

REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS BEFORE

PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE

INQUIRY INTO CONNECTING WITH PUBLIC TRANSPORT

At Sydney on Monday 27 October 2008

The Committee met at 4.00 p.m.

PRESENT

Mr P. E. McLeay (Chair)

Mr N. Khosaba
Mr G. A McBride
Mr A. J. Roberts
Mr J. H. Turner

PETER ACHTERSTRAAT, Auditor-General, The Audit Office of New South Wales, 1 Margaret Street, Sydney, on former oath:

JIM GLASSON, Director General, Ministry of Transport, 227 Elizabeth Street, Sydney,

PETER DAVID SCARLETT, Director, Finance & Corporate Services, Ministry of Transport, 227 Elizabeth Street, Sydney, and

SEAN MICHAEL CRUMLIN, Director, Performance Audit, The Audit Office of New South Wales, 1 Margaret Street, Sydney, sworn and examined:

CHAIR: Auditor-General, would you like to make an opening statement?

Mr ACHTERSTRAAT: I welcome the opportunity to appear before the inquiry. My report on connecting with public transport was tabled in Parliament on 6 June 2007. I would like to give some context to the report's recommendations, which were developed in consultation with the Ministry of Transport.

The audit focused on the role of interchanges. Interchanges can promote access to the public transport network with good waiting times and fast transfers. The audit found that while some impressive interchanges have been developed, such as Parramatta, there was considerable potential for the Ministry of Transport to plan and manage interchanges more effectively so as to make better use of our public transport network. The audit found that the Ministry of Transport needed to focus more on modal transport planning and interchange performance. It needed to assign responsibility for the coordination and oversight of intermodal operations to an entity resourced for that purpose. Without this we considered it would continue to be very difficult to identify and address unmet needs, seek and secure stakeholder funding, and monitor and evaluate system performance.

We recommended a series of measures, which were designed to assign clear responsibilities, develop a more strategic approach, develop and promote best practise, provide better information to the public, systematically evaluate performance, and address the need for long-term funding. We have not gone back since the audit to assess the Ministry of Transport's progress, but I am encouraged that the Ministry of Transport continues its efforts for meeting these challenges.

CHAIR: Mr Glasson, would you like to make an opening statement?

Mr GLASSON: Thank you for the opportunity to appear today and thank you also for taking into account my leave provisions in the scheduling of the deliberations of the Committee. In terms of the role of the Ministry of Transport, we are the lead public transport agency of the New South Wales Government and we provide a focal point for integrated transport planning and service delivery. The Ministry coordinates the high-level transport priorities in New South Wales and implements them in collaboration with other New South Wales government agencies. We manage the provision of transport interchanges and commuter car parks, which are funded through levies raised from the Parking Space Levy Act, which is the primary source of funding for such initiatives. In the past few years major public transport interchanges in locations such as Parramatta, Bankstown, Blacktown, Liverpool and Mount Druitt have been redeveloped or upgraded from parking space levy funds.

We are committed to providing improved access and we are achieving this by upgrading existing interchanges and creating additional commuter car parking. The parking space levy program was included in the 10-year total asset management plan, which requires a strategic approach to physical asset planning and management. Our plan incorporates recurrent maintenance expenditure to ensure an appropriate balance between asset expansion and maintenance of existing assets. Providing infrastructure such as transport interchanges and commuter car parks across the network aims to make using public transport a more attractive and viable alternative to driving a car.

The performance audit outlined the importance of interchanges in promoting increased use of public transport, and the Ministry supports that conclusion. The audit has been effective in demonstrating the challenges to providing efficient and effective public transport. We recognise the issues raised in the audit, and we have engaged with our stakeholders in a process of commencing to address these issues. It is important to note that improvements to public transport currently occur through many activities undertaken by the Ministry in cooperation with various government agencies. These include a number of major initiatives such as bus reform, the rationalisation of bus contracts within the Sydney area and the rollout of strategic bus corridors

which have significantly altered the role and importance of interchanges in the strategic transport of Sydney going forward.

