

REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS BEFORE

JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON ROAD SAFETY

INQUIRY INTO SCHOOL ZONE SAFETY

At Sydney on Wednesday 16 November 2011

The Committee met at 11.00 a.m.

PRESENT

Mr G. J. Aplin (Chair)

Legislative Council

The Hon. C. M. Faehrmann
The Hon. W. Secord

Legislative Assembly

Mr R. A. Furolo
Mr J. D. Williams

CHAIR: I declare the public hearing of the Joint Standing Committee on Road Safety inquiry into school zone safety open. The public hearing to be held today and again on Monday of next week will explore a range of issues surrounding school zone safety. The inquiry will examine the adequacy of management and operation of school zones in New South Wales to determine their effectiveness in minimising the risks of injury and fatality. Mobile phones should be turned off. I welcome our witnesses from New South Wales Government agencies with responsibilities in the area of school zone safety.

MARGARET PRENDERGAST, Acting General Manager, Centre for Road Safety, Transport for NSW,

EVAN DANIEL WALKER, Acting Principal Manager, Safer People, NSW Centre for Road Safety,

KAREN LEE PATERSON, Manager, Policy and Research, Division of Local Government, Department of Premier and Cabinet, and

GREGORY ANDREW PRIOR, Deputy Director General, Schools, Department of Education and Communities, affirmed and examined:

CHAIR: Do any of you have any objection to being filmed or recorded during the course of today's hearing?

Ms PRENDERGAST: No.

Mr WALKER: No.

Ms PATERSON: No.

Mr PRIOR: No.

CHAIR: I draw your attention to the fact that your evidence is given under parliamentary privilege and that you are protected from any legal or administrative action that might otherwise result in relation to the information you provide. I should also point out that any deliberate misleading of the Committee may constitute contempt of the Parliament and an offence under the Parliamentary Evidence Act 1901. As time is limited today, the Committee may wish to send you some additional questions in writing, the replies to which will form part of your evidence and will be made public. Are you happy to provide a written reply to any further questions?

Ms PRENDERGAST: Yes.

Mr WALKER: Absolutely.

Ms PATERSON: Yes.

Mr PRIOR: Yes.

CHAIR: Before we proceed with any questions, would any of you like to make a brief opening statement of not more than five minutes in duration?

Ms PRENDERGAST: Yes. We welcome the opportunity to attend this public hearing of the Staysafe inquiry into school zones. Transport for NSW and Roads and Maritime Services has a very strong focus on improving safety around schools. School zones were established to protect the more than one million children in New South Wales who attend primary and secondary schools. There are over 3,150 schools and over 10,000 school zones in New South Wales. Many of these schools are located in precincts where there are both high schools and primary schools. School zones are located on roads with direct access to schools and will vary in line with individual needs. School zones need to address local issues. We appreciate the need to balance mobility and safety. However, where a school access point exists we are obligated to provide a school zone. There may be scope to review certain school zones, particularly those on arterial roads, but any review of individual locations must be accompanied by a review of the location of the school access point, acknowledging that alterations to access to schools may not be feasible.

All 10,000 school zones operate in consistent hours: 8.00 a.m. to 9.30 a.m. and 2.30 p.m. to 4.30 p.m. except for 27 non-standard zones, which are based around different start-finish times. Notwithstanding the small number of non-standard zones, consistency is a critical factor to ensure motorist awareness and to increase compliance. The alternative to longer school zones is an increased number of shorter zones. However, this will not assist motorists and is the opposite of what we are trying to achieve through the Government's very innovative speed zoning audit that is currently being undertaken—seeking to reduce the number of speed limit changes across our road network to assist motorists. In reality school zones do not add significant travel time to journeys. However, we understand that this is not the perception of motorists. School zones have been very

successful; with significant reductions in pedestrian casualties—casualties are defined as both fatalities and injuries.

Last year the Auditor-General's performance report highlighted that success and recommended that existing school zone facilities should be retained. We have provided the data in our submission that highlights that in the pre-and post-period for a small sample of school zones—820 zones—we reduced the average annual number of casualty pedestrians aged 5 to 16 years by 46 per cent. We are currently collating the analysis for all 10,000 school zones and we have created a spatial map that will identify the crash details for all school zones. This is a major exercise. The data collection phase is nearing completion and the next stage will involve the analysis. We hope to have the analysis for the Staysafe Committee early in 2012 for consideration within this inquiry. Another key point is in terms of pedestrian casualties in the 10-year period from 1998 to 2008 the highest frequency of casualties were for 12 to 15-year-olds; with the 12 and 13-year-olds comprising 25 per cent of those casualties and 60 per cent of those were males. That really is about the propensity for risk-taking behaviour in those early adolescent years.

The 40 kilometre an hour speed zone treatment is the primary safety treatment to protect our children. It slows motorists down, it reduces the risk of a crash occurring and it can reduce the severity of any crash that does occur. Pedestrian crashes at 40 kilometres per hour are twice as survivable as a crash at 50 kilometres an hour. Crashes at 30 kilometres an hour are five times as survivable as a crash at 50 kilometres an hour. Speed is still the major issue in road safety in New South Wales. In 2010 40 per cent of our fatalities had speed as a contributing factor, albeit other factors also contributed. The 40 kilometre per hour speed zone is supported by a range of other measures, which we have outlined in our submission. The other key element to ensuring the safety of our children is our road safety education program, which we are delivering with our partners. It is mandatory in New South Wales schools from kindergarten to year 10, and we provide additional packages for years 11 and 12 and early childhood. Safety is paramount for our children.

CHAIR: Does anyone else wish to make a brief opening statement?

Mr PRIOR: Yes. I am delighted to have been invited to appear before this inquiry as a representative of the Department of Education and Communities. I have looked carefully at the terms of reference of this inquiry, particularly around my direct area of responsibility: the availability and effectiveness of current road safety education programs in New South Wales schools. Road safety education aims to develop positive attitudes and safe behaviours in children and adolescents as present and future road users, as pedestrians, passengers, wheel users and novice drivers. There are a significant number of issues that impact on the safety of children in the vicinity of our schools. The department's Road Safety Education Program is one aspect of the department's integrated approach to road safety education across the State. This program provides a statewide road safety education consultancy service to New South Wales primary and secondary schools and is funded annually by the NSW Centre for Road Safety, Transport for NSW.

The Road Safety Education Program provides curriculum advice about road safety resources and consultancy support to assist schools in four areas: teaching and learning, policy, management practices and parent-engagement strategies. The priority areas for the safety program are the provision of road safety education support to schools on request, the provision of support to targeted primary schools, and the provision of support for the early career primary and secondary teachers. The department also provides support and curriculum advice for the development of a number of print resources. In particular, it focuses on challenging and changing behaviour, values and attitudes, harm minimisation and lowering risk-taking behaviours. The department is committed to playing its part in improving safety on the roads and around schools and school zones.

CHAIR: I will open the questioning. Whilst you have covered some of these issues, I would like each of the agency representatives to outline their respective roles in the formulation of policy governing the establishment and operation of school zones in New South Wales and to comment as to whether the Department of Planning also has a role to play. I would also like to explore some of the past community consultation leading up to the establishment of school zones and what provision there is for the establishing of new zones in terms of community consultation. We will begin with Ms Prendergast.

Ms PRENDERGAST: The Centre for Road Safety is responsible for the provision of policy in relation to road safety in New South Wales. Therefore we have established the policy for school zoning and we are responsible for speed zoning throughout New South Wales. In terms of the evolution of school zones, the first school zone was introduced in 1992. There was another Staysafe inquiry that finessed the school zones and

recommended a blanket approach. In 2003 we implemented the blanket approach for school zones and by the commencement of the school year school zones served virtually every school in New South Wales.

Mr WALKER: As a member of the Centre for Road Safety and someone who looks after the Safer People policy area one of my roles is responsibility for school zone policy in New South Wales. As has been said, we have a blanket approach to 40 kilometres an hour zones but there is opportunity for local communities to communicate local issues around school zones to the Centre for Road Safety. That is done through our Roads and Maritime Services regional areas and the Safety around Schools Coordinator. Principals also have the ability to communicate with us about the need for school crossings supervisors and things like that.

Ms PATERSON: The Division of Local Government does not have a policy role in relation to school safety zones. The division administers the Local Government Act, which establishes and sets out the broad functions and operations of local councils. Certainly local councils have a role in enforcing parking restrictions around school zones and those powers are exercised under legislation and road rules administered by Roads and Maritime Services, as it is now called. I also understand that many local councils employ road safety officers. Again, they are partly funded by the former Roads and Traffic Authority—I am not sure whether that is continuing with the change in agency. Whilst the division does not collect information about their particular activities there certainly would be scope for them to implement initiatives that relate to school zones and the safety of children.

Mr PRIOR: Education and Communities does not have any direct policy on school zones. However, when we develop new schools the Department of Education and Communities employs a traffic management consultant as part of the process as it works with local agencies, local councils and the Centre for Road Safety to look at ways we can design our school around the site specific areas to increase the safety aspects of the flow of students in and out of schools.

CHAIR: According to a submission we received from Wyong Shire Council current policy does not allow parents to enter school properties to set down, pick up or park on public school property, even for disabled students, whereas this is permitted for private schools. What level of consultation exists to standardise policies across the school sector?

Mr PRIOR: The policy frameworks around the supervision of students' movements in and out of schools is very site specific so the local principals and their communities work, particularly through their parents and citizens associations, to determine the best safety rules for picking up and dropping off students. As the Committee would be aware, there is a vast range of differences in sites in the 2,240 schools across the State so schools for specific purposes for children with disabilities in most cases have appropriate drop-off zones where transport from the disabilities transport units will come in and drop children. The Committee would also appreciate that geographically it is very different from region to region so it is managed locally with the community. Not all schools have the available space to have off-street facilities for general pick-up although we try to do that in new areas where we develop drop-off zones and appropriate bus bays to come out of the traffic flow.

CHAIR: Could you comment on the involvement of the Department of Planning in such instances as we have been talking about?

Ms PRENDERGAST: The only comment I want to make is that land use planning plays a critical role. The placement of a school on an arterial road and the placement of a direct access point really impact on what we need to provide by way of traffic facilities and safety protection. The safety considerations need to be taken up-front in those land use planning decisions.

Mr ROBERT FUROLO: My question is to the representatives of the Centre for Road Safety. The submission from the Australian Road Research Board [ARRB] refers to projects it has undertaken for the Roads and Traffic Authority in relation to school zones, namely the school zone alert system evaluation and the school risk prediction model. How does the Roads and Traffic Authority incorporate the results of projects by the Australian Road Research Board in the design of schools under construction?

Ms PRENDERGAST: We have employed the Australian Road Research Board to provide us with some tools and we use the risk criteria they have developed to help us assess and prioritise the need for flashing lights. We assess through this pedestrian risk model and we measure things like severity exposure and the likelihood of a potential crash against the possibility of a crash occurring, and we consider factors such as crash

risk, traffic and pedestrian volumes, approach speed limits, number of travel lanes, existing facilities such as crossings, site distance and visibility, and of course road environment and geometry. The Australian Road Research Board provided that for us to use in our assessment process.

Mr ROBERT FUROLO: The Auditor-General's report "Improving Road Safety in School Zones" makes a number of recommendations, one of which is that global positioning system [GPS] data about school zones should be made available to global positioning system users. Does the Centre for Road Safety have this data? Will you make it available to global positioning system users? Do you intend to charge for that information and when will it be made available?

Ms PRENDERGAST: We are currently completing a project called the speedlink project in which we have collected all of the speed zone data across New South Wales. This has been a major three-year data collection exercise and we are currently validating that data. We are also ensuring the update process is current so that every time a speed zone changes that update will feed back into the system. In October last year we released our trial of Intelligent Speed Adaptation, which is a global positioning-based system that advises motorists of the speed limit of the road they are travelling on and gives them a warning if they are exceeding that speed limit. That trial used over 100 participants in the Illawarra region and proved that there are significant road safety benefits associated with what we call ISA—Intelligent Speed Adaptation. We are currently developing a smartphone application using Intelligent Speed Adaptation that will hook onto our speed link map and we are seeking to provide that free of charge because in road safety benefit terms the more people who comply with speed limits and have devices that assist them to comply with speed limits, the better the road safety outcome.

Mr ROBERT FUROLO: When do you expect that to be available?

Ms PRENDERGAST: We have had the first prototype in the last week. We envisage that to be mid to late next year.

Mr ROBERT FUROLO: Do you support the introduction of higher fines for speeding in school zones? Have you recommended that or would you recommend that to the Minister for Roads and Ports?

Ms PRENDERGAST: We did that in 2007. We introduced an extra demerit point and a slightly higher fine for offences in school zones.

Mr ROBERT FUROLO: It was one of the recommendations in the Auditor-General's report last year.

Ms PRENDERGAST: Correct. When we responded we said we did not support it because we had already done it and there was already a higher fine for that offence. It is in accord with the seriousness of the offence in so far as protecting children is concerned.

Mr ROBERT FUROLO: Do you think the current penalties for speeding in school zones are appropriate?

Ms PRENDERGAST: Yes.

Mr ROBERT FUROLO: Do you support the Auditor-General's recommendation that revenue from school zone speed cameras should be confined to spending on road safety issues?

Ms PRENDERGAST: The Government announced last week the intention to explore hypothecation of road safety funding from speed cameras. We believe this is a fantastic initiative. It has already been implemented by other States including Queensland, Victoria, South Australia and Western Australia. In fact, in Western Australia about 70 per cent to 80 per cent of the funds are diverted. They are moving towards 100 per cent of speed camera fines being diverted to road safety. We also feel this would increase public acceptance because speed cameras are a fundamental road safety tool that have been proven, and were proven recently by the Auditor-General, to make a difference in road safety outcomes and to reduce fatalities and injuries on our roads.

Mr ROBERT FUROLO: That leads to my next question: Do you agree with the decision of the Minister for Roads and Ports to deactivate speed cameras in six school zones? Is this likely to increase speeds at these school zones?

Ms PRENDERGAST: We support that decision. The analysis showed they were deemed to be not as effective. There is still a crash risk at those locations so we are currently undertaking a major safety review of all 38 locations to look at alternative measures. If the speed camera itself was not addressing the risk at that location it is imperative that we seek alternatives that will address that risk.

Mr JOHN WILLIAMS: This is a general question. In describing the characteristics of pedestrian casualties in school zones the submission identifies a range of predisposing risk factors, including speed and congestion. On page 8 the submission also provides a crash chronology based on pedestrian and vehicle movements by impact type. On page 8 the submission also makes reference to the adoption of the Safe System approach to school zone safety. Can you explain what is meant by this approach?

Ms PRENDERGAST: The Safe System approach to road safety is implemented by all leading road safety nations in the world. The Safe System approach recognises that human error is inevitable and that all aspects of the system need to be addressed by initiatives to protect those elements of the system. Therefore, if a crash occurs, you want a safer vehicle, a safer road, and behavioural components that will influence the behaviour of the driver. So all aspects of the system need to be developed and addressed in order to protect the risk of inevitable human error.

Mr WALKER: One of the key components of the Safe System is travel speed related to the ability of a human to tolerate force and survive at certain impact speeds. For a school zone, for example, an impact at 40 kilometres an hour is twice as survivable as one at 50 kilometres an hour. One of the key points of the Safe System approach is to have an appropriate speed that the road users at a particular time and place on the road are likely to survive.

Mr JOHN WILLIAMS: I refer to the breakdown of crash types set out on table 1 of the submission. What can be deduced from these figures to guide policy making and to design appropriate interventions to improve safety?

Ms PRENDERGAST: In terms of the type of the crash, the basic treatment is the speed zone itself. Then there is a range of other treatments that we can use to improve safety at that location. They may be traffic signals, traffic calming treatments, such as raised medians, pedestrian crossings, or pedestrian fencing in order to prevent crossing at a particularly dangerous point. Then there is the human element where we will bring in a school crossing supervisor at a particular crossing in school zone periods. We work with schools to encourage drop-off and pick-up initiatives to be done in a controlled manner. The placement and location of parking is also crucial. We know that the crash type of people emerging from a parked vehicle is also critical. So the placement of no stopping zones near crossings is important, and the enforcement of parking around schools is critical. Then there is the way in which we make school zones visible in order to ensure that motorists are aware that they are entering a school zone and that there will be a high level of pedestrian activity, reinforced with back-to-school communications at the start of a school year or term.

Mr WALKER: Further to that, the type of crashes that are detailed there are the type that we try to address in road safety education such as pedestrians emerging from behind a parked car or stationary vehicle. A key point of road safety education for more senior primary school children is to find safe places to cross the road. We consider these factors when we develop road safety resources and road safety policy.

