and are properly assessed and delivered. I respect enormously that advice. Clearly, when you have—

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: It's not about whether you respect it. I'm asking it because you've said the Government's pressing on with this project, despite only allocating \$1 million. Would you characterise your position as accepting or rejecting that advice?

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: In what respect?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: It's quite clear advice to defer this project. You look like you've deferred it in the budget.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: This Government is committed to Beaches Link, Mr Graham, unlike yours; Mr Minns has ruled that out. We know for a fact that under Mr Minns there will be no Beaches Link to the northern beaches. We know that for a fact.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: If you're committed to it, when will an investment decision take place?

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: We obviously have the planning process, which is underway at the moment, and there are property acquisitions. But we've given clear indication that, given the global headwinds, supply chain challenges and the number of mega projects we have underway at the moment, we will be staging this. It's always been the third part of the western harbour crossing-Warringah Freeway upgrade and Beaches Link.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Minister Stokes—

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: But we are undertaking the property acquisitions and we've made it clear with the property acquisitions—

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Yes, I'll come to that, Minister.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: —that we've put those on hold for two years to give certainty to those residents in Dudley Street, to let them know that we have more time. If they want to—

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Minister, we'll come to the property—

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: —have their properties acquired now, we can do so.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Minister, I'll just stop you there. We'll come to property acquisitions. Minister Stokes stated:

We do have a bit of time to make the investment decision, as we can't build the Beaches Link until the Warringah Freeway upgrades and the Western Harbour Tunnel are done. The timing is probably 2027-28 until those projects are completed.

Do you agree that an investment decision for the Beaches Link will not happen until after 2027-28?

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: I can't guarantee when the investment decision—you're asking for conjecture and a hypothetical into the future. What I can say is it's in the planning stages, as it should be. That

should properly be considered, noting that the environmental impact statement was extended so the community could have further consultation on that. Ms Drover might speak to the next steps—

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I'm asking do you agree or disagree with your senior cluster Minister, who says this investment decision will not be made until after 2027-28?

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: I'm sure that's probably absolutely right. But what I am saying is that we—

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Well, Minister, why are you saying this project's proceeding, that—

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: —don't have a planning decision.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: —you're pressing ahead, given Minister Stokes is saying an investment decision is years away?

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Because we delivered NorthConnex. Because we delivered the M2, which you said was the "road to nowhere". Because we have delivered major infrastructure across New South Wales. We have a record of a decade of delivery—

The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD: Hear, hear!

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: —for the residents of New South Wales because our record is clear.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Minister, aren't you misleading the public when there's only \$1 million of planning money and, rather than pressing ahead, Minister Stokes says this decision is years away?

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: We've made it clear to the residents of Dudley Street that they have two years. If they would like their properties acquired now we will happily do so, but if they'd like more time, as we've heard from some of them, there is more time. When you are rolling out \$76.7 billion worth of transport infrastructure you have a large job. We have demonstrated to the community that we are capable of doing that. But you have to be realistic about—

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I'll turn now to one of the other issues that you've been dealing with, Minister.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: —the challenges involved, and this is still in the planning stages, Mr Graham.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Minister, if I could put the question? I want to turn to the issue about E-Toll glitches. To your credit, you've been quite up-front about some of the issues here. I think one of the good things you've done is be really up-front early on about the scale of these challenges. On 24 March you talked about the 45,000 customers who were charged with duplicate transactions. On 31 March you made it clear that some of these people didn't have duplicate transactions; they had what was referred to as multiple duplicate transactions. There were 3,600 of them. On 1 April you indicated that an IT upgrade had then caused a second problem for 78,000 more drivers. As of today, how many drivers have been affected by the problems with the E-Toll system?

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Thank you, Mr Graham. Once again, and I have publicly done so, can I apologise to e-tag holders who have been inconvenienced by these IT upgrades. My frustration is palpable. I have expressed that to Mr Secretary in the strongest possible terms. I am frustrated by it. My expectation is—and I've made it clear—that these upgrades, in whatever form they are, do not impact customers. That is not acceptable. I have apologised for that and I will do so again. Transport has undertaken an audit at my request of these contracts to ensure that we are across the detail of why these things are happening. I apologise to impacted customers. It is not acceptable to have that impact to users. They are errors, I'm advised, but Mr de Kock might speak to that—or Mr Secretary—about what we are doing. It's a good question.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Thank you for that answer. I think—

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: No, I think it's important that we hear—

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: No, I might take an answer from the officials on this. Minister, thank you for that answer—and you've been clear about that in the Parliament. I'm happy to take an answer from the officials if it goes precisely to this point: As of today, how many drivers have been affected by these errors?

ROB SHARP: Thank you for the question. In regards to the first error, 40,000. In regards to the second, which was the licence plate number issue, 78,000.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Do we know of any other drivers affected by subsequent errors?

ROB SHARP: These were the errors that occurred.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Do we know of any other errors with the E-Toll system that are impacting on drivers?

ROB SHARP: I will have to defer to Mr de Kock on that.

JOOST DE KOCK: Thank you for the question. Maybe just to go back, I think it's very important that we actually put a new tolling system in place for the—

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Mr de Kock, there is not time to revise this. We'll certainly come to you. I'm asking a very specific question: Do we know of other errors affecting drivers with the e-toll system?

JOOST DE KOCK: As the Minister and the secretary has mentioned, there was the 40,000 and the 78,000. There's also another issue with some of the addresses that were impacted, about 14,000 customers, but not impacted any financials.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Fourteen thousand.

JOOST DE KOCK: That's correct.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Thank you. Minister or officials, what is the total amount of money involved in these errors?

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: We'll take that on notice. I don't know that we have that to hand, Mr Secretary.

ROB SHARP: Wouldn't have it to hand. It depends on how you define it, as well. If it was a top-up, for example—we need to define the question.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: We might come back to that, Mr Sharp. I'm happy to come back to that.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: It's an excellent question, Mr Graham. I was disappointed. I made that very clear at the time. I've expressed that to the secretary. I understand that steps have been taken to remediate that and ensure that those things don't happen again.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Minister, I want to ask you just a couple of questions about—

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: I understand that all the funds have been paid. My advice is that they have all been paid back, so there's not a dollar outstanding.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: We'll come to that. I want to ask about your knowledge about some of these e-toll concerns. Have you been made aware of concerns, of people being told that this is a big mess, when they ring up to try to clear this up? "It's best to hand in your tag and close your account"—are you aware of people being told those things?

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: I don't know that that's the case. Certainly, we have a comprehensive program in place to ensure that refunds are executed quickly. Mr Secretary, you might speak to that.

ROB SHARP: I've certainly not heard that particular comment, no.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Minister, are you aware of people being told not to use toll roads until this is fixed?

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: No.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Have you been made aware of concerns, where money is being taken off cards, people's credit cards, while they're not using toll roads?

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: No. But, Mr Graham, there are automatic top-ups in place. But if you have particular examples you should let me know. Provide them to me and I will investigate them.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Is one of the problems with the—

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: If you have specific examples of those, please let me know. I will happily look into them.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Is one of the problems here that the system, which in the past has been able to look back, say, 20 months, can now no longer see back further than February this year and so it's quite difficult to determine what the cause of the error is in people's accounts? Is that a concern that's been raised with you?

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: If you've got specific examples of that, Mr Graham, you should bring them to me directly and I will look into them.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: But these concerns haven't been brought to your attention prior to this.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: You haven't brought them to my attention except for today. I think you're just simply trying to—

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I'm asking if you've been briefed on these concerns, Minister.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Mr Secretary can answer that.

ROB SHARP: I'm certainly not aware of that particular issue. Mr de Kock—

JOOST DE KOCK: I'm not aware of that either.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: We might return to that issue with the officials.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: Minister, is your Government considering an unsolicited proposal in respect to the M7?

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Yes, the M7 and the interchange.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: When were you notified of an unsolicited proposal in respect to the M7?

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Noting that that is publicly known, Mr Mookhey—it's not secret—we have an unsolicited proposal process set up by our Government to ensure that we have a proper process around unsolicited proposals. We welcome them where they can fill gaps.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: When were you notified?

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Of what?

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: The proposal in respect to the M7.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: That's managed through the department. So—

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: It is. But were you notified? We'll happily hear from the department, but were you actually notified about the fact an unsolicited proposal has come in in respect to the M7?

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Yes. I've been briefed on all of our projects across eight motorways being delivered.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: Do you mind, then, just perhaps telling me when were you briefed?

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: I have to take that on notice, Mr Mookhey.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: Was it before 5 May 2022?

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: I said I'd have to take that on notice, Mr Mookhey. I've been briefed as incoming—

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: Were you asked to approve—

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Sorry. Just to be clear, Mr Mookhey, if I may answer that, as an incoming Minister I receive a brief. As an incoming Minister I received that brief in, probably, December. I'll have check when I received it, but probably after being sworn into these roles I would have received an incoming Minister's brief at that time. That—

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: So it was in your incoming brief.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: I don't know. I'll have to check.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: That's helpful.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: But I assume it would have been, given it's such a major project. But that is all managed by the unsolicited proposal process, Mr Mookhey.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: Indeed, so can I just ask you, Minister—

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: There's no conspiracy. That is all separate from Government.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: Minister, can I ask you: Did you approve or object to this unsolicited proposal being fast-tracked immediately to stage three of the process?

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: That is an entirely separate process from Government, Mr Mookhey, which I think you know. That is managed by Infrastructure NSW—

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: I am just asking you therefore Minister to say—

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: —by a process which this Government set up for this very reason.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: We will pick it up. Trust me. But I'm asking you specifically, did you approve the decision to fast-track the consideration of this proposal to stage three?

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: I don't think I possibly could have. It's managed under the unsolicited proposal process, Mr Mookhey.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: So that requires advice to be provided to the relevant portfolio Ministers as well. I've read the policy. So I'm asking you, was a decision to fast-track this proposal immediately to stage three made by you or was it made by your secretary or was it made by the secretary of DPC? Because they're the only three people who have the authority.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Mr Mookhey, it's a separate process.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: Minister, you're leaving open the impression that you did approve it or you at least were notified that it was going straight to stage three.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: But it's all separate from me, Mr Mookhey.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: Therefore, simply say you didn't. It's not that hard. It's not a particularly complicated question.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Mr Mookhey, those considerations form part of a process. I receive an incoming brief as an incoming Minister. From time to time, I am updated on the status of those projects, as I should be and as I would expect. I don't believe it has been fast-tracked. I think that's another scaremongering campaign.

The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD: It should be. The M7 is a car park.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: To be clear here, Minister—

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Those decisions on stage three would have to go to Cabinet in any event, Mr Mookhey. I am not sure what conspiracy you're dreaming up today.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: Perhaps before you launch an attack, you might want to hear the relevant facts.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Okay, I will make it clear. I did not, Mr Mookhey.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: Thank you. That's helpful, Minister.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: I could not have. I don't not have the capacity to and I have not. But Ms Drover might speak to, if you're actually interested in where that's up to, the process.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: To be fair, I think Mr Sharp might need to speak to this, not Ms Drover.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: I can refer it.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: Through you, Minister, Mr Sharp, can you explain why this particular proposal was fast-tracked to stage three?

ROB SHARP: Thank you for the question. The proposal wasn't fast-tracked. As the Minister indicated, there are stage gates and those stage gates are being followed. It's in stage three at the moment. It would need to go to Cabinet for an approval. But it has gone through the other stages. It hasn't been fast-tracked.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: Can you then explain, Mr Secretary, through you, Minister—

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Thank you.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: Why at the time that the public disclosure was made—publicly this project was disclosed at 5 May 2022, and at the point of public disclosure it was listed as being in stage three. It was never notified in respect to stage one or stage two. The first time the public learns about this is already at stage three of the process. Given that on the face of it that appears to be a clear breach of the unsolicited proposal policy, what were the reasons why the public was not notified about this proposal in stage one or stage two?

The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD: Why are you opposing the upgrade to the M7?

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Mr Mookhey, firstly, I don't agree with your assertion. I don't believe that's correct, and our evidence today has been that that is not correct. So I don't know what latest conspiracy it is that you're dreaming up. But Ms Drover can speak to the process of the unsolicited proposal. It hasn't been fast-tracked.

The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD: They don't want better roads in western Sydney.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: Perhaps we should hear from the project steering committee chair, who is Mr Sharp. Mr Sharp, do you know why or not this proposal wasn't disclosed in respect to stage one and stage two, in light of your earlier answer?

ROB SHARP: I'm not aware that it has or hasn't been disclosed. What I will do is take on notice and ascertain what the history is around those earlier stages.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: Can you explain, Minister, or the secretary, why—

The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD: Time's up.

The CHAIR: Can I just ask, Minister, we referred to the tolls review earlier, which I understand is being led by Treasury. Who in Treasury is heading it up? Do you know?

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: You'd have to ask Treasury.

The CHAIR: You don't know?

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: You'd have to ask Treasury. It's not my responsibility. It's being led by Treasury, supported by Transport for NSW. I understand that there's a dedicated group conducting that review. I don't know the specific person inside of Treasury because it's not my remit.

The CHAIR: So just no.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Why would I?

The CHAIR: Why wouldn't you? It's a review relevant to your portfolio.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: It's a matter for Treasury, Ms Boyd.

The CHAIR: That's fine. If you don't know, you don't know. There was a tweet from Minister Dominello last week around e-tags, and he said he'd been speaking with you about e-tags and the idea of giving people an option to use an app on their phone instead.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Yes.

The CHAIR: Where did that idea come from?

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Minister Dominello has lots of great ideas to make the lives of people in New South Wales easier.

The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD: A big loss to our State.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: A huge loss, yes. A great person who has revolutionised Service NSW, who got us through COVID with the COVID app.

The CHAIR: Yes, and we will have the chance to speak with—

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: As always, he is looking at opportunities. I think his most recent one was birth certificates.

The CHAIR: All right, but my question—

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: He's also been very helpful in domestic violence in online documents.

The CHAIR: My question was whose idea was it? Was it yours or was it his?

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: I'd love to take credit for great ideas.

The CHAIR: It was Minister Dominello's?

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: I think we were having various discussions about good things that we could do into the future and I was congratulating him in relation to domestic violence because we've heard in the sector that paperwork can be a challenge.

The CHAIR: If I can ask you to be directly relevant.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: I am. I am.

The CHAIR: It's a very simple question: Whose idea was it?

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: We were having a conversation about what good things we can do. I don't remember whose idea it was but I understand it's utilised overseas. It's already in place and it could be a good thing to do.

The CHAIR: Okay. Is it an idea that was raised with you by Transurban?

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: No.

The CHAIR: Okay. It's just a very simple question.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Wow.

The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD: Conspiracy theories here.

The CHAIR: I don't need to create conspiracy theories when it comes to Transurban.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: We're always looking at ways to modernise our government, Ms Boyd, and if we can do that effectively with great support and great ideas—

The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD: It's a great idea.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: —and if it makes people's lives easier, that's what we'll do.

The CHAIR: Heavens forbid we ask an innocent question. It's clearly pressed a button. Tell me if this is not within this portfolio but is actually within Minister Elliott's portfolio. I wanted to talk about a particular red light camera within the metropolitan region. Would that be something in your portfolio?

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Yes.

The CHAIR: Thank you. I understand that there is a traffic light at the Victoria Road and Darling Street intersection in Rozelle—

The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD: Jamie Parker's seat.

The CHAIR: —and there has been a request for a red light camera to be put there. I'll refer you to the existing condition road safety audit of Victoria Road and Darling Street, Rozelle, that was prepared for Transport for NSW on 10 September 2020. In that audit report, it referred to the risk of pedestrian crashes at that spot resulting in potential fatality being at a level risk of intolerable. And yet here we are, almost two years later, and I understand there is still no red light camera there. Can you please let us know why that is?

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Ms McCarthy manages the process for that. Sorry—Mr de Kock manages that, so he might speak to that. Sorry, Bernard Carlon, my apologies.

BERNARD CARLON: So the camera strategy, the NSW Speed Camera Strategy, which includes red light cameras, has criteria for selection of sites. I don't have the details specifically on this site. Although a risk may be identified as "intolerable" in any road safety audit that might be conducted, there may be multiple ways of actually addressing that intolerable risk, including structure changes to the location, fencing, a whole range of strategies. So again, we could take it on notice, but, you know, it may not be that the best solution is a red light camera, that there may be other solutions. But again, without the details, I'm happy to take it on notice.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Can I just add to that, Ms Boyd, just to be clear. We have a focus on installing additional red light cameras focusing on crash risk, so that is clearly a component. We're installing those at high-priority locations. We have committed to installing an additional 10 red light speed cameras each financial year, and to date 21 sites have been approved as part of that commitment.

The CHAIR: My understanding is that this is very close to a school and there are schoolchildren who regularly walk across there. I also understand that nothing has been done. I appreciate you will need to come back to me, but if you would come back to me this afternoon on exactly what has been done, two years later, to address the risk of fatality, being intolerable, that would be appreciated. If you could also let me know what the average time is to address an issue that has been rated "intolerable" across the board—

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: We'll take that on notice, absolutely.

The CHAIR: Thank you, that would be very useful. Going back, I want to talk to you very briefly about something that is a bit of an increasing issue, and that's drink spiking. In your capacity as Minister for Women's Safety and the Prevention of Women's Safety—no, start that again. You know what I mean.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Women's Safety and the Prevention of Domestic and Sexual Violence.

The CHAIR: Thank you.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: It just rolls off the tongue.

The CHAIR: Yes. It's already been a long day. I want to ask if that's something that's come onto your radar. I did ask the Attorney General as well—

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Yes.

The CHAIR: —and whether you have had any sort of discussions or any ideas around what we might do to stop that.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: It's an excellent question and I haven't specifically had discussions on that but I know that we have a range of issues that we could be addressing. I'm aware of incidents in Newcastle as well in relation to needle use.

The CHAIR: Needle spiking, yes.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Anything we can be doing to keep women safe I will be a strong advocate for. This is something that we should be doing more about. Certainly I know that I'm happy to work with the department to look at opportunities for us to look at initiatives in that space. We should be keeping women safe. They should be able to go out at night and enjoy hospitality as we open up and support them in doing so and work with the sector and with the hospitality industry to keep them safe.

The CHAIR: I understand that this is one of those issues that crosses across responsibilities for police, for regulation of licensed venues and how well they're enforcing and reporting. It seems like one of those areas that is perfect to fall within your portfolio responsibilities. Are there any plans to bring those different parts of the government together to try to work out what you could do?

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Certainly. I'm happy to get involved and roll my sleeves up. I'm certainly happy to be an advocate. I think there is a role for Liquor & Gaming here—for the regulator. There's certainly a role for the hospitality industry. I'm very happy to advocate for further steps to be taken.

The CHAIR: Let's turn to domestic violence leave. As you recall, there was a little bit of controversy earlier in the year in relation to the 20 days of domestic violence that the Sydney Trains deal was trying to strike. At the time it was reported that you were not supportive of that agreement because you were looking for something more across the government. Where have we got to with ensuring that we have a certain number of paid days of leave for domestic violence?

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Can I say that supporting survivors of domestic and family violence is an absolute priority and of paramount importance to me. That's my job. Under our Government, 10 days of paid domestic and family violence leave were implemented for the entire New South Wales public service in January 2019. That has been in place for some time. I'm pleased that the Federal Government has caught up to that, implementing 10 days as well. That is available to all public sector employees as defined under the GSE Act. We're working through proposals, but it's important to me that we have a consistent approach across all of New South Wales government because we know that domestic violence doesn't discriminate by postcode or by what union you belong to.

I have to say I was disappointed that Mr Claassens and Labor's union mates have never raised this with me before. It's never been a priority for them prior to these industrial negotiations. All of a sudden it seems to be an issue for them. It's unfortunate that they have sought to politicise a very serious issue for us across the sector. As a government, we will be committed to doing what we do across all of the sector. We would never agree to politicise or prioritise leave for one sector over another, particularly in relation to unions.

The CHAIR: But can I ask you: Is 10 days enough?

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: We can always do more. I think it's important that whatever we do is across the whole of the sector. Ten days, importantly, I think, provides that comprehensive response to be able to ensure that you can take leave and do what you need to do. But we can always do more to support victim-survivors and, frankly, perpetrators to get help during that time. I'm always happy to advocate for more. But I'm not able to advocate for one union over and above another. But I'm very happy to do so across the sector.

The CHAIR: But what is the—

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: I'm happy to have conversations with them. But for them to raise it in the midst of an industrial negotiation—

The CHAIR: Okay. But what is the policy—

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Very disappointing.