Overall, the Ministry believes that there has been good progress made. We have completed the development of minimum standards for interchanges, and have published guidelines for the development of interchange facilities as a direct result of the Auditor General's report. We have completed an interchange ranking framework which provides a framework capable of evaluating and prioritising interchanges for forward planning. We have adopted a precinct-based approach, in conjunction with the New South Wales police, for transport security at major transport interchanges, and we are proceeding with the procurement of aerial photography and GIS data to support a program of maps and diagrams for interchanges. I would like to assure members of the Committee of our commitment to address the recommendations of the review and to deliver best outcomes for the community.

CHAIR: I would like to make a declaration which is not necessary under the standing orders. However, in light of transparency, my wife is also a director of the Ministry of Transport.

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS: The Auditor General recommended a coordinating entity. In your opinion, who should this be?

Mr GLASSON: I think the Ministry of Transport is best placed to carry out that function. There are a number of mechanisms for the delivery of interchanges. The Ministry of Transport and indeed the Government are not the sole developers of interchanges; local councils and some private-sector developers have a development role with interchanges, and in those circumstances the Department of Planning has a clear role. But in terms of the Government coordination, with government funds are involved, I think it is the Ministry of Transport. Within the Ministry we have established, within the past two years, a Centre for Transport Planning and Product Development, which has been an outcome from the previous Premier's Urban Transport Statement of 2006. It has as one of its core objectives a more coordinated and integrated approach to multimodal transport, rather than a focus on single modes, whether that be road, rail, bus or ferry.

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS: So what you are saying is that as far as the Ministry of Transport is concerned the coordinating authority should be the Ministry of Transport.

Mr GLASSON: That is my view.

CHAIR: Does that mean that if a private bus comes in the Ministry of Transport can give guidelines on what their timetable should be, for example?

Mr GLASSON: Correct. Under the new metropolitan bus service contracts, we have overall engagement in the development of those timetables. Can I just expand a little on the bus issue? You may be aware that prior to the new bus contracts being implemented in the past three years, Sydney historically had grown around the private bus network of a lot of small family entities with exclusive rights within small areas, mainly to deliver to local stations and local schools. There were previously 83 private contracts; those have been consolidated into 11 much larger areas with rights of carriage through adjoining areas. So now there is a much greater potential for bus to start to fulfil a much bigger role in integrated public transport across Sydney.

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS: So this coordinating entity, when it is established—

Mr GLASSON: It is established now.

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS: So you are currently directing that?

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS: It is under my overall direction, yes.

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS: Is there any move to change that?

Mr GLASSON: Not that I am aware.

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS: Not that you are aware of?

Mr GLASSON: No.

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS: Interchanges are one thing but it is how—and everyone tends to agree with this—you utilise them. You mentioned before about commuter car parks.

Mr GLASSON: Yes.

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS: What sort of role are we looking at? How much will commuters be charged? You must have some financial planning with respect to how much a commuter would be charged a day for these car parks?

Mr SCARLETT: We have done no work on charging for car parks in the sense of doing any financial modelling of them at this stage. There is no policy decision to charge for car parks so we have not been doing any work on that issue.

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS: Certainly in your opening statement there was some allusion to the funding of it.

Mr GLASSON: Certainly. Can I respond to that?

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS: Yes.

Mr GLASSON: The Auditor General in his report commented on the need to explore the opportunities for private sector investment in both interchanges and car parks. In relation to car parks, the Ministry has engaged consultants to provide some preliminary advice, not in relation to pricing but in relation to the sorts of things the private sector would need as a precursor to be interested in investing in that sort of infrastructure. That work has yet to be considered by the Government.

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS: Effectively you are saying that we are looking at paid commuter car parking. Lendlease is not the Red Cross; it will not build a commuter car park because it is a bunch of good blokes. So we are looking at paid commuter car parking.