Mr PRIOR: From the education perspective, one of the things that we deal with around school zones on a day-to-day basis, particularly from the perspective of a school principal, is the continuing communication with the local school community. While all those measures are in place, one of the continuing frustrations is trying to change the adult behaviour around the school. The education programs target children but often the behaviour that we witness is more in the pick-up times where parents call their children across the road to a parked car on the other side, or crossing with their children outside a designated crossing area. Adults sometimes illegally park around school areas, reducing the visibility for young children who are attempting to cross the road. We continually look at that behaviour management or change of behaviour of the adults in school zones during morning and afternoon.

Mr JOHN WILLIAMS: Page 9 of the submission refers to the lack of data on fatigue and blood alcohol concentrations of drivers, particularly for drivers leaving the crash scene. How significant do you think this lack of data is?

Ms PRENDERGAST: Blood alcohol, or BAC, is not collected in injuries. It is mandatory that if you are involved in a fatality or if the police are called you may need to be tested. Therefore, there are a lot of injury crashes that occur where the blood alcohol content is not measured. That is the lack of data there. Fatigue is difficult to measure. We estimated in our crash data from the type of crash that a number of crashes are associated with fatigue. Often it is drifting off to the left and then suddenly waking up and overcorrecting to the right, resulting in a head-on accident. Fatigue is difficult. We are undertaking a wide range of research into fatigue, trying to understand how to measure and address it.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: My first question is to Mrs Prendergast. Of the 38 locations of the speed cameras that were shut off, how many were in school zones?

Ms PRENDERGAST: There were eight located in school zones.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: And when were they turned off?

Ms PRENDERGAST: They were turned off on 27 July.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: Have there been any injuries or crashes in those areas? How many were there again?

Ms PRENDERGAST: There were eight school zones.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: Have there been any crashes or injuries since then in those eight zones?

Ms PRENDERGAST: Not that we are aware of. But you must understand, daily we get fatality data so we are very much on top of the fatality data. There is a stronger lag for the injury data.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: When do you have the injury data?

Ms PRENDERGAST: Within six months but within three months we receive some data and then in six months we have a better picture.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: Do you think the speed cameras made a difference in those school zones when they were in place?

Ms PRENDERGAST: The data showed that the decision was based on the fact that the cameras were not as effective as they could have been.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: Do you support that view?

Ms PRENDERGAST: Yes, because they were not as effective as they could have been. Therefore the key for us is to look for alternative measures.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: What do you propose then?

Ms PRENDERGAST: We are looking at other measures. A lot of them may be infrastructure-related such as looking at further removing the points of conflict, be it through pedestrian fencing, traffic calming, additional signage—there is a range of other road safety measures we can employ against those risks.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: In your opening statement you referred to 25 per cent of all victims and that 60 per cent of those victims were males between the ages of 12 to 15. What do you think we should be recommending to improve safety in school zones, targeting the group you describe as engaging in risk behaviour?

Ms PRENDERGAST: This group is very difficult. I have 9- and 11-year-old boys. High school students, particularly when they first get to high school, are risk takers. They are a little bit more independent. Mum's probably let them get the bus for the first time—but they can be over confident. The other issue is that we are placing them in a far more complex environment when they get to high school and they are more likely to be distracted, both by peers and devices such as an iPod or mobile phone. Therefore, we work through road safety education to reinforce the message to those children. There is nothing physically we can do to target them

specifically, but education, creating separation between vehicles and pedestrians as much as we can, and ensuring the lower speed limit are our protective measures for that group.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: If I gave you a magic wand and asked you what you could do for this group what would you recommend?

Ms PRENDERGAST: Maintaining the school zone at high schools.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: I ask the same question of the other members. What you would you do for 12- to 15-year-olds, the largest single group of injuries in school zones?

Mr WALKER: I agree with Ms Prendergast, maintain the education resources and the education specific to this group around risk and around making safe choices when crossing the road, and continue to have a safe road environment when they are exposed to risk. So if there is a crossing on the road it should be contained within a lower speed limit. Then if they do make a mistake or take a risk it is less likely to result in a crash. Where possible we should provide alternative facilities to help them across the road.

Mr PRIOR: I think we have picked up on the education programs and we know that we deliver that. We certainly look at both trying to cover all students but also a targeted response so obviously young adolescents is a target area, for the reasons already indicated. The other thing I would add is, as an education community and through the school, we have a duty of care to our students, so I think some of our supervision plans are designed to ensure reasonable measures are taken to protect students. If we look at this age group we need to look at the secondary environment and how we do have our measures to look at how the students arrive at and depart the school to minimise the at-risk behaviour we tend to have in those adolescents. That is something we continually look at on a site-by-site basis.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: Are you aware of GPS technology available to alert drivers to school zones coming up?

Ms PRENDERGAST: That is what I was alluding to with Intelligent Speed Adaptation. Intelligent Speed Adaptation knows the speed zone. We are even building our new systems so that we adjust for the two time periods of the day where there is a different speed zone in place.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: So the technology does exist to do this?

Ms PRENDERGAST: Yes and we are rolling it out on a smartphone application.

The Hon. CATE FAEHRMANN: Further to the statements around the 12- to 15-year-old age group, has there been any request to the department to look into alternatives to school zones around high schools?

Ms PRENDERGAST: No.

The Hon. CATE FAEHRMANN: That is good to hear. The submission from Kidsafe stresses the need for an extension of the existing school zone regime to cover early childhood centres or preschools. Has any consideration been given to including early childhood centres and preschools in the selection of sites for school zones in New South Wales?

Ms PRENDERGAST: We have received requests previously to include early childhood centres within our school zone scheme. There are over 3,000 licensed early childhood centres, including established centres like the large ones you see, plus private homes. But the risk is greatly reduced, as children are required by law to be accompanied into those centres and to be signed in by an adult or carer and therefore the children are never exposed on their own in the traffic environment. Many of those facilities have off-road parking so they do not have the same risk as schoolchildren independently accessing schools. The children are accompanied all the way into the centre and they are picked up in the afternoon and are not alone in the traffic environment.

We are trying to protect school-age children in the road environment. The typical crash that has impacted early childhood centres is a vehicle leaving the roadway and crashing into an early childhood centre. We know the consequences of this can be dire, in the case of Sophie Delezio and recently an incident in the western suburbs where a car left the roadway at speed and hit an early childhood centre. This issue must be addressed by the land use planning framework when approving the location of these facilities. However, what

we have offered is that if these facilities have specific traffic issues they should contact the local council traffic committee to look at what can be done. We do not support the extension of the school zone into early childhood centres, to another 3,000 locations, because the risk is not the same as for school-aged children who are not accompanied by an adult or carer.

The Hon. CATE FAEHRMANN: So there are no more accidents, in terms of child accidents, outside. Do you have the research that analyses where the childcare centres are in terms of injuries?

Ms PRENDERGAST: We do not have the locations but we monitor all child-related injuries and fatalities and therefore we are informed when something occurs. We would liaise with the police, we would get a call from one of John Hartley's people in that respect and look at the location.

Mr PRIOR: The Department of Education and Communities operates 100 preschools across the State, the majority of which are on the site of an existing school and would fall within the current school zones and the supervision and procedures that occur around the normal school zone.

The Hon. CATE FAEHRMANN: The Roads and Traffic Authority provides resources for children about passenger safety and safety on bicycles, skates and skateboards. This is in the Government submission on page 31. Could you provide more details about the other road safety messages and campaigns being undertaken to address safety issues related to bicycles, skates and skateboard riding, if you have information to provide on that.

Mr WALKER: We have a number of website materials in relation to bicycle safety and a number of other resources. These issues are also covered to some extent in our road safety education program. The Roads and Traffic Authority does not have a large program of public education directed at this but there are a lot of resources provided to the different education sectors.

Ms PRENDERGAST: Of course, we make our resources for education age appropriate. So there are simpler messages around bicycle riding for younger children and then it progresses as you get more independent and can ride further. The Government has requested that we develop the New South Wales Road Safety Strategy for the next decade. Recently, in May, the National Road Safety Strategy was released. We are working on that and one of the areas we are addressing in that, and we are holding a special workshop on, pedestrian and cycling safety. We have already done a lot of work on motorcycling. So we are assembling the building blocks of what the new strategy will be to guide us for the next decade. We know that cycling is growing and that it has always been imperative to young children and very important for physical and health wellbeing—it is something they all do. We know that we need to address both child age and also the growth in cycling across the board that we are seeing every day on the road network.

Mr PRIOR: The department also provides a number of resources particularly targeted around that area as part of the education program. Examples would be Move Ahead with Street Sense; Bicycle Riding Skills Manual for stage 3; Road Risks—Your Choice; and Bicycle Riding Skills Manual for stage 4. They are quite specifically targeted around particularly the bicycle aspect.

CHAIR: I know we have covered some areas already in terms of alternative facilities but I would like to dig a little deeper into those to reduce reliance on school zones. Some of those have been mentioned—the grade separation, traffic lights and fencing. In your submission part 5 refers to the local traffic management treatments. They clearly cover things such as traffic lights, zebra crossings, pedestrian bridges and underpasses, kerb ramps, refuge islands and pedestrian fencing. At table 2 you detail pedestrian impacts based on the nature of the treatment deployed. In terms of their safety benefit, which of the treatments deployed have been found to be most effective in combination with school crossings?

Ms PRENDERGAST: The ultimate treatment is the complete separation of vehicles and pedestrians. Therefore, that would lead itself to an overbridge or an underpass. However, unless we can totally restrict our at grade access, which is usually impossible using traditional methods of pedestrian fencing, there is no way to force the children to use these facilities. Our surveys show that whilst the majority will many do not. Where there is an opportunity children will cross at grade, especially when traffic signals are available. The issue is that the behaviour of many children and young adults is unpredictable, as it is with many adults.

We apply school zones where there are bridges unless all other crossing options are removed. But the challenge here also relates to access for people with disabilities. For example, if a lift is not working to an

overbridge we need to provide an alternative at the grade crossing point. There are currently only 70 overbridges across the network, serving 80 schools, and they cost approximately \$3 million each. However, we can consider changes. But any individual change must review the localised factors, must review crossing opportunities and, last but not least, it must be accompanied by a strong localised communications campaign and education campaign for schools within those precincts.

CHAIR: I remember reading that in your submission. It does indicate, as you have said, that a number of students do use pedestrian bridges but a number do cross at a grade, particularly where a signalised crossing is accessible. Can you expand on the results of the usage survey of pedestrian bridges and indicate in which circumstances this treatment is justified in cost-benefit terms?

Ms PRENDERGAST: That survey we did was really just at one point in time; it was not an extensive survey that is comprehensive. The way to channel them onto the bridges we saw at the Kogarah example, where you provide pedestrian fencing that prevents any other crossings in the vicinity of the overbridge. In terms of cost-benefit, there potentially could be a cost-benefit in mobility terms. But as we have noted before, the travel time savings are not significant. For example, in a 400-metre school zone where the default speed is 50 kilometres an hour the extra travel time involved is only seven seconds. For 500 metres with a default of 50 kilometres an hour it is nine seconds. For, say, a two kilometre length of school zone on a 60 kilometres an hour default it is one minute extra. So whilst it may seem to motorists that it is a far longer travel time it actually is not and therefore the cost-benefits of those travel time savings are not always able to be realised. If you then throw in heavy traffic that is another compounding factor.

CHAIR: Clearly, the majority of pedestrian bridges are used in heavy volume areas. In regional areas access to a school may well be from a service road yet the whole area is blanketed by the 40 kilometre an hour zone, and that might include a highway which runs adjacent to that service road.

Ms PRENDERGAST: Effectively, you protect the entire area because of access. Whilst there is a service road, that is not to say that there will not be crossing movements or access from across the highway. Also, it has to be related very closely to bus stops, drop-off facilities, et cetera. But we can consider those locations if they are raised. With every issue that is raised—for example, the location of a service road—we can look at the local issues and the speed zone and reassess that. But at the moment our criterion is that whilst there is a direct access point we provide that school zone.

CHAIR: That takes us to a point raised in several of the submissions regarding community consultation and local solutions within the overall formula. How open is the school safety zone to modification according to local needs?

Ms PRENDERGAST: We need consistency across all school zones. It is important for motorists and to ensure compliance. However, we do have a localised framework that allows individual school zone issues to be addressed. We established a program in 2001. It is a bottom-up approach driven by local communities and regional staff. We invest some \$3 million per annum in that. It comprises a child and school communities road safety partnership manager within the Centre for Road Safety, and within each of the six Roads and Maritime Services regions we have a full-time safety around schools coordinator. We have also produced a document that we send to principals every year, which is called the Practical Guide to Addressing Road Safety Issues Around Schools. It invites the principals to raise local issues through an established framework. They can touch base with the safety coordinator.

Depending on the issue, they bring in the local council, the police, whoever else needs to be involved to address those local issues, and they are responsible for a range of things: liaising with school communities; liaising with other stakeholders—nearby neighbouring property owners; identifying priority engineering projects that may be required; auditing school zones, ensuring that the facilities we have to make them visible, such as signage or patches, are in good condition; investigating incidents within those zones; and assessing zones for flashing lights. They give us that local input. They are available to the local community as a resource to facilitate addressing those local issues. But I must reiterate that a level of consistency is required in a school zone that can then be adapted and tweaked to the local conditions.

CHAIR: Mr Prior, have you any comment in that regard?

Mr PRIOR: I would support from an education perspective that the standardised school zone times currently accommodate the range of school opening and finishing times across the majority of schools in New

South Wales. Just to reinforce that point, the provision of that consistent message to road users removes the confusion and assists schools to implement practices which aim to protect students against the risk of injury. When we are talking about trying to change particularly that adult behaviour I think that consistency around the times and that they know what the zone is and the function of the zone helps to reinforce that consistently across the State.

Mr ROBERT FUROLO: You provided some advice earlier about the importance of 40 kilometre an hour speed limits in terms of the likelihood of accidents and the injuries arising from them. The NRMA analysis shows that less than half of motorists obey the 40 kilometre-an-hour speed limit around schools. If, as the Auditor-General found, enforcement is almost entirely dependent on fixed speed cameras, why is their removal supported? The Auditor-General's report said that the enforcement of 40 kilometre an hour speed zones around schools is almost exclusively reliant on fixed speed cameras. If keeping cars at 40 kilometres an hour is the objective of speed zones, why is the removal of speed cameras supported? I do not understand.

Ms PRENDERGAST: There are other measures to improve visibility and to gain compliance in those zones; for example, flashing lights. They have proven to be a very effective way to highlight the visibility and to get drivers to adjust their behaviour on entering a school zone. The Government has reasserted its commitment with \$13 million dedicated to significantly increase the number of schools with the flashing lights, and we think this is very important. In terms of the speed cameras themselves, the eight located in those school zones were deemed to be non-effective. When I say that I mean that potentially crashes, fatalities and injuries increased. Therefore, whatever the crash risk at those locations was, the speed camera itself alone was not addressing it, which is why we are now out consulting with the community. For all school zones we have met with the local principal, the parents and citizens' association and the local council. We have held a consultation session and we have also done a site inspection with them to look at those localised issues to try to develop the alternative treatments to address the crash risk in those zones.

Mr ROBERT FUROLO: Is there or will there be any follow-up to see what compliance with the speed limit is in those areas where the speed cameras have been removed?

Mr WALKER: Certainly. We have already put measures in place to monitor the speeds in those zones where the cameras are not operating to give us a good understanding of what is happening with speed and what other road safety measures might be suitable at those locations.

Mr ROBERT FUROLO: How will that information be conveyed?

Ms PRENDERGAST: Effectively, we will use that in an analysis of alternative options. For example, if speeding is still an issue we will look at the measures within our tool kit to address that speeding issue.

Mr ROBERT FUROLO: Will that information be published about the speeds after the removal of the speed cameras?

Ms PRENDERGAST: We will consider that.

Mr ROBERT FUROLO: You talked before about the importance of land-use planning in the allocation of schools and speed zones. Has the Centre for Road Safety developed a policy about that and made it available to the Department of Education to assist it in identifying suitable areas for schools?

Ms PRENDERGAST: We have provided guidance in respect of the traffic treatments and the different measures that address different risks for consideration in that planning process. We have also influenced planning at any given opportunity. There is a section in the National Road Safety Strategy which raises the importance of land-use planning to improve road safety outcomes. We will be incorporating the same within the New South Wales strategy.

Mr ROBERT FUROLO: So you will be providing advice to the department about it?

Ms PRENDERGAST: We do on an ongoing basis.

Mr PRIOR: I think I mentioned earlier that road safety is addressed as part of our safe school design in our Schools Facilities Standards. So when planning new schools the department would employ, as I said, a traffic management consultant, and that helps with the decisions about the traffic flow, and our assets unit, with

a conjunction of that process, would be working with all the local authorities and appropriate agencies in the planning to make sure we look at all possibilities to minimise the risk around the traffic flow of that new site.