The CHAIR: —of your Government in relation to the number of days? Is your policy to stay at 10 regardless? Or is the policy to—

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: At the moment we have 10 across all of the public sector employee— all public sector employees have 10 days of leave and the Federal Government has caught up.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: Just in respect to that question we were talking about before, Minister, can you outline what exactly—

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Which question, sorry? There were many.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: So this is about the unsolicited proposal. Can you just outline: Who exactly is the proponent of it?

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Ms Drover can speak to that. Yes, it's WSO Co.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: And who does WSO Co consist of?

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: My understanding is it's three-part owned by Queensland Investment Corporation, the Canadian pension investment fund—I'll get that name wrong—and Transurban.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: What are they proposing?

The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD: It's in *The Daily Telegraph*; I've seen it. You know it's estimates.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: That proposal is obviously subject to the unsolicited proposal process, so I wouldn't want to provide any further commentary in relation to that while it's under consideration.

The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD: To break up the car park.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: What exactly are the Queensland Investment Corporation, the Canada Pension Plan Investment Board and Transurban asking in exchange for their proposal?

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: You'd have to ask those who are assessing, independent from the Government, under the unsolicited proposal process.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: Okay, that might be Mr Sharp.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Ms Drover might seek to add to that, but there is a separate process. I've been very clear about that in my past answers. I don't know what conspiracy you're looking for.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: No conspiracy, just the facts, Minister.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: There is a separate process to government, and that's where it sits.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: It's a really straightforward question. Ms Drover, of course, may be in a position to assist, but otherwise I'm sure Mr Sharp can assist.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: What do you have against Ms Drover? She's very knowledgeable on all of these issues, Mr Mookhey.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: Very capable, but the only reason I'd just make—

ROB SHARP: Mr Mookhey, we're assessing the process.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: My respect for Ms Drover is well known throughout the budget estimates process, Minister. The only reason I'm asking Mr Sharp is that he's apparently the chair of the proposal steering committee. So perhaps he might know exactly what Queensland Investment Corporation, the Canada Pension Plan Investment Board and Transurban are seeking as part of this USP process.

ROB SHARP: Firstly, the USP process is confidential. To be quite honest, a lot of the proposals evolve during the discussions and the various stage gates. I'm not sure which committee you're referring to that I chair, but what I do understand is that this proposal is still going through stage three and is still being assessed.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: There are two committees that you apparently chair, Mr Sharp—or perhaps it is Ms Drover who chairs it. Is it the secretary or the deputy secretary who chairs it? But someone from Transport for NSW is chairing the proposal steering committee and the assessment panel.

ROB SHARP: Someone that's public?

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: Someone is; who is it?

CAMILLA DROVER: Not you or I.

ROB SHARP: It's not Ms Drover or myself, so we'd have to take on notice that particular committee.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Can we perhaps come back with the details?

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: Is anybody else who's here aware that they are chairing it?

The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD: I wish I was.

CAMILLA DROVER: I'm aware of the committee, but neither myself nor the secretary chair that committee.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: There are two of them; there's a project steering committee and there's an assessment panel. Apparently, Minister, someone from Transport for NSW is chairing them.

CAMILLA DROVER: Yes, indeed. We are doing the assessment of the USP in concert with others in government.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: Okay. We'll pick it up this afternoon, perhaps.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Minister, I might just come back to one of the other things you've devoted some time to, and that's the damage to the State's roads as a result of the rain events.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: As a result of what, sorry?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: The recent rain events over the course of the year.

The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD: Potholes.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Minister Faraway has been really upfront in his part of the portfolio about the damage in regional areas and the scale of the damage, including the cost of that damage.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Yes.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: What is the cost of the damage that's been done to roads in metropolitan Sydney as a result of those rain events?

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Thank you. Noting, as you quite rightly recognise, the unprecedented rainfall events that we've had, I now know a lot more about potholes than I ever thought I would. Mr Collins has kindly explained it to me. But we have a number of potholes, which is why I asked for an audit, in the area. We've repaired over 14,000—I think 14,508, or it might be give or take. Clearly, it's difficult to repair those while the rain is occurring. You need to wait for them to dry out, and so that has set us back. But we prioritise those of the greatest risk. I can take on notice the cost of that repair, if that assists you, but noting that we've repaired the equivalent of two times the size of the Royal Botanic Garden, or in my favourite—

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Yes, and I've seen your comments on those, but I think you've taken that question on notice.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: We've repaired the equivalent, though, Mr Graham, importantly, of 3,758 volleyball courts.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: As you've asked people to report potholes, many of those won't be on State roads; they'll be on council roads.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: It doesn't matter.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Right, so the potholes that have been repaired—

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: So 131 700 or the Feedback2Go app—you can download those. We also have—

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: The potholes that have been reported, how many are on State roads and how many are being maintained by councils?

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: We'll have to get that number to you. But, clearly, if you feed that information in, we will direct it to councils where appropriate, and we will get those on our list. We've also funded councils to repair their pothole responsibility as well, knowing that, for some, the largest damage is on some of those local roads. We need to get on to those.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Exactly right.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Mr Collins and I spend quite a lot of time working through those.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Minister, if a pothole is reported on a council road—and the majority of these are on council roads—

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Yes.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: —is there the information to say, "You've got a pothole here"? What financial assistance has been provided since those rain events to those councils?

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: We pass that information on to those councils. I'll have to take on notice the dollar amount of support that's been provided.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Since those rain events.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Ms Mares can help.

TRUDI MARES: Thank you. We provided \$15 million in funding to Blacktown, Hawkesbury, Northern Beaches and Wollondilly councils. In addition, we have provided some assistance for pothole repairs to councils on their behalf.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: So that's four councils. What about the other councils that were reporting significant damage?

TRUDI MARES: Outside of those four? We are working with all the councils. If they seek funding, advance cash payments or any assistance from us, we are working with them. They are the four that have sought funding assistance.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: We also provide, Mr Graham, if I might assist—

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Ms Mares, do you know, given that \$15 million has been provided—

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Sorry, if I can assist, on the other councils. We provide technical assistance to those other councils as well.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: But no funding to date, Minister.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: From those that asked—sorry.

TRUDI MARES: We've offered assistance to all the affected councils. Those four councils I outlined have sought our assistance financially, and we've provided that \$15 million.

The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD: Blue Mountains.

TRUDI MARES: In addition, we've provided support in the form of repairs for other councils. I don't have that information to hand.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Minister, is the position you're putting, along with your agency, that the reason other councils haven't been given funding to fix the potholes on their roads is that they haven't yet asked for that funding?

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: I'd have to check whether they have asked or whether there have been other requests. But, certainly, we are here to ensure that we get potholes fixed across New South Wales.

TRUDI MARES: I can confirm we've offered assistance to all the flood-affected councils in Greater Sydney. If they haven't sought funding at this time, we may be working through applications with them as well.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: How many applications have you received?

TRUDI MARES: I'd have to take that on notice, Mr Graham.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Thank you. Minister, how many potholes have been reported on those council roads, where the great bulk of—

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Reported or repaired?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Reported. I'm asking firstly about reported, given that this is where the great bulk of the damage has been done.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: I'll take that on notice.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: And how many have been repaired?

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: I'll take that on notice as well. But I can say that for State roads it's over 14,000.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: That's exactly why I'm asking, because you've been clear about the State roads. There's been no real clarity over what's happening where the bulk of this damage has occurred. How much damage and how much repair? That's really what we're seeking.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: I'll flag that we will take that on notice. If we can get the number to you, we will get that to you. It might be that that's with the remit of councils, so we may not have that number to hand. But Mr Collins—

HOWARD COLLINS: If I may clarify, whilst we work very closely with councils for their local roads, they hold that information. Obviously, we may be able to facilitate that, Mr Graham, in terms of the number of repairs they've carried out and also the extent of the works. Generally speaking, what we have done here is collaborate with local councils.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Mr Collins, I'm aware my colleague has a question, so I'm going to come back to you precisely on that point.

HOWARD COLLINS: Okay.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: Minister, can you give us an update on where we're up to with the Future Transport 2056 Strategy paper?

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Yes. I think Mr Secretary can speak to that.

ROB SHARP: Thank you, Mr Mookhey. The strategy document is in the final stages of preparation before it gets released publicly.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: Can I ask specifically, Minister, in respect of the part of that paper which refers to flying vehicles, how are we going—

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Sorry, what vehicles?

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: Airborne.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Airborne vehicles, good.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: Yes, the flying vehicles that we're apparently getting ready for.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Didn't Uber have a proposal for that in Melbourne at one point?

The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD: That was yesterday.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: Have you received an unsolicited proposal for flying vehicles?

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: I have not, that I'm aware of.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: Fair enough.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: I'm sure I'd remember it.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: It's good that we clarified this.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: We get lots of proposals for innovation in Roads—

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: Apparently, you're considering the use of this—

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: —but that will put me out of a job because we won't need roads.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: Currently, you're considering this technology, apparently, as part of that strategy to provide fast and affordable point-to-point and on-demand connectivity.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Sorry, could you repeat that, Mr Mookhey? I couldn't quite hear that. I had visions of *Back to the Future* in my mind. I'm sorry, I got distracted.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: Let's go back to 1986. You're apparently getting ready to provide affordable point-to-point and on-demand connectivity using these flying vehicles. Can you take us through what the budget implications are of that?

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Point-to-point strategy is a matter for Minister Elliott. While I'm very supportive of the taxi industry, I think it's his portfolio responsibility.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: According to this, we're apparently meant to be having a certification regime in place by 2026. Are we on track?

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: The operational rollout of that, Mr Secretary might speak to.

ROB SHARP: The vision document is a forward-looking document. If you're looking for a very specific date, I would have to refer to Mr de Kock on that.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: Apparently, we are funding developmental test flights, with the goal of having a certified aircraft capable of commencing operations by 2026. That is according to the version of the document that we've seen. Given that is sort of—

ROB SHARP: Mr Mookhey, firstly, the document was unofficially released. The final version is quite different because it is subject to a lot of consultation. I wouldn't be able to talk specifically to that document at the moment but, in respect to the actual flying cars, is there a—

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: Minister, are we abandoning the flying car policy?

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Work on that strategy is ongoing. I don't think it's a laughing matter. It's important for us, as a government, to have a future strategy and ensure that we are setting ourselves up for success in the future and embracing technology. If that means we don't need to have roads and pothole issues, I welcome that. That work is ongoing, Mr Mookhey, is the answer on that strategy.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: The reason I ask you, Minister, is because it's not just a strategy document about future development. It contains clear reference that it is meant to be completed by 2026. That's not too far away. I'm asking you: Have you had any advice as to where we're up to in terms of developing that certification regime? Is that still the Government's policy?

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: The process for developing that plan is underway. That work is continuing. There are a number of components, as the secretary said. There's been different iterations of that. That draft strategy has not yet been endorsed by our Government. I'm pleased that we have a forward-facing future strategy. Mr de Kock might speak further—

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Minister, are you aware of the \$950,000 that the Government has put behind this flying cars proposal in Narromine? This was a—

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: It's a draft strategy.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: That's why I'm asking if you're aware. On 8 July 2020, Minister Barilaro announced a \$950,000 grant for flying cars in Narromine. Are you aware of that grant?

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: That was before my time and not part of my remit. Mr de Kock might add to that.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: But it's referred to in your strategy, Minister.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: It's a draft, as I said. My evidence to the Committee is, and on the record, it's a draft strategy, Mr Graham, which has not yet been endorsed.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I think that's fair. Referred to in your draft strategy.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: It has not yet been endorsed by the New South Wales Government.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: As Mr Mookhey has just said to you, you're promising that flying cars will be operational by—

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: No, we're not. That's just a grab for television tonight, and it's just a cheap shot. We have a future transport strategy, which is exactly what we should have.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: We'll table this page.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: It hasn't been endorsed by the Government—

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: We'll table this page, Minister.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: —and you're just scaremongering once again. Come up with something for the people of New South Wales that gives them confidence and puts them first.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Our question is, given you can't fix the roads in western Sydney, why are you promising flying cars by 2026, in the next term of government?

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Please. You're just trying to get a grab for television tonight, and it's just a cheap shot, Mr Graham. What we are doing is building eight motorways—

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: This is your draft strategy.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: —in delivery or delivered—not just promised, not just announced, not just repeating the same thing over and over. We actually build them—NorthConnex, the M2—

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Minister, we have got the commitment there to you—

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: —WestConnex, the M6 stage one and—

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: At the bottom of the third paragraph—you'll see there the paragraph that my colleague is referring to.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: It's a draft strategy, Mr Graham. You can try to make all you like out of it.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Would you agree that it says—

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: We are getting on with the job of building life-changing infrastructure—

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: —aircraft capable of commencing—

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: —for the people of New South Wales. You're referencing some draft report—

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: You're funding this proposal, Minister. Your Government is—

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: This is a draft report.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: —funding this proposal.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: We are also funding eight motorways.

The Hon. CHRIS RATH: Point of order—

The CHAIR: Order! I'll hear the point of order.

The Hon. CHRIS RATH: We cannot hear the Minister's answer to the question when there is constant interjections from the Hon. John Graham.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: What is it that you're building in western Sydney? What is it that you are proposing to build—

The CHAIR: Order! I haven't actually ruled. I'll uphold the point of order. We will do this in a more polite way.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Minister, given that CASA won't certify this sort of flight until years after that 2026 date, why does your draft strategy promise flying cars by 2026 when the roads in western Sydney are in total disarray?

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Why is Labor more focused on flying cars than building infrastructure for people in western Sydney?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: This is your draft strategy.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Name one infrastructure project that your proposed group will agree to. Name one infrastructure project—

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Not this one, I can tell you that.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: —that you will promise to deliver. Name one.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: We won't be promising flying cars—

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: You're focused on flying cars—

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: —in the next term of Parliament. I can guarantee that.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: —while we are getting on with the job for the people of New South Wales.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I can rule that out now. Unlike your Government, we won't be promising flying cars.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: This is your focus. It's extraordinary.

The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD: No vision.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Where is your vision?

The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD: The best you can do is flying cars?

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: Minister, just in respect to the announcement that the then Deputy Premier made when he announced a \$950,000 grant for this proposal, he said that construction will have commenced and testing was expected to commence in early 2021. Have we started the testing as promised by the then Deputy Premier?

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: You would have to ask the department about that.

The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD: Or Elon Musk.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: I'm not interested in flying cars, as you would like to—if that's your line of questioning—

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: No, it's \$1 million, Minister.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: —and of infrastructure projects that we are delivering, you don't have a single question about those in western Sydney and what we are delivering—

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: Minister, perhaps if you just allow me to—

The CHAIR: Order!

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: —is a very disappointing day, Mr Mookhey. I thought you could do better.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: Minister, given that Mr Barilaro has spent \$1 million on this proposal, given that it's still in the draft of the financial strategy and given that you've said that that makes it clear in 2026, it's not unreasonable for us to ask you whether or not the \$1 million of money that we put towards this has delivered the facility it was promised to build.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: It's a draft strategy, Mr Mookhey, that the Government hasn't endorsed. It's a draft strategy—

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: When we gave \$1 million to this organisation, we were apparently expected to commence testing in early 2021. It's a really straightforward question.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Mr Mookhey—

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: Did we commence the testing in 2021 as was promised by the then Deputy Premier—

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: I heard your question.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: —when he gave this organisation \$1 million?

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: This is a hearing about roads, metropolitan roads, and how they impact families across New South Wales, and Labor is obsessed with flying cars. I mean, I cannot believe that is your focus—

The CHAIR: Order!

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: —when we have a \$76.7 billion infrastructure pipeline to help people across New South Wales get where they need to go quickly and efficiently, and that's the best you can do.

The CHAIR: I take it, from the answers given, that you would rather give that \$1 million to, say, the sexual assault helpline than to flying cars.

The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD: Absolutely.

The Hon. CHRIS RATH: Just noting the time, Chair.

The CHAIR: Does the Government have any questions?

The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD: We could ask questions that are meaningful around infrastructure for western Sydney and the M7 and why it needs to be upgraded, but we will defer to that and ask no questions.

The CHAIR: Fabulous. Thank you very much for your time, Minister.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Thank you.

The CHAIR: We will be taking a break now and coming back just with the officials in the afternoon. I wish you all a pleasant lunch break.

(The Minister withdrew.)

(Luncheon adjournment)

The CHAIR: Thank you very much for returning. It being two o'clock, we will recommence with questions from the Opposition.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Thanks to the officials for reappearing this afternoon. I want to place on the record again our view that while we're very grateful for your attendance in the morning, it's certainly not required from the Opposition's point of view. The Minister's entitled to bring whoever they like to the session. It's not at our request that we have you there for the morning and don't direct questions to you. But we're very grateful and for this session to work with you. I want to return firstly to that issue that we were talking about, the e-toll "glitches", was one of the terms, and the news that there's an additional glitch of, I think, 14,000 additional people affected. Mr de Kock, could you tell us more about what has happened, when it happened and what's going on?

JOOST DE KOCK: Thank you for that question. As you know, we introduced a new e-tolling system earlier this year. It's there to provide a lot more features and enhancements for the benefit of our customers, including viewing and downloading transaction accounts; more preferences in account top-ups; managing tags and vehicles; and managing some of the inquiries directly. Also the new system allows us more flexibility to manage our customer support functions and help with our service operators doing first-call resolution and also provide more real-time banking and so forth. So many benefits to come from a modern tolling system. That system was implemented in February 2022. As you mentioned, unfortunately there were a number of issues that arose from that. As I was saying, it's a very large, complex system, and we had some issues regarding—there were three issues.

One was relating to 40,000 customers being overcharged during duplicate transactions on their e-toll accounts. All refunds related to this have been processed into people's bank accounts many months ago. Then there was a second issue related to the licence plate numbers linked to an e-toll account that impacted about 78,000 customers. That issue meant that some of our customers were incorrectly charged for unpaid trips, when they were not the owner of the vehicle following the sale or transfer. We corrected all of these errors in March and April and contacted impacted customers, and all those e-toll accounts have been re-credited and associated top-up related transaction refunds have already been made to their bank accounts. Finally, there was an issue that we only came across in July this year where some customers may have had their address incorrectly updated due to the migration issue. About 14,000 customers have been impacted by that. We're very sorry for these errors in the system. But, as I said, we've refunded all our customers and have corrected all the errors.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Just to be correct about the number, I think you said 14,000?

JOOST DE KOCK: Yes, 14,000.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: If I was a customer, if I was one of these 14,000 people who were impacted, my address is as it is at the moment at my home, what would I have experienced when this—

JOOST DE KOCK: It was basically customers who previously shared the same address as another, and then when they logged in through their account and they notice that their address has changed. It occurred when there were multiple accounts actually and the same address. When one of the people updated their address, it updated the other one as well, when it shouldn't.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: So if I'm living at the same address as someone and they change their address, I'm immediately ported across to that address for my account.

JOOST DE KOCK: Those 14,000 customers, yes.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Even though I've taken no action on that.

JOOST DE KOCK: Correct. It was an incorrect match of the single—a single location had two different accounts associated with it.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: They're separate accounts—

JOOST DE KOCK: There should've been separate accounts for separate addresses.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: —but a single address.

JOOST DE KOCK: Yes.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: But impacting on both accounts.

JOOST DE KOCK: Yes.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: That's happened with 14,000 people. Have those people been notified?

JOOST DE KOCK: Yes, they've been contacted to inform them of the issue and ask them to verify and correct their address details.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: How were they contacted?

JOOST DE KOCK: I'll have to take it on notice, but I presume via email through their contact channels.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: How many people have now confirmed their address—either confirmed that they did not want it changed or that they did want it changed—of that 14,000?

JOOST DE KOCK: I will have to take those details on notice and get back to you.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: You indicated before that this didn't have a financial impact on people, unlike those other—

JOOST DE KOCK: That's correct, yes. Just an address issue.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: —circumstances. So that's an additional glitch again that we weren't aware of. Are there any other issues with the E-Toll system that are not public that customers are experiencing?

JOOST DE KOCK: No, not that I'm aware of.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Given that the Minister was quite up-front about those first two issues and the agency was as well—they clearly impacted on quite a few people—why hasn't this been made public before?

JOOST DE KOCK: I believe there was a press release issued to explain that.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I certainly hadn't seen any reporting, or that release. Can we have that on notice, please?

JOOST DE KOCK: Yes, absolutely. I'll take that on notice.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: When you audited the first two errors, what was the total amount of money that was involved in each of those errors?