Mr GLASSON: No. The Government may consider what will be the implications of the private sector investing in commuter car parks but at this stage we just have a clear policy that the Government is putting funding from the parking space levy into commuter car parks and at this point in time there is no charge for those car parks.

CHAIR: For the benefit of the Committee, is the parking space levy collected from central business district car parking spaces?

Mr GLASSON: Yes.

CHAIR: Can you explain that process? How much is it per year, and is that used for capital works?

Mr SCARLETT: The levy is collected across a number of areas. It is collected in the CBD, as you pointed out. It is also collected in Chatswood, North Sydney, Parramatta and Bondi Junction. Different rates apply in the two areas. In the CBD the current rate is in the order of \$900 per annum and in the category 2 areas, that is the other areas I mentioned, the rate is roughly half that figure. The car parking levy is indexed each year to the consumer price index [CPI]. Currently it raises in the order of \$47 million per annum and under the legislation is required to be used on transport infrastructure to encourage the use of public transport from those areas where the levy is collected to those areas where the levy is collected, so there is a benefit to getting cars off the road. That is the principle behind the levy.

CHAIR: Most of the time it is used for capital works to build a commuter car park in conjunction with a railway station and there is free parking all day?

Mr GLASSON: It is predominately assigned to either car parks or interchanges and substantially to encourage public transport to those major centres where it is collected.

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS: How many commuter car parks or car spaces are there currently in metropolitan Sydney that the Ministry controls?

Mr GLASSON: I would not want to give you a precise figure. I am happy to take that on notice and give you a precise figure.

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS: Thank you. Following on from that, there must be a plan. How many car spaces are we going to be building over the next—what period you looking at—5 to 10 years?

Mr GLASSON: Generally we look at 5 to 10 years, but I think the answer to that right now is that we are in the process of a mini-budget and we will not have clarity on that particular issue until the mini-budget is finalised by the Government.

CHAIR: Given that is a fund that is hypothecated, why would that be affected by the mini-budget? If it is a fund for either car parks or interchanges, would you expect money to be taken from it or does the fund only supplement part of it?

Mr GLASSON: There is often an attempt to use additional money to expand the scope of the work we are doing, including from the private sector. The interchange at Parramatta and the interchange that is under construction now at Chatswood have had significant private sector investment included in addition to the money that has been allocated from the parking space levy.

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS: It is very important to know where we are going. Going through your report there does not seem to be a large amount of substance in the responses. For example, we are talking about commuter car parking but the Ministry of Transport cannot tell us how much there is going to be. It is a major issue. As you said in your opening statement, if you are going to get people onto buses and trains, it needs to be addressed. It is strange that, as a Government or taxpayers, we do not have any knowledge of how many we are going to get. It is great to talk about it.

Mr GLASSON: Within the context of the mini-budget the Government may reallocate or reprioritise. It is not an appropriate time to give a forward list in so far as the Premier has indicated to all of us that the entire forward capital program is under consideration.

Mr ACHTERSTRAAT: To build on that, Mr Roberts, our audit found there were 23,000 parking spaces located in dedicated committee car parks with RailCorp—23,000 at the current time. It is on page 24 of the report.

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS: Can you update us on the latest information on integrated ticketing and how that will work with our interchanges?

Mr GLASSON: The current situation with integrated ticketing is quite clear. The previous contract was terminated by the Government and is subject to court proceedings. There has been a new call for expressions of interest. I do not have accountability for integrated ticketing; that is a separate authority. But there has been a new call to the market for expressions of interest, which I think closed a week or so ago. I do not have any details of what those responses have been. In relation to the broader question on what does that mean in terms of integrated transport, I think it is quite clear that the Government recognises that integrated ticketing is to the benefit of the customers. I think they have been quite frustrated with the delays in achieving that.