Mr ROBERT FUROLO: When a 40 kilometre-an-hour speed zone is being considered is the thinking behind it to provide safety for pedestrians or for motorists or a combination of the two? If it is for motorists, the point you made before about not implementing 40 kilometre-an-hour zones around childcare centres because there was no pedestrian movement, surely if there are vehicle movements around those, which there are—

Ms PRENDERGAST: I might step in first about the overall policy towards speed zoning. Speed zoning is actually considered at a local level and therefore all crash risks and all activities occurring are a factor in the decision of the speed zone. We already implement 40 kilometres in high pedestrian areas; we have a lower speed zone—50 kilometres—in the general urban area, but if a particular road that contains facilities, different attractions and land uses was showing a crash risk, be it pedestrian crashes or indeed vehicle crashes, we would be looking at a suitable speed zoning to actually fit that location.

There is a bottom up approach to speed zoning. Over time we have actually had local communities raise speeding issues or crash issues in their local area and we respond to that through the Roads and Maritime Services regions but, more importantly, we have actually now launched a new website—on 19 July—which is very innovative; it is the Safer Roads website, where we give an opportunity for the entire community to submit issues about speed zones or indeed speed zone signage and that then triggers us to have a look at the location and to enact a review.

Mr JOHN WILLIAMS: In its submission the NRMA suggests that the Roads and Traffic Authority replace all current yellow school zones with fluorescent yellow-green, which is the Australian standard requirement. What is your view of this suggestion?

Ms PRENDERGAST: We strongly support that and a third of our school zone signage is now the fluorescent yellow-green and we are progressively rolling it out in line with audit inspections and life replacement of that signage. We hope in years to come that all school signage will be yellow-green.

Mr JOHN WILLIAMS: The Chair alluded to a question earlier that motorists travelling into a school zone area are mindful of the fact that they are in a school area and slow down but some areas are not directly near a school but still fall within the school zone category. Will an extra effort be made to identify those more clearly because generally motorists tend not to identify those as school zones?

Ms PRENDERGAST: For every school zone we have a series of identification tools; we have the patch on the road and we now have dragon's teeth leading to every school zone. We have our signage, which is actually the regulatory component of the school zone marking the end of a school zone in regulatory terms. We also have flashing lights. At the end of November we will have 746 zones covered by flashing lights—they are the Government-provided flashing lights, the large ones, but we also have community-based flashing lights now rolling out across schools, which add extra road safety benefit for us in terms of marking that visibility.

It is also important to note the speed zone audit we have been conducting recently in that we have recently changed the guidelines. It includes improved gateway signage for all speed zoning. We are looking at innovative ones targeting where you are coming from on all of those rural roads when you are going from a higher approach speed into a much lower speed. We are looking at exploring ways to improve the signage at the gateway to those zones.

CHAIR: As local representatives obviously we get calls from constituents from time to time pressing for the introduction of flashing lights at particular areas. Given the priority for establishment of those flashing lights at schools and given the number you said that have already been established and will be in place by the end of the year, what role does the siting of a school on a highway constitute in that priority order; I am talking in terms of regional highways here not arterial roads in metropolitan areas?

Ms PRENDERGAST: I will start and then hand over to Evan. Basically we use that pedestrian risk model that we alluded to before. We look at a number of different measures in assessing the priority for flashing lights. We measure the severity exposure and the likelihood of a serious or potential crash. We consider these factors: crash risk; traffic and pedestrian volumes, which will pick up your highway issue; approach speed limits, and that is the most common issue on a regional highway where you are coming in from a much higher speed and are suddenly in a lower speed area; we look at the number travel lanes; existing crossing facilities;

sight distance requirements; road environment; geometry and visibility. All of those factors are the factors considered in the prioritisation and the allocation of who gets flashing lights.

Mr JOHN WILLIAMS: Did you want to add anything?

Mr WALKER: Yes, all I note is that all those factors are considered to give individual school zones a risk score so when we have a number of flashing lights to prioritise around the State, we go to those school zones that have the highest risk score. Approach speed limit probably is the biggest factor when calculating a risk and so roads with higher speeds typically would have a higher risk score, but that is always balanced against pedestrian volumes and other considerations.

Mr JOHN WILLIAMS: My question relates to the education of the public in relation to the dragon's teeth as a marking for a school zone. From my general comments with constituents, I do not believe enough people understand what those dragon's teeth represent.

Mr WALKER: We did run a campaign when we put dragon's teeth out. It wasn't a television campaign, on that kind of scale; I take that point. It is an additional treatment for school zones. It works in conjunction with the signage but I think any amount of education can always be increased. It is hard to get good reach across all levels of the community and the message that we are trying to get across has to be balanced.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: Your television comes from Adelaide.

Mr JOHN WILLIAMS: It probably does. Further to that comment, while I acknowledge that I think it is a great initiative it is not bold enough. For a driver who understands what it represents it is a wonderful tool to alert that driver to start slowing down. However, it is not getting through to the majority and I believe there needs to be a bit more boldness with that road marking.

Ms PRENDERGAST: The road marking was based on a technical guideline but what we can do is look for opportunities to further communicate to the community the meaning of the dragon's teeth as an added measure to denote the commencement of a school zone, and we will look for those opportunities.

CHAIR: Mr Secord, would you like to pose some questions?

The Hon. WALT SECORD: Yes. Margaret, in response to Mr Furolo you said that you were monitoring sites where speed cameras in school zones had been removed; you were actually monitoring that. So has speeding increased in those zones?

Ms PRENDERGAST: We have not analysed any speed data yet. It really has only been a couple of months. What we are doing—

The Hon. WALT SECORD: But you have people out there so you must have anecdotal evidence, so yes or no, is speeding increasing or decreasing or staying the same?

Ms PRENDERGAST: We have the facility within the camera itself even though it is de-activated to measure speeds and we can do additional speed surveys which we are actually planning to do in a number of those locations.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: Your colleague next to you would like to answer.

Mr WALKER: A number of the cameras were put back into warning mode and on review of the amount of warning letters there has not been a considerable increase.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: There has not been an increase?

Mr WALKER: No, it was a similar level to the amount of infringements that we have had before.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: How many warning letters have you issued?

Mr WALKER: I do not have that.

Ms PRENDERGAST: We will take that on notice.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: Can we have that on notice?

Mr WALKER: Yes.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: Can you also give us the highest range of speeding that has occurred in those zones that have been de-activated? Could we also have that information on notice too, please?

Mr WALKER: Yes, we can take that on notice.

CHAIR: To put it in context, we would like the overall range across all speed zones that you have monitored, thank you.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: I am not sure to whom I should direct this question and who would have knowledge of a specific school zone—Mount Annan Christian College. The local mayor has made representations to this Committee about Mount Annan Christian College and the traffic congestion on Narellan Road. Can you take me through the issues in that community?

Ms PRENDERGAST: Effectively the Mount Annan Christian College school zone is located on Narellan Road. In my opening statement I highlighted that sometimes we need to look at direct access points into schools as an alternative measure. What the community is telling us is that there is very little volume of activity coming out from the entrance of Mount Annan Christian College onto Narellan Road. It services a bus stop. The volumes are low. We also know from a visibility-of-motorists-perspective that you actually cannot see the school when you drive by, which creates a further issue.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: If you cannot see the school then shouldn't you have the speed zone?

Ms PRENDERGAST: But what we are hearing is that the volumes are very low and it has been quantified that they are quite low, we understand. What we would advocate in that case would be thinking about that particular access point.

Mr ROBERT FUROLO: Could you explain that, because I was actually at the school yesterday to have a look and I understand the concerns of motorists in that area. The school is approximately 800 metres to a kilometre away from the road that has the 40-kilometre zone on it. Most of the students who walk to the school come from the back of the school, as I understand it, and in fact Narellan Road has no pedestrian access; there are no good paths, there is nowhere to walk to access the school from the road that has the 40-kilometre limit on it. What is the process that the community, the council, can go through to have that issue reviewed?

Ms PRENDERGAST: I alluded to the Safer Roads website that we have done, which is fabulous, and what we have actually received on that website is over 1,800 submissions about speed zones and 52 of those submissions were about that speed zone on Narellan Road, so we are quite conscious of the issue. Narellan Road itself has a default speed of 80 kilometres an hour; therefore, slowing down suddenly to 40 is an issue for motorists. The issue for motorists is that there is no visible activity and, therefore, it goes back to what I said in the opening statement that in some instances there needs to be reconsideration of the direct access point to schools because whilst that direct access point is there, we need to provide a school zone.

CHAIR: Ms Faehrmann, would you like to pose some questions?

The Hon. CATE FAEHRMANN: Am I correct in saying that because of the unpredictability of young people around roads you can never totally prevent young people walking onto a road or walking into oncoming traffic even if you have pedestrian barriers or pedestrian overpasses and therefore you need to combine other road safety measures such as those with ideally 40-kilometre speed zones to prevent fatalities. That is basically what your submission is suggesting, is that correct?

Ms PRENDERGAST: That is correct, albeit, we note there can be flexibility in certain instances and we know it is more of an issue on an arterial, which is where the majority of overbridges are. If there is another way to actually limit the ability for that access, there could be consideration. There could also be consideration of replacement or relocation of some access points to assist in that measure as well.

The Hon. CATE FAEHRMANN: Yes, but in terms of preventing and reducing fatality or serious injury obviously the 40-kilometre speed zone is critical because of the unpredictability of kids. What if we were to have more fixed speed cameras in more 40-kilometre speed zones, would it not correlate therefore that that would also make it safer, given the impact and effect of most fixed speed cameras in 40-kilometre speed zones? Would that be quite a cost-effective measure in terms of improving student safety even more?

Ms PRENDERGAST: It would but the choice of where to put a fixed speed camera must come down to the crash risk and different factors at that location, yes.

Mr WALKER: If you look at the treatments for school zones, you start with your signage and your dragon's teeth. A school zone with a greater risk might have flashing lights and those with a crash history is where the fixed speed cameras have gone but they are there to address the crash history at the school. For those ones where they were de-activated, they were not found to be addressing that crash history, so it is not probably a treatment that would work across all schools. The current treatments are probably reasonable at most schools given the risk.

Ms PRENDERGAST: Just to extend what Evan has just said, we cannot simply put a speed camera in for the what if. It has to be based on history and what has occurred on that road, and what the potential risk, the geometry, et cetera are. Therefore, it could be a tool but you may be protecting a very small number of children, but they are still worth protecting, so we need to look at all the different measures and a speed camera itself may not be the answer in all situations.

The Hon. CATE FAEHRMANN: Is it Government policy then to not put a fixed speed camera in the situation for a what if, it has to be based on crash history and crash analysis or is that how you have always done it?

Mr WALKER: That is the current policy in terms of locating fixed speed cameras. It is based on crash risk.

The Hon. CATE FAEHRMANN: So you wait for the accidents to occur?

Mr WALKER: For the school fixed speed cameras the criteria is slightly different to a typical black spot speed camera. With black spot speed cameras we have measures of about an 85th percentile speed and a much higher crash threshold. For the school ones it is a bit lower. We were considering crash risk for children as well, but again, a part of the criteria is a history of crashes.

Ms PRENDERGAST: Approach speed is one of a number of factors; it is not the only criterion.

Mr WALKER: It considers traffic volumes and risk of a pedestrian casualty during school times.

The Hon. CATE FAEHRMANN: Are there criteria based on numbers of injuries before a fixed speed camera is considered for a school zone? Are there any guidelines for that?

Mr WALKER: Yes, there are. In the establishment of the fixed speed cameras that have been rolled out to school zones there was a minimum crash number. I do not have that at hand, but I can provide that to the Committee.

The Hon. CATE FAEHRMANN: Is that minimum crash number per year or over what time?

Mr WALKER: It is a minimum crash number over a set period of time in the lead-up. When we analyse where they should go, we have a look at a whole range of school zones and find those that meet the minimum crash criteria.

Ms PRENDERGAST: It is also important to note that we would take local knowledge and community input into account in the assessment of those decisions. So that, if the community or the local school or some other body is raising an issue specific to their area, we will go out and look at the site, take our tool kit with us and work out what is the best tool to deploy in that situation to minimise the crash risk.

The Hon. CATE FAEHRMANN: So that I have it correct: Fixed speed cameras are put into school zones after a certain number of crashes have occurred. Is that correct?

Ms PRENDERGAST: That is one factor. There are other factors at play. It is not that black and white. Other factors are at play even to influence it being there in the first place.

Mr WALKER: We do not wait for a number of crashes to occur and then put in a fixed speed camera. We had the opportunity to put in a number of fixed speed cameras, so we prioritised them by crash history and a number of other factors.

Ms PRENDERGAST: I have the site selection criteria for the installation of fixed speed cameras in school zones. A single "length" of road is selected which includes a school zone. This "length" achieves maximum road safety benefit from the installation of the camera around the school. That "length" must also meet the following: the number of crashes along the selected road within the school zone must exceed 10 crashes for a three-year period and include at least one crash in school zone times. The annual average daily traffic volume must exceed 10,000; potential for conflict between pedestrian vehicles during school zone times; and whether physical site requirements are suitable for the installation of a fixed speed camera. So this is not a black and white exercise. It could be a crash history, but it could be the potential for conflict, and it could be some of the physical site requirements, or looking at the aspects of that site that lend itself to a fixed camera deployment.

The Hon. CATE FAEHRMANN: When you say that crashes must exceed 10 over three years, is that a firm must, or is that just a guideline?

Ms PRENDERGAST: These are just indicative criteria that are considered in the decision-making. As I said, you could have one or the other: you could have a crash history, or there could be potential for conflict.

CHAIR: Your submission, in part 7, describes the provision of school based road safety education. The Committee has heard elaboration on that during today's hearing. I would like to draw your attention to the Catholic Education Commission submission referring to the development of a new Health and Physical Education curriculum for Australian schools. What is your involvement in the development of a new syllabus, and how will this impact on road safety education in New South Wales?

Mr WALKER: From our perspective, a national Personal Development, Health and Physical Education program including road safety is critical. We are lucky in New South Wales; we are one of the few jurisdictions that have that as part of their Personal Development, Health and Physical Education curriculum. The Centre for Road Safety has been advocating that road safety education be included as an essential component of the Australian Health and Physical Education curriculum. We have been working with other jurisdictions to make submissions to the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority, which is developing the curriculum.

Mr PRIOR: If I may add to that. What is important for the Committee is that the three sectors— independent, Catholic and public—are very much involved in the Board of Studies, which is our authority, which is charged with taking the national curriculum framework and developing the New South Wales syllabuses for this State. It has been clearly articulated by the board president and the Minister on a number of occasions that in doing that translation we will not be watering down what we consider to be the critical elements of our current syllabus requirements. I would concur that that would include the emphasis that we have always had on road safety being a critical part of the Personal Development, Health and Physical Education curriculum.

Mr ROBERT FUROLO: I think, whether as parents or as representatives of our communities, we have all been to school zones during morning and afternoon peak periods and seen the chaos around schools. In large part, we have relied on enforcement and punitive measures, whether that be through parking enforcement by council officers, speed cameras and police enforcing speed zones. Mr Prior, in relation to schools is there a process whereby individual schools can look at their site circumstances and designate specific areas drop off, pick up and kiss-and-ride areas and pedestrian groups that are preferable in terms of safety, and that a review be undertaken of all schools to identify these issues and implement them in their local schools?

Mr PRIOR: If I could start with the aspect of local decision-making. As we have said, each site is very specific, so the local information around that community context is very important in that decision-making, whether in a rural or remote school as opposed to a metropolitan school in the northern Sydney area on the Pacific Highway. Schools, by normal procedure and policy, would look at the transitioning of their students both

to school and exiting school and put in place processes that try to eliminate or reduce the risk of any accidents occurring, whether from traffic or other incidents involving movement around that site. It is not something that we review across the State, on a statewide basis, but if circumstances change around a school context, a school, in its normal revision of its own policies and implementation plans, under changing circumstances would review the way that occurs.

Things that might be put in place would be looking at appropriate entry or exit points from schools, considering the traffic flow around the school site, the supervision of students leaving schools by teachers, which may include supervision to bus bays or bus duty, pedestrian supervision, or there could be the deployment of a supervised crossing in association with the other agencies around those schools. So, yes, I think the answer to that is that locally schools are continually looking at how to minimise risk and ensure the safety of their students arriving and departing schools.

Mr ROBERT FUROLO: Are any resources provided specifically for schools to undertake that work? Is there any reporting by schools on what they have done to improve safety at their schools? Is there a structure by which schools are accountable, and are resources provided to the schools to assist them with that process?