JOOST DE KOCK: In all those errors we either repaid those errors or refunded that. I have to take on notice the exact numbers and dollar amounts for that, so I will take that on notice.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I didn't press the Minister on this, mainly because of time, but you have audited these errors. I would expect you would have that information available to the estimates Committee.

JOOST DE KOCK: Maybe just to explain a little bit what the audit is, when we uncovered these issues we instigated an independent audit of how that occurred together with our development partner. That audit is still underway. We're still waiting for it. It will be ready in a few weeks' time. It looked not at the financial aspects; it really looked at why did these errors occur. It was also for us to understand what the lessons learned are for other system developments across Transport so that we can prevent these types of issues from happening again and, unfortunately, impacting customer experience.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Are you aware of how much money is involved in each of these errors?

JOOST DE KOCK: We can get that information, but I think I will have to take that on notice and ask the team to get those numbers.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I'm asking a separate question, though. As we sit here today, do you know how much money was involved?

JOOST DE KOCK: I don't have that number at my fingertips, but of course we know what the number of refunds and re-credits that we made as part of the process to address—

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Have you been briefed on how much money was involved? I might come to you more appropriately in a minute, Mr Secretary.

JOOST DE KOCK: No, I've not been briefed on the dollar amount.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Secretary, I might ask you. You're in the crucial role in the agency. Have you been briefed about how much money was involved in these two errors?

ROB SHARP: I've been briefed in terms of the transactions involved, the nature and the dollars associated with the transactions. I haven't seen a multiplication times, for example, the 40,000, what that would relate to. As I indicated this morning, it's actually quite complex. For example, if an account was within \$1 of being topped up, it would be topped up. The top-up would have been pulled forward by two or three days. The impact on the customer was probably a two- or three-day impact of the drawdown. Where there were some multiple drawdowns—and there's one or two cases where that occurred—the dollars were much higher. The actual refund, we'd have to go back and look at exactly what the dollars were that were paid out to each of those customers and add those up. But in terms of the impact for your standard customer, I was briefed on those.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Secretary, how is it that no-one has added this up until now? Isn't that one of the first questions you would want to know as the secretary of an agency dealing with what was a major issue for over 100,000 drivers?

ROB SHARP: There were two priorities. One was to actually fix the error, understand the error and actually correct the errors with the customers. That was the key priority. The following priority was what was the reason and the root cause it actually emerged in the first place? It's a software development by a global company. The audit focuses in on why their development processes didn't have test cases; and within Transport, what was the process around implementing a new process. As part of that, it was also ensuring—were there other lurking issues in there? If these had come up, were there any others? That audit process, there's an interim report but the final review of that is taking place at the moment. They were the priorities. The importance here was to actually make sure that customers weren't out of pocket. That was expedited at the time. So the refunds occurred in a reasonably short period of time—

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: But you can't tell us how many refunds were issued or the value of those refunds.

ROB SHARP: Not today. We'd have to come back with that number for you, which we'll do.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I have to say I'm surprised by that. Can you give a guarantee, based on the information you've got, based on the briefing you've had to date, that you're now confident that this won't happen again, that there won't be further errors with the E-Toll system, that these glitches have been ironed out.

ROB SHARP: I think there's been clear process improvements highlighted through this. We'll be rolling those out. We've also focused additional teams into the testing phase. We're also monitoring a lot of our software changes that occur. It's not just a new system; there's also patches. Obviously, in the cybersecurity environment, we want to make sure those patches are also being deployed but also not having unintended consequences. So we've also tightened up and improved processes around those. All of those will definitely minimise the risk of this occurring.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Before I hand to my colleague, though, I'm going to just insist on asking you this. I think it'd be fair to answer either way, but I do want to insist. Are you confident that this won't happen again, given the glitches that have happened? Or is this still a risk? I think it's fair to ask you to give the Committee a sense of those.

ROB SHARP: I do not believe there will be any further glitches out of this system. We've performed considerable work to understand the root causes. We're not aware of any other items in there. There are ongoing, normal processes of patches and improvements to the new system. We're not seeing anything new come out of those.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: Mr Secretary, who's doing the independent audit?

ROB SHARP: I'd have to refer to Mr de Kock on the firm.

JOOST DE KOCK: An independent accounting firm.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: Which one?

JOOST DE KOCK: Deloitte.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: Will you be making the audit public?

ROB SHARP: It will come down to the commerciality. The audit is actually commissioned under the contract. We have audit rights in these large system contracts. So I'd need to take on notice whether there's a privacy issue with it. But it does talk to specific systems and processes within a commercial organisation. So I'd need to take that on notice.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: Thank you, Mr Secretary. Mr Secretary, can we talk about the road tolls line item, picking up a discussion from this morning? I asked the Treasury officials if they could break down the road toll line item on *Budget Paper No. 1*, on page 4-20, between the Harbour Bridge and the harbour tunnel. You'd be pleased to know that they said that they couldn't and I should ask you. So here I am. Are you in a position to tell me, by each year of the forward estimates, how much of this money is being collected from the bridge, how much from the tunnel and, clearly, in 25-26, the bridge, tunnel and the M6?

ROB SHARP: In respect to the Harbour Bridge and the tunnel, I'll just see whether I've got that number here. Mr de Kock, do you have that number handy?

JOOST DE KOCK: So just maybe in terms of the—

ROB SHARP: Eighty-six million? Is that the number?

JOOST DE KOCK: That is the Harbour Bridge and the harbour tunnel number. Each of the number sets that you refer to in the budget paper relate. It's comprised of multiple components. It has the Sydney Harbour Bridge. It's got the Sydney Harbour Tunnel. But it also has all the E-Toll business revenues in there.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: Let's just stick to the bridge and the tunnel. I heard someone—

ROB SHARP: The number is \$86 million.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: For which one?

ROB SHARP: For the harbour tunnel and the Sydney Harbour Bridge combined.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: In next year?

ROB SHARP: That was for June '22, financial year June '22.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Looking backwards for the year.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: That's for the \$133 million?

ROB SHARP: That's the actual number.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: That's for the \$133 million. You said \$86 million of it was from—

ROB SHARP: That's correct.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: Then the balance is from the E-Toll, is it?

JOOST DE KOCK: It's from the broader E-Toll business, yes.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: Do you have the same forecast for the coming year, the 164?

JOOST DE KOCK: We don't have a forecast but maybe just a bit of broader context. In the last few years, as you appreciate, due to COVID, the revenues have dropped quite a bit. So we expect that—

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: Mr de Kock, I appreciate that. I don't wish to necessarily cut you off. But, clearly, someone has a forecast. Someone's written this into the budget. Someone's written this into the system that defines the revenues that are expected.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Treasury says—

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: Treasury says it's you, it's this cluster. Someone is responsible for coming up with a \$164 million projection, then \$173 million, then \$177 million and then \$227 million.

ROB SHARP: We don't have a breakdown of the forwards here, but certainly we can take that on notice what each of the build-up is, if that's what you're requesting.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: If you can, each year, that would be really helpful. I'd really appreciate it and I do thank you, if that's possible, to break it down by the three components.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: It'll be the four components then.

ROB SHARP: The M6 will be in there as well.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: That \$50 million revenue jump that takes place between 2024-25 and 2025-26, that's the projected revenues that come as a result of the opening of the M6? Did that I hear that correctly?

ROB SHARP: The M6 in there plus it's the bounce back pre-COVID, if you're looking at historical growth.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: Yes, the volume growth.

ROB SHARP: Correct.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: What are the expected average daily users of the M6 in that 2025-26 year that has given rise to that projection?

ROB SHARP: We don't have that information here. I'm not sure whether we—

CAMILLA DROVER: Can I suggest that we do take that on notice and provide that forward breakdown, because they are Treasury's numbers and we just need to confirm what is in that forward estimate.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: Thank you. Just to be clear, they deny that it's their numbers and they said that it's your numbers. I did ask them to provide it on notice too because I anticipated that this might take place. I would appreciate it if we can get what the average daily user number projection is for the M6. Do you have that number independently of this forecast?

CAMILLA DROVER: We can take that on notice with the forecast and bring that back.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: Thank you. What is the actual annual maintenance cost for the Harbour Bridge?

TRUDI MARES: I can assist with that. The operating and maintaining costs are associated with the Driver Aid Services, our security on the bridge, and also our maintenance contracts, and the tunnel and bridge revenue also goes towards the asset management for the harbour tunnel. Let me just grab the amount for you.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: I'm happy to take it with the tunnel, if that's an easier figure to report—the Harbour Bridge and the tunnel, the annual maintenance costs for both.

TRUDI MARES: They haven't given me the total here, so bear with me a moment. We're looking at \$105 million together.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: For both of them?

TRUDI MARES: Yes.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: Okay, \$105 million. Was that this year or for the coming year?

TRUDI MARES: That was last financial year.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: How much does it go up each year?

TRUDI MARES: I haven't got the other years here, only that one. So I'd have to take that on notice, Mr Mookhey.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: Thank you, I do appreciate that.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Mr Sharp, the thing I neglected to do was to ask you was there anything after the Minister's session that you wanted to update the Committee with?

ROB SHARP: Yes, two things. Flying cars—I thought this would be a priority issue for you.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I'm happy for you to deal with that first.

ROB SHARP: The flying car initiative is actually out of the regional department or the regional agency. It's actually run out of that. We did have some references to it, but it's actually not an initiative of Transport. It was specifically out of that agency. It comes out of a Regional Investment Attraction Fund, for your information. There was a press release in 2020, apparently, regarding that. The unsolicited proposal for the M7-M12 intersection—Mr Mookhey, you were asking about the expediting of that to stage three. The stage two unsolicited proposal was actually finalised in August 2020, and it was put up on the website and disclosed at that point. So it's a couple of years ago. This has been bubbling along for a while. In respect to stage three, as we indicated, that is still underway. We are still awaiting proposals. There are various market estimates that have been worked through, and that is still in process.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: I might just pick up from there if that's okay. Have we figured out who's chairing the assessment panel steering committee from Transport for NSW?

ROB SHARP: Yes, I think Ms Drover tracked that down.

CAMILLA DROVER: Yes. They are members from my division. There are separate chairs for the two separate government groups.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: Why then is this disclosure in the name of the Department of Enterprise, Investment and Trade?

CAMILLA DROVER: Because that's the department that manages all unsolicited proposals, and they've been allocated to the relevant agency processes.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: So the question I was hoping we could get an answer from is what precisely is WS & Co Pty Ltd, which consists of Transurban Ltd and the Queensland Investment Corporation and the Canadian Pension Plan, proposing to do?

CAMILLA DROVER: WS & Co, who are the current concession holders of the M7, are proposing to widen the M7, also deliver the M7-M12 interchange and also deliver the final stage of the M12, which is the M12 east package.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: In exchange for widening the M7 and the other two matters that you referred to, what are they asking for?

CAMILLA DROVER: They're still in the stage three process, so they need to come back to government with a binding offer. So they are firming up the planning process.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: But they've given you an indicative offer—a non-binding offer? What is their non-binding offer, at least in general terms? What are they seeking in exchange for funding this particular initiative?

CAMILLA DROVER: The primary part of their proposal is to widen the M7. Extra capacity will obviously generate additional revenue and then they're looking at what the costs of doing those works may be and therefore what funding requirements will be required.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: So they're not doing it for free, I presume—or offering to do it for free. I presume that they are asking for something.

CAMILLA DROVER: In the approval to widen the M7, as I said, that would generate additional capacity because you'll have an additional lane in each direction and that will generate additional revenue, which can go towards funding the proposal.

The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD: Hopefully, it's a car park.

TRUDI MARES: Mr Mookhey, would you mind if I just clarify my previous answer I gave you only—

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Sorry, Chair. Do you mind?

The CHAIR: No. Go ahead.

TRUDI MARES: Just briefly, I gave you Sydney Harbour Bridge only. The 105, Sydney Harbour Tunnel, is an extra \$17.5 million. I'll take the other questions on notice. Apologies.

The CHAIR: Thank you. Ms Campbell, if we could pick up on where we left off on a few of the different lines of questioning I was directing to the Minister—firstly, the commissioner of women's safety. We were talking about where that's sort of up to in terms of recruitment. If I understand it—sorry, if that's you, Mr Tidball?

MICHAEL TIDBALL: Initially, if that will assist the Committee.

The CHAIR: Sure. I'm particularly interested in where the recruitment is up to, but also what that remuneration level will be. I understand it's a band 2, if you could just clarify what that is.

MICHAEL TIDBALL: Yes, thank you. The position has been advertised. I will provide the role description to the Committee. The applications close this week. If I may, Chair, I just wanted to address the question of where the position sits, which your questioning this morning touched upon. It sits in the strategy, policy and commissioning area, which reports to Ms Campbell. I thought that the point to be made there is that it sits very closely with child protection, commissioning in that area, housing and homelessness. Clearly, in terms of the range of trauma services and supports, it'll have access to policy formation and strategy that also can be located proximate to the commissioning activity of the department, which hopefully will be beneficial in terms of

the dexterity of that role. I should now refer to Ms Campbell. In terms of the remuneration, I do not have those figures on me, but I'll certainly provide them today.

The CHAIR: Thank you. Ms Campbell?

ANNE CAMPBELL: Yes. I can probably update that. In the job advertisement, it has the total remuneration available from \$311,914 to \$357,359, so obviously it will depend on the candidate, experience, and all those sorts of things.

The CHAIR: Will the commissioner have their own staff?

ANNE CAMPBELL: They will have some dedicated staff reporting to them.

The CHAIR: How many?

ANNE CAMPBELL: I would have to take that on notice.

The CHAIR: If you could let me know how many and at what level, that would be really useful.

ANNE CAMPBELL: I'm happy to.

The CHAIR: Can we come back then to the National Partnership Agreement funding allocation and the organisations that received that \$20 million. Are you able to tell me how much each of those organisations received?

ANNE CAMPBELL: We don't normally report on individual allocations to services, partly because until—within the contract there's GST. But I'm happy to take that on notice and come back to you because I do know that we do report some programs and what funding it is. I just need to get some further clarification.

The CHAIR: That would be very useful to understand. Even if you want to clarify that it's without any GST, if applicable, that would be really handy. We also talked about the core and cluster, and the way in which the expressions of interest and the timetables were working. Was there anything else you wanted to add to that—I think I cut you off on when the tranche two timetable would be finished and when the tranche three would commence.

ANNE CAMPBELL: Without pre-empting the outcome of the EOI process and the request to tender, the outcome, we anticipate, from that RFT, based on the current assessment of those proposals submitted for tranche one EOI and the budget available—the proposals that have proceeded to RFT for tranche one should be successful in that process.

The CHAIR: So all of them? Okay, that's useful. In terms of tranche two, when were they moved to RFT?

ANNE CAMPBELL: Expressions of interest opened on 25 July and closes on 26 August. Requests for tender opens on 26 September 2022 and closes on 24 October 2022, which is indicative. It depends, obviously, on how many applications we receive and how long it takes the tender evaluation panel to review those applications.

The CHAIR: I know that you were providing some of this information to Ms Sharpe earlier and there's a limited amount you can give, but are you able to tell us how much of the funding has been dedicated to tranche one and/or how many new refugees are in tranche one?

ANNE CAMPBELL: I probably would need to take it on notice because we haven't finalised the first phase, and we've got tranche two as well coming forward. But in terms of the budget allocation for this financial year, it's \$47.24 million.

The CHAIR: So \$47.24 million expected for 2021-22?

ANNE CAMPBELL: That would cover tranches one and two.

The CHAIR: And then what's left over then?

ANNE CAMPBELL: Then for 2023-24, \$119.23 million; for 2024-25, \$152.88 million; and for 2025-26, \$107.25 million. So you can see there that a lot of the funding comes in in future years, which gives people an opportunity through tranche three. Tranche three expression of interest is expected to open in early 2023.

The CHAIR: That's because the tranche one was shovel-ready whereas tranche two and tranche three are—

ANNE CAMPBELL: Correct.

The CHAIR: —going to take a longer lead time?

ANNE CAMPBELL: That's right.

The CHAIR: Can we assume then that the \$47.24 million is the value of the projects in tranche one?

ANNE CAMPBELL: Yes. Without looking at the final—yes.

The CHAIR: So if we're expecting a total of 75 new core and clusters and we are using—I'm trying to do some very quick maths. If we're looking at \$370 million left to spend out of \$420 million, that's quite a small percentage then. I'm trying to make a rough—we're looking at about a seventh. So we're looking at around 10 new refuges being built?

ANNE CAMPBELL: Roughly. It depends. Some proposals may be bigger than others. I can't obviously comment really now because we're still going through that process but, certainly we'll make that available once it's known, how many places. Overall, over the four years we're looking at 2,900 women and children accessing core and cluster escaping domestic and family violence.

The CHAIR: Mr Carlon, the other thing that we discussed was in relation to the red light camera issue. Do you have any information for me?

BERNARD CARLON: Yes, I have further information. We have a red light speed camera program, which is funded to roll out in an additional 10 locations every year across New South Wales based on the current criteria within the speed camera strategy, which is essentially based on casualty crashes. The particular location that you're talking about has actually been assessed in the last three rounds and hasn't met the criteria from the casualty crash component. However, it has been in that list but hasn't made the top 10 of those locations which are actually high risk and have casualty crashes as a result.

In December 2021, following further representations from the community after the audit, a request was put through to install red light runner software, and so we did install software to determine whether the red light running was actually happening. There are indications that it was. That data became available in June 2022, and that assessment was analysed and a technical feasibility study was done as to placement of cameras at that location. Because of the physical shop awnings and other issues at that location, it wasn't technically feasible, so further work has now been done to determine whether it's technically feasible to mount them on the existing light poles and other structures—infrastructure at that location. However, we have also—during this period there is pedestrian protection for the left turns from Darling Street that was pre-existing.

The CHAIR: What does that look like? Can you explain that?

BERNARD CARLON: That's where you delay the green light for the vehicle, and you have pedestrians able to cross the road or get onto the road and be more visible. On Tuesday 15 June 2021 that pedestrian protection for that movement was increased. On the near side, pedestrian protection was increased to eight seconds, and on the far side, was increased to a minimum of 12 seconds. It's part of a larger program across the whole of the network where several hundred locations have had the pedestrian protection where the pedestrians get the green light and the vehicles turning into those streets get held on the red for a period of time, so the pedestrian gets further across the road or actually gets across the road before that vehicle movement. Having done the assessment of the red light running, pending the feasibility of being able to install the cameras—and we're currently doing that work—it is our intention, if it's feasible, to actually then do the installation of a red light speed camera at that location.

The CHAIR: In terms of that red light running assessment that you finished or got the results for on 30 June this year, when did that study commence?

BERNARD CARLON: We installed that in December 2021.

The CHAIR: Okay, so in September 2020 there's a report that the risk of fatalities at that spot is intolerable, and it's not until nine months after that that we end up increasing the pedestrian protection to eight seconds or 12 seconds. That takes nine months.

BERNARD CARLON: Yes, that audit was done by an independent—I understand Cardno did that audit. The independent auditor made that assessment. There are literally thousands of locations across the State where that left-hand movement currently happens. The current protection measure for that is the road rules, which say that a vehicle driver should—it's against the law to not give way to the pedestrian who's actually crossing the road. That risk exists on literally thousands of roads around the State. We would have said that the current system for managing that through the road rules was the mitigation of that risk currently. We haven't had that conversation with that individual auditor at this point, but we would say that there are many locations and, as we all know, the road network has many risks that on sad occasions generate fatal and serious injury outcomes. The criteria for the

red-light speed camera program is based on those casualty crashes, the number of casualty crashes at those locations and the prioritisation of those sites where those crashes happen. This location didn't meet that criteria. But, even though it hadn't met the criteria, additional work has been done to do a further assessment of the red-light running risk. We are now at that point where, having done that, we're going to accommodate, if it's feasible, the installation of a red-light speed camera in that location.

The CHAIR: So almost two years after the audit report came out saying that it was an intolerable risk, the assessment that you've run on the red-light running has basically backed that up, that people are running the red light.

BERNARD CARLON: That's the case in many locations across the State, where people inappropriately break the law and run the red lights. The current program is based on prioritising those so that those that have actually manifested themselves in serious injuries and deaths are the ones that get done first.

The CHAIR: That's great that there haven't been as many fatalities and injuries at this particular location. But, given that it was identified as having this intolerable risk of fatalities, and given that it's so close to a number of schools, is the program perhaps not broad enough?