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS: Now that the railways board has been effectively sacked and is now under direct Government control, what is your position with respect to improving the management of railways? What are your plans to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the railways?

Mr GLASSON: That is not for me to comment on. I do not have responsibility in my position for the railways. It is a separate chief executive. That is a matter between the chief executive and the Minister.

Mr NINOS KHOSHABA: The thrust of the Auditor-General's recommendation was that a public transport authority exercising control over public transport arrangements be established. The Ministry gave effect to this recommendation by establishing the Centre for Transport Planning and Product Development within the Ministry of Transport. Why did the Ministry of Transport create a work group within the Ministry instead of establishing a separate authority, as recommended by the Auditor-General?

Mr GLASSON: Those decisions are made by the Government; not by me as a public servant. I think the answer is that the Government decided to establish the Centre for Transport Planning and Product Development within the Ministry. I do not have the ability to influence the structures of the public service.

Mr NINOS KHOSHABA: Would you know how the planning responsibilities are shared between the Centre for Transport Planning and Product Development and the Transport Planning Division of the Ministry of Transport? Has this resulted in improved accountability?

Mr GLASSON: Those two groups have slightly different roles. The transport planning function within the Ministry generally has oversight of statutory planning and implementation of the metropolitan strategy by way of liaising with other government agencies, and also oversight working with the bus industry on the development of integrated bus networks, coming out of the new bus contracts. The Centre for Transport Planning and Product Development has the strategic role of looking at the forward strategic view across all transport modes, including public transport. They are different roles. We also have the Transport Data Centre within the Ministry of Transport as well, which does the continuous travel surveys to determine people's travel behaviour within the Sydney region.

Mr NINOS KHOSHABA: What is the nature of the relationship and coordination between the Centre for Transport Planning and Product Development and non-State government agencies such as local councils and private owners?

Mr GLASSON: At this stage that would be on a case-by-case basis. The greatest role within the Centre is, in fact, the integration of planning across the government agencies in terms of the relationships between the Roads and Traffic Authority [RTA], RailCorp and the Ministry. But on a case-by-case basis where local councils are affected then certainly there is consultation and similarly with the private sector in relation to a major development that has some private sector ownership or impacts.

CHAIR: Recommendation 2 states that there is a need to establish clear responsibilities for interchange ownerships for operations and maintenance?

Mr GLASSON: Yes.

CHAIR: You have touched on it a few times that there are issues around it. Your submission states that an inventory has been compiled and ownership of interchanges is to be determined according to land ownership. Does that mean that we know who is responsible for every interchange? You said before you have a coordinating authority but is it clear who is responsible for the operation and maintenance of each one now?

Mr GLASSON: How broad is the definition of "interchange"? Are you talking about interchanges at rail stations or more broadly? The Auditor-General's definition is really quite broad from bus to bus transfers through to bus to ferry wharf.

CHAIR: Let us take the broad definition. For example, if I walked up to an interchange and tripped, would I know who to sue?

Mr GLASSON: The lawyers would probably need to look at that, the property records. I am not trying to be dismissive of that. There are some very clear boundaries of land ownership around these things, particularly at ferry wharves, at bus interchanges, at rail stations and clear delineations of the ownership of land, including the private sector. At Parramatta, for example, the delineation of the Westfield Shopping Centre boundary vis-a-vis the RailCorp station is a line. If you tripped on one side of it, it is Westfield, and if you trip on the other side it is RailCorp. In terms of the question as to whether we understand who does own most of these things, Peter do you want to comment?