Mr PRIOR: Can I take the longer part of the question on notice? I am happy to provide the Committee with information on the particular resources and processes around that. But I can comment at the moment that as part of the management of our schools we have school education directors who manage an average of 28 schools with principals, and as part of their responsibility around supporting and accountability of principals they will routinely look at matters such as we are talking about. So a whole range of safety issues, policies and procedures would be part of that dialogue from time to time to ensure that in the course of their duties schools do revisit that matter. As well as those areas, we would also be looking at evacuation procedures, lock-down, lock-out and a whole range of other safety procedures that are practised and are part of plans in schools for the safety of our students. But I am happy to take the second part of the question on notice.

Ms PRENDERGAST: I would like to add that one of our key resources is called "A Practical Guide to Addressing Road Safety Issues Around Schools". This book is regularly updated and is distributed to principals annually. It gives real guides about what to look out for, as to process, whom to contact and how to facilitate that change. We will get more detail for the Committee.

CHAIR: Thank you.

Mr ROBERT FUROLO: Mr Prior, earlier you mentioned that when new schools are putting in a development application they have a traffic management plan developed as part of their application. In your view, is there a benefit for existing schools whose plans may have been approved 30, 40 or 50 years ago? Should they go through a similar process of having a traffic management plan prepared for those schools, so that safety issues could be incorporated well after the school has commenced operating in order to improve the standard of care for students?

Mr PRIOR: Again, Chair, I might take that question on notice. I would have an opinion at this stage, but that is not my direct area of responsibility. I am happy to take the question on notice and provide a response to the Committee.

Mr JOHN WILLIAMS: The Parents and Citizens' Federation, in its submission, refers to the lack of parking options for staff and student drivers and the consequential congestion caused by parking on streets around schools. Is the lack of adequate parking in school a road safety issue formally addressed as part of an overall school road safety management strategy?

Ms PRENDERGAST: Parking is a very localised issue and it needs to be addressed on a local basis. We set provisions around regulations that stipulate there be no stopping at particular crossing points, et cetera. We look at those pedestrian crossing points and try to restrict parking in that area. Whilst Roads and Maritime Services have responsibilities on State roads, 80 per cent of our network is actually on local roads that are the responsibility of local councils, so we provide guidelines and advice. Of course, the other key avenue is that if issues are occurring the schools raise those with their safety around schools coordinator, who will then harness all the different people involved to look at those issues, such as local councils, NSW Police, adjoining land owners, et cetera.

Mr PRIOR: I suppose a comment from education is the complexity of the issue in that question. We have in some areas schools that have existed for more than 100 years, so that when they came into existence the geographic location was quite different from what we are now looking at from a management point of view. Certainly, parking is an issue around many of our schools, and it does create congestion that can become a hazard. I mentioned in an earlier response that some of the behaviour of drivers in that congested environment creates a hazard.

Ms PRENDERGAST: I would like to add that my children's school is in a precinct of multiple schools, and parking there was always chronic and quite an issue. However, once our school introduced the local drop off and pick up initiative, that cleared some of the parking issues that occur in the morning and afternoon because it set out processes and designated areas in a back street in which parents could pick up their children, and not have to be on the very busy little shopping strip trying to negotiate parking.

CHAIR: It is good to hear that. That particular issue has been raised in other submissions.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: Ms Prendergast, the Catholic Education Commission of New South Wales put forward in its submission a proposal regarding local school zone road safety advisory committees. What is your feeling about that proposal?

Ms PRENDERGAST: We believe there is already a strong local safety committee framework in place, and we have local traffic committees in every local government area and that that is the appropriate body to which to refer decisions about that local government area as it has all the key players involved.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: So do you think that that would be just another layer of bureaucracy?

Ms PRENDERGAST: Correct. I believe the framework we now have, with the safety around schools coordinator harnessing those issues and bringing in players at the local level to inspect the site and discuss the issues, enables the local committee to size up the issues and make recommendations to the local traffic committee, which has all of the key decision-makers involved.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: Have you communicated to the Catholic Education Commission your concerns about its proposal?

Ms PRENDERGAST: Not to date.

The Hon. CATE FAEHRMANN: The Committee has been informed, in response to the pedestrian safety inquiry, that a review of the feasibility of count-down time be conducted. What is the result of that review, and has any consideration been given to the installation of count-down time at school signal locations?

Ms PRENDERGAST: Effectively, we ran a trial, after the Office of Transport and Safety Investigation Unit actually asked us to conduct a trial of pedestrian count-down timers, which we did at two central business district locations last year. The dilemma we have is that we have an adaptive traffic signal system. Therefore, unlike overseas countries that can count down the green signal, or count down to the green signal, the only portion that we are able to count down is the flashing "don't walk" signal, because it is not a fixed time system. The flashing "don't walk", with the little red man flashing, is the only fixed component of our signal system. Everything else adapts in line with volume, be it pedestrians or traffic. That is actually the advantage of our system. When we trialled it, we found road safety disbenefits because it increased non-compliance.

People came up to those crossings and could not judge how long it would take them to cross the road, be it the elderly chap, the adolescent boy or the mum with four kids attached. It is not something we intuitively judge well. Therefore what they were doing was exiting onto the roadway when it was really deemed unsafe to cross. It actually created road safety issues. Again, the Australian Road Research Board has assessed that for us. We are not recommending a further widespread roll-out because in our metropolitan areas it does not seem like an application that will assist road safety.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: Do you think there are places in New South Wales where you could use countdown technology? By that I mean perhaps not in Sydney's central business district but in other areas?

Ms PRENDERGAST: There are very few traffic signals in regional areas outside metropolitan areas, albeit in some regional centres there are some. It is still the issue that we can only countdown that flashing "Don't walk" and that creates non-compliance because people cannot judge how long it will take them to cross.

CHAIR: Thank you very much for appearing before the Committee.

(The witnesses withdrew)

(Luncheon adjournment)

IAN GEORGE BAKER, Director, Education Policy and Programs, Catholic Education Commission of New South Wales, Level 9, 133 Liverpool Street, Sydney,

PAUL DOMINIC MASTRONARDI, State Coordinator, Student Wellbeing Programs, Catholic Education Commission of New South Wales, Level 9, 133 Liverpool Street, Sydney, and

CHRISTINE MARIE RHEINBERGER, Diocese and K-12 Student Wellbeing/Road Safety Officer, Catholic Schools Office, Diocese of Broken Bay, 423 Pennant Hills Road, Pennant Hills sworn and examined:

CHAIR: I welcome the witnesses from the Catholic Education Commission of New South Wales to the public hearing of the Joint Standing Committee on Road Safety inquiry into school zone safety. The public hearing to be held today and again on Monday of next week will explore a range of issues surrounding school zone safety. The inquiry will examine the adequacy of management and operation of school zones in New South Wales to determine their effectiveness in minimising the risks of injury and fatality. Mobile phones should be turned off.

I draw your attention to the fact that your evidence is given under parliamentary privilege and that you are protected from any legal or administrative action that might otherwise result in relation to the information you provide. I should also point out that any deliberate misleading of the Committee may constitute contempt of the Parliament and an offence under the Parliamentary Evidence Act 1901. As time is limited today, the Committee may wish to send you some additional questions in writing, the replies to which will form part of your evidence and will be made public. Are you happy to provide a written reply to any further questions?

Mr BAKER: Yes.

Mr MASTRONARDI: Yes.

Ms RHEINBERGER: Yes.

CHAIR: Before we proceed with any questions, would any of you like to make a brief opening statement of not more than five minutes in duration?

Mr BAKER: Yes, very briefly. We have put in a submission, which I am sure the Committee is aware of, and the four basic governing principles of that submission are: as a community we need to address the vulnerability of children and not move it around; we need to protect children through both management interventions and education; we need to deliver road safety education in an integrated and developmental way through the school curriculum; and we need to support local decision-making to address local risks.

CHAIR: Does anyone else wish to make a comment at this point?

Mr MASTRONARDI: No.

Ms RHEINBERGER: No.

CHAIR: I will open the questioning. Your submission states that the Commission administers a \$400,000 Roads and Traffic Authority grant—which is now Roads and Maritime Services—to employ a road safety adviser on a full-time basis. Will you expand on the role of that road safety adviser and also on the Catholic schools road safety program to which you refer in your submission?

Mr BAKER: Yes, I will make some comments and then my colleagues might supplement them. We receive the money under a contract—there is actually a funding agreement that runs for the period 2011 to 2013—and the use of that money is managed under that contract. We use the money to engage a number of road safety education officers around the State. The money partly supports my colleague Paul Mastronardi's position and it also supports a number of positions in the 11 dioceses of New South Wales. There is a full-time equivalent of 3.5 people I think—

Mr MASTRONARDI: Yes, 3.5 people.

Mr BAKER: —a 3.5 people equivalent employed full-time on the program across New South Wales. That is a full-time equivalent but at any one time there can be up to 17 people, and that goes to the model we use—I am happy to elaborate on the model.

CHAIR: Yes. I would also like to ask whether you deliver road safety material and training separately to that available through the Personal Development, Health and Physical Education [PDHPE] syllabus at State schools.

Mr BAKER: The Commission does not manage Catholic schools on a day-to-day basis; we represent them. The funding supports road safety education officers in the dioceses. Christine, do you want to elaborate on how it works in your dioceses?

Ms RHEINBERGER: All the road safety education advisers have a teaching background so their role is basically consultancy support to ensure that there is significant road safety, and quality road safety, education happening from kindergarten to year 12. To that end one of our agreements with the Roads and Traffic Authority, which supplies the road safety resources, is that there be age-appropriate resources for each of the stages from kindergarten to year 12. We also provide policy advice in terms of road safety education policies for the schools around drop-off, pickup and wet weather procedures. We also conduct professional learning activities for teachers around road safety and personal safety to ensure that they are more confident and competent in delivering road safety education in the curriculum of PDHPE and/or pastoral care programs.

CHAIR: In common with some of the other submissions received by the Committee, you recommended that local and regional communities should be given more input into school zone management decisions. How would you suggest that local and regional communities should be consulted in the management of school zones?

Mr BAKER: Particularly in relation to the times of operation. We were only commenting on the way down here that a 2.30 p.m. start may or may not be appropriate in some communities. We recognise the issue of greater metropolitan Sydney and the need for consistency across greater metropolitan Sydney, but particularly in provincial and rural areas we think that local communities should have input into the times of operation.

CHAIR: Do you participate in any of the consultative mechanisms set up by the Department of Education and the now Roads and Maritime Services to manage road safety issues, and what is your view of the effectiveness of the coordination between the various agencies?

Mr BAKER: The short answer is, yes, but at State level—I do not know. I think that illustrates the point that the coordination at State level is good but it is too centralised. That is the paradox of it—yes, we liaise a lot in Sydney but it tends to give a Sydney-centric view of the world.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: You talked about time changes. Can you give us a couple of examples of where you think there should be deviation between the times?

Mr BAKER: I think it illustrates the point. Our view is that there should be local committees who make those decisions around the times of operation of their schools.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: You will have to educate me on this. Can you give me an example of where you would need to deviate between the 2.30 p.m. and 4.00 p.m.?

Mr BAKER: I would not like to nominate a particular community.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: No, just give me an example.

Mr BAKER: Most schools are not releasing any students from anywhere at 2.30 p.m., except perhaps kindergartens. A lot of the movement of children around schools is determined by bus timetables. There can be a lot of local community factors. You have the irony that a lot of schools—I would say most schools—are trying to serve the before- and after-school care needs of families. There are a lot of families who cannot even start thinking about picking up their children until after 4.00 p.m. and school zones finish at 4.00 p.m. A local community would make some decisions around locally appropriate times. But I acknowledge that there are difficulties in greater metropolitan Sydney where people travel long distances to get to work and there would be

problems if they went through multiple zones. That is why in our submission we say that greater metropolitan Sydney should be treated on its own.

Mr MASTRONARDI: I would like to add to that. Sometimes sporting events go on for quite some time after normal school finishing times so you can add quite a few students finishing at a much later time as well.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: How would you propose that we implement or respond to that? Would you have individual signage for different areas?

Mr BAKER: Yes, and we did indicate that this is the ultimate conundrum for the inquiry. In paragraph G.1 of our submission we say:

This is the most challenging area to provide advice ... As already indicated there is an obvious tension between the need for certainty for drivers and the need for flexibility for schools ...

That is why we are saying that there should be local management committees to bring together schools, police and local government that can determine hours of operation to suit local communities. But—the reason I am hesitating—I personally acknowledge, and the submission acknowledges, that in greater metropolitan Sydney you probably need the Henry Ford approach: it is black and everyone does it at the same time, while acknowledging that that does not represent the reality even of Sydney.

Mr ROBERT FUROLO: Your submission highlights the role of bus companies as important contributors to student safety around schools.

Mr BAKER: Yes.

Mr ROBERT FUROLO: Have you had any consultation with bus companies and included them in your own educational processes to improve student safety?

Mr BAKER: From time to time the Commission has been involved in consultation at a statewide level with the bus association—I am aware there is a second inquiry going on at the moment about bus safety in relation to seat belts—and local consultations, which my colleagues may or may not be able to comment on. Most school principals would have their own conversations with bus companies, not exactly on a daily basis but certainly on a weekly basis. A lot of the starting and finishing times of schools are frankly determined by bus companies.

Mr MASTRONARDI: If I can add to that from my previous role as a school principal? You do have conversations with bus companies to do with student behaviour. Seatbelts was often an issue that was spoken about—a lot of buses do not have seatbelt provisions and there were discussions to and fro around that. But that is something that is done at a local level.

Mr BAKER: If I can make a comment. As we know seatbelts is another inquiry but in relation to bus safety the most dangerous time is getting on and off buses. There are actually very few injuries when people are in buses; it is the embarking and disembarking from buses. Managing buses around schools is a major issue for all schools.

Mr ROBERT FUROLO: You spoke at length about the preference for local decision-making. In local government there are traffic committees, is that the sort of forum you are contemplating?

Mr BAKER: It could well be. We do not want to proliferate the number of committees and decision-makers. Yes, that could be a mechanism. We are also aware that local government boundaries may or may not work in relation to this matter because—I keep coming back to buses—the greatest determinant will probably be the bus routes and how many local councils the particular bus company serves. You may need aggregations of councils based on the bus service. That is off the top of my head.

Mr ROBERT FUROLO: In trying to find local solutions to traffic issues around schools do you think those committees should have the capacity to influence all factors including whether a speed limit should be enforced and what hours the speed limit should be enforced or do you think there should be some fixed issues that are immutable but other local issues—

Mr BAKER: The latter. There should be some general rules that apply to the whole State. For instance, our submission, after some internal debate I might say, says the speed limit should be uniform at 40 kilometres per hour. We think the greatest input locally could be around the times of operation.

Mr ROBERT FUROLO: You have had experience as principals and as coordinators of safety at schools. Do you see either the 40 kilometres an hour speed limits or parking and pick-up and drop-off around schools as being a greater challenge to safety than the other?

Mr BAKER: The statistics show that the greatest vulnerability is in the parking scenario. That is where the two fatalities have been.

Ms RHEINBERGER: It is a major challenge for all school communities to try to educate parents about safe areas to park, reiterating the parking legislation and reinforcing positive parent behaviour in picking up and dropping off students. That is where the road safety policy in a school needs to have a road safety environmental map that suggests the parking areas. I know that some principals put in the different parking signs and talk about the fines. Some principals ring the local police when they have had enough and really want them to start enforcing some of the signage. It is a constant challenge with the density and the kiss-and-drop zones. I must say the kiss-and-drop zones usually work quite well because they are generally well managed by the staff. They are very good at educating parents and children about the procedure and protocols involved. It is more when parents are parking where they should not be parking and disobeying road rules and legislation that it becomes problematic.

Mr JOHN WILLIAMS: The Committee has been advised that mandatory teaching of road safety as part of the Personal Development, Health and Physical Education [PDHPE] syllabus may be compromised as part of the current review and possible introduction of a national syllabus for all schools. What is your view about the adequacy of road safety education taught as part of the Personal Development, Health and Physical Education syllabus in New South Wales?

Mr BAKER: We have been early and long-time advocates of integrating road safety education into the Personal Development, Health and Physical Education curriculum in this State from K-12 because we believe the best protection for children is self-protection. The greatest vulnerability is outside the zones; the data is quite clear on that. If a child is going to be injured they will be injured outside the zones. We do not want to lose that integration so we intend to be vigilant to make sure that in the transition to the national curriculum for the Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority [ACARA], road safety education is embedded into the new health and physical education syllabus. That cannot just be assumed because New South Wales is fairly unique in having it embedded in the curriculum.