BERNARD CARLON: The assessment criteria for casualty crashes comes out as a result of putting, in particular, enforcement cameras at locations, which then some people might say, "That's been put there for revenue raising rather than safety."

The CHAIR: I wouldn't say that in this case.

BERNARD CARLON: The criteria, which is in the strategy, says that it needs to meet this criteria of casualty crashes. We have been doing additional work around a risk assessment for red-light running which does do this, put technology in to measure the real level of red-light running. We are now moving towards better understanding those risks and being able to weigh that up against the actual crash data, or the history of crashes, at those locations as well. That's where, in this instance, as a result of doing that extra work, which we have been doing over the last few years, we've seen some of these locations being able to be assessed as warranting a red-light speed camera. Again, there may be hundreds of locations that may meet that criteria.

The CHAIR: Sure. Presumably, then, the criteria is based on what we can afford to fund versus what is going to save lives?

BERNARD CARLON: The criteria is based on preventing at those locations where there already have been casualty crashes—

The CHAIR: So we wait for someone to die and then we install.

BERNARD CARLON: —that's correct—in order to mitigate clearly those locations that are higher risk because that risk has been manifest in seeing somebody lose their life or be seriously injured. As sad as that is, there are many risks, as you know, across the whole of the road network that result in fatalities and serious injuries. That said, we had the lowest road toll in our history last year at 270 and a whole raft of initiatives that have been seeing the road toll reduce in New South Wales significantly over the last decade.

The CHAIR: If I wanted to prevent my child from dying at a particular place and I got an audit that came back and said, "Actually, there is a significant risk here, it is intolerable and someone is going to die," the department is going to overlook that because there hasn't already been a death?

BERNARD CARLON: No, that's not correct. I wouldn't say it in that way either. As I said, we would not necessarily agree that the risk is intolerable. When you look across the whole of the network, the mitigation for that risk is in place in the road rules, which is that it's illegal to do that manoeuvre on the road.

The CHAIR: Sure. But we're not relying on that. That's why we have red-light cameras, that's why you have a program and that's why you have priorities.

BERNARD CARLON: Yes.

The CHAIR: But those priorities are clearly based on limited resources. Do you think that the criteria should be expanded, and the resources expanded accordingly, in order for us to protect people before they die?

BERNARD CARLON: That's what, as I've just said, we have been doing in terms of implementing a program that actually does now do, at these specific locations where risks continue to be highlighted by local communities—implementing a system where we actually then go and do the real-time monitoring of red-light running to add to that criteria in order to make an assessment.

The CHAIR: When will this red-light camera be installed?

BERNARD CARLON: Again, pending the feasibility of the physical infrastructure and whether it can be actually installed in that location—that work is happening now. I can get back to you with the time frame for when that work, we expect, is to be completed.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: We might turn to that issue about the capital slippage. There are two aspects to this. Firstly, to that \$8 billion asterisk—that footnote in the budget that makes it clear that the promises that have been made to the community are different to the money that has been allocated by Treasury that will be spent this year. The difference between those two figures in the general government sector is \$8 billion. Firstly, Mr Secretary, I might ask you how much of that \$8 billion you believe lies in the transport agency?

ROB SHARP: The State budget has a footnote with that number in it. It is a number from Treasury, and I've listened with interest to their commentary on it. It is an aggregate level overlay, so we have no direct input to it. That question would have to go directly to Treasury, which I believe you have already tabled with them. The budget that we do is actually based on a forecast of what we think the project expenditure for that particular year is. As you are aware, we have programs that are small that we could deliver in a year, and we have some very large programs that are almost up to a decade in length. From an appropriation perspective—which is the number that you're talking about—in that year, we calculate what we believe those project deliverables will be in the next 12 months up to the milestones, and then we put that into our forecast. At the moment we are one month in, and our forecast is based on that program. We don't put a slippage factor in. We don't say, "Here's three projects that are going to be delayed, and there'll be a slippage factor." We actually gear up to deliver on time to those milestones, and that's how we budget.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: That point you make about the monitoring of it is really important. Of course, big projects slip over the month. As an Opposition, we've been quite clear that of course that happens. There has got to be some understanding of that. But this is Treasury saying on budget day that 26 per cent of the capital expenditure of the Government will never see the light of day in this financial year.

ROB SHARP: For Transport, at the moment, one month in, we're still forecasting we'll hit our numbers. However, what we do see are COVID risks, and we did see some impacts on projects last year where there was a delay in some of the larger projects. It's not all projects; it's typically projects that are in full swing. That's where you've got machinery and actual works underway. COVID really impacts that. If you're in the early planning stages—budgets and earlier works—you tend not to have that direct impact.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: This is a Treasury asterisk. I just want to understand, is it based on a discussion with Transport? You're really saying "no", as part of the budget process. This is a judgement they apply—

ROB SHARP: Correct.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: —that they don't talk to you about. But it is their assessment about the likelihood of the promises you've made in your cluster actually making it out the door.

ROB SHARP: When Transport goes through the budget process, which is six-monthly, we prepare a Cabinet paper which actually summarises what we see as the key risks for our portfolio. Whilst we put up a budget, Treasury is keen to understand what are the risk factors. Those risk factors can be around timing of land acquisition or the dollars involved. A couple of our large programs can swing from June to July very easily, for example, so you could end up with some numbers that move. Likewise, we've had periods in COVID where stimulus work has been pulled forward. During COVID, we also pulled forward some of our large capital works whilst traffic was low. We resheeted the Harbour Bridge. You may remember some of the rail changes we did on the Harbour Bridge. So you get some that gets pulled forward and some that gets pushed back, and we summarise that. Treasury then would put a macro overlay on that.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Secretary, that's the ordinary process of budgeting.

ROB SHARP: Correct.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Often the budget allocation of the first part of the year, by the end of the year, will be different. Over the last six years, it has been often billions of dollars short as exactly the process you have described has happened at the end of the 12 months. This is actually different. This is—before any of that slippage happens—Treasury saying, "We're going to borrow \$8 billion less. We're going to fund \$8 billion less because we know that this won't happen," and that is now baked into the budget papers. That is different to the ordinary process you're describing. Of course, there is going to be slippage—in recent years, it has been billions of dollars.

ROB SHARP: Yes, and what I'm flagging is—how would Treasury make that assessment, you would need to talk to them about it, but I am presuming the information that we provide is one of those inputs. Likewise,

they would look back at history. Clearly, there are actuals that occur. There are definitely timing issues that have occurred over the last two years, principally of floods and the obvious impacts. But there is no list that Transport has of "Here are projects that we would perceive that are going to be delayed, and hence here's a dollar amount that adds up to that".

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Let me come back to projects, but I am asking at the moment—as an agency, as a cluster, you're saying you don't know, as I understand you, how much of that \$8 billion is in their response already of—

ROB SHARP: Correct. That's a whole-of-government number.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: You just don't know.

ROB SHARP: I haven't seen it broken down. We haven't been apprised.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: The reason I'm surprised by that is on page 1-10 of *Budget Paper No. 3*. That table there, table 1.2, indicates the money that isn't allocated to agencies. I might let you turn to that. So 1-10, table 1.2, that note (d):

Also includes provisions and slippage forecasts not allocated to an agency.

That number that is footnoted is \$2.5 billion. So about 68 per cent of the money has been allocated to an agency. That would suggest at least—I mean, that's about the size of the Transport share of the infrastructure. You're saying you don't know—

ROB SHARP: When you say "allocated", are you assuming there that is allocated back down through our appropriation numbers? Because—

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: No, I am saying this refers to slippage forecasts not allocated to an agency. Of course, there will be some of those. But you are putting the view to us that no slippage forecasts have been allocated to an agency.

ROB SHARP: Not into my budget specifically. My budget is the actual build-up of the project budgets, and that total is what goes into our submissions to Treasury, and then there is this aggregate level provision that is put at the Treasury level.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I accept that. I think you've made that point clear.

ROB SHARP: You would have to talk to Treasury about how at a State level they are allocating.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Can you understand why we are confused? If you add up the nine agencies in here and there, their expenditure is more than \$30 billion. Transport's alone is \$21.3 billion next year—this year.

ROB SHARP: Correct.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Twenty-one point three.

ROB SHARP: That's the capital spend.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: But the whole—capital spend is only 22.6. If you spent what has been promised by your Ministers, you wouldn't build a school or a hospital in the State of New South Wales. That's why we're confused here. The answer is this \$8 billion asterisk where Treasury says, "Well, forget what was promised—we know already a quarter of that will never leave the Treasury."

ROB SHARP: I understand the premise of your question very clearly. However, the \$8 billion number is one that is created at the accounting level at the Treasury level. It is allocated, clearly, across the whole of government, and we are not privy to the build-up of that number.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: All right. That's about the future expenditure.

ROB SHARP: My understanding is—

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I think my colleague wants to ask you about what is really past expenditure.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: Indeed. How much did you underspend your capital budget last year?

ROB SHARP: For the 2022 financial year, our appropriation was within \$100 million of our budget.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: Underspent?

ROB SHARP: So that's our overall appropriation.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: On the capital side?

ROB SHARP: I would have to take that on notice to give you the exact number.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: Because there's a lot that turns on that distinction.

ROB SHARP: It cuts across a number of our divisions within the cluster.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: Yes, I can see from the agency financial statements that 100 million variants, but my understanding is that the capital side—how much did you underspend on the capital side?

ROB SHARP: There would have been a shortfall there, but I'll have to come back with the breakdown.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: Can we talk about the \$715 million downward revision due to the deferral of planned capital expenditure beyond the forward estimates, which is the reason why we won't be collecting all the money that's available to us under Federation funding agreements? I know the Minister this morning was making extensive reference to Ms Drover and yourself. Secretary, do we have further information as to which road projects may well have led to the deferral?

ROB SHARP: Yes, let me explain that number. The number in here, once again I believe, is a whole-of-government number. Clearly a large portion of capital projects are driven by Transport, and there would be an element of that in there. It is very similar to that \$8 billion number. My understanding is that—

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: It's a little different.

ROB SHARP: —when a Federal government grant comes through at a particular milestone, it comes in as revenue at the Treasury level. That's treated as revenue. So that revenue drop there is a correlation to the \$8 billion. So if they're assuming there's going to be a drift to the right of spend, there will be a drift to some of those milestones. As the Minister said, it's not cutting a cheque back. The better way to describe it is the milestone hasn't occurred at that point; when the milestone occurs, the funds will come at that point.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: Indeed.

ROB SHARP: So it's a shift to the right. It would be a timing issue, I imagine. Once again, it's not by project; it's a macro overlay and I think it's related to the \$8 billion.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: But, Secretary, I'm not sure that it is necessarily related to the \$8 billion, but I understand that they're closely linked, I will say. But there are a couple of caveats I might wish to put to you, because the Treasury did make clear to us their supposition that a lot of this arises from road projects. They actually did say that. It's probably the road projects because they're the ones that are most likely to be prone to Federation funding agreements. If you look at the table on page 4-19, Table 4.8, you can see that, for example, in the next year New South Wales will collect \$3.5 billion in Federation funding agreements, of which Transport will collect \$2.1 billion. So you're getting a pretty solid 60-ish per cent. But if you go to the last year of the forward estimates, we're getting \$4,784,000,000 of which you're getting \$4 billion. At that point you're getting close to 80 per cent to 90 per cent of it.

Just to be clear for you for context, Mr Secretary, a lot of the exploration of the other agencies' spending, as I'm sure the other secretaries would know, arose from COVID and from specific Federal relief designed for emergency interventions. That's obviously tailing out. But you're not; you're keeping overwhelmingly the lion's share. So just as a matter of probability, the Treasury thinks that you're not going to hit your milestones and they're not going to collect the revenue. Do you have any reasons why they would have that opinion?

ROB SHARP: The stated one—I'm not Treasury so I can't comment on their behalf, but what they have stated publicly is that that was their view on COVID supply chain impacts and they increased their provision this year on the back of that. That was the stated feedback. I've not had specific information from Treasury around the detail of how they arrived at those numbers.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: To be very clear here, Mr Secretary—

ROB SHARP: But I agree with your proposition. At the end of the day, we're spending 65 per cent of the State's budget on capital, so those ratios there do appear reasonable.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: Thank you, I appreciate that, Mr Secretary. But there are just a few other issues here. The \$715 million downward revision is due to the deferral of planned capital. To be very clear, Education, Disability, Health, Housing and Environment don't get their capital side of the budget funded through Federation funding agreements; they get it through a different form of national partnership agreements, which means really the only people who are spending on the capital side is you. I've looked at *Budget Paper No. 3*.

Overwhelmingly, a lot of the lines that are relevant to this particular portfolio—to be fair, Mr Farraway might be having to answer some questions to here.

The Appin Road improvements are federally funded. Mulgoa Road infrastructure upgrade M4 to Glenmore Parkway is joint funded. Mulgoa Road infrastructure upgrade is joint funded. The Horsley Drive M7 to Cowpasture Road is joint funded. The M12 Motorway from the M7 to The Northern Road is joint funded. The M5 Motorway Moorebank Avenue-Hume Highway intersection is joint funded. They're the ones that are five or six key candidates that are probably what we're talking about here in terms of the expectations. Are we experiencing or have we anticipated any delays with respect to those projects that you are aware of?

ROB SHARP: Before I pass to Ms Drover, who will know intimately the details around that, those projects that you mentioned wouldn't add anywhere near the billions that you're talking about in that capital program. I'm trying to assess what would be—

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: To be clear, they would. The ones that I just read to you, between them all, would have an allocation of nearly half a billion—and that is just for the next year. That's not for the other years over the forward estimates. I do think that they are prime candidates for—

ROB SHARP: Okay. I'll ask Ms Drover to talk specifically to that list.

CAMILLA DROVER: It might be helpful if I perhaps give you some actual data from last year, which is based on the Sydney Roads portfolio.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: Thanks.

CAMILLA DROVER: In that portfolio of projects—which did include the M12 and The Northern Road, for example, which are large projects, federally funded—we only had a \$19 million underspend in their final forecast, which represented just half a per cent underspend. That was in a portfolio of over \$3½ billion. I am a little confused as to—

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: Are you mystified why Treasury has downward revised \$715 million?

ROB SHARP: You would need to refer that to Treasury.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: We did.

ROB SHARP: As I said, we've not been—the numbers that we've seen—

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: They told us that someone is not hitting their milestones. To be fair, they pointed the finger at you.

ROB SHARP: That would be an assumption.

CAMILLA DROVER: It would be fair to say that there were challenges last year with productivity, particularly given the wet weather we had right across the State, and there were COVID lockdowns and IR—

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: Ms Drover, I totally agree with you. But this is a forward forecast.

CAMILLA DROVER: Yes, but the results from last year suggest that we did not have that degree of underspend, particularly in the Roads portfolio.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: I am not going to push it much further, but—

ROB SHARP: There's clearly a—

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: —I will push it a little further. It's clear here that this is not \$715 million that's been "Well, we didn't get around to spending it last year. There's been a little slippage in the timetable. We'll pick it up." It's been revised for beyond four years. The reason why I'm asking is because the Federation Funding Agreements are all due for renegotiation in 2025-26. We are now in a position where, having not claimed what we're entitled to over the life of the existing agreements, we're now at risk of having to effectively renegotiate with the Commonwealth for the same pot of money. There is no guarantee we're going to get this money back in the next round of Federation Funding Agreements. What I'm worried about here, Mr Secretary, to be clear—and I won't push it much beyond this—is that having not claimed the \$715 million within the life of the existing Federation Funding Agreements, are you confident the Commonwealth won't mark us down in the next round and we're going to lose this money?

ROB SHARP: The process with the Commonwealth is that we keep them informed of the progress on every project. There's regular reporting. If there's under- or overspend, we inform them. There's a good collegiate relationship there because we are open book and we do share where issues are or not. There are examples where

funds are reallocated or reprioritised. We do have a new Federal Government and they have openly stated they are reviewing their budget for October in any event, and they have publicly stated they will be looking at some of the priorities, so there is already some risk there. I will just reiterate: In terms of our projects, we haven't got a specific list that would say these slippages are occurring. But I do acknowledge Treasury's comments that we are facing headwinds. There are real supply challenges and we are facing those daily on our projects.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Ms Drover, can I turn to your comments? I can see why that limited underspend might be the case even while some of these specific projects might be in trouble, having looked at the way the expenditure rolled out last year. Some projects have gone over, some have gone under and the macro impact is, I'm sure, as you've described.

CAMILLA DROVER: I wouldn't categorise it as that. I don't think there are projects in trouble. I think we've met our forecasts particularly well, given the headwinds that we faced in 2021-22.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: And I'm acknowledging that at a macro level. But you're simply saying you have no explanation for why this money will not be secured from the Commonwealth?

CAMILLA DROVER: Yes, I don't have an explanation as to why Treasury has suggested we won't get that funding from the Federal Government.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: While the macro figures may be as you've described, in relation to the number of projects my colleague has just outlined, do you have a view about whether those specific projects have been underspent relative to what the plan was in previous budgets?

CAMILLA DROVER: Yes. I think Mr Mookhey went through them fairly quickly—

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I'd be happy for him to—

CAMILLA DROVER: —but the ones I recognised, I'm not aware of any significant delays to any of those. Some are in the development phase. Some are in the delivery phase. My colleague Ms Mares is nodding. We're not across any major delays to any of those projects.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I might ask about some other key Sydney roads projects because there are underspends in a range of those. For instance, the Heathcote Road, The Avenue to Princes Highway, I think you acknowledge, is about \$4.8 billion. Less was spent, compared to what the budget had planned, either 12 months before or six months before, at the midyear update.

CAMILLA DROVER: Could we just clarify which package because we've got three projects in Heathcote Road?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: It's listed in the budget papers as "Heathcote Road, The Avenue to Princes Highway". That is various packages, as you've indicated.

CAMILLA DROVER: The early works commenced some time ago. We're finalising the procurement for the balance of the works. I just need to check exactly when they started, but they've been going for many months.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: But since the last budget information, compared to what's actually spent in this budget, you acknowledge it's \$4.8 million less than should have been spent?

CAMILLA DROVER: Did you say \$4.8 million? I just need to confirm that. We can take that on notice, given it's a very specific number.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I would prefer if we dealt with it as one example. I've got some others I'd be happy for you to take on notice. Originally we were expected to spend \$7 million. The budget papers now show the estimated expenditure to June 2022 was \$2.114 million. That's \$4.886 million less.

CAMILLA DROVER: Would you mind just repeating those numbers for me again?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: At one point, expenditure was expected to be \$7 million on this project or, as you perhaps want to say, projects. The budget papers show estimated expenditure to June 2022 of \$2.114 million.

CAMILLA DROVER: That number doesn't accord with my numbers. Perhaps if we take that off and we confirm that. The budget for this year is \$45.7 million. This year's budget in the forward estimates is \$141.3 million. My figure of spend to date is well above yours, so I'm happy to take that on notice and confirm it.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I'll just put this for you. Looking at the pattern of expenditure in the budget, on western Sydney growth roads—a number of these projects have been overspent and progress may have been more rapid. Acknowledging that, which goes to your point about the macro expenditure, where that hasn't—

CAMILLA DROVER: I'm not sure Heathcote Road is in the Sydney growth roads program.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: No, it's not. The areas that have been underspent are areas such as the western Sydney growth roads, perhaps underspent by \$242 million or, similarly, outside of Sydney. There's a very significant underspend in some of these areas. Do you want to detail that or perhaps take it on notice?

CAMILLA DROVER: We might take it on notice because, to the best of my knowledge, the projects that are in the western Sydney growth roads portfolio are generally on track—M12, obviously let; Mulgoa Road, one package delivered, the other about to be awarded; the others, in final stages of planning et cetera. We'll take that away and come back with further details across that program.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: Mr Secretary, can we talk about the toll rebate scheme? Firstly, has the budget allocated \$520 million to the toll rebate scheme over two years, to 2024-25?

ROB SHARP: Whilst I'm just checking my notes, Mr de Kock, do you have that number?

JOOST DE KOCK: Thank you for that question. In terms of the toll relief scheme, that's actually an arrangement between Treasury and Service NSW. So we are not so closely involved with that. Obviously we run the E-Toll business and we provide information for them, but that's not a number that is part of a transport budget so far as I'm aware.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: Just on page 4-8 of *Budget Paper No. 1*, Mr Secretary, if you don't mind.

ROB SHARP: Yes.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: It says here that the toll rebate scheme is \$520 million over the two years 2024-25, but that's not coming from your budget.