Mr SCARLETT: It is a significant issue for us and we are currently in the process of undertaking a review. We have gone through and looked at the top 40 interchanges, basically based on passenger movements, and we are addressing those initially to get a better understanding of the ownership issues. In most cases when we build an interchange we try to make arrangements with the landowner to take ownership of that facility and for them to take on the ownership and maintenance responsibilities. So what we want to do with this group we have selected initially to work through is to make sure we are clear about that ownership issue, and the maintenance issues as well that go with that. At the same time as doing that we are also looking at assessing the standard of the interchange. Mr Glasson mentioned earlier, we have developed a set of guidelines for

interchanges and we are using that as a measure of the facilities that are found at particular locations with a view then to seeing whether any further work is needed at those locations to bring them to a standard that we think is appropriate. That is where we are going with that at the moment. We are working through. We have just started that work a month or so ago and we will work through this first 40 and get an understanding of those and how that comes together for us and then move on from there to the other list. The first 40 we will pick up.

CHAIR: You only started that one month ago?

Mr SCARLETT: Yes, it was early this month, I think, October.

Mr JOHN TURNER: I may have misunderstood you, but there are 40 interchanges that you do not know who actually owns?

Mr SCARLETT: No, we have understandings about ownership but sometimes there are differences of opinion between—

Mr JOHN TURNER: That is pretty scary stuff that the Ministry does not know who owns the interchanges in high activity areas.

Mr SCARLETT: The ownership of land is clear and the facilities are owned by the people who own the land but in some cases there are issues mainly around maintenance of facilities that were built a long time ago and there is sometimes a need to clarify those issues with particular owners. That is the work that we are doing at the moment.

CHAIR: In relation to the chief executive officer of RailCorp, you said that that chief executive officer looks after rail. If it is a RailCorp and Westfield interchange, for example, how does the MOT come in over the top and say "we are the operator" or do you not?

Mr SCARLETT: No, we do not seek to be the operator. We seek to facilitate the development of the interchange to appropriate standards and then to ensure that there is a regime in place to maintain that facility and manage it into the future.

CHAIR: The Auditor-General report lists a number of locations of created transport authorities whose role is to centrally control, plan, market and coordinate transport. These locations include Queensland, Perth, London, New York, Vancouver, Paris and Berlin. To what extent has the Ministry looked at what other cities have done when attempting to coordinate a response to, and assign responsibility for, the interchange challenges facing Sydney?

Mr GLASSON: In those examples that you mentioned the governments in those jurisdictions have created an over-arching transport authority to have oversight and management of all transport and infrastructure operations, marketing, et cetera. That has not been done in New South Wales and that is a matter for the Government.

CHAIR: Do the challenges facing our interchanges differ from those other cities?

Mr GLASSON: In those cities there has been the creation of an over-arching entity with powers over all those authorities to coordinate and direct. My role is in strategic planning and coordination of delivery and then coordination of maintenance.

CHAIR: Are there any barriers to New South Wales developing a central transport authority for Sydney or is it just a policy decision?

Mr GLASSON: That is a policy decision.

CHAIR: Auditor-General do you want to make a comment to that?

Mr ACHTERSTRAAT: The Audit Office is after clarity and accountability. Mention was made of a situation if somebody trips at an interchange who do they sue? My concern would be: whose incentive is it to make sure nobody does trip? Who is in charge of this interchange? Who is in charge of determining where they should be and what the criteria should be for where they should be placed? I think the example of ownership of

the land is a good step forward but while there are a number of advisory committees and steering committees I guess I would be keen to understand more fully the accountability for actually delivery. I am still not certain, as our report pointed out, who has the incentive to be proactive to ensure nobody trips?

CHAIR: In your report you mention that RailCorp is trialling a program whereby joint owners of the interchange entered a precinct management deed and appointed a precinct manager.

Mr ACHTERSTRAAT: I think that was the case in Parramatta for example?

CHAIR: Why did you highlight that as important?

Mr ACHTERSTRAAT: It is an example of how it could work.

CHAIR: Do you want to respond?

Mr GLASSON: At Parramatta, as I understand it, RailCorp are the precinct manager and they do provide the onsite liaison on a day-to-day basis. That is a resource issue going forward.

CHAIR: Are you able to comment on how that trial has been going?