Ms RHEINBERGER: The education sector road safety education managers meet on a regular basis. All the sectors are represented and it is really important that they keep abreast of the Australian curriculum or key issues that need to be addressed in the syllabus and that they are very proactive in making sure that it is well represented when they are putting their submissions to the reporting authority and that it is dealt with.

Mr JOHN WILLIAMS: There was a suggestion that education on road safety may not be mandatory when we go to a national curriculum. What are your feelings about that?

Mr BAKER: I do not think there is any deliberate intention; there is a danger of it being overlooked. As I understand it, we have the most explicit inclusion of road safety education in the curriculum so when it comes to a national meeting New South Wales will be just one voice.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: In your submission you talk about local school zones road safety advisory committees. Can you elaborate on your proposal and how planning decisions would be influenced by this process?

Mr BAKER: Basically we are suggesting the key stakeholders be brought together—school principals or representatives, because we do not want to the committee to be too big, parent associations, the local police area commander and the Roads and Traffic Authority. They should hopefully make evidence-based decisions on local evidence about what is the most appropriate way to manage the school zones and also to manage risks outside the zones. This is one of the points we make: the greatest risk is outside the zones. The zones work but there is quite a significant accident rate outside the zones. That raises the issue of whether we are lulling kids

into a false sense of security. They are protected in the zone. The committee needs to be focused on the zone but it should also have a broader remit to look at road safety issues involving children in their local area.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: Do you not think this could be duplication? Most local councils have local traffic committees.

Mr BAKER: I agree we want to avoid duplication. It need not necessarily be a new committee but an enhancement of those committees. New schools or schools going through major development go through traffic management processes as part of their development applications so that could be part of it as well.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: How do you feel about integration of the Department of Planning in relation to school zones?

Mr BAKER: As a matter of principle it would be sensible to involve the Department of Planning. Because we have to put in development applications to develop schools or redevelop schools, traffic management is part of that development application process. We would like to see all of that integrated. We certainly do not want multiple and conflicting processes.

The Hon. CATE FAEHRMANN: I am particularly interested in road safety management plans. Can you explain how they are created and who is involved in their creation?

Mr BAKER: Local plans?

The Hon. CATE FAEHRMANN: Yes. On page 11 of your submission you say the Catholic road safety education advisers assist the schools with the development of those plans. Do you know how they are created?

Ms RHEINBERGER: The Catholic Education Commission got a working party together and we developed a resource to support the advisers in working with schools on how to develop a road safety policy. As an adviser I would go out to schools and support the development or review of their current road safety policy to see whether it is covering all the areas it is meant to cover. A big focus of that policy is prevention. We would talk about whether they have an adequate road safety curriculum in place and then also look at the different protocols of parent parking, bicycles if they are bringing bicycles to school, entry and exit points, where staff are supposed to be, wet weather procedures and those sorts of things. I would sit down with the principal and/or his or her representative and work to develop a policy for their school context.

Mr BAKER: We have a manual. I think we have a copy of it here.

The Hon. CATE FAEHRMANN: I think you mentioned that as well in your submission. So, it is the commission and the school. Are any other stakeholders, for example the local council or the Roads and Traffic Authority, involved in the creation of the plans themselves?

Ms RHEINBERGER: I am a representative of the Roads and Traffic Authority in some respects because it funds the road safety positions. Normally it is a school-based policy but if there was a need to do so we would consult. Basically bus drop and pick-up areas are set so we do not generally liaise with other stakeholders in the development of that plan. It is an in-school and diocesan regional matter.

CHAIR: You mentioned parking. One of the major issues that has been raised in several submissions is the lack of sufficient parking in school grounds or in the immediate vicinity. Clearly it results in traffic congestion on adjoining streets. Is it an issue—you mentioned obliquely it was—and how are you tackling that particular issue, whether in terms of kiss-and-drop or parking to enable people to be accompanied to school?

Ms RHEINBERGER: If there are congestion issues principals often suggest in newsletters streets where it is safe to park and then walk and collect your children from a certain point. That is all I can add. It is really a matter of parent education as to where they can park, obeying the signs, and encouraging other areas for parking.

CHAIR: Two of us come from regional areas and I am aware of one school that has a service road servicing the school and children are not dropped off on the major highway that runs adjacent to that service

road. What are your views on any adjustments to the school zone safety policy in regard to that particular type of school?

Mr BAKER: That is our point: there should be a local group that can make the decision about exactly where the zone restrictions apply and how they are managed. Does that answer your question?

CHAIR: Yes. I was seeking some input as to how you would go about determining community, local council and school board results if you determined that there could be a better way of approaching it. That is one of the terms of reference.

Mr BAKER: That is why we are suggesting this committee, which could either be a new committee or an enhanced committee as we have already discussed. At the moment there is some uncertainty as to how to bring all the players together and even who the players are. The Department of Planning has been mentioned, so that is one of the issues.

Mr ROBERT FUROLO: All of us have had some involvement with schools in our communities either as parents or elected representatives. Do you think one of the challenges is confusion over signage and where it is permissible to park and what the school zone signs mean? One of the comments I hear repeatedly is that parents do not know whether they can park somewhere or not. Is that part of your experience as well?

Mr BAKER: This is a personal view: the signage around most schools is clear. I think there is an issue with compliance. There perhaps needs to be more consultation with parent groups about putting up signs and deciding where people can and cannot park. Sometimes parents cannot see a reason why parking has been prohibited. Obviously there is a role for schools too. Part of it is a communication issue and although the signage is there parents perhaps do not understand why certain decisions have been made. The flashing lights generally work.

CHAIR: Thank you very much for appearing before the Committee.

(The witnesses withdrew)

HELEN MARGARET WALTON, President, Federation of Parents and Citizens' Associations of New South Wales, and

RACHAEL BARHAM SOWDEN, Publicity Officer, Federation of Parents and Citizens' Associations of New South Wales, sworn examined:

CHAIR: Thank you for attending this public hearing of the Joint Standing Committee on Road Safety on its Inquiry into School Zone Safety. The public hearing is being held today and on Monday next week. It is exploring a range of issues surrounding school zone safety. The Inquiry is examining the adequacy of management and operation of school zones in New South Wales to determine their effectiveness in minimising the risks of injury and fatality. I remind you to switch off your mobile phones as they can interfere with Hansard recording equipment and if your phone is on silent would you please switch it off completely. Welcome to you as representatives of the Federation of Parents and Citizens' Associations of New South Wales. Thank you for appearing before the Committee.

Thank you for being here as Regional representatives. I draw your attention to the fact that your evidence is given under Parliamentary privilege and you are protected from legal or administrative action that might otherwise result in relation to the information you provide. I also point out that any deliberate misleading of the Committee may constitute a contempt of Parliament and an offence under the Parliamentary Evidence Act 1901. Time is limited as usual today and the Committee may wish to send you some additional questions in writing, the replies to which would then form part of evidence and be made public. Would you be happy to provide a written reply to any of those questions?

Ms WALTON: I would.

CHAIR: Before we proceed with any questions, would you like to make a brief opening statement of perhaps five minutes?

Ms WALTON: I think our opening statement is contained within the documentation we have already sent through to you.

CHAIR: Indeed. It is just an opportunity we afford witnesses in case they wish to commence, settle in and provide some leads for the committee. I start with the first question. Your submission does indeed describe a situation relating to the provision of safe student access to Eastern Creek Public School, to take one example. It is critical of the lack of support from the New South Wales Government and the Roads and Traffic Authority, now the Roads and Maritime Services, to provide parking and drop-off and pick-up areas at the school. That was at pages 1 and 2 of your submission. Can you provide more information about the situation which did arise at Eastern Creek Public School and how safe access for students was provided by Council?

Ms WALTON: The information I am providing is a compilation of information from people within our Council, I am the spokesperson. As I understand it, Eastern Creek Public School is in Western Sydney and is on a major highway. The concern arose from allowing children access to that school. The fact that the front gate was on the highway created problems for children and parental concerns about their safety. They worked with the local Council—and are high in their praise of Council—to recognise what the problem was and also to have a look at what options they had within the school boundaries.

There was an area of vacant ground identified at the back of the school which, through working with the Council, was developed as a shared area. It started off as a parking area for parents where they could leave their car and walk their child into the school grounds. That is an issue with many schools that parents and carers can park but cannot get out of a vehicle to take children into the school. This area provided an opportunity for parents to park and safely deliver their child to the school. There were no concerns about a short time limit on the parking of the car, it was extended parking. The community then installed chairs and other facilities where parents could wait after school for their child. So it was a good, positive outcome for a problem that existed in terms of parental concerns about their children crossing over a highway.

CHAIR: Constraints of land availability would be a factor. Do you feel that there is generally sufficient or adequate consultation with schools about the design and management of school zones?

Ms WALTON: The feeling we got from conversations that we have had is that often there is not consideration around the issue of safety of children getting in and out of school grounds. Unfortunately at the moment there are a lot of situations where there is not the availability of land around schools. Some schools have been there for long periods of time, particularly in metropolitan areas, and the capacity does not exist to change the way parents deliver children to school, particularly parents with cars. I think there has been an increase in students being driven to school, rather than walking because of parental fears about the safety of their child on buses or walking. So the capacity is not there in some areas to provide a mechanism by which we can alter the way that parents have access to drop their child off and ensure that they get into school safely. It is possibly different in regional areas where there is more capacity but I am not sure if there is a lot of consultation around it and because it has been such an historic way of getting access to schools, that probably is part of the problem.

CHAIR: To finish that particular subject, do you see there is a role for the school community, in liaison with those other groups, in recommending either the establishment or removal of school zones or the alteration of school zones? What would your view be on that?

Ms WALTON: We would want to see consultation within the community for the needs of all people within that community if you have a situation where parents want to change what is available for them in regard to their schools. You can have a situation where a school goes from 100 to 400 students and getting 100 students in and out of a school is a different matter to trying to get 400 students from the same school base. There needs to be consultation with the community. The community has a view about what it would like to see happen and what it sees as the minimum requirements and that needs to fit in with standards from councils, from the Roads and Traffic Authority and from other Government agencies. There would need to be some form of consultation and we would like to see that happen.

Mr ROBERT FUROLO: What is the view of the Federation about the adequacy of the flashing lights program being installed and rolled out across New South Wales?

Ms WALTON: As I understand it, there is a number of flashing lights that are currently in existence. We have lots of schools that say to us: We would love to have flashing lights. I think the value of them is that it is a visual thing. It is okay to have a sign but when you have a sign that lights up and attracts the attention of drivers, they are more likely to take notice of it. There are so many schools that would like them, but I understand that there are monetary and budgetary constraints around councils putting them into their plan to ensure that they are available in schools—schools need to come up with an argument for having them. We have a lot of schools across the State that would appreciate it if flashing lights were part of the management plan for traffic around schools. They are very positive about flashing lights.

Mr ROBERT FUROLO: One of the points made consistently so far in the inquiry and through submissions, is that there should be an opportunity for local involvement from the school community in the decision-making about the types of treatments around their school. How far do you think that should go? Do you think that should include whether or not the 40 kilometre zone should be implemented and what times the school zone restrictions should apply? Do you think those things should be included as local decisions or do you think there should be an over-arching framework of major policy and local solutions to local issues?

Ms WALTON: I think that one needs to acknowledge that every school community is different and the needs of that school community are different. If you have a one-size-fits-all, it is not going to work because of the nature of the community in terms of the usage of roads, the age of children within schools, and the sense of community in terms of whether parents walk their children to school or drop them off by car. I can understand the notion of having an over-arching policy around school zones but I think there needs to be an appreciation of the benefits of involving the local community in decision-making. Even if there is controversy and people do not agree with everything that is happening, the more consultation you have, the more involved people feel in the decision-making and the more likely they are to support even slight changes to what they would like to see. Consultation is always a positive.

Mr ROBERT FUROLO: Is there a view amongst the members of the Federation of Parents and Citizens that the 40 kilometre an hour school zone speed limits that have been implemented since 2003 have been effective in improving safety around schools?

Ms WALTON: I think there is a belief that they have improved safety. I think there are concerns however about the signposting of them. We have examples of schools that say the sign is not visible until a driver is already at the school. They would like to see the sign put further back. For example, if the entrance to the school is on a highway and then there is a street which leads to the entrance to the school and the first time a driver sees the sign is outside the school, a car travelling at 50 kilometres an hour around the corner can suddenly come to a 40 kilometre zone. By the time they slow down enough they are on the school crossing with the students crossing in front of them. The concerns relate to the signposting and education of drivers. There are a lot of drivers who do not understand why the 40 kilometre zone is there, particularly in school holidays because you have the period where it is there for school term but on the weekend and during school holidays it is not and you can go 50 kilometres an hour. So I think some adults who do not have children in schools do not understand the signposting and why the changes occur. There needs to be education around that and we believe the process of where the signs are placed around the schools should be looked at. Signs need to be placed perhaps a little further away than they are at the moment in some schools.

Mr ROBERT FUROLO: Is the principle of 40 kilometres an hour around schools something the Federation of Parents and Citizens supports?

Ms WALTON: We definitely support the fact that the lower speed obviously needs to be an improved outcome in terms of driver and child safety.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: As the head of the Federation of Parents and Citizens, how do you feel about the removal of eight speed cameras in school zones across the State? Is that a positive or negative step?

Ms WALTON: We look at the fact that a speed camera is a deterrent. If people know there is going to be a speed camera they tend to slow down. Even if you are going at the speed limit, if you are going at 50 in a 50 zone suddenly you will be doing 45—it is just a natural instinct. So the removal of such a thing, to me, is a little bit detrimental because if people know a speed camera is there they are more likely to take note of it. If suddenly it is not there it is not the same.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: Were you disappointed?

Ms WALTON: We are disappointed at things like that.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: Would you like to see those eight returned?

Ms WALTON: We would like to see eight plus more.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: How many would you like to see?

Ms WALTON: I do not think there is a definitive number because there are so many schools in so many areas who say, "We have these major problems and we would really like to see one in our area because we think it would be a deterrent". I would hate to say 20 and then find that is going to be—

The Hon. WALT SECORD: Would you like every school zone in the State to have a speed camera?

Ms WALTON: I am sure Wilcannia Central would not necessarily like to have a speed camera where they are, but the notion of those schools that definitely need it, particularly in metropolitan areas maybe more than rural—

The Hon. WALT SECORD: Sydney, Wollongong, Newcastle?

Ms WALTON: And on major highways where there is a school, in a rural area where there is a highway that goes past a school, which often occurs—places like that where there is a high incidence of traffic going past.

CHAIR: Most of us would say that the visibility of police in those zones would probably contribute to an even greater reduction and certainly awareness.

Mr JOHN WILLIAMS: Firstly, Helen, congratulations. As a fellow citizen of Broken Hill, this Committee becomes aware of the great representation that can happen for the State of New South Wales out of

the far west. The Committee has been advised that mandatory teaching of road safety as a part of the Personal Development, Health and Physical Education [PDHPE] syllabus may be compromised as part of the current review and possible introduction of a national syllabus for all schools. What is your view? I see you have made comment regarding the adequacy of road safety education as part of the PDHPE syllabus in New South Wales.

Ms WALTON: Obviously for us education in many realms of things that a child experiences in their life is extremely important, but things such as road safety is vital to kids. As adults, we as parents try and give a child that opportunity to know how to cross a road safely, et cetera. But I think some of the programs are just reiterating what parents say, and for some kids mum can keep saying whatever she wants but if somebody else says it they are more likely to believe it. It is just the notion that all through their life there needs to be that sort of education available and we would really like to see that continue because we think our children are out there in the big wide world and they really need to be aware of what is going on and how to protect themselves—all those protective mechanisms that they need to develop through their life—and it needs to continue because children are constantly developing and you cement what you do in kindergarten in year 1, year 2, year 3. They get to know what it is all about. I think anything like that is important.

Mr JOHN WILLIAMS: One of the obvious challenges is going to be if a national curriculum is put in place and it is not mandatory. What would be the view of the Parents and Citizens' Associations in that regard?

Ms SOWDEN: Our belief with a national curriculum is that anything that is not covered by the national curriculum in New South Wales can still have their own curriculum underneath that, so therefore there would be an opportunity to continue to have that level of embeddedness in our curriculums in schools.

The Hon. CATE FAEHRMANN: Back to fixed speed cameras: Are you aware of schools applying to have fixed speed cameras in their school zones and being rejected by the Roads and Traffic Authority?

Ms WALTON: I could not give you names. A lot of what we have is anecdotal evidence. We have given you some of the examples where people have been willing to give their school as specific examples. But I am quite happy to check that up.

The Hon. CATE FAEHRMANN: That would be good. We heard from the Government this morning that there needed to be 10 crashes in three years in school zones to qualify for a fixed speed camera in school zones. Were you aware of that criterion?