JOOST DE KOCK: My understanding is that's a budget allocated to Service NSW, between Treasury and Service NSW, not a Transport budget line item.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: So what advice did Transport give to Treasury? Was it the Treasury or Service NSW that developed this proposal?

JOOST DE KOCK: It was developed as part of the tolling review program, and so there were multiple stakeholders involved in that process.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: That was led by Treasury, was it?

ROB SHARP: That's led by Treasury.

JOOST DE KOCK: Led by Treasury.

ROB SHARP: We provide potential impacts on roads and any specific data they need, and we have a representative on the group.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Yes, and they've clearly discussed this proposal. I mean, this proposal has come out of that group.

ROB SHARP: We had input. Yes.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: Did you provide advice as to how many people are likely to access this scheme?

JOOST DE KOCK: As I said, Treasury led that process. So with the help of their consultants, and the numbers obviously are forecast and hard to predict because of—

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: What's your understanding as to how many people are likely to use this scheme each year?

JOOST DE KOCK: I think it's about half a million.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: Do you know how they got to that figure? Did you validate that figure or were you simply told it was likely to be half a million?

JOOST DE KOCK: It was part of the analysis that was done, led by Treasury.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: This is meant to be rebated to the e-tags accounts, is it?

JOOST DE KOCK: Sorry, could you say that again?

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: How is it being rebated? Through Service NSW—people claim it? Or are you refunding it through e-tag or e-toll?

JOOST DE KOCK: It will be an arrangement—and it's really a question best placed for Service NSW, but it will be done through Service NSW, yes.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: Can I ask on that, how many e-tag customers satisfy the eligibility criteria for this scheme? Did you provide advice on that?

JOOST DE KOCK: We provided the information, but the analysis was led by Treasury—to do all that analysis.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: Well, how many e-tag customers would be eligible for this scheme?

JOOST DE KOCK: I would refer that question to Treasury.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I might just rewind slightly to see if you can help us. Essentially, one of our key, very basic questions is that there's \$520 million allocated over two years in the budget—how much this year and how much next year? Are you able to shed any light on that?

JOOST DE KOCK: This is not a budget line item for Transport, and I think Treasury answered that question on Monday.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Despite the fact that this is the transport agency sitting in the toll review, you are saying you cannot tell us the number of people who will access toll relief in this financial year, as part of this scheme?

JOOST DE KOCK: I think that is a question best answered by Treasury.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I have to say, Mr de Kock, you've given us quite good evidence before about the tolling relief program and some of the work. I think you were very up-front in the hearing. Some of the answers on notice that then came back—we were slightly less happy with the detail there. But this is a Transport and Treasury process, led by Treasury. Transport's input here is to provide the information, particularly about traffic volumes or the way the road system works. I know there are consultants at the table, but are you honestly saying that you don't know, as a transport official, how many drivers will access toll relief under this scheme that's in the budget that's been announced publicly?

ROB SHARP: Mr de Kock did say half a million. That's the number I have in my notes as well. So 500,000 is the number.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Okay, 500,000. It was the imprecision that I was finding distracting. So 500,000 in 2022-23, and in the next financial year, how many drivers?

JOOST DE KOCK: I think, again, the details of that—you'll have to refer that to Treasury. But as I said, about half a million is the number that is estimated.

ROB SHARP: Are you saying will the half a million increase?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Does it grow?

ROB SHARP: I've only got the number for the 2023 year.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: Do you have that 500,000 as percentage of users of toll roads? How many people as a percentage of the motoring community who use toll roads are meant to benefit? Did you provide that information?

ROB SHARP: Not here, no.

JOOST DE KOCK: I don't have that information, again.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: You don't have the information, or you don't have it here.

JOOST DE KOCK: I don't have that information. I'll have to take that on notice.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: Okay. Well, can we talk about the removal of the tolling relief rebate. Is that coming from your budget?

JOOST DE KOCK: So that payment is made out of—it's not in our budget. It's in Service NSW's budget.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: Okay. Did you provide advice for that proposal to end the registration relief scheme?

JOOST DE KOCK: As I said, it was a decision that came out of the tolling review program that was led by Treasury.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: Are you expecting additional revenue in Transport as a result of higher registration fees?

JOOST DE KOCK: I'm not too sure I understand your question.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: That's okay. To be fair, I'm not sure I do either. And so—

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: It's a rare occasion. It's the only time I've seen that happen.

The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD: It's hard to think.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: No, no. I have been around long enough to pick up on the cue that I can stop knocking on your door. I get it. Can you tell me: What is the budget for the M5 cashback for the next year?

ROB SHARP: For the financial year '22, it was \$73 million in benefits that was paid to 274,000 account holders.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: And what's your—

ROB SHARP: But I haven't got the number for '23.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: Does that come from your budget, or am I—

ROB SHARP: Mr de Kock has the cashback.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: Because it's listed in your annual accounts so I'm just going to assume it does.

JOOST DE KOCK: Yes. We administer that in a particular scheme. Actually, Ms Mares, it comes out of, I think, your area and, yes, it's in an advanced position.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: So how does that interact with the rebate?

CAMILLA DROVER: My understanding is that the M5 cashback continues.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: Yes, but does it impact on your ability to get the full \$750 or not? Are the trips or the money rebated discounted for your ability to claim that rebate, or not?

ROB SHARP: In terms of the rebate scheme itself—

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: Yes. Are you excluding costs or trips that are refunded under the cashback scheme in order to determine your level of relief for the rebate because you can't claim the full \$750 unless you've satisfied all the criteria?

TRUDI MARES: I don't know. I'm happy to—

CAMILLA DROVER: We may need to defer to Service NSW for the rules around that.

TRUDI MARES: So you're asking if, out of the \$750 rebate, the M5 cashback is separate or included?

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: No, no. To the best of my knowledge, under the \$750, \$750 is the maximum you can claim and that you have to demonstrate a certain level of trips in order to satisfy, so I'm wondering whether or not you've provided advice as to whether or not the M5 trips that are refunded should be included in those calculations, or are they excluded.

TRUDI MARES: Understood, yes. I am not aware of that.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: That is, do you have to meet the criteria by using other roads?

TRUDI MARES: I'm not aware of that, I'm sorry. Mr de Kock?

JOOST DE KOCK: My understanding is—and I will have to confirm this—that if you've made a trip on the M5 and you get your cashback, that is excluded from—

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: Okay. Thank you.

JOOST DE KOCK: But we'll come back to you and confirm that, just to make sure.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Just to conclude that, yes, I think that is the position the Government has announced, although if you didn't claim your cashback then it would contribute to the cap, either the \$375 or the \$750.

JOOST DE KOCK: I would have to confirm with—

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: If you could also take that on notice?

JOOST DE KOCK: We'll take on notice employees' advice from Service NSW in that regard.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: To Ms Mares or to Mr de Kock, what is the percentage of people who claimed the trips from last year? From that \$73 million, do we know the percentage of users claimed that?

TRUDI MARES: No. I'm not aware of that, Mr Mookhey. I'd have to take that on notice.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: Okay. Do you mind taking that on notice?

TRUDI MARES: No problem.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: Can you also take on notice the forecast or the amount that has been budgeted for each year of the forward estimates for the M5 cashback scheme?

TRUDI MARES: Yes.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: Thank you.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Can I just ask about the GST treatment in order to reach the thresholds, either the lower or the higher threshold? How is the GST treated when making that calculation?

TRUDI MARES: Mr de Kock, are you aware of that?

JOOST DE KOCK: I think I'll have to take that on notice on the GST treatment.

TRUDI MARES: Yes.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Great.

TRUDI MARES: A few of these appear to be for Service so we'll just clarify what we can provide, what we've given to Service, and come back.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Yes.

JOOST DE KOCK: Most of the work on how the actual new scheme will actually operate is obviously going to be run by Service NSW. They are—so a lot of those questions are best addressed to them.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: We're comfortable with taking that up elsewhere provided you're comfortable taking that on notice given the record we've had of being sent between agencies.

ROB SHARP: We're clear. We're happy to take it on notice.

JOOST DE KOCK: We can take it on notice. That's not a problem.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: Before we leave this page, Secretary, did your department provide the advice that led to the decision to remove the exemption of temporary visa holders—their ability to use overseas licences?

ROB SHARP: Our department was clearly involved in that process. We saw a number of issues that played out quite publicly in that space and we commenced a review quite some time ago in terms of how we might address some of the challenges that we were seeing.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: I'm just interested more—in respect to the \$71 million of revenue that that's meant to gather, is that coming to your agency or is that going to someone else?

ROB SHARP: Ms McCarthy, do you know where that revenue goes?

TARA McCARTHY: No, I'd have to take that on notice as to where that's going.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: Do you have an estimate as to the number of overseas—or actually, to be fair—temporary visa holders that are likely to have to seek a New South Wales driver's licence in the next year?

TARA McCARTHY: It's an incredibly loose estimate. Service have done some modelling on this and their estimate is in 200,000 to 300,000 but, as I said, it's a very loose estimate. People come into the country. We don't know whether they're going to choose to drive on an overseas licence or not.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: The question, I guess, is what is the definition of a temporary visa holder versus a permanent resident? Are there permanent residents who can't do this anywhere?

TARA McCARTHY: When somebody's driving on an overseas driver's licence in Australia, in the current regime they can do so indefinitely—in New South Wales, I should say—providing they have that licence on them and, if that licence is not in English, they've got an English translation on them at the time they drive. However, when a person gains permanent residency, they then have three months to convert to a New South Wales licence.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: So it is temporary visa holders in that sense, excluding Australian residents—

TARA McCARTHY: That's correct.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: —and you think it's a very loose estimate of 200,000 in the first year?

TARA McCARTHY: A few hundred thousand, but I would prefer to take it on notice.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: If you don't mind—it's just that there's \$53 million next year, then \$17 million and then it tails out. So if we could just get a profile by years for the forward estimates, that would be helpful.

TARA McCARTHY: I will say, though, that it's a figure that Service NSW put together. But we will take it on notice.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: We'll hold them to account for it too, rest assured.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I'm going to qualify this question by making it clear that I don't believe this is the Transport agency's responsibility, but I do want some clear direction about who we should ask. It's clear publicly that the small business fees and charges rebate scheme through which people could claim certain tolls—certain tolls could be claimed through that scheme—has now ended. That's correct, isn't it?

JOOST DE KOCK: That's not a Transport initiative. I think it's, again, Service NSW—best direct the question to them. But my understanding is that scheme has ended.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Yes, but Service NSW—

ROB SHARP: So 2022 I believe it ended.

JOOST DE KOCK: But I think that you need to confirm that with the department of services—

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: With Service NSW. Good. I appreciate that answer. We've talked before at length about the toll review which, as you observed, is being conducted by two agencies—led by the Treasury, assisted by Transport. Can we get an update on progress with the toll review?

ROB SHARP: The toll review is still underway. We've indicated on a number of occasions that they're looking towards the end of this year to complete that. So it is in progress. The team members are still working, and the initial output was the toll relief part of it—the more policy forward-looking element—will be towards the back end of this year. That's my understanding.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Mr de Kock, did you want to add anything to that?

JOOST DE KOCK: Nothing. The secretary covered it well. The team is working on that and expecting to come up with options by the end of the year for Government consideration.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: You're confirming, I think, Mr Secretary, that that budget option that ended after the toll relief was a recommendation out of this group?

ROB SHARP: Correct.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: And can you give us any—we've talked before about the nature of the policy work. As we're heading towards the end of the year, this is really looking at some of the bigger questions in that terms of reference about the way that the tolling system applies right across Sydney.

ROB SHARP: Correct, and it's principle driven. I'm sure everyone wants an equitable toll system. We do have a network of roads that's changing. What does that forward look like with the major ring roads and other roads that are coming through?

You have equity questions between east-west. There's a number of policy questions that would flow from that. All options are being looked at, but the thorny issue of how do you actually get a fair toll, taking into account cost of living and the equitability, is actually a core part of what they're reviewing. There will be a number of recommendations placed in front of the Government to discuss and consider. Obviously, as with any policy, there's implications there for a number of communities, and the Government will need to assess those pros and cons on each policy option that's put forward.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Looking at it as you're doing the work, I want to acknowledge that they're obviously very difficult issues. I think everyone's been clear these will not be easy issues to alter or solve, given the contracts that are now in place. But in tackling some of those big questions about what might be possible here, are you confident that the review will be able to deal with those questions? The terms of reference are really raising some big issues. Do you have a degree of confidence that by the end of the year there will be work produced by Treasury, but also by your agency, that will deal with those big questions that are asked in the terms of reference?

ROB SHARP: I think, ultimately, we've been reasonably consistent that we're targeting the end of the year to table those options, but they are complex and they do raise a number of challenges. Whether it will be exactly in November or whatever date, I can't commit to. What I can advise is that there is a lot of work underway. There is some deep thinking underway around those core issues, and then it really will become a matter for Government in terms of the policy considerations that flow from that. But I do believe there will be data and information and options for the Government to consider.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Previously, I think both agencies have said there would be some short-term recommendations, and that has happened.

ROB SHARP: Yes.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: And then the remaining—

ROB SHARP: They're squarely focused on the more challenging policy-related matters.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Yes, the remaining recommendations would really look to much more long-term reform. Is that still how you'd characterise it?

ROB SHARP: Yes.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: We're likely to have data and long-term reform recommendations, rather than additional short-term interventions, recommended by this work at the end of the year.

ROB SHARP: That's the nature of the exercise, yes.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: Secretary, what will you do with the \$25 million you're not spending to put a third flagpole above the Harbour Bridge?

ROB SHARP: Thank you for the question. The Premier has indicated that that \$25 million will be allocated towards Closing the Gap initiatives—and that is an area I'm personally very passionate about, so I was pleased with that—and ultimately, once again, a good community initiative.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: Why was the pole going to cost us \$25 million?

ROB SHARP: Yes, the pole itself doesn't cost \$25 million. The pole is part of three poles that have been constructed. These poles are about the length of a basketball court, so you can't go down to Bunnings and just buy one. It's on a heritage structure with a lot of air in that structure, so quite a bit of complex, specific engineering work; a healthy contingency, on the basis that we hadn't put a flagpole in the middle of the bridge before; and we were actually going out to market just before the announcement to place the State flag elsewhere. We were about to go out to market and test those costings.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I might just get you to clarify that comment first.

ROB SHARP: I'll pass to Ms Drover, who was intimately involved with the project.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: We had put two flagpoles in the middle of the bridge previously, hadn't we?

ROB SHARP: At the moment what we call Blinky Bill—it's a massive navigation light, the red light you see flashing—actually sits in the middle of the bridge. The two other flagpoles there were nearing replacement, so the program was not just the one flagpole; it was actually to replace all three and refresh them. But if you're wanting some more detail, Ms Drover was intimately involved with the project.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Yes, Ms Drover?

CAMILLA DROVER: Yes, as the secretary said, the requirements for this project weren't clear at the start, so a healthy budget was put in place. We knew it had to be done.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: Ms Drover, when you say that the project's requirements weren't clear at the start, how is it possible that you're not clear on the project of putting a third flagpole on the Harbour Bridge? Somehow we can allocate \$25 million in the budget yet we're not clear about what the project is?

CAMILLA DROVER: If I can clarify, we obviously knew that the outcome was an Aboriginal flag on the Sydney Harbour Bridge. There was some discussion about whether there would be an additional flag as well. It was whether we would take the opportunity to also replace the existing two flagpoles on the Sydney Harbour Bridge. It should be noted that most of the cost is not associated with the flagpole at all. It's actually about the temporary works and gaining access to install a new flagpole, or new flagpoles. There also was the requirement to strengthen the heritage bridge structure because in the 1930s, or 1920s, it was not designed to have a flagpole in its vulnerable bit at the top of the bridge. So a lot of the costs are temporary works associated with safe access. Obviously, the flagpole was to be installed also over a live environment—a live roadway below but also a live working railway below. So they were some of the considerations. We weren't clear at the time the request came through what—

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: Who requested the project?

CAMILLA DROVER: We were requested via the Department of Premier and Cabinet.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: When were you requested?

CAMILLA DROVER: I would have to take on notice exactly—

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: Was it this year, last year, the year before?

CAMILLA DROVER: It was this year.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: So sometime in this year?

ROB SHARP: Earlier this year.

CAMILLA DROVER: Yes.

ROB SHARP: But the actual date, I'd have to go back and have a look.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: I don't need an exact date, but do we have a month?

ROB SHARP: Early—no, I'd have to go back.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: Okay.

ROB SHARP: There were quite a few conversations, but the actual formal request I'd have to come back to you on.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: Was there a business case prepared for this project?

ROB SHARP: There was a business case, a document with the costings, which we sent through to the Premier's office.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: When was that business case prepared?

ROB SHARP: That was done fairly quickly after the request had come through.

CAMILLA DROVER: Yes.

ROB SHARP: So early in the year.

CAMILLA DROVER: It was one of the reasons why the generous budget of \$25 million was put in place, because at the time the request came through, we hadn't confirmed what the planning approval and other approvals processes would be. The Harbour Bridge is a heritage structure, so it requires a heritage approval. And, as the secretary mentioned, there is a navigation beacon also about in the location that we had to put the flagpole.

So that is required to be removed. Again, the approvals around moving a navigation beacon also had to be confirmed.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: But it's fair to say you got a request and you were asked to turn this project around in fairly short order.

CAMILLA DROVER: Yes, that's right.

ROB SHARP: Correct.

CAMILLA DROVER: The first thing we did was to prepare what we call a reverse brief, which was to confirm back to DPC what our understanding of the project was, and the requirements and the outcomes that they would like.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Can I ask about a second Harbour Bridge infrastructure issue, which is the report that the removal of the tollbooths on the Sydney Harbour Bridge then cost \$20 million? Obviously, this is rewinding slightly, but it's become more topical, given the questions my colleague was asking. Were those reports correct? How much did it cost to remove the tollbooths on the Harbour Bridge?

ROB SHARP: I don't know specifically, unless Ms Drover knows.

CAMILLA DROVER: I would have to take on notice the actual cost, because budget is obviously different from cost. I'd have to confirm what the original budget was and what it cost. Noting, though, that there is more to the tollbooth than most of us see. In the old days the 20c pieces used to be collected manually, and then there's actually infrastructure that did take the coins down below into the substructure of the bridge. So there are works that the public don't see that had to be removed and rectified. But we can take on notice—

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: You've taken that on notice. It does seem an extraordinary amount, \$20 million, even given the comments you've made, to—

The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD: Rebuild the whole road.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: —remove these tollbooths.

CAMILLA DROVER: I think, though, on a project like that, where we're working in a brownfield environment—and, particularly, in a live environment—the Harbour Bridge has one of the highest vehicles per hour, or per day, travelling across it. We are working in a live environment, so many of the costs associated with these projects are not the costs of demolishing a tollbooth. It's actually the staging of the works so that you can do it without having significant impact on the customers travelling across the Sydney Harbour Bridge.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: To be clear, on the Harbour Bridge flagpole proposal, given that you were asked to turn it around pretty quickly, is it fair to say that perhaps Infrastructure NSW didn't have the opportunity to do the assurance that they would do for a project like this as well?

ROB SHARP: I'll ask Ms Drover to talk to the dollar process, because \$25 million—normally it's the high value that would trigger—

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: It's above 10, so it requires registration under their framework.

ROB SHARP: Correct.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: I presume it wasn't possible for them to apply the standard assurance procedures that they would.

CAMILLA DROVER: No, we did have engagement with Infrastructure NSW and every other approval body, including the heritage department, and CASA, for the navigation—

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: And you had to do it all very quickly.

CAMILLA DROVER: Our target was to complete it by the end of this year. We were doing it in an appropriate and measured manner.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: But the funding decision to allocate \$25 million to the project was made prior to the completion of those assurance processes? It must have been, if you were planning to—

CAMILLA DROVER: There was a reservation, I understand it to be. We were then working through what the assurance and approval process would be. But we did agree with INSW on an appropriate process, and it was undertaken. We did go by the book, if you like. Everything was done correctly, which is why we only committed to the end of the year and no earlier time frame.

The CHAIR: The time is 3.30, so we are going to have a break. We will be back in 15 minutes.

(Short adjournment)

The CHAIR: Welcome back. We're going to recommence with questions from the Opposition.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: You mentioned this morning the women's safety commissioner position and the Women, Family and Community Safety directorate. Is that a new directorate?

ANNE CAMPBELL: As part of the machinery of government changes earlier this year, in April a number of functions from what was the strategy and programs directorate moved to DPC. That was Women NSW and the counterterrorism team. We took the opportunity to relook at that directorate to have a greater focus on domestic and family violence and sexual assault. As a result of that, some functions moved to other parts of Strategy, Policy and Commissioning. Functions like seniors, carers et cetera moved to other aligned areas so that we could have a greater focus on this area.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: Thank you for that. That's helpful. Are you able to tell me—maybe if you take it on notice—what has actually moved into this new directorate?

ANNE CAMPBELL: We have put in some additional resources. As you know, we got quite a bit of funding through the core and cluster model and national partnerships so that we could actually increase the number of staff within that area to consult and work on the relevant policies, processes and new programs.

MICHAEL TIDBALL: If I may add to that—and I adverted to this in a response to a question earlier this afternoon—part of that thinking is that, in dealing with domestic and family violence, there are linkages with child protection, homelessness and housing issues. If the commissioning, strategy and policy were collocated, given the place that trauma plays in so many of those elements, there would be a more integrated approach.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: Thank you for that. My apologies if Ms Boyd asked some of these questions. I did not hear all of your questioning. Ms Campbell, you were just outlining the funding that has gone into the Women, Family and Community Safety directorate. Are there National Partnership Agreement funds as part of that?

ANNE CAMPBELL: I would need to take that on notice to give you an accurate answer. I'm happy to take that on notice.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: That would be great. As I said, some of these may have been asked, so I apologise. The New South Wales women's safety commissioner will report to whom? To you, Mr Tidball?

ANNE CAMPBELL: To the Deputy Secretary of Strategy, Policy and Commissioning. I'm acting in that role at the moment.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: Have you got a total budget for the commissioner?

ANNE CAMPBELL: I can take that on notice and come back to you.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: You've said that it pulls on different parts of the portfolio and the cluster. Is there some sort of advisory committee that is going to sit with that, or interdepartmental work? Can you explain that?

ANNE CAMPBELL: We established, I think, about a month ago—or it could have been two months ago—an executive director committee; I can't remember the name of it. That works both across DCJ but also across government. So it has representation from Health, Education, I think DPC, and NSW Police.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: That's good. I think you are going to take some of this on notice, but when you provide the information to us, are you able to provide what programs have got in and also what new money has been used to establish that? Are you able to tell me that now?

ANNE CAMPBELL: No, I would rather give you accurate information, so I will take that on notice.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: All right. Okay, that is good. Look, I suppose, obviously we are not quite—the reason I'm asking these questions is it's unclear to us from the information we've been able to find publicly in terms of how it's sort of set out. So if you can provide us with the kind of org structure, that would be great. Just going back to some of the core and cluster issues that were raised this morning, you told us that there's \$47 million in tranche one. How much is allocated to tranche two?

ANNE CAMPBELL: I went through that earlier. I'm happy to do it again.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: Sorry.

ANNE CAMPBELL: So 2022-23, as you said, the \$47.24 million; 2023-24, \$119.23 million; for 2024-25, \$152.88 million; and for 2025-26, \$107 million. So you can see that a lot of the funding is next financial

year and the following ones. It's important not to link tranche one with 2022-23 because we are doing tranche one and tranche two. Tranche three, as I said earlier, we are looking at going out for an expression of interest early next year in 2023.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: Are you able to tell me where you're up to—given that you're still looking at tranche one, my understanding is that there's funding allocated for specialist support for children and young people in homelessness services. I think there has been about \$5 million allocated for that. Are you able to give me a breakdown on how that's going to be allocated? Is that being allocated to specialist children's workers in refuges? Is that the primary purpose?

ANNE CAMPBELL: Yes, I can talk to that. That's the \$5.2 million—

MICHAEL TIDBALL: Over four years.

ANNE CAMPBELL: —over four years to pilot two services for accompanying children.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: Just to be clear, so it's 5.2 over five years—

ANNE CAMPBELL: Four years.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: —four years, but it's really for two services as a pilot.

ANNE CAMPBELL: Correct. One will be in regional New South Wales and one in Greater Sydney. The pilot model will comprise a specialist team that provides holistic trauma-informed and family-centred support to accompanying children and young people who are accessing specialist homelessness services after leaving domestic and family violence.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: Have you identified the services yet?

ANNE CAMPBELL: We're in the process of doing that.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: Is this sort of a separate process to the tranche one and tranche two?

ANNE CAMPBELL: Yes, separate project.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: So there has been an EOI process for this?

ANNE CAMPBELL: That's correct.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: Where is that at?

ANNE CAMPBELL: I can take that on notice and come back to you.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: Thank you. I wanted to ask you about the Domestic Violence Safety Assessment Tool that was trialled in 2022. Has the new tool been developed?

ANNE CAMPBELL: This came up probably when you weren't here this morning.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: Sorry.

ANNE CAMPBELL: Essentially, they're looking at the trials starting towards the end of this year. They're currently reviewing the risk assessment tool itself. So that's Legal Aid NSW and the NSW Police Force. They're also looking at the BOCSAR study in the redesign of that tool.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: Sorry, when is that review due to be finished?

ANNE CAMPBELL: The pilot, we are looking at the end of this year. I can get more detail on when the actual tool itself will be finalised.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: So there's a pilot. Where's the pilot operating?

ANNE CAMPBELL: That's still to be determined.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: So by the end of 2022 you will have identified a site for a pilot. Is that what you're saying?

ANNE CAMPBELL: Correct, and commence trial of the tool.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: Sorry, I'm just confused because there have been commitments made. In February of this year Minister Ward flagged that there would be this tool. Just to be clear, so that I understand it, you're telling me that basically you're looking at it, the work's being undertaken, nothing's happened yet but at the end of 2022 you will have a pilot. Is that right?

ANNE CAMPBELL: That's correct.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: What input is the department having in relation to the new safety tool?

ANNE CAMPBELL: Sorry, could you—

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: What input are you having into the design of the new tool, or none?

ANNE CAMPBELL: Part of the women's safety area would be involved in working with New South Wales police and Legal Aid NSW.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: I suppose the reason why I'm asking is that you've established the new directorate. I suppose across government your area would be considered to have the policy expertise in relation to this. I'm just trying to understand what role you have. I understand that police are the primary delivery agency in relation to the tool, but what is the input that your department or your directorate is having in relation to this?

ANNE CAMPBELL: It would be working as part of a working group with those two organisations, but I'm happy to get further detail for you.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: Is the working group established?

ANNE CAMPBELL: My understanding is yes, they've already been working on the revision of the tool.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: Terrific. If you could just give us some detail about who's on that group—

ANNE CAMPBELL: Yes.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: That would be fantastic. I'd appreciate that. I want to ask you about the Premier's Priorities in relation to domestic violence recidivism. Do you believe you're going to meet the target of reducing that by 25 per cent by 2023?

ANNE CAMPBELL: I think that's a very challenging target.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: So is that a no?

ANNE CAMPBELL: Unlikely.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: What's the current rate of recidivism?

ANNE CAMPBELL: Just bear with me. The most current data—so that's year to March 2022—shows that the number of domestic violence reoffenders is 2,013. That's an increase of 199 reoffenders overall or 11 per cent from the 2015 baseline of 1,814 reoffenders. It's down six reoffenders from the previous quarter but up 151 reoffenders from the same time last year. The increase in the number of domestic violence reoffenders since the baseline clearly demonstrates the challenges in meeting the target of a 1,360 reduction in reoffenders, which was 25 per cent, by December 2023. To meet that target, you'd need a reduction of about 653 reoffenders. We're working closely with the Premier's Implementation Unit, as well as with the domestic and family violence board, to look at the initiatives that we've put in place in an attempt to reduce that rate, to look at how effective—a number of those particular programs that have been funded are subject to evaluation, so we'll be looking at those very closely to look at what else can we do in this space to address that particular target.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: That was a lot of numbers, Ms Campbell. What's the current recidivism rate, though? You didn't actually tell me. I could probably try to work it out on my calculator, but I reckon you've probably got it there.

ANNE CAMPBELL: Let me just see. I'd need to take that on notice just to give you the exact one. It's probably somewhere in here but obviously—

MICHAEL TIDBALL: Can you just clarify?

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: The Premier's Priorities—you've basically got a target that says that you want to reduce domestic violence recidivism by 25 per cent by 2023.

MICHAEL TIDBALL: Yes.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: I know there are some hard numbers against that, and Ms Campbell has indicated the challenge, which is that in the next four months you've got to get 653 fewer people to be repeat offenders. It sounds almost impossible to me. But I'm just wanting to know what the actual recidivism rate is as we sit here today, which I would hope you would know because it's a Premier's Priority that I believe, Mr Tidball, you're held accountable for under your KPIs.

MICHAEL TIDBALL: Yes. Just repeating, there's an increase of 199 offenders overall, or 11 per cent, from the 2015 baseline of 1,814. But if there is a specific figure missing there we can easily do the calculation for that.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: That's alright.

ANNE CAMPBELL: If I can just add, I think how we've been tracking this particular target is not on rates but actually on hard numbers. But again, I'm happy to come back on notice.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: We think you report it by percentages hence why we're asking it in percentages, but that's fine. You indicated that there's the Premier's Delivery Unit and that you're doing some evaluations, but it's clear that you're not going to meet the target, isn't it?

ANNE CAMPBELL: I think very highly unlikely.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: Since the Priority was put in place—you can take this on notice; I know you won't have it—can you tell us how much has been spent on the programs that have been attached to trying to reduce this number over that period of time?

ANNE CAMPBELL: Happy to take that on notice.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: That would be great. I want to move on to the Closing the Gap target 13, which is to reduce the experience of domestic violence and family violence experienced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and girls by 50 per cent by 2031. Are you able to give us an update of where that is up to or what the current baseline is?

ANNE CAMPBELL: What I can say is target 13 of the national partnerships agreement for Closing the Gap is to, by 2031, reduce the rate of all forms of family violence and abuse against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and children by at least 50 per cent as we progress towards zero. The Closing the Gap targets are underpinned by the Closing the Gap agreement priority reforms, which focus on, obviously, changing the way governments work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. The NSW Department of Communities and Justice is the lead for Closing the Gap targets, including target 13. We're working alongside the Aboriginal Legal Service and the nominated coalition of Aboriginal peak organisations to progress work on Closing the Gap justice targets and implement the priority reforms.

The program of work to address target 13 will also be aligned with and informed by the next National Plan to End Violence against Women and their Children and the associated action plans, which include two five-year Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander action plans. We're also developing our own two five-year New South Wales plans on family and domestic violence and sexual violence to align with the national plan. We're also proposing the development of a standalone Aboriginal and sexual violence plan. We've also established within DCJ a Transforming Aboriginal Outcomes division, headed by a deputy secretary, to drive design and implementation of activity to meet those gaps. That includes a small team focused on domestic and family violence in Aboriginal communities and progressing the design and implementation of initiatives to meet that target.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: Can I just stop you there? That's obviously a long list of things. Do you consider all of those initiatives to be part of the response to the Closing the Gap target?

ANNE CAMPBELL: Correct. I think the difference with the approach now in New South Wales in response to Closing the Gap is that it isn't just being done by government consulting in its normal way; it's actually about doing it together. I'm on a particular group that's overseeing this target. It's co-chaired by the Aboriginal Legal Service and Brendan Thomas, who is the Deputy Secretary, Transforming Aboriginal Outcomes. It is looking at those strategies, looking at the evidence and looking at the data but, equally, looking at how we do things jointly. There was funding, as you'd be aware, that was announced recently—I think it was about \$400 million for Closing the Gap—and there are particular implementation plans that I think are currently being finalised or have been finalised. That joint working arrangement is looking at how those particular initiatives are going to be implemented.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: Thank you for that. Can you just—again I'm happy for you take it on notice—give us a dollar figure of what the proportion of the domestic and family violence budget is set aside for reaching the Closing the Gap targets?

MICHAEL TIDBALL: Yes.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: If you can give it now, that would be great. But I suspect not. I just want to go back to the national partnership agreement. The Commonwealth's committed an additional \$80 million to cover domestic violence and sexual violence service provision. There's been some discussion about this. How much of the funding has New South Wales allocated to specialist sexual violence service provision?

ANNE CAMPBELL: New South Wales committed \$60 million to domestic and family and sexual violence over two years of the—

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: I've got that. I just want to know the sexual violence part of it, the non-DV part of it.

ANNE CAMPBELL: I might need to take that on notice. I know that was a question at the last budget estimates. There was a concern that there wasn't a focus on sexual violence. We have funded Full Stop, which Minister Ward talked about this morning, for about \$1.2 million from the national partnership agreement, but I am happy to take that on notice, to look at other initiatives, noting that the third round has yet to be made public. So we might wait, if that's possible, till that happens, so that we can look at the allocation for sexual violence.

MICHAEL TIDBALL: If I may, Chair, just be more granular in response to the question in respect of target 13 progress—I'm happy to provide this in written form as well, Ms Sharpe—based on the baseline incident rate of 1,196 per 100,000 in the 12 months to June 2019, the 2030-31 target rate is 598. Based on the latest Aboriginal population projection for New South Wales, this target rate equates to a target incident of 1,457 in 2031. The domestic violence related assaults incident rate per 100,000 in 2021 was 1,328. This was based on the incident number of 2,719 in the 12 months to June 2021 and was 11 per cent higher than the 2019 baseline rate, of 1,196.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: Thank you. I'll have to get the calculator out. Thank you.

The CHAIR: I'm just going to ask a few questions. Then I'll pass back. I think this is for you, Mr Sharp. I just wanted to talk about the Lane Cove Tunnel. It was reported in July that cracks had been found in the tunnel. I understand there's an ongoing dispute between Thiess and John Holland, as well as Transurban. In the meantime, what is Transport doing about those alleged defects?

ROB SHARP: We, basically, have an ongoing relationship with the operator of the tunnel. The conversations we have are clearly focused around the safety. This is an issue that's been known for some time. The litigation that's taking place is between a contractor and a subcontractor. The clear issue for us is the resolution of that and keeping across it but also "Is the public safe?" And they are. I'll pass to Ms Drover, who could potentially add a bit more colour to that as well.

CAMILLA DROVER: My understanding is that we're not party to the litigation between the concessionaire and their original builder. But we're, obviously, monitoring the progress of that, as the secretary said, to make sure there's no customer impact, and the safety and wellbeing of those travelling through that tunnel remains paramount.

The CHAIR: I understand there will be a lengthy legal process to work out who was liable. But, in the meantime, the public would expect that the repairs would be being made. Concerningly, as part of that litigation, Transurban was claiming that the repairs could take decades and would cost \$300 million at least. Are those repairs being carried out? Is that just for the purpose of this litigation, that they're making these claims? Or is the damage that extensive?

CAMILLA DROVER: Given that it is the subject of a legal case—the litigation—it would be unwise for us to comment on that. Obviously, parties are going to present their interests, so I think it would be imprudent for us to comment any further.

The CHAIR: Are we to assume that, if Transport for NSW is not demanding that the repairs take place urgently or immediately, it is your current position that there is no need for any sort of urgent repairs?

ROB SHARP: All safety-related repairs are being done. Could they be expedited? That comes down to a commercial question around time frame. The public are not being impacted from a safety perspective. It then becomes a commercial question around how quickly the repairs are done. As Ms Drover indicated, there are differing views being presented through the litigation and we're keeping across the detail of that as it unfolds.

The CHAIR: How does it work from a Transport for NSW perspective in terms of how do you get comfortable with the safety risks? Is that independently assessed? Are you reliant on the contractor? What's happening there?

CAMILLA DROVER: Obviously, we have the right to make regular inspections. We review a lot of documentation about the operations and maintenance of all our tunnels. It also should be noted that motorway tunnels in New South Wales are the subject of an EPA operating licence as well. So there are a whole lot of checks and balances that we do regardless of whether there are any matters like this afoot. Also it should be noted that if they were to undertake any repairs, they would also need to apply to Transport for NSW for road occupation

licences et cetera, so we would review what works they were undertaking and what impact that would have on the roadway at that time.

The CHAIR: Just picking up on two things in that answer, then, the first one is you said that you have the right to inspect. Has Transport for NSW actually inspected?

CAMILLA DROVER: Yes, we have. I'm across a number of inspections of a number of facilities and systems in that tunnel that we do regularly. But reports and updates on, as I said, the operations and maintenance do come to Transport for NSW and they're reviewed to make sure everything's in order.

The CHAIR: In the media coverage it was reported that Transurban claims, as I say, that the repairs could take decades and cost \$300 million—but, they say, only if the work can be completed before the motorway is handed back to the New South Wales Government in 2048. Can you speculate as to why there would be a difference in cost, whether it was held by the New South Wales Government or not?

CAMILLA DROVER: As I said, I think it's a matter of a court case and we probably shouldn't comment any further.

The CHAIR: Firstly, when did you find out about these defects in the tunnel? When was Transport for NSW first aware?

CAMILLA DROVER: I know it's been a matter that's been going for many years. I'm not sure when Transport for NSW was first made aware of these issues. It's beyond my tenure at Transport for NSW. We would have to take on notice when it was first identified to Transport. It would have initially been identified to the RMS as the original concession counterparty to that tunnel.

The CHAIR: I understand it has been running for at least five years, or at least that's what has been reported. In the ordinary course, how long after being made aware of something like that would you be telling the public about it?

CAMILLA DROVER: It would depend on the nature of the issue and whether there was any impact on the community et cetera.

The CHAIR: Do you think it's reasonable for the public to have found out about this only because of Supreme Court documents being lodged? Is that the way that people should be finding out about defects in major infrastructure?

CAMILLA DROVER: Well, I think the issue is there is a court case running, litigation that has been running for many years. The outcome of that court case is yet to be determined.

ROB SHARP: In terms of your question, I'd have to go back to the five or six years ago as to when the issue came up and as to what the information publicly was made. If it was subject to litigation, I'd also have to just check on what the contractual obligations are around that. Clearly, if there was a safety concern, Transport would act in the context of the contracts we have in place, but I'd have to go back and look at the circumstances at the time in regards to that question.

The CHAIR: Yes. If you could—because I understand that the litigation is in relation to who's going to bear the costs of the repairs, not whether or not any repairs are necessary, and you have said yourself that repairs are required and are ongoing.

ROB SHARP: We'll come back to you with the specifics around that.

The CHAIR: Yes. So, if you could tell me when RMS or Transport for NSW first found out and when it was first made public by you to the public. Correct me, but I believe the first we heard of it was in July. That would be very useful.

CAMILLA DROVER: Could I just clarify? I'm not sure we have said that repairs are required. We're obviously aware that there is a litigation matter underway. I'm not sure we've commented on the need for repairs.

The CHAIR: Yeah, okay. That's interesting. So, you're not actually conceding that we do need repairs.

CAMILLA DROVER: As I said, we're not a party to the litigation.

The CHAIR: No. You're not party to the litigation, but you are responsible for the safety of Sydney's roads, so I would hope that you knew whether or not repairs were required.

CAMILLA DROVER: I'm not saying whether they are or aren't. Just to be clear: my evidence wasn't that we're saying that repairs are required.

The CHAIR: Okay. I might circle back on this in a bit. Back to Mr Mookhey.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: Chair, good news! Depending on the views of the secretaries and the Government, it is unlikely that the Opposition is going to have questions for Secretary Tidball, Mr Collins, Mr Carlon, Ms Campbell, or Mr McKnight, so their continued attendance is a matter for them. From our perspective, unless other members are intending to keep them—

The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD: It would be better news if you say you've finished your questions and go home early.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: No.

The CHAIR: If you're no longer required, please feel free to leave. You're also completely free to stay, should you wish to bring popcorn in.

The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD: Why would you do that to yourself? Go and sort out those unions for us.

(Michael Tidball, Howard Collins, Bernard Carlon, Anne Campbell and Paul McKnight withdrew.)

TARA McCARTHY: Chair, I do have a response to the question about overseas driver licences—those numbers.

The CHAIR: Yes, please.

TARA McCARTHY: I will notify that these are Service NSW numbers. As at April of this year, there were 548,844 people in New South Wales with a temporary visa. It has been estimated that half of those people, 274,422, are likely to hold an overseas driver licence. So that's the figure they're basing it on. They also have indicated that in any given month, there are around 26,091 people who enter the State and hit that three-month mark.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: Thank you. That's very helpful.

TARA McCARTHY: I would like to say it is an important initiative. Overseas licence holders are significantly represented in our crash statistics. I'm sure Mr Carlon would be happy to speak to that, if you like.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: Look, we don't. We were just more interested in the number of people affected, but on notice if you wish to provide any further information—

BERNARD CARLON: Certainly. I will do it very quickly, if you like.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: Please do.