CHAIR: That was one of several qualifications; it was not a sole criterion.

Ms WALTON: I was not aware of that one in particular. What sort of accident are you talking about? Are you talking about an accident where somebody dings the back of your car or are you talking about an accident where somebody is killed? For us, you cannot replace a life, so the more that we can put in place to ensure the safety of our children in this particularly risky area the better. There is no better criterion that negates the responsibility we have.

The Hon. CATE FAEHRMANN: We have seen evidence that obviously the 40 kilometres-an-hour speed zone is improving safety, and speed cameras in school zones do as well. You would agree with that evidence?

Ms WALTON: Any mechanism that can be put in place that allows for a safer area around our school zones obviously we would support.

The Hon. CATE FAEHRMANN: Do you find generally that the Government responds adequately to concerns raised by schools regarding necessary safety improvements in relation to school zones—requests put in to improve student safety?

Ms WALTON: From the anecdotal information that we have, the frustration of schools is that it takes a lot of concerns being expressed over a long period of time. Often people have a child in year 6 and they will say, "That problem existed in kindergarten. We raised it as an issue. We were told we had to see the RTA, we were told we had to see the council; the council said no it was not their issue it was the RTA's". There appears at times to be a lot of buckpassing between people to determine who is responsible for making the final decision. We understand sometimes that if it is a council matter they have to budget within their particular yearly budget and do some forward planning, but it is the frustration of the fact that it takes so long and it is that time that will

often be an impact because there will be something that will happen in the intervening period and someone will turn around and say, "I told you so. We've been saying this for five years". So it takes a crisis to make people say, "Maybe we do need to do something now".

The Hon. CATE FAEHRMANN: Can you provide an example? I understand that you might not want to mention a specific school but could you provide an example of what you are referring to in a general way? When you are saying that buckpassing and things seem to take a long time in terms of safety measures, can you provide an example of what that would be and how long it has taken?

Ms WALTON: I will use a personal example where my children went to a primary school and there was discussion around flashing lights and things like pedestrian crossings at that school for years, literally from at least the time that my oldest was there and it was still going on when my youngest was going through. It is the fact that parents are saying, "We want something there", and sometimes it is something as basic as a crossing, literally just a pedestrian crossing or a traffic island, and there are schools who say, "It takes us four or five years for somebody to sit back and listen to us", or they come back to a school and they say, "Have you done a survey? Can you talk to the parents about it?" The parents go out and do a survey and they say so many kids cross that street. They will do what they need to do in order to provide the evidence. But even doing that they still feel like they are pushing uphill to try and have it looked at.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: This morning the Roads and Traffic Authority's Centre for Road Safety said that 25 of all victims of accidents in school zones were between the ages of 12 and 15 and 60 per cent of those were male. What would you like to see targeted to improve road safety for those 12- to 15-year-old males? What do you think could be done? Why are you laughing?

Ms WALTON: Rachel said put them in a bubble until they are 25, but I do not think that is appropriate. It once again comes down to the fact that children of any age act like children. The problem that we have is that in trying to determine something safe around the school it will depend on the child. We have people who say there is a major highway so they put in an overpass and that is fine, but boys walking across an overpass will push each other. It is okay to say we have got an overpass, but there also needs to be an understanding of child development and the fact that teenage boys will be teenage boys and they will push each other, they will run. So if you are going to do an overpass do an overpass with a high wall so that if a kid pushes another child on that overpass the wall is adequately tall enough for them if they get pushed not to fall over and end up on the ground.

Sometimes it is a matter of continuing to educate and make those around them aware. You can keep reiterating to a boy not to run behind cars, not to jump off buses and not to run around behind buses to run across the road because their mate is over the other side waiting for them; you can try and use as many safe things as you can but we also need to make sure that what we have in place is adequate for them to be safe.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: One of the things that came out of your submission is that you said some schools are using playgrounds and ovals for parking. How prevalent is that?

Ms WALTON: I would say quite prevalent. Once again, we cannot give you figures. But when we have a discussion in a group of people and we talk about things like teenage drivers—at 16 you learn to drive, at 17 you have got your P-plates—and how you have to stay at school until you are 17 now. Those 17-year-olds who previously may have been employed and driving their car to work are now driving their car to school. As a result, there is a build-up of kids in cars and they are needing to find somewhere to park them because, particularly in metropolitan areas—it is probably a little bit easier out in rural areas—there is a finite amount of parking around a school and those spots get taken up by teaching staff with their cars and students with their cars. Then you have parents who come along and say, "I want to drop my child off and go into the school as well and I can't because I have to park four blocks away because all the car parks are taken up." A lot of schools are saying, "What can we do?" Being proactive, as a safety mechanism, they are saying, "We've got a bit of an oval at the back, let us open it up and allow them to park there".

CHAIR: Ms Walton, earlier you referred to a road meeting a road which contained a school and the change in speed—you gave as an example 50 down to 40. What is your view on service roads, particularly in, say, country areas, although they do exist in many suburbs as well, where the service road services exclusively the school or perhaps a couple of houses on either side of the school and a major road might well run alongside and the service road leads from and then back onto that main road, and of course the whole area is blanket-

approached by the 40 kilometres an hour zone? What is your view on the appropriateness of that 40-kilometres-an-hour zone on the major road as opposed to just the service road?

Ms WALTON: It all depends on where the traffic is coming from. If it is coming from the major road onto that service road the concern is that if you have people coming at a speed onto a service road is there sufficient time for them to reduce speed in order to get onto that service road and is the speed limit on that service road adequately policed so that people are aware that it is important that they stick to that zone in that particular area because of the fact that it is there as a safety mechanism for the students in that area?

Ms SOWDEN: We have one at my school, just as an aside. You do need to have it on the main road because kids still walk on it; they go off the service road and back onto the main road. So there are still very much safety concerns around that.

CHAIR: I wanted to tease that one out because views have been expressed that perhaps there should be an exclusion. We need to ascertain the views and involve, no doubt, more than just the school community, perhaps local councils and the wider local body—you would be in agreement with that—before any suggestion was made that unilateral action be taken.

Ms WALTON: Again, consultation is always of benefit because people like to be listened to.

CHAIR: You made reference in the submission at page 6 to the frustration by some school parent bodies with "the level of unacceptable driving behaviours". Can you expand on what the unacceptable driving behaviour consists of and how you are dealing with this issue, and do you think there is a lack of adequate enforcement of road rules around schools?

Ms WALTON: I think the difficulty that you have got is that people are aware of the rules and no matter how much you have an awareness of a rule there are people out there who will, for whatever reason, choose not to follow that. I have concerns—and I hate to be derogatory of young people because I do not think all young people who are driving are necessarily bad drivers but what they do is not necessarily think when they are in certain areas. Their brain is focusing on driving, not necessarily on what is happening around them. To me education is always an important factor and education around the importance of fulfilling the requirements of a school zone is particularly important because of the fact you have such young children in some of those zones who do not have the capacity to think quickly enough, if they have a car coming towards them, of what to do so I just think education is a really important part, and it has to be the adult education as much as the education of a child.

Ms SOWDEN: We have anecdotal evidence of school zones where parents have picked up their child and they are focusing on the child and do a U-turn on the school crossing and then drive away or parents who will stop on the other side of the road because there is inadequate parking and call their five-year-olds across the road, saying "Come on, come on", and you cannot see them in between the cars. There might only be three car spaces for a school of 400 students so you have parents parked where ever they can to pick up those students. We also find that perhaps it is an issue—and I am going rural—for some of our central schools where you might have P-plate drivers who are the year 11 or year 12 students but you might also have five-year-olds at the school on the same block, on the same site, so that then also becomes an issue.

CHAIR: Indeed, I think we are all aware of some of that behaviour and it might make a great news photo when people are encouraging their children to cross the road, and that in itself acts as a point of education, but unfortunately needs to be reinforced continually, so I sympathise with the problem. Mr Furolo, do you have any final questions?

Mr ROBERT FUROLO: We are talking a little bit about parking around schools. A lot of our questions have focused on school zones and the speed at which cars travel. It is clear from our own experiences and the experiences of those who have been giving evidence that parking around schools is a big source of anxiety and concern for school communities and parents. What more can be done to help improve safety of parents parking around schools when picking up their children? Is it a question simply of more and better education or is it better planning of where there should be parking and clarity about where it is safe to pick up and drop off?

Ms WALTON: I will go back to the comment I made earlier about historical things. We do not get a lot of new schools. We get schools being built but historically a lot of the schools that we have, have been there

for a long period of time and what happened back then is different to what is happening now. You have growth in local communities so you get more families in there; you get more people travelling by car rather than by public transport. You have communities where there is no public transport so people do depend on cars. What we find is that sometimes the planning that occurred 20 years ago, 30, 40 or 50 years ago around a school zone did not incorporate the whole school.

They may have incorporated the buildings inside and all the infrastructure there, but what they did not look at is the community and the fact that a child goes from home to school and from school to home. You need to incorporate all of that as part of your management plan and what we need to do is make sure that in future all planning includes that as an aspect of it but also anything that happens around schools now, if there is a capacity to do something more positive about allowing improved parking, more flashing lights, pedestrian crossings or anything like that just to improve the safety mechanism around those schools, we would like to see that, but part of an overarching management plan would be great.

Ms SOWDEN: Can I add to that one? The other thing is consistency. We are all aware of schools where you might have a kiss and drop zone. What does that mean because the Roads and Traffic Authority, the local council and the police all have different interpretations of what that means so as a parent how can you do the right thing if there is no consistency and if you do not know does a kiss and drop mean you are not allowed to leave the car and your child has to get out by themselves or does a kiss and drop zone mean that you can stop there for five minutes? Again, if you have three car spaces and you have 400 students and three car spaces for kiss and drop, how does that work? Those things need to be looked at as well.

Mr ROBERT FUROLO: One of the issues that we raised with the Department of Education earlier was recognition that for new schools a traffic study needs to be completed, which is great for those new schools. The department was asked the question, and I put it to you, do you think that all existing schools, some of which have been around for 100 years, should also have an updated traffic management plan so that you can take into account current school numbers and the current traffic circumstances around those schools?

Ms WALTON: We definitely feel that what needs to happen is an audit of what currently exists and what the needs of the community are because, as I said, what we have from some of our information is that there are schools where the community has changed. For some schools there have been decreasing numbers but for a lot of schools where there have been increasing numbers at particular schools there just has not been the planning to say, "If this happens, what do we do about this particular situation?"

For us, what we would like to see is perhaps for the department to do more of an audit around what currently exists and also what options are available in consultation with the agencies that have carriage of the ability to do something about it. It is no good the school saying, "What we really need is this, this and this" and then going to the local council and the council saying, "We really can't do this because of B, C and D". Once again they do need to have a look at what currently exists and what the option would be for perhaps putting in place a few changes that may make it a little bit safer but also do that in consultation with the council, the Roads and Traffic Authority, the police and the local community to make sure that everybody is aware of what is needed and how it is going to be achieved.

The Hon. CATE FAEHRMANN: I notice in your submission you mention how Western Australia has determined that traffic wardens or warders or lollipop ladies, or lollipop men or women as I see a fair few men, will be removed following a study on the number of children crossing the street versus the number of cars travelling along it. You said in your submission that you do not want New South Wales to go down that path. This is your chance to get on the record why you think that lollipop men and women are beneficial to street safety around schools?

Ms WALTON: Once again it comes down to the fact that it is okay to have signs but signs do not necessarily make people aware. They are there to make them aware but there is nothing you can do that can make a person safe. A 40-kilometre zone means that there is a school and a school means there are children. For some areas the use of lollipop ladies is just another visual reminder to people who travel on those roads that the reason we are here standing with the sign is because there is a reason: there are children; there is a school zone; there are people travelling backwards and forwards across this pedestrian crossing. We will have children with a parent who will drop them off on one side and the idea of the lollipop lady is to stand there and see that the child gets from one side of the street to the other side.

The other thing about them is that it is a community resource as well. You have people who want to support the school however they can and for them the opportunity is provided by having the role of being that safety warden to see that those children do get across that road into the school successfully, so there are a number of reasons why we would like to see those people continue.

CHAIR: Thank you very much. Are there any other questions?

Mr ROBERT FUROLO: No, thank you.

The Hon. CATE FAEHRMANN: No.

CHAIR: Thank you very much for appearing before the Committee. We appreciate that you have travelled great distances, from Broken Hill and Uralla. It is important that the Federation of Parents and Citizens' Associations appeared before the Committee on something as important as school zone safety and I do thank you for appearing here today.

(The witnesses withdrew)

(Short adjournment)

MICHAEL FREDERICK LANE, 17 Paul Avenue, St Ives, New South Wales, affirmed and examined:

CHAIR: Mr Lane, thank you for attending this public hearing of the Joint Standing Committee on Road Safety inquiry into school zone safety. The public hearing today and on Monday of next week will explore a range of issues surrounding school zone safety. The inquiry is examining the adequacy of management and operation of school zones in New South Wales to determine their effectiveness in minimising the risks of injury and fatality. I ask you, if you have not already done so, to turn off your mobile phone as it does interfere with the Hansard equipment. Mr Lane, would you state your occupation and the capacity in which you are appearing before the Committee?

Mr LANE: I am retired. I am appearing in my personal capacity. I have noted on the submission that I have other connections.

CHAIR: I draw your attention to the fact that your evidence is given under parliamentary privilege and that you are protected from legal or administrative action that might otherwise result in relation to the information you provide. I should also point out that any deliberate misleading of the Committee may constitute a contempt of the Parliament and an offence under the Parliamentary Evidence Act 1901. Time of course is always limited. The committee may wish to send you some additional questions in writing, the replies to which would then form part of the evidence and be made public. Would you be happy to provide a written reply to any further questions?

Mr LANE: Yes, I would. Could I ask that any questions be sent to my email address, because I am going away on Monday for a couple of weeks?

CHAIR: That is noted. Before we proceed with any questions, would you like to make a brief opening statement of perhaps not more than five minutes?

Mr LANE: I think I have said in my submission pretty much everything that needs to be said. You will note from my history that much of my professional life was in assessing industrial research and development grant applications and tax concession matters, which of course give me a rather interesting insight into the standards of research and development, which I have commented upon in my submission. It was a very unusual occupation that I had.

CHAIR: Indeed, and that is one of the reasons that the Committee were intrigued and invited you to appear before the Committee. We thank you for coming today. We note that you have prepared your submission as an individual, as you stated, but that you do have an interest in school zone safety and are the spokesperson for an organisation called the National Motorists Association of Australia. Can you tell the Committee more about the National Motorists Association of Australia, its membership and charter?

Mr LANE: It is a very small organisation. It is not a registered organisation; it is just a very small group of people who have an interest in road safety. The most public thing we do of course is object to speed cameras. But I have taken my interest a lot further than that; that is only one facet of things. I have appeared on a number of television shows, current affairs programs and those kinds of things.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: Mr Lane, how many active members would you have?

Mr LANE: Active members, probably ten.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: Ten?

Mr LANE: Yes. It is a very small organisation.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: That is very small.

Mr LANE: But it is comprised of people with a particular interest in the subject.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: So are you all anti speed camera activists?

Mr LANE: We have a problem with speed cameras, and I have referred to that within the documentation. It is not a question so much of objection to speed cameras—

The Hon. WALT SECORD: So, Mr Lane—

CHAIR: I am pursuing a line of question, and I have no doubt we will be able to pick up that point in a moment. But can we leave the introductory remarks until we get to that point?

The Hon. WALT SECORD: I am just mindful of the time, Chair. We have 27 minutes left.

CHAIR: Indeed. Mr Lane, you were saying?

Mr LANE: Yes, I do have this involvement, and it is a very small organisation. It consists, really, of people whose demographics, as I know them, would be middle age and middle management.

CHAIR: You referred to that, and in passing you indicated you were presenting as an individual.

Mr LANE: As an individual, because I have not discussed this in depth with any of the other members.

CHAIR: You made that clear.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: You also note that you are a vice-president of the Lindfield branch of the Liberal Party. You felt compelled to put that in your submission too.

Mr LANE: It is a matter of openness. I am, therefore I should tell you.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: So you are an anti speed camera activist and a Liberal Party activist?

Mr LANE: Yes, but I don't—

The Hon. WALT SECORD: That's okay. You answered, "Yes."

Mr LANE: I made that position very clear as a matter of honesty; that is what I am.

CHAIR: It is not relevant to the terms of the inquiry.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: I think it is relevant.

CHAIR: It is not relevant to the terms of the inquiry. Mr Lane, can you provide more detail about your background and experience in road safety matters?