BERNARD CARLON: In the last five years, there were 2,209 casualty crashes involving overseas driver licence holders, including 27 fatalities and 502 people who were admitted to hospital—a much more significant cost than the cost that we're talking about in terms of the implementation of this program.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: Okay. Thank you. Are you getting the revenue then? Are you getting the revenue?

BERNARD CARLON: No. I think the revenue for testing is about—

TARA McCARTHY: We took that question on notice.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: Perfect. Thank you very much. That's all. Secretary, through you to whoever you direct, how many properties were acquired last year under compulsory acquisition terms or using the processes prescribed in the just terms compensation Act that affect road projects in Greater Sydney?

ROB SHARP: I might pass to Ms Drover on that.

CAMILLA DROVER: I do have a number but it's for the whole of Transport.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: I'll take it. Let's have them and I'll just ask them on Friday.

CAMILLA DROVER: So, in the 2021-22 year, we acquired 214 properties for road, light rail and heavy rail projects across New South Wales. In addition to that there obviously is the metro program.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: That's separate.

CAMILLA DROVER: Yes.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: That's fine. Of that 214, how much was retained by agreement following the procedures of the just terms Act?

CAMILLA DROVER: A hundred and seventy-three.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: And then—

ROB SHARP: It's about 90 per cent.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: Yep.

ROB SHARP: That's good.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: Of the 41 that were not, where are we up to in—so that was for the last year. How many in general are currently still subject—regardless of whether it was last year or not, how many acquisitions are currently live in the system for which it's not yet been possible to reach agreement?

CAMILLA DROVER: I'd have to take that on notice. Obviously it's dynamic. We're starting processes and completing processes with property owners continuously. That's why we aggregate it on a yearly basis. But I can take it on notice.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: If you can take it on notice, that would be helpful. Do you know how many have reached determination by the Valuer General at this stage?

CAMILLA DROVER: Again, that's a dynamic figure. But we can come back with some analysis on what it is, say, at the end of July or the end of August.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: What was the total amount of money spent last year on acquisitions of property—just the actual acquisition costs, not the legal or surrounding costs, the actual amount paid to property owners?

CAMILLA DROVER: Yes. So I'm advised that, of those 214, the cost of the acquisition was \$316.4 million.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: Thank you. Do you have the previous year's figure, by any chance?

CAMILLA DROVER: I'm not sure I do, but we can provide that on notice.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: On notice, can we get for the last three years how much the cost paid to previous landowners was? That would be helpful. What were the costs incurred by Transport—as in, your internal costs, administration costs—that arose?

CAMILLA DROVER: I'd have to take that on notice.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: Can we talk about, Ms Drover, one of—obviously, my favourite of the acquisitions. What happened with the Tigers site?

CAMILLA DROVER: It should be noted that we were always pursuing a construction lease for that site, so not a full acquisition. We gazetted the construction lease for that site. It was last year, I believe. We had been in discussions with the property owner or the landowner since last year that there was always an opportunity that we may not need that site. The need for that site was identified in the reference design for the Western Harbour Tunnel. On that basis we gazetted that acquisition of the lease. In May this year we advised the landowner that we no longer needed that site. We had obviously procured the first package for Western Harbour Tunnel and that contractor had confirmed they had no need for that site. We tested the need with the bidders for package two of Western Harbour Tunnel. All three bidders confirmed they no longer needed that site either, given the approach for package one. On that basis we advised the landowner we no longer needed that site and the lease was rescinded on 29 July this year. That site is—

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: Let's just unpack a little bit of the detail there. We could be here for a while but I'll keep it relatively brief. So we decided in May that we weren't needing the site. Did I hear correctly?

CAMILLA DROVER: That's right.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: So why did we think we originally needed the site?

CAMILLA DROVER: The reference design for Western Harbour Tunnel—that was proposed to be a main tunnelling site for Western Harbour Tunnel.

The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD: It's the same evidence we took—just go back and read the report.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: Thank you, and just curb your enthusiasm, Mr Mallard.

The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD: Point of order: We've had an inquiry into this and we've had all this evidence and it's been published in a report. We don't need to hear it all again.

The CHAIR: There's no point of order. Carry on.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: This followed a consultation with the first—coming out of the early works and a consultation with the three bidders in the second package, correct? What site are we using now in lieu?

CAMILLA DROVER: Because we have awarded a variation to the Rozelle Interchange to deliver the first package of the Western Harbour Tunnel and they are using the site that they have already established, we no longer need a mid tunnelling site, and therefore we could do without.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: So we're using the dive site that's already being used for the Rozelle Interchange?

CAMILLA DROVER: Yes, so the spoil that will come out of the Western Harbour Tunnel will actually come out of the future Western Harbour Tunnel portals at the Rozelle Interchange site.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: How much money to date have we paid Heworth, the property owner, throughout the period of time in which we had a lease?

CAMILLA DROVER: I'd have to take that on notice but my understanding is, although we gazetted the lease last year, the compensation payable has not been determined, because it wasn't able to be done by agreement and, in fact, at the request of Heworth the property was gazetted and went through the compulsory process. So the Valuer General was determining compensation.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: Where is that now up to?

CAMILLA DROVER: At the time we advised the landowners that we no longer needed the site for Western Harbour Tunnel, I understand the Valuer General had not made their determination. Therefore, now that we've rescinded the site, there is no need for them to determine the compensation.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: Then what are we paying Heworth?

CAMILLA DROVER: We're still discussing that with Heworth at the moment.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: So rather than pursuing a Valuer General determination to determine the compensation payable, we're effectively trying to obtain an outcome by negotiation?

CAMILLA DROVER: As I understand the process—and I can confirm this on notice—we start by negotiating and, obviously, if that fails, it'll go to another process.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: They'll sue. They'll lodge a claim, and then it'll go into litigation.

CAMILLA DROVER: Yes, I understand they have put in a claim, and we're just going through that claim. You'll note that we only formally rescinded the site at the end of the July, so it's been less than a month.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: Have they lodged a statement of claim in the Supreme Court, the Land and Environment Court or any of the courts?

CAMILLA DROVER: Again, I'd confirm on notice. I don't believe they have. They have provided us with some details of their compensation claim.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: What does that mean? You're in the process of negotiating it and they've provided a first—

CAMILLA DROVER: Yes. As I said, we only formally rescinded the lease on 29 July, which is less than a month ago. I understand that they are putting together—

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: Publicly, they've identified that they think that the claims will run into the tens of millions of dollars. I think it was somewhere between \$10 million and \$30 million, depending on the media reports you believe. Are they requesting compensation to the tune of \$10 million to \$30 million?

CAMILLA DROVER: I would have to take on notice the exact nature and quantum of their compensation claim, but I know it's going through a process.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: Who in Transport? Is this your department? Will you be the person negotiating this, Ms Drover?

CAMILLA DROVER: Yes, the property access team sits in my division.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: How much money have we spent to date on lawyers and other costs to do with the non-acquisition of that particular site?

CAMILLA DROVER: As I said earlier, I have taken that question on notice.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: To be fair, Ms Drover, I think you took that on notice for every one of them. I'm asking you specifically about this site.

CAMILLA DROVER: Okay, we will specifically note that.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: How much have we spent to date for the past four or five years this process has been running?

CAMILLA DROVER: We'll take that on notice and see what we can bring back.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: Thank you.

CAMILLA DROVER: We should note it's a good outcome for the community that they'll no longer have a mid-tunnelling site at that site.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: No doubt, Ms Drover, but let's find out how much money we've had to spend to get to that outcome.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Ms Drover, I might return to those questions about the underspending in specific projects. Can we return to what's listed in the budget papers under "Established Sydney Roads" as "Heathcote Road - The Avenue to Princes Highway (Planning) (State and Federal Funded)"? It's on page 5-47 of *Budget Paper No. 3*. To date, how much money have we spent on this project?

CAMILLA DROVER: The Avenue to Princes Highway, Mr Graham?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Yes, "Heathcote Road - The Avenue to Princes Highway (Planning)".

CAMILLA DROVER: My understanding is it's about \$39.5 million, but I can take that on notice and confirm that figure.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: What was the estimated expenditure to 30 June this year?

CAMILLA DROVER: I don't have that with me. I can give you the budget for this financial year and the budget for the forward estimates, but not last year's budget.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Have you got *Budget Paper No. 3* there?

CAMILLA DROVER: For this year's budget, yes.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Page 5-47.

CAMILLA DROVER: Yes.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Can you see it there? The estimated expenditure there is \$2 million—\$2.114 million.

CAMILLA DROVER: Yes. It says \$2 million, yes.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: So you're saying that in the less than two months since then we've spent another \$37 million?

CAMILLA DROVER: I have to take on notice my figure because my figure may not be just this financial year. It may be a prior financial year.

TRUDI MARES: I think I can assist, Ms Drover. I think you're looking at Infantry Parade, not the Princes Highway project. It's a different project. Apologies.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Yes, understood. I'm happy for you to find the—

CAMILLA DROVER: Sorry, yes. There are three projects on Heathcote Road.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Yes, exactly.

CAMILLA DROVER: You're right, the previous spend is the 2.1.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: The 2.114.

CAMILLA DROVER: And noting that project is still in the planning phase.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Yes, exactly. So this is 2.114 to June. Maybe it has changed since. You will note that we should've spent—in last year's budget the commitment was we'd already spent two and we were planning to spend an additional \$5 million this year. Would you agree that we're \$4.886 million, or thereabouts, short of what we were planning to spend in last year's budget?

CAMILLA DROVER: My figure is that this year we'll spend the \$6.5 million, and then \$39.8 million over the full forward estimates.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: You're talking about what's going forward. I'm asking you: In the last 12 months was this project underspent?

CAMILLA DROVER: I don't have what last year's budget was with me.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I do. We were predicting to spend, on top of the \$2 million that had been spent, \$5 million, and we spent \$114,000.

CAMILLA DROVER: As I said, I don't have that \$5 million figure you're quoting in front of me.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Well, it's in the budget from the previous year. I'm using this example to try to work out that we agree the process here. Do you agree, or you can't say today, whether this project was underspent?

CAMILLA DROVER: We'll take that on notice.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Yes, sure.

CAMILLA DROVER: The project is in planning. We're advancing with the other two projects, which are both in delivery. This one is still in the planning process.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Yes, understood. But this is, as my colleague pointed out, State- and Federal-funded. It might be the sort of project that might attract the attention of the Commonwealth and perhaps see their funding deferred. Given what we've discussed earlier, you might be concerned that this would be one of those.

CAMILLA DROVER: We're noting that the only funding for this project is just planning money.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Yes.

CAMILLA DROVER: So there's no funding from the Federal Government for the delivery phase. It's a very modest amount of funding that they've allocated just for that planning phase.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: So you're saying that it's not federally funded in the planning stage?

CAMILLA DROVER: No, I'm not saying that. I'm saying that the Federal funding for it has only been for the planning phase and not the delivery. So it's a very modest allocation.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I totally agree with that. Acknowledging that we agree on the amount that's been spent, I'm telling you that's \$4.86 million less than what was committed to a year ago. You're going to confirm that on notice?

CAMILLA DROVER: I will take that on notice and confirm. We'll also give you rationale as to why there is that disconnect of circa \$4 million, which, in a program of \$76.7 billion—we will take that on notice.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Looking at the Heathcote Road, Woronora River Bridge, how much has been spent to date on this project?

CAMILLA DROVER: It is 10.9. The project has been awarded. We're on track to deliver that for early next year. Obviously, the wet weather did put some constraints on that project, but we're still targeting early next year to complete.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Again, the Transport promise in last year's budget was that this would be at \$17.821 million by June. We're well short of that figure. Do you agree with that?

TRUDI MARES: I think it was 10.

CAMILLA DROVER: I think with that project there was some community feedback about the approach and some safety concerns around the original design of that bridge. We went through an industry engagement process, which yielded some really good innovation. The final design for that bridge is a good one and addresses the safety constraints and concerns of the community.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: To be clear, some of those are—I wouldn't necessarily say that in relation to this project. Some of these are just ordinary processes; I'm not critical of that. It's really just this capital slippage issue that I'm interested in. These are the sorts of projects—this one, for example, was \$7 million underspent compared to what was committed to 12 months ago. Seven million dollars should've left the door and didn't by the end of June.

CAMILLA DROVER: I think the positive thing with that project, though, is we're still maintaining the target date for opening to traffic. Although we took longer to get through the planning process and work with industry to get a better solution, we are still keeping our commitment to get it open to traffic.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: How much have we spent on the Homebush Bay Drive upgrade—the planning for that? Again, it's State and federally funded.

CAMILLA DROVER: Again, that project is in the development phase. I think we have spent in the order of about \$2 million.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Perhaps, at the end of June, \$1.875 million? Does that sound right?

CAMILLA DROVER: One-point-nine is the figure I've got.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Yes. And you agree that is also significantly under budget, perhaps by \$4.79 million? We were supposed to have spent \$6.66 million by the end of June. We've spent \$1.9 million, by your account.

CAMILLA DROVER: I'm happy to take it on notice to say why we have underspent. Sometimes we underspend because we save. I'm happy to take that away as to why we haven't spent as much in the time frame that was originally prescribed.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: For each of these projects, if you could take on notice the extent of the underspend in just 12 months and the reason, that'd be fantastic. I might ask you about the Henry Lawson Drive upgrade. I believe we've underspent by \$7.2 million on that project compared to what was committed just 12 months ago.

The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD: Was it Werrington?

CAMILLA DROVER: We've spent \$13.6 million.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: And the commitment was for \$20.855 million. That was what Transport told the Treasury they would spend, and you're now \$7 million short on that project.

The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD: Is that Penrith?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: It's Milperra, is what's marked here.

CAMILLA DROVER: Are we talking about a different project now? Are we still on Henry Lawson?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: No. I'm saying do you agree or disagree with that assessment?

CAMILLA DROVER: All I can confirm is that we have spent \$13.6 million to date.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: That would leave us \$7 million short of what the budget one year ago said would be spent. If you could confirm that and any reasons—

CAMILLA DROVER: Yes.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: King Georges Road, Stoney Creek Road to Connells Point Road—we were supposed to have spent \$30 million on this.

CAMILLA DROVER: I can't find that one at the moment, but I'm happy to take on notice what we've spent and if there's any difference between last year's budget and the actual—

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: The budget papers show we're \$7.663 million short on that project. If you could confirm that and any reasons, that'd be welcome.

CAMILLA DROVER: Yes.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Turning to the western Sydney growth roads, there was some discussion earlier that there had not been similar issues here. Looking at the Appin Road improvements, what have we spent to date?

CAMILLA DROVER: I believe \$13 million has been spent.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Thirteen million, I heard you right? Not 30, but 13?

CAMILLA DROVER: It's 13, yes.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Thirteen. So that's \$1 million short. Again, if you take that on notice, that's fine. Memorial Avenue, Old Windsor Road to Windsor Road in Kellyville—we should've spent \$134 million.

CAMILLA DROVER: That one is in delivery, I believe. So we have spent \$124.3 million on that one.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: About \$10 million short for that project, the Spring Farm Parkway.

CAMILLA DROVER: Which stage?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: It's listed as "Spring Farm Parkway, Menangle Park" in the budget papers. We should have spent \$34 million.

CAMILLA DROVER: Yes, that one is also awarded. Was it Spring Farm Parkway—

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Spring Farm Parkway, Menangle Park.

CAMILLA DROVER: I think it's stage one. That's in delivery. We've spent \$27.4 million.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Yes, and we should have spent 34.

CAMILLA DROVER: I think on a few of those there were some delays with the procurement.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Yes.

CAMILLA DROVER: COVID didn't help.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Yes.

CAMILLA DROVER: But now we're in delivery, and the contractor is expeditiously progressing the project.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: But you would agree it wouldn't be fair to say there have been no issues in this section of the budget, these western Sydney growth roads?

CAMILLA DROVER: Look, there have been some—there were some obvious issues with COVID last year. Procurement did take a little bit longer.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Yes.

CAMILLA DROVER: You can look at things within one financial year, but I think you've got to perhaps take a longer time frame when you're looking at projects like this that take sometimes many years to get through development processes and then get into delivery.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Yes, I acknowledge that. To be clear, why I'm concerned, though, is that it's the judgement Treasury has made about the Roads portfolio and the transport agency and their estimation that in this financial year \$8 billion might not go out the door, and this promises so. It's this financial year that we're concerned about. I don't expect you to comment on that. I'm just giving you some context. The Horsley Drive, M7 Motorway to Cowpasture Road, in Horsley Park—

CAMILLA DROVER: Yes.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: We should have spent \$29 million. How much has been spent?

CAMILLA DROVER: Nine point three, I believe.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: So it's nearly \$20 million short.

CAMILLA DROVER: We're still in the optioneering phase for that project.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Just a third of what was committed to has been spent.

CAMILLA DROVER: If I can just comment, though, most of these projects that you're referring to are in the developments phase.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Sure.

CAMILLA DROVER: That's not where the major spend on a project occurs; it's in the delivery phase. So you're more likely to—

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Yes. But these were all—

CAMILLA DROVER: If you see an underspend in the delivery phase, that's when you will get a significant underspend across the portfolio.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I accept that, although the numbers we've run through now really do add up. These were always promises in the budget—short-term promises, too. These aren't the forward estimates; these are promises about what will occur in the next 12 months, and that's the issue that Treasury is drawing

attention to. I will ask you about the western Sydney long-term strategic transport corridor preservation program. This is a crucial program. We should have spent \$212 million.

CAMILLA DROVER: So that's not a project in my portfolio. I think—

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I hope we haven't sent the person home whose portfolio it's in. We might return to that one on Friday. But I can see why they're concerned about this, Mr Secretary. I might flag ahead of Friday that this is \$90 million short. Again, I might just flag now that we will be interested in the same information. So, Ms Drover, thank you for taking those on notice. If you can come back with the details about how much was underspent and the reasons why, but I think you can understand why we're concerned at an assertion that there are no issues here in some of these specific projects. Absolutely acknowledging your point that Transport has balanced some of this by spending more on some projects—some toll road projects, often; sometimes the money has been allocated to a greater degree there. But you agree that it's not fair to say there have been no issues with capital slippage with these individual projects?

CAMILLA DROVER: I think it's fair to say that in any development process there are always—we want to get the right outcome for the community and the project, and that sometimes takes a little bit longer to refine options, work with industry and get projects through procurement and then into delivery.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Secretary Sharp, having run through some of those projects, including some of those State and Federal-funded projects, and given the asterisk that Treasury has applied, given the concerns they've had and given the fact they've referred to the roads section of this agency's budget, do you acknowledge there are capital slippage issues here? Let's quantify them exactly, but these are the sorts of projects that might be causing Treasury's concern.

ROB SHARP: We'll come back with the explanations for them. I think some of those are COVID related. We have indicated that supply chain and COVID are certainly drivers. Ms Drover has also indicated that during that development stage the timings can move. There were also examples there, though, where, whilst the upfront stages slipped, the project will deliver when we were saying. One of the interesting comments you made, Mr Graham, was around the portfolio. We do actually take a portfolio approach. We've got thousands of projects. So one of the things we do do is look at the dollars that are going to be spent in a year. I think you gave an example where some of the toll roads might be over. We need to manage within the fiscal packet that we are approved, and so I receive a budget. There's a dollar amount I need to stay within. So there are prioritisation decisions that we make, and we have a finance committee that actually manages that particular process. But we'll come back specifically to provide more context around that.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Which is appreciated.

ROB SHARP: We get the theme that you're spotlighting.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Given the process you're running to balance that across the portfolio, as you say, can you understand why Treasury is putting this doubt on the budget mainly of your agency? Others are involved as well, but they did point to your agency.

ROB SHARP: They would point to our agency because we're 65 per cent of the capital budget, so clearly we'd be a major contributor to that. Just to round back to the earlier comments that we made, Treasury has indicated that they have been doing this provision for many years. During COVID they saw patterns coming out of that. That's one of the reasons why they raise a provision. We are still experiencing COVID-related impacts—Omicron, for example. You see the labour shortages that are impacting generally. We're not immune to those, so I can see the risk certainly being there. We will look at the drivers of those particular projects.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Just to be clear, though—I do want you to respond to this point—we're not objecting to the ordinary process of capital slippage over the course of the year that you described earlier. But this is different. This is Treasury on the day the budget papers hit the table in the Legislative Assembly saying \$8 billion—the bulk of it in your agency—will not be spent this year, even though it's been promised. You accept that's different to capital slippage over the year, which just happens in a capital program as big as the one you're managing?

ROB SHARP: Yes, as I indicated, we don't have a list of projects that support a number of that size. We haven't done that. Treasury has indicated that it's a macro aggregate overview they've put on. So in terms of the logic behind it, you'd need to direct that to Treasury. What I can do is look at our actual numbers and provide some context in terms of what we're actually seeing in terms of those slippages. As I indicated, our budget doesn't budget for a slippage; we actually budget for delivering through the 12-month period, or an allocation of project costs within that 12-month period. But I understand where you're coming from.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Did you become concerned at that point when the entire capital budget that was announced by Treasurer Kean was almost just your allocation? Did you become concerned that the rest of the money was—

ROB SHARP: I'm aware that they raised provisions at the State level. To be quite honest, I'm not privy to the logic or the calculations behind them. There were a number of provisions they raised. But I'm not surprised in that there is a Cabinet infrastructure committee where we do talk regularly about pipeline status. Infrastructure NSW also provides assurance around those.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I really appreciate the answers you've both given. I might hand to my colleague.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: Mr Secretary, just in the same dual-theme vein, I can give you a clue as to the money that we haven't been collecting from the Commonwealth, at least insofar as it applied to FY21. We don't know about FY22, but in FY21 the Auditor-General made clear that we had failed to collect \$378 million in that particular year due to what she describes as the "lowest spend on the Infrastructure Investment Program", including the Woolgoolga to Ballina and Fixing Local Roads and WestConnex projects. Of course, we've flagged that we might pursue the Woolgoolga to Ballina and the Fixing Local Roads components of it that are not in this portfolio when Mr Faraway is here. But WestConnex apparently was one for which we certainly in that year missed the milestone that would have allowed us to access Commonwealth funding. Is some of that \$715 million we were talking about earlier related to the WestConnex?

ROB SHARP: Federal funding is there on WestConnex and it would have been connected to milestones. I'll just ask Ms Drover if she's aware of any particular milestone.

CAMILLA DROVER: Which financial year? There is no Federal funding in stage 3B of WestConnex.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: Hence I'm a bit more interested now. Apparently in financial year ending 2021—and bear in mind we only got this report six months late. That's not your fault at all. But the Auditor-General makes it quite clear that \$378 million wasn't collected from the Commonwealth in relation to road projects in that year, and certainly WestConnex is listed as one of them. In case you need to take this on notice to understand my reference, it is page 6-175 of total State sector accounts that were tabled in Parliament earlier this year as well. I didn't think that the Commonwealth was making a contribution to stage three.

CAMILLA DROVER: No, I don't think they are.

ROB SHARP: No.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: They were making a contribution to stage 1A, I think is what we described, which was the—

CAMILLA DROVER: Yes, I think they also provided a loan to stage two. But we'll take that on notice.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: See, a loan wouldn't classify as a payment under the NPP. I'm interested in how much money we have not collected.

ROB SHARP: Mr Mookhey, I suspect if the report was—did you say a '21 report?

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: It's the last available report of the State's accounts from the auditor, which was FY21.

ROB SHARP: FY21. It's probably a couple of years earlier that they're referring to, I'm suspecting.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: Well, no—

CAMILLA DROVER: Stage two WestConnex opened in 2020.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: But just to be clear here—and, again, you might see it from the reference when you have an opportunity to actually access the report—the budget the year before anticipated us receiving \$378 million more from the Commonwealth, including a component that was WestConnex. By the end of that year we hadn't collected the money we'd budgeted for. It isn't an historic issue. It is an historic issue in that it relates to two—

ROB SHARP: But there's a timing issue last year.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: But there's a timing issue. To be very clear to the department here, we would have asked you about this if we had access to this report. We didn't. I'm interested in where we're up to in terms of collecting the money from the Commonwealth that is due to us for WestConnex as well. Secretary, I can't ask you this here, but I do flag for Friday that we'll be asking you this similarly about where we're up to in

terms of the contributions that the City of Sydney is due to make to the Sydney light rail project as well, to see whether or not that money has been—but that's just a heads-up, really—

ROB SHARP: Thank you.

The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD: Can't wait.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: —more than anything else. If we can take that on notice as to what we can—and I do flag again, in terms of the matters that are related to the regional side of the portfolio, we will obviously also pick those up when we get to that. In terms of the actual third stage of the WestConnex, when are we opening that again?

CAMILLA DROVER: Stage 3A, which is the M4-M5 link tunnels, is on track to be opened early next year. They're due by March '23. The Rozelle interchange 3B is due to open in December 2023.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: Have we received modification and variation claims in respect to those two roads, particularly the Rozelle interchange?

CAMILLA DROVER: Obviously the State retains some risk associated with the Rozelle interchange. There have been normal claims arising out of the project. There has also been a significant variation of course, too, because they were issued the variation to deliver package one of the Western Harbour Tunnel, which was the \$722 million.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: Okay. I'm going to try my luck. I'm positive I might not succeed, but I am going to ask: How many requests have been received in respect to the Rozelle interchange in the last 12 months for modifications and variations?

CAMILLA DROVER: I haven't got that information with me. There would be a number, including the COVID claim given the construction pause in July last year. There was a claim. It was assessed under the INSW principles. That has been resolved and, I understand, paid.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: How much did we pay?

CAMILLA DROVER: I haven't got the exact figure, and I'd prefer not to disclose that in this forum.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: Why not?

CAMILLA DROVER: It's commercial in confidence.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: But we've already paid it?

CAMILLA DROVER: Actually, you're right. It's on the eTender website so I can—

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: Can you tell me?

CAMILLA DROVER: It's of the order of \$20 million, I think.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: Twenty million, did you say?

The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD: "Of the order of".

The Hon. CHRIS RATH: Is this already public?

ROB SHARP: In the order of. She's just checking it now.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: Even if it is, Chris, we're entitled to get it in this forum. How much is it, sorry?

TRUDI MARES: She's just checking.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: Thank you. Sorry. Government members were rudely interrupting.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Secretary, I might just hand up this document to you. You're going to have to go easy on me because it's my only copy, although I can track it down. I just want to return to the flying cars issue. You'll see that this is a copy of a document marked "Sensitive; New South Wales Cabinet; not for further distribution", dated 10 February. I think it's 10. I don't know if you—

ROB SHARP: Fifteen.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Fifteen of February, 2022. You can see the bit I've highlighted there. Can you just read that out.

ROB SHARP: "Having a certified aircraft capable of commencing operations by 2026".

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: This was a reference to the project—as you've observed, you've distanced your agency from it. I can understand why. But that's a reference to the grant that John Barilaro announced on 8 July 2020, of \$950,000 from the Regional Investment Attraction Fund, for this flying cars project. It was headed *Outback to the future: flying cars in Narromine*. I accept you're distancing yourself from that grant—

ROB SHARP: I'm not distancing myself. I was just pointing out that the actual initiative is through the regional agency. So we're not across the detail. But I do actually support aviation. Aviation has an expanding role, particularly in the regional area. There's some exciting developments on the electric aircraft front. We do see a facilitation role for Transport in that particular initiative.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I'm glad you say that because I do want to ask you about something that is your responsibility. This is a draft of the future transport plan, 2061. It commits the Government to having these flying cars capable of commencing operations by 2026, in the next term of government. What can you tell us about that commitment?

ROB SHARP: As we've just indicated, I'm not sure there's anything more I can say. The commitment was made through a grant two years ago. We'd have to talk to the regional agency in terms of the status of that particular grant.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: The grant was made, but this is a draft of your transport strategy, committing the Government to having these flying cars capable of being operational by 2026.

ROB SHARP: Mr Graham, this particular document is not the strategy. The strategy is being released in the coming weeks. The strategy gets circulated around government and needs to reflect government positions and policy. That will be coming out—

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Will this be in the strategy?

ROB SHARP: I'll be happy to talk to you when that one comes out. This document is not a public document, hasn't been through review processes. That particular item is not us committing to it. It's a reference to a particular grant as an example of changes of roles in aviation.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: It is not a reference to a particular grant. It is a reference to the goal of having these aircraft, these flying cars, as the Deputy Premier called them, capable of commencing operations by 2026. Given the CASA issues that are involved here and the fact they've said that wouldn't be possible, to have operational activity, for years after that—certainly two years, possibly longer—you agree that is just not possible, that we'll have flying cars in the next term of government, as committed to in this document.

ROB SHARP: I'm just referencing back to the press release. The press release doesn't seem to refer to that time frame. So I can't comment on that time frame. As I said, it does sit with the regional agency. So I don't know the current status of that, and I can't comment on it.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: Mr Secretary, who's actually developing these strategies?

ROB SHARP: I'll ask Mr de Kock to explain, but we actually solicit a number of items of feedback. We pick particular topics that we believe are areas that are changing the community—what the ramifications might be for transport. There's been about five or six of those. We also tap into some subject matter experts in various spaces as well. But, Mr de Kock, if you can expand on that.

JOOST DE KOCK: Yes. Thanks for the question. Future Transport is the main document that lays out our long-term vision and strategy for transport for decades. It's a long-term vision document. There was a version developed in 2018—2056. Since then a lot of things have changed—COVID. We've seen the floods. We've seen new technology and so forth. So we updated the document and—

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: You're developing the strategy?

JOOST DE KOCK: Yes, it's in my team but we obviously engaged widely across governments.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Were you responsible for this recommendation that we'd have flying cars by 2026?

JOOST DE KOCK: As the secretary said, this was an early draft not approved.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: But are you or your team responsible for this recommendation that we have flying cars available by 2026?

JOOST DE KOCK: As I said before, it is a draft document. It doesn't have any status. It's not—

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: It has some status.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Accepting that answer for the moment, Mr de Kock, I do want to ask the secretary a question in the time remaining. Mr Sharp, you're the secretary of the transport department. I am interested in your view on this question. Will we have flying cars operational by 2026 in New South Wales? Or is that just pie in the sky?

ROB SHARP: I'm not personally running a flying car development project, so I don't know one way or another. I'm not in a position to have the experience to comment about vehicle lift and take-off vehicles in Narrabri.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Narromine.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: The other part of this which attracted some condemnation from the Government itself was the proposition around congestion charging. What is the status of the work the department is doing on preparing policy advice around congestion charging?

The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD: The Government has ruled it out.

ROB SHARP: The Government has ruled it out and Transport is not developing any policy advice around congestion charging. What I can say is that if we're looking into the future, we are looking at, post-COVID, what's the new norm and what are the changes in travel patterns that are occurring, and what might that mean for policy. There's a number of elements and options that we're exploring. To be quite honest, it's still moving at the moment, in terms of the percentages of people working from home. We see, for example, in the CBD a lot more entertainment travel coming into the CBD, so the shift of travel is changing. Basically, that end-to-end mobility mode is a very important part of it. So we'll be recommending over the coming years what the response to government may need to be for any permanent changes.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: But you were working on congestion charging to at least February this year. When did work cease on providing that as a policy option?

ROB SHARP: The media called it congestion charging. We were not working on a congestion charge.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: Okay. Well, apparently, you were investigating "more holistic, cost-reflective network pricing". What is the meaning of "more holistic, cost-reflective network pricing"?

ROB SHARP: As I mentioned to you, we're looking at—one example would be the tolling review, where we're looking at the equitability of the costs of tolling. From a Transport perspective, we're investing billions in roads, networks, new rail, and the cost of transport is a pretty big subsidy for government. So the fare box doesn't recover it all. So part of our role would be to provide advice to Treasury and the Government in regards to—

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: Let me be very specific, then, Mr Secretary. In the draft report, under the section that says "Road pricing"—not "Rail pricing", "Road pricing"—it states, "Providing a price signal nudges customers to weigh up the cost of taking a trip against other options. Charging for road use at certain locations or times can encourage customers who have flexibility to choose other options (travel off peak, use public transport, walk or cycle, or reconsider the need to travel at all), improving the efficiency and reliability of the traffic for customers who have the greatest need to drive during peak times. Shifting towards a network-wide road pricing system that ensures the most efficient use of New South Wales roads will have to be complemented by a suite of alternative measures for resolving congestion and it must consider the interdependency of other modes."

So it was quite clear that, at least as of February this year, your department was working on a proposal or at least a recommendation around the introduction of charging for road use at certain locations or times. So, Mr Secretary, this has been publicly canvassed. As you rightly point out, the Government has ruled out the option. Can we just assume that, as a result of their intervention, the policy advice you were providing them has been rejected and that won't be in part of the final report?

ROB SHARP: A number of assumptions in that question are not accurate. We weren't providing policy advice. We didn't recommend a congestion charge. None of that's mentioned there. As I indicated, we regularly review our costs, fare buckets, the tolling review, the electric car vehicle charging, road user charging. There are a number of elements in there. That is a normal part of the work that we do. That data is collected. You referred to work we were doing. That document is a forward-looking document 40 years out. It's actually not summarising anything in the next five years.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: I appreciate that.

ROB SHARP: So we're not working on it and we weren't. However, I do indicate that, as a transport department, we do look at what effect, for example, tolling charges would have upon traffic flows take-up on trains and transport. There is a direct synergy there.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: Do you maintain the view that is reported in this report? I take your advice, Secretary, that this is a future-looking documents that covers four decades, but do you maintain your view as stated here that currently road users do not pay the true cost of driving and congestion, and this does not encourage an efficient use of the road network. That's not future; that's current.

ROB SHARP: I think that's just a matter of fact. You could have the same conversation regarding rail. It's the fare box and the charges for rail—a very small portion of the cost—and that's a policy decision of government in terms of the transport network and how much it's subsidised or not.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: Indeed. If it is the case that it is still the view that road users do not pay the true costs of driving and congestion, by how much are road users not paying the true costs of driving and congestion?

ROB SHARP: This document, as I indicated, is a forward-looking 40-year document. Over the long term we'll be considering those matters. That particular item, as I've mentioned, is not being worked on and we are creating policy in regards to it, or recommendations.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: The one remaining issue I just want to press for today was just the issue I raised with the Minister, but we did so in a pretty hurried fashion. So just to recap and perhaps to ask for a little bit more detail about those issues about potholes. We got a reasonable way through. Some of this will be recapping, but how many pothole reports have been submitted through the online reporting process?

TRUDI MARES: I think Mr Collins tried to clarify what we may have available. I believe the Minister took on notice having a look at what we could provide from local councils. Our number, if we receive notification for something that may be for a local road, we'll pass that on to the council but we don't actually collate local road pothole requests for repairs.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Understood, but I'm just asking for a global figure of how many were submitted by this process.

TRUDI MARES: For State roads?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: No. I am asking for a global figure that was submitted, which you surely must know.

TRUDI MARES: He wants all of them, so we'll take that on notice. I don't have that with me.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I'm happy for you to take on notice the total number submitted, the number for State roads—I think Mr Collins took on notice the number for local councils.

TRUDI MARES: We'll endeavour to get that.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Hopefully those all add up. Whether he does or he doesn't, we should be able to tell. And can you tell us what has been the cost of fixing the number of potholes that the Minister's referred to today to date, and that is on State roads?

TRUDI MARES: I can't give you just potholes. We've got an overall estimate of \$165 million for flood recovery works. That includes some future project works for road repairs, but the pothole portion of that I don't have.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Which makes sense. You don't just turn up to fix a pothole.

ROB SHARP: If I can just add: The definition of a pothole is kind of interesting because some of them you can actually drive into a crater and come out the other side.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Indeed.

ROB SHARP: That's why we have a cost that is allocated to those road repairs.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Yes.

ROB SHARP: Sometimes you're re-sheeting and it's not just a pothole. So it is challenging to define a simple hole and what that cost is.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I agree. So it's \$165 million in this financial year or last financial year?

TRUDI MARES: That's our estimate just for the March weather events.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Right.

TRUDI MARES: So that hasn't included any further weather events post that.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Okay. There's been a number of weather events since then.

TRUDI MARES: That's right.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: So that would be additional to the \$165 million.

TRUDI MARES: Correct.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: And this is a damage assessment, essentially, in the Sydney metro area.

TRUDI MARES: I would have to clarify whether that is a cost to us or whether part of that is through disaster recovery or insurance, just looking at the total estimate—

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Yes, so where the funding comes from might be different. But the amount of damage—we agree on for that period.

TRUDI MARES: Initial March estimate.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Is there any estimate for what damage has occurred since then?

TRUDI MARES: Not with me, but I can take that on notice. I know we are pulling those figures together.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: If you could, that'd be appreciated. You've said \$15 million has been allocated to the four councils that have requested financial assistance. How many other requests are in the pipeline that haven't yet been processed?

TRUDI MARES: Yes, thank you for that question. Just a little bit of clarification, so there were two pieces of assistance we offered. The first was cash advance for councils with cash flow issues.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Yes.

TRUDI MARES: That relates to the \$15 million that I put to you earlier. In addition, we have got formal natural disaster claims that can come through from the councils. My understanding is we haven't received any formal claims from any of the councils yet for the March or July weather events, but we are working closely with them.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Are you expecting some?

TRUDI MARES: I would expect so, yes. They're working on their estimates.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: So the \$15 million is a cash advance. Is that similar to what was going on on the North Coast, where the money was put up-front so they could get going on the work but then they'll repay it at that point?

TRUDI MARES: Yes, that's correct, Mr Graham. They were for immediate works. In addition to that, if we had our contractors, road crews out doing work on State roads and it was right beside a local road and there was a repair to do, we'd contact the council—just make sure they were okay with us doing it—and get that done on the adjoining road.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Are you anticipating further requests for the cash advances, to use one term, from other councils? Or is their assistance going to be more in the natural disaster claim category?

TRUDI MARES: We're anticipating it would be more in the natural disaster claim now.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: Mr Secretary, can we get an update, just in respect to the industrial dispute that involves the Australian Workers' Union's represented members who are involved in the road maintenance aspect of it—where are we up to in that dispute?

ROB SHARP: The AWU, CFMEU and AMWU are the unions that we're liaising with. So the traffic signals award, I think, is the one that you're referring to.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: It is, yes.

ROB SHARP: That's listed for a consent hearing on 31 August. We've got in-principle agreement with the ETU. We're hopeful to arrive at a position at the end of this month.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: Just in respect to the general wages policy as it applies to this particular award—and I flag that it's possible that you'll have other questions in respect to other awards to which you're a respondent that are all in a similar vein later—the Government has made clear that there is a discretionary additional 0.5 per cent that is capable of being paid next year.

ROB SHARP: Linked to productivity.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: Productivity. Treasury tells us that they expect agencies to pay that from their existing budget. Is that your understanding?

ROB SHARP: My understanding is that any wage negotiation and outcome will come through into our budgets. So when we are finalising an industrial negotiation, there's an approval mechanism through the central Government obviously looking across whole of government. Minister Tudehope has carriage for that.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: I'm aware of the policy, yes.

ROB SHARP: What we would do is then factor into our costs and budgets the outcomes of those.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: But I'm talking about the specific—

ROB SHARP: There's not a subsidy of the 0.5.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: So it has to come from your existing budget—

ROB SHARP: If it's productivity generated, we'd have an offsetting saving.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: But it says here that in the budget the cap will lower from 2.5 to 3 for two years and the opportunity for workers to claim an additional 0.5 per cent in 2023-24 subject to productivity reforms. For those award workers that we just made reference to before, what process is in place for them to come forward to make a claim for an additional 0.5 per cent payment subject to productivity reforms?

ROB SHARP: I'd have to take it on notice but, generally, where we would have those conversations is through the bargaining room.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: That award is negotiated over—what, that's a three-year award, isn't it, or a four-year award?

ROB SHARP: It can be a one, two or three.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: What is it likely to be?

ROB SHARP: Probably a one.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: So you're expecting that in a year's time—

ROB SHARP: In a year's time we'd be having the conversations. Now, to be quite honest I've been involved in a couple of these meetings recently myself and this issue has come up in terms of productivity. There's been some good dialogue in terms of ideas coming from the members as well as some from the management team. Those conversations are ongoing in regards to the traffic signal award, in particular.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: Fair enough. You expect that to be going into the commission—

ROB SHARP: On 31 August. The wages staff award is also listed for hearing on 31 August.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: Mr Secretary, I'm prepared to give you a 20-second early mark. It's very generous of me.

ROB SHARP: It's the first time.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: You've been very productive. I hope you appreciate the bonus that we can give you.

The CHAIR: Thank you very much for your attendance, as always. To the extent that there were questions taken on notice and also in relation to supplementary questions, the Committee secretariat will be in touch. That concludes our hearing for today. Thank you.

(The witnesses withdrew.)

The Committee proceeded to deliberate.