Mr LANE: My background and experience in road safety matters comes from my very high exposure to road matters. I have been driving on the roads for half a century; I have done the best part of a couple of million kilometres. I am still active on the roads, probably still doing something like 20,000 to 25,000 kilometres a year. I have a great desire to get there and back in one piece, and not injure anybody else, and not pay any money to anybody who does not deserve it. Since my retirement it has been a matter of great interest to me. I have had some 10 years in retirement, and have spent quite a significant amount of time delving into several things that have attracted my particular attention. In particular, I have been looking at some of the research, some of which is not very good.

CHAIR: The submission claims there is a lack of research on crash causality in relation to school children, and that is our particular focus, as you would be well aware. Are you familiar with the traffic accident data system [TADS] crash database managed by the Roads and Traffic Authority—now Roads and Maritime Services—which also has input from NSW Police data? Do you think that this is deficient?

Mr LANE: It should be sufficient, but it is not published. This is one of the problems we always have: when you have a piece of research, all you ever see is some summary of it, but not the detailed information that was available to the researcher. Consequently, you may see things coming out which do not gel, or whatever, with people, and there is no real explanation as to what has happened and why it has happened. So one of the

things I would like to see very much is the research published on the Roads and Maritime Services website so that we can read it, understand it and, if necessary, criticise it.

Mr ROBERT FUROLO: In your submission you talk about additional charges to improve compliance, and additional penalties specifically. Would you like to elaborate on your proposal to introduce additional charges for contravening the road rules around school zones—on page 9 of your submission?

Mr LANE: That consideration be given to charges; that is, not financial charges but prosecution charges. The thought that has been going through my mind is of adapting that old English offence of driving without due consideration for other road users. It is a very complicated issue, because then you run into questions of how to enforce it, how to judge it, and what penalties if any should apply? I have spent quite a long time trying to think some of these things through. It would not necessary apply to just school zones; it could apply overall. For example, if you have a penalty system that depends on a certain number of kilometres an hour over the limit, that may or may not be fair to people at the time.

But if people were doing something that they should not be doing, then this sort of charge is not just a simple financial and points penalty; it would mean going before a panel of experienced drivers and basically being told what you did wrong. I am envisaging things like penalties requiring that the offender go and retrain, rather than simply a financial penalty. But it is a very complex issue. Frankly, the thoughts I have on it would probably take a couple of hours to divulge and go through. One of my objects would always be that, rather than a simple straight penalty, you should be looking towards getting people to do things better rather than just saying, "Here's a fine."

Mr ROBERT FUROLO: Training, for example?

Mr LANE: Yes, appropriate training. I see many cases of people making mistakes because they have not been trained properly.

Mr ROBERT FUROLO: Mr Lane, I am curious about your interest in speed cameras. Is it your view that speed cameras, particularly those in school zones, should be there or should not be there? Are they an appropriate way of managing speed in and around school zones?

Mr LANE: The problem I have with speed cameras is that they are single-issue things; they do not deal with things on the spot. A speed camera does not stop a person on the spot, so that you do not particularly identify the driver, and you get these cases of points swapping because the authority does not know which person is driving. If you have a policeman on the spot, he pulls you up, checks your licence, and verifies who is the person who did the action. A real-life policeman can also check whether or not the person is properly licensed, whether or not they are sober, whether or not the car is in reasonably good condition—all those other factors that go towards general road safety, rather than that one particular issue.

Mr ROBERT FUROLO: Do you think that speed cameras should be removed?

Mr LANE: It is a difficult issue. Politically, removing a speed limit would cause a lot of problems, because there will always be people in your electorate who will jump up and down at that, as we have seen following the Auditor-General's report—which I have certain criticisms of, one of which is that it did not include all the information about all speed cameras. So, certainly my local member of Parliament—

Mr ROBERT FUROLO: Did you agree with the Auditor-General's—

Mr LANE: I am sorry, could I finish that answer? My local member of Parliament, having taken the position that one speed camera should not be retained, is now in the position of trying to argue for and against without any information to work on.

Mr ROBERT FUROLO: Do you think local members of Parliament should be arguing whether speed cameras should be retained or not?

Mr LANE: They should be given the information to enable them to determine whether or not they are actually beneficial.

Mr ROBERT FUROLO: Should not those decisions be based on objective criteria, rather than political considerations?

Mr LANE: They should indeed. But, as we all know, in politics you get a lot of pressure from people, and the pressure to retain them is very strong. But the member of Parliament who is given insufficient information to make an argument is in a very difficult spot. I know the one closest to me is designated as one of those to be removed, but there is no information available in the public sphere or in the Auditor-General's report to say why.

Mr ROBERT FUROLO: Do you agree with the Auditor-General's finding that speed cameras are effective in reducing accidents and incidents of speeding?

Mr LANE: I have a bit of a problem with that report for a number of reasons. One I have already stated, and that is that all the information is not published for people to see. Secondly, the Auditor-General took road safety advice from Associate Professor Max Cameron, of the Monash University Accident Research Centre, which of course is one of the biggest proponents of speed cameras. In my view, the sort of assessment that the Auditor-General was doing there was not dissimilar from the sort of thing I used to do in my working life, but I would also have looked at contrary and alternative opinions so that I could give a balanced judgement.

The Auditor-General took evidence and support on the details of road safety from one particular sector. He should, in my view, have taken it from a wider viewpoint. One of the consequences of that is that he has come up with, if I remember rightly, a finding that the statistics over three years should be used to put a camera in place, but it should be judged for eight years before it is taken away. Why the imbalance? Over an eight-year period there is going to be a normal reduction in the accident rate overall. Consequently, over an eight-year period it would look as if the speed camera was more effective than it really was. That gives me a problem as someone who has spent a lot of time looking at research.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: Mr Lane, so that I can understand this, why do you campaign against or object to speed cameras? What is the crux of why you decided to form an association of 10 to fight speed cameras?

Mr LANE: I did not form the association; I joined it.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: Okay. But there are ten of you forming like a small cabal.

Mr LANE: It is a small group of individuals. That does not necessarily mean that we do not have the support of the wider community.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: But what motivates you?

Mr LANE: What motivates me is that, if we are looking at the wider aspect of road safety, we should not be using robotic systems; we should be using real police on the road, because they can deal with all the issues that are there.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: So traffic police and road safety police officers?

Mr LANE: Yes, that is right. I will give you an example of one thing that happened in the United Kingdom. The Yorkshire ripper was pulled up for a traffic offence. It was when the traffic officers looked at him and his car they became suspicious—the old policeman's instinct—and discovered he had all the equipment that he had used to kill those girls. You are never going to get that on a speed camera.

CHAIR: Mr Lane, you made it clear in your submission that having police officers on duty is preferable to enforce school zone restrictions. We might leave that subject for a moment and move to another question, from Mr Williams.

Mr JOHN WILLIAMS: Your submission refers to the lack of comprehensive road safety education in New South Wales schools and recommends that this be implemented. New South Wales does in fact have mandatory road safety as part of the Personal Development, Health and Physical Education curriculum from kindergarten to the end of secondary school. Have you had recent experiences with schools where you think this was not the case?

Mr LANE: My children are now aged 22 and 26 years. I have no recollection of any teaching that they had on road safety matters.

Mr JOHN WILLIAMS: I think you would find that the implementation of this has been recent, probably more recent than that.

Mr LANE: Which is a good thing. I would support that, and I would take it further. You may recall that in my submission I suggest that one of the bases of all road safety education is the principle of self-preservation. It is what I taught my kids from when they were little toddlers. I taught them that trucks and cars were hard and they could hurt little boys and girls, so little boys and girls stayed off the road. As they grew up to a stage when they could cross roads, I made sure that they understood that, even if there was a crossing there, they still had to make sure the driver had seen them so that he would stop; because if he has not seen them, they were going to get hurt. I might say that I carried on with that education until I was teaching them to drive, and it has paid off.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: What do you think about the lollipop ladies and lollipop men who guide people through school zones? In Western Australia there has been a debate about them—

Mr LANE: I think it is an excellent idea. In fact, I know it is an excellent idea because I have seen them around not only here but in other parts of the world. They are there to make sure that the driver has seen the kids, particularly when they are very little because little kids are not as aware of danger as the rest of us. The only issue is—I came across one just the other day in our local area—where they have divided traffic islands and they put big "keep left" signs on them. From my height and in my car that obscured the lollipop man and therefore would have obscured a child. There are some issues where people need to do a bit more lateral thinking on some of these things. Another case I came across yesterday was a pedestrian crossing at West Pymble where from the driver's seat you do not see the zebra stripes until you are about 10 metres away—it is just on the edge. Certainly there are signs but the human mind of the driver pays more attention to the lines that are there than other sides that are around—J. J. Leeming is a good reference on that.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: Earlier today we heard evidence that the group most at risk are 12 to 15-year-olds; with the 12 and 13-year-olds comprising 25 per cent of the casualties and 60 per cent of those were males. How do you think we should respond to the issue of 12 to 15-year-old males who constitute more than half of the injuries in school zones?

Mr LANE: Again let us go back to what I said originally about research. We need some more research about what is happening and as to why they are doing it. I suspect—I could not prove it—that it may be a factor of horseplay. At that age they are coming into puberty and they are getting a little bit stropy. Maybe we need a little bit more discipline in the schools.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: Discipline in the schools?

Mr LANE: Yes.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: Such as?

Mr LANE: And in the home as well.

CHAIR: Let us keep to road safety.

Mr LANE: I meant discipline that complied with reasonable behaviour. Horseplay is one of those things that can have kids rolling around fighting and then they run onto the road to avoid each other. That to me is a very significant part of the problem.

The Hon. CATE FAEHRMANN: We heard evidence this morning about the risk-taking behaviour of those young males aged between 12 and 15 and those who do sometimes jump in front of oncoming traffic. Therefore 40 kilometres per hour speed zones around schools will reduce the risk of serious injury because cars can more easily stop. Speed cameras in school zones also ensure, in some instances, that cars stick to the speed limit. Do you agree that 40 kilometre per hour speed zones and speed cameras will ensure that the 12 to 15-year-old young males who sometimes jump out in front of cars will be a little bit safer?

Mr LANE: Do not get me wrong, I have no issue with 40 kilometre speed zones. In fact, in many cases I would suggest you should drive a lot slower, particularly if you are driving on one of those relatively narrow roads with people parked on both sides. In that instance, with kids coming out of school, 15 kilometres per hour is faster than we should be going anyway and in terms of being able to miss them it is a question really of observing. If you observe kids by the side of the road you know they may do something stupid because that is what kids do—just like dogs bark, kids play up. In terms of the enforcement by speed cameras, the unfortunate thing is that speed cameras often focus just on the crossing point where people cross the road.

Outside Knox at Wahroonga, for instance, the focus is on the light-controlled pedestrian crossing. Similarly, at Lindfield Public School there are four cameras and the focus on the cameras is right where people would cross. Instinctively when you come to a camera zone you check your speed because you do not want to get booked. That means your eyes are looking down, but your eyes should be looking out. You should not be looking at the dashboard. As I said in my submission, I have never heard of a crash on the dash because it all happens on the road and that is where we should be looking. I am conscious of the probability that there is a certain amount of distraction but there have not been any or many accidents mainly because they are, fortunately, very few and far between particularly where there is a light-controlled crossing.

The Hon. CATE FAEHRMANN: You make a lot of your public statements as the spokesman for the National Motorists Association. I did not quite catch what you said at the beginning of your contribution today. Did you say that that association is "informal"?

Mr LANE: It is an informal organisation; it is not a registered organisation. It is only a small group and we have no money.

The Hon. CATE FAEHRMANN: You call your association an association. I am curious as to why you have not registered it under the Associations Incorporation Act. As far as I am aware you only need five individuals to do that.

Mr LANE: I believe it was originally registered in Queensland but there was some problem before my time—I do not know what happened. It is a very informal group. We have no money and no expenditure.

The Hon. CATE FAEHRMANN: Therefore if it is informal perhaps the term "association" is slightly misleading. The term "association" implies a very formal organisation with lots of members.

Mr LANE: It is a copy of the United States National Motorists Association, which Mr Secord is probably aware of.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: Does it have any splinter groups? Do have other associations with it?

Mr LANE: No.

The Hon. CATE FAEHRMANN: In your submission you claim that an example of research that may create distortions is the claim by the New South Wales Roads and Traffic Authority that between 40 per cent and 46 per cent of fatal crashes are caused by speeding, and you talk about United Kingdom annual statistics there—I am unsure of the linkage. Do you agree with the research in the Auditor-General's report into improving road safety in school zones, released in February last year, which included an analysis of crash and casualty trends in 820 school zones? Are you familiar with that research?

Mr LANE: It was on the website as a submission.

The Hon. CATE FAEHRMANN: Do you agree with the analysis about those 820 school zones? Have you had a look at that analysis?

Mr LANE: I have had a quick look through it. Unfortunately, I have been dealing with other matters in the past few days so would you please refresh my memory today.

The Hon. CATE FAEHRMANN: That analysis highlighted a 45 per cent decrease in average annual pedestrian casualties during school zone times in selected school zones—compared with the time when there

were no school zones—and a 46 per cent reduction for pedestrians aged five to 16 years. My question is perhaps redundant as you have not analysed it.

Mr LANE: If I recall rightly that was an assessment done after the introduction rather than—

The Hon. CATE FAEHRMANN: Pre-and post, yes.

Mr LANE: My understanding of what the case was before that event is that the actual accident position was not particularly well recorded, but I may be incorrect on that.

The Hon. CATE FAEHRMANN: Is that an understanding based on your analysis of the research?

Mr LANE: Based on information that I tried to obtain from the Roads and Traffic Authority many years ago. They said at that stage that they did not have a detailed position of what accidents were happening before then—they may well have done it now. If I recall correctly, they used some special mapping techniques to work out what was what. I am not awfully confident of some of the work. I would like to see much clearer detail.

The Hon. CATE FAEHRMANN: The Auditor-General seemed quite confident of the research.

Mr LANE: Again, I would say that this is the sort of information that should be published all the time so that we, the public, know what is going on and can criticise it or not, as the case may be. Do not get me wrong, I do not have a problem with the issue of the new speed limit at school zones. In many cases 40 kilometres is far too quick—I am thinking there particularly about one of my local schools where at the time when the kids are coming out of school you have mothers parked on both sides of a narrow road waving to kids to come across. In that instance 15 kilometres is too fast at that particular point in time. Certainly one of the major impacts of a 40 kilometre zone is to draw the driver's attention to the fact that children are around. But it is much more than just looking at the speedometer; it is about paying attention to what people are doing in the area. Safe driving under any circumstances is about being aware of everything that is going on around you so you never get caught out. That is what I taught my children.

CHAIR: In your submission you address the issue of reducing reliance on school zones safety by utilising other facilities. In particular, you mentioned the use of kerbside fencing to separate children and vehicles to prevent pickup and drop-off on major roads. In your submission you also referred to the presence of very long school zones and you gave as an example the Pacific Highway, to which you referred a little earlier, where there are several schools located. Are you in favour of flashing lights as the preferred option in all locations where there is more than one school along the same stretch of road? How would you prioritise school locations for particular safety treatments?

Mr LANE: Flashing lights to me are something that you must have all the time because many of us no longer have children at school and we are not quite sure which is a school day and which is not. You have interstate people from a different time zone and different times when kids are at school. You have private schools with different days in attendance to public schools. You have some schools which are on different time zones. To my mind flashing lights should be everywhere and there should be no excuses. I remember asking the Roads and Traffic Authority, when I was chairman of the traffic committee, about them and they said that they did not particularly like them. Sorry, my view is that you are trying to get the driver to pay extra attention. Just sticking a sign up with some odd numbers on it does not mean a thing. Get the flashing lights.

Also you can use the flashing light system to tailor a period for a particular school for its particular circumstances. There are a number of schools that have slightly different times. If you have flashing lights there and you have the general concept that school kids are going to be around when there are flashing lights then you are telling everybody that they have to pay extra attention. To me it is a proverbial no-brainer to take you through to the point where you should have them. The other issue was fencing down the sides of roads to separate children from the road. That means you will have no parking on those stretches of road but particularly on main roads that does not really matter because you are coming up to the peak period and there are probably clearways anyway so you should not have parking there.

Bridges separate children from the road. Soft bodies and hard metal do not mix under any circumstances. It is possible to build these things and if you go to the one on Epping Road that I mentioned near the shops you will see it is a very extensive bridge. It crosses six lanes, a very wide median strip and two wide

footpaths and has lifts at each end. It is fully enclosed so they cannot throw things from it. I understand it will be paid for in 20 years by the advertising on it. It seems to me the most logical thing to do.

CHAIR: Thank you for appearing before the Committee and bringing a different perspective.

(The witness withdrew)

MEG CUNNINGHAM, Training and Community Education Officer, Waverley Council and

GEOFFREY GARNSEY, Manager Transport and Development, Waverley Council, affirmed and examined:

CHAIR: We appreciate your appearing before the Joint Standing Committee on Road Safety inquiry into school zone safety. The public hearings being held today and next Monday are exploring a range of issues surrounding school zone safety. The inquiry is examining the adequacy of management and operation of school zones in New South Wales to determine their effectiveness in minimising the risks of injury and fatality. Your evidence is given under parliamentary privilege and you are protected from legal or administrative action that might otherwise result in relation to the information you provide. Any deliberate misleading of the Committee may constitute a contempt of the Parliament and an offence under the Parliamentary Evidence Act 1901. The Committee may wish to send you additional questions in writing, the replies to which would form part of your evidence and be made public. Are you happy to provide a written reply to any further questions?

The Witnesses: Yes.

CHAIR: Would you like to make a brief opening statement?

Mr GARNSEY: I have nothing to add to the submission to the Committee.

CHAIR: The submission you have provided from Waverley Council supports grade separation as the preferred and safest option for students crossing main multi-lane roads. Is your preference for grade-separated roads based on research or information gathered as part of any evaluation conducted in your local government area?

Mr GARNSEY: It is really based on observations once those facilities are installed. The children or students using them have a much safer way of crossing the road. They are not mixing with the vehicles; they are totally separated, which is the safest way to cross. I am talking about multi-lane roads up to about six lanes, not just our local streets—the Roads and Traffic Authority-type State roads.

CHAIR: This has been the subject of other submissions and discussion earlier today. Given the high cost of constructing overhead or underground pedestrian walkways and claims in other submissions I referred to that not all students will use these facilities when they are available, do you still believe they are the most cost-effective way to manage school zone safety?

Mr GARNSEY: I know they are very high cost and they very rarely can be installed in a location without acquiring land close to them. Usually you cannot fit them within the existing road reserve. There may be some other ways of getting students across the road at less cost but I guess this is the safest way of getting them across the road. There is a high cost to do so.

CHAIR: Can you indicate the range of treatments constructed at school zones in your local government area and which ones have been found to be least effective?

Mr GARNSEY: We do not have any grade-separated facilities. The most common arrangement is either an un-signalised crossing—a pure zebra crossing—or a signalised crossing outside the school.

CHAIR: Is there adequate consultation with councils in regard to the design and management of school zones and what is your view on the effectiveness of coordination between the various agencies involved in monitoring and enforcing?

Mr GARNSEY: We get very little feedback, as I understand it, from the Roads and Traffic Authority on school zones. They have sole responsibility for them other than getting them approved through, say, council's traffic committee in the first place. They are installed and maintained by the Roads and Traffic Authority. I get very little feedback about anything to do with school zones from the authority. Meg may get more.

CHAIR: Are you speaking from a local traffic perspective?

Mr GARNSEY: Yes, in my local area.

Ms CUNNINGHAM: I have worked previously for seven years as a local government road safety officer and in that position I received regular communication from the Roads and Traffic Authority in relation to school zone road safety. In my current role I receive nothing from the RTA. Waverley Council does not have a road safety officer position so I function partially within that role but it is not my official title.

CHAIR: In general terms what is the position with councils? You are appearing for Waverley Council but for our Committee purposes you are also representative of councils. You have no road safety officer but do other councils generally have them and what has been the result in terms of this inquiry? Have you any comment on that?

Mr GARNSEY: Over the years road safety officer numbers seem to have dropped at a lot of councils. I think the Roads and Traffic Authority was considering dropping the 50-50 funding for those staff at one stage but I believe it is still running. Many councils have dropped that position and deal with safety issues through their normal staff.

CHAIR: Do you have direct contact with school communities? Do they contact you directly?

Mr GARNSEY: Yes they do. I have contact with local principals.

CHAIR: Do you ascertain the needs of the local community?

Mr GARNSEY: Yes.

Mr JOHN WILLIAMS: Lack of adequate parking options for staff and student drivers is cited as an area of concern in several submissions. Reference is made to parking space being taken out of playgrounds and ovals as well as problems associated with increased congestion on adjoining streets due to parking requirements. How prevalent is the use of school facilities such as playgrounds and ovals for parking in your local government area?

Mr GARNSEY: I would say it is pretty rare. Most of the principals that I have dealt with at most of the councils I have worked at over the years do not want vehicles inside the school grounds at any time. Those teachers they might let in have to come in by a certain time so they are not moving around when the students are there. Most of the schools have very little parking for their teachers. They certainly do not let parents in but they have very limited parking for teachers inside their school grounds. They do not really want vehicles in the school.

Mr JOHN WILLIAMS: How do you think parking congestion problems can be overcome without compromising school zone safety for students?

Mr GARNSEY: The parking would probably have to be time limited so that when school comes out the daytime parking would be gone and it is thrown open to the parents to have some parking for drop-off and pick-up time. So, parents would have it at certain times and teachers would have it in between.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: Would you say that Waverley Council is an unusual council compared to other Sydney councils or councils elsewhere in the State in that it has the highest population density in Australia? In fact, in some parts of Waverley it is the equivalent of living in Singapore. Is there speeding in school zones? I find it hard to believe that you can actually speed in Waverley with the congestion that occurs there now.

Mr GARNSEY: It is very difficult to speed at any time in Waverley regardless of whether it is a school zone time or not. The problem is that parents all seem to want to park as close as they can to the school grounds whether it is legal or illegal. They do it so they can pick up their child as close to the front gate as possible. I think this happens at most schools. A lot of people are not prepared to park and walk. They all want to park within a very short distance of the school. There is just not enough kerbside parking for the number of vehicles that turn up. Mornings are usually not as big a problem because they are dropping off at different times but when the school comes out at 3.15 p.m. or 3.30 p.m. they are all there for the pick-up and usually it is by far the worst time.

Ms CUNNINGHAM: In fact we have two schools where speeding is a problem—Moriah College and St Catherine's School.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: Where is the speeding at St Catherine's?

Ms CUNNINGHAM: On Macpherson Street.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: What strategies do you propose there? Should there be speed cameras there?

Ms CUNNINGHAM: Possibly on York Road on the periphery of Moriah College, particularly for traffic travelling north. I prepare a roster and our patrol officers visit at least two schools every day and I provide that school roster to the local highway patrol so that we do not double up.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: What do you provide to the local police?

Ms CUNNINGHAM: Our parking patrols visit our schools every morning and afternoon. Our roster provides the police with information so that they do not go where we are. Occasionally we do joint—

The Hon. WALT SECORD: Do those council officers give out infringements to parents who are parking in school areas?

Ms CUNNINGHAM: Yes we do.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: How much revenue do you generate per month?

Ms CUNNINGHAM: Last year, in the name of making a link between parking safely and child safety, we donated the net income from all infringements issued in school zones to the Prince of Wales Children's Hospital.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: How much did you donate?

Ms CUNNINGHAM: That was \$49,000.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: How many schools would that have come from?

Ms CUNNINGHAM: That would be 15 or 16 schools.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: In Waverley?

Ms CUNNINGHAM: Yes.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: You work in conjunction with the police?

Ms CUNNINGHAM: We do.

The Hon. CATE FAEHRMANN: Your submission suggests that drivers are not always aware when they are entering school zones, is that right? So do you want to expand on the problems in your area in relation to signage and identification of school zones and perhaps suggest some recommendations to improve those, if there are any?

Mr GARNSEY: I think the flashing lights on the school zone signs are a big plus to warn drivers they are entering a school zone. In the Waverley area you have a lot of activity on the road at the best of times with high vehicle numbers.

The Hon. CATE FAEHRMANN: You obviously have a lot of school zones in Waverley, or some school zones in Waverley that do not have the flashing lights?

Mr GARNSEY: Yes.

The Hon. CATE FAEHRMANN: Do you know how many have flashing lights, as a rough estimate?

Mr GARNSEY: No, I do not offhand. They tend to be on the more significant roads, the busier roads. In the quieter back streets where some of the school zones are, they just have the usual warning signs without the flashing lights. But again, I think there is a greater increase in driver awareness of a school zone when the flashing lights are there, there is no doubt about that.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: Have you had any fatalities or injuries in Waverley in school zones in the last year?

Mr GARNSEY: Not that I am aware of, no.

The Hon. CATE FAEHRMANN: You have mentioned briefly in your submission and raised it briefly at the beginning as well, the insufficient road safety consultants provided by the Department of Education and Training to adequately service schools and that more funding is required to provide one consultant per Department of Education and Training region, at a minimum. What is the impact of not having these road safety consultants per Department of Education and Training region?

Ms CUNNINGHAM: From my point of view, I have an annual work plan which is the financial year, and as of yesterday our consultant did not know if she would be employed next year. So it has an adverse impact on program planning. We have done a lot of good joint work together but it does impact negatively on forward planning.

The Hon. CATE FAEHRMANN: That is a consultant provided by the Department of Education and Training for which region, the Local Government Association region?

Ms CUNNINGHAM: There are four regions within the Sydney Metropolitan Area but only three consultants. The consultant who services Waverley Council covers both Sydney and northern regions—I think it is Cherrybrook in the north to Lucas Heights in the south, and out to Bankstown in the west. That is one person servicing all primary and high schools and all local governments.

The Hon. CATE FAEHRMANN: That is a huge area. I think you mentioned before that you have not received any information in relation to school safety zones from the Roads and Traffic Authority in your role at Waverley Council but you used to get that information when you were working for the Local Government Association. Do you think that the Local Government Association or the Local Government and Shires Association should be acting as the distributing agency for councils? Is it that the Roads and Traffic Authority should be going through the Local Government and Shires Association and they are distributing all that information to the councils and perhaps that is what the Roads and Traffic Authority is expecting to happen and it does not?

Ms CUNNINGHAM: I think that could be helpful and I do not think the Roads and Traffic Authority expects that. Our neighbouring council, Randwick, does happen to have a road safety officer; Woollahra does not. It would be helpful if we could all work jointly on specific school zone safety programs. My understanding is that the contract between the Roads and Traffic Authority and local governments that do have road safety officers, there are certain restrictions upon what activities they can do in combination with councils that do not have road safety officers, so it is not really enhancing safety.

The Hon. CATE FAEHRMANN: Another question on the road safety officers, does each local council apply to the Roads and Traffic Authority or the Government for funding for a road safety officer? Is that why some councils have them and others do not?

Ms CUNNINGHAM: Yes, they can choose to participate in the scheme.

The Hon. CATE FAEHRMANN: And what is the scheme, what is the funding stream there?

Ms CUNNINGHAM: It was 50/50.

Mr GARNSEY: 50/50 as far as I know, yes.

Mr JOHN WILLIAMS: On the question of drivers not always being aware of entering a school zone, there has been an initiative to roll out dragon teeth, just based on some of the comments, can they be concealed by the volume of traffic on the road?

Mr GARNSEY: Yes, they can be. They are relatively close to the crossing. I am not sure of the distance at which they start out from the crossing but if you are in a queue of traffic watching traffic around you, I doubt you would see the dragon teeth on the road.

Mr JOHN WILLIAMS: So you would say in those congested areas, that is an ineffective method of advising drivers?

Mr GARNSEY: Yes, I think drivers would be looking more for footpath-mounted signs or devices above the road, not on the road itself. I can recall years ago the Roads and Traffic Authority used to have the yellow sign with the black legs on it across every pedestrian crossing, which were lit at night. And over the years they were a bit of a hazard when they possibly dropped on vehicles. They were slowly removed, just as they are removing traffic domes now. They do not put the silent cops in any more, they are illegal to install. I feel that an overhead device across a crossing gives the driver far more awareness of the crossing on the road and the potential for a person to be on it, rather than anything painted on the road.

CHAIR: Other submissions have commented on the current operating times for school zones and the appropriateness of standardised hours of operations across the school centre, particularly in relation to public and private school operating hours. Given you have a mix of those schools in your council area, do you have a view about the appropriateness of the standardised approach to school zone operating times?

Ms CUNNINGHAM: My only comment would be that it is my experience that many parents who have their children at independent schools understand that when their children are on holiday the zones are not in operation. We do what we can through educating, we send information to school newsletters advising parents that that is not the case, we give them the dates that the zones start and finish, but I think it is difficult.

Mr GARNSEY: There are so many different schools with different starting and finishing times, the private schools. Even their official starting times are different. My daughter goes to a private school and she now has a period zero which starts at 8.00 a.m. Some of the others schools in the area do not start until 9.00 or 9.15, even though the school zones click in at 8.00. Some schools even have students there at 7.30 because they have before normal school hours classes. So there are even schools operating well before the 8.00 a.m. time when these zones click in.

CHAIR: I do not want to go down the path of speculating whether schools may extend their hours in the future because that would be another ball game altogether. But one of the other submissions did draw our attention to the fact that in the Australian Capital Territory, for instance, there are some areas that operate from 8.00 a.m. to 4.00 p.m. as school zones and that overseas some operate 24/7. Do you have any comment on that extended period of operation? I might add that he was not in favour of it.

Mr GARNSEY: I think you have to balance up traffic flow with safety. I think the 8.00 a.m. to 9.30 a.m. and 2.30 p.m. to 4.00 p.m. times at the moment are adequate for safety outside schools. I think an all-day arrangement would not really be desirable and I do not think it would be supported from a lot of points of view.

CHAIR: Do you have any comments on other treatments that you would recommend?

Mr GARNSEY: I consider the wombat-type crossing speed hump arrangement at a pedestrian crossing outside a school to be a good facility to slow cars down. I do not think you necessarily need lights at every school. There are many streets with traffic volumes that are quite low and you do not necessarily need the lights to get children across the road. My observation at my daughter's high school is that the school has two street frontages, a primary school on one street and a high school on the other, and even at the morning drop-off and afternoon pick-up times, the cars are still going through those school zones at speeds, in my opinion, higher than 40 kilometres per hour. While I was at one of the councils, I put in a wombat crossing at the school and it slowed the cars down substantially as they approached the school.

CHAIR: Would you elaborate for Hansard and for the record, just describe the wombat crossing, please?

Mr GARNSEY: The wombat crossing is essentially installing a speed hump at the zebra crossing itself. It is a raised platform where one drives up on to the platform and off the other side. It is quite a large

device compared to a normal speed hump installed in the street. It is a large platform where the four wheels of a car go up on that platform as they drive up and drop off the other side.

CHAIR: Do you have any currently and what is the effect then outside of school hours on the traffic flow?

Mr GARNSEY: They are usually not installed on high volume roads; they are generally installed on the lower volume roads. They have very minimal impact on drivers after school hours. It can be an issue for some residents where the cars are thumping over these humps all night.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: How many are there in Waverley?

Mr GARNSEY: I could not put a figure on that.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: I do understand that there are complaints from local residents that there is a loud noise that occurs as you drive over them.

Mr GARNSEY: There can be, particularly from the larger vehicles such as trucks around 5.00 a.m. when they are on the way to jobs, they sometimes lose tail gates when they drive up over these humps and down the other side.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: Are they expensive to install?

Mr GARNSEY: They are, you are looking at roughly \$20,000 for a device, depending on whether it is made of concrete or bitumen, how fancy they are. The residents want one that looks nicer than the basic one because we do a fair bit of consultation before we install a device like that.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: You are a supporter of that approach?

Mr GARNSEY: I am.

Mr ROBERT FUROLO: For the sake of the Committee, there is a wombat crossing at Cathedral Street at St Joseph's school, there is one there that has been developed and it is effective, I use it regularly myself. But regardless of the school time zones, I think people are already slowed down by that pedestrian crossing and it has been a fairly effective method of reducing the speed of drivers approaching it.

Mr GARNSEY: I think responsible drivers always slow down at those devices even though there may not be a child on the crossing, but there are always the hoons who will drive over the devices at well over the desired speed limit, which is about 25 kilometres an hour.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: If you, in fact, speed through one of those devices, can you damage your car?

Mr GARNSEY: There is no evidence that damage is done if you use them normally. I think if you continually hit one of those devices at a higher than desirable speed, you could do damage to your car but normal driving under normal conditions at the desired speeds should not be a problem.

CHAIR: There is, of course, a system of education within the school system and we have had some exposure to that through the Centre for Road Safety within the public school system and we have explored some of the others today with previous witnesses. Are you aware of the proposed move towards a national syllabus which some may feel may result in road safety education being no longer mandatory and what would be your response to that?

Mr GARNSEY: I am not aware of it but it is not really a question for me to answer.

Ms CUNNINGHAM: I am also unaware of that proposal.

CHAIR: I raise that in particular in connection with your submission making a point about insufficient road safety consultants and clearly this is one way in which that particular concern is being addressed and we

want to explore whether it will be addressed in the future and get a view. I thank you for appearing before the Committee. We appreciate your time.

(The witnesses retired.)

(The Committee adjourned at 4.00 p.m.)

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