Mr GLASSON: My understanding is that the Parramatta interchange is operating well. I cannot give you specific comments on trips and falls and issues that may or may not have arisen there.

CHAIR: Were they mainly about hygiene or accessibility or signage?

Mr GLASSON: I think Parramatta has good signage. RailCorp provides toilets there. The standards of finishes on the public spaces in terms of walkways, et cetera, is of a good standard, but it is a very recent interchange.

CHAIR: Do you have any precinct managers in any non-rail interchanges?

Mr GLASSON: Not that I am aware of.

CHAIR: Or any agreements with any other parties to manage, including emergency services or other local authorities in any of your interchanges?

Mr GLASSON: The work that is being done led by the police at the moment is looking at putting together interchange committees for the purposes of security. Interchanges generally, in terms of emergency services, are picked up under the normal State Emergency Services protocols in the local and district emergency management plans. Beyond that I do not think we have anything in particular.

CHAIR: You do not think you have a role in, shall we say, terror? Do you have any particular emergency response policing issues?

Mr GLASSON: We have a role under the State Emergency Management Act of being the coordinator within the transport portfolio, but the actual responses are done by the line agencies such as RailCorp and Ferries.

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS: Let us say if there was a bomb threat at a multimodal interchange with several owners, has responsibility for the response been clearly assigned in all such interchanges?

Mr GLASSON: Yes, it is clearly with NSW Police.

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS: And they are aware of that?

Mr GLASSON: That is my understanding, yes. The protocol is that the facility owner, or whoever becomes aware of a threat or a suspicious item, goes directly to the police.

CHAIR: Recommendation 17 says that you should forecast long-term funding requirements for development operations, maintenance and security. Your submission notes that long-term forecasts are prepared

in conjunction with the State Infrastructure Strategy and the Total Asset Management Plan, and you mentioned earlier that in the mini-budget there may be other things up for grabs. Does the forecast for long-term funding include funding requirements for operations, maintenance and security existing for new interchanges?

Mr GLASSON: Yes. Those matters are always included within the forecast for individual interchanges.

CHAIR: What about recommendation 22, which says, "identify, secure and leverage further funding sources as necessary to address the shortfalls", which is talking about a parking space levy, and listed alternative funding sources including private developers and councils and other transport agencies. Should Sydney Buses or Veolia or someone assist to pay for further car parking spaces for interchanges? What alternative funding sources have been identified and are you pursuing increased private sector involvement?

Mr GLASSON: Can I answer that in a number of ways? Under the metropolitan bus contracts the bus operators are not funded to provide contributions to infrastructure. So there is no infrastructure funding available from that source. The most obvious source of funding, aside from local councils and including local councils, is land adjacent to rail stations or major interchanges that is capable of being redeveloped to provide an improvement in value to the private owner. That is where the redevelopment of Parramatta interchange and Chatswood Interchange have achieved significant additional outcomes in a total interchange sense because they have been integrated with the private owner immediately adjacent who gains a benefit as well. That is often the case also with local councils where the council has land which it controls or there is the ability to negotiate with adjacent landholders over redevelopment that provides an improved outcome both for the government infrastructure investment and for the retail or other services immediately adjacent to the interchange.

CHAIR: So you do those things, not RailCorp if it is RailCorp land?

Mr GLASSON: In those instances those developments are taken on a whole-of-government basis depending on the nature of the particular piece of infrastructure. We would be involved with RailCorp and potentially with the Transport Infrastructure Development Corporation on those sorts of opportunities.

CHAIR: Your submission indicates—in relation to recommendation 6—a program of works for interchange upgrade and renewal is being prepared and will be incorporated into the Ministry's Total Asset Management Plan. Will that program of works cover upgrade and renewal plans for what period of time into the future—five, ten years? And if so will that program be published?

Mr GLASSON: Generally our forward programs are aligned to the budget process. So we have a relatively well-developed four-year forward horizon; a less developed following six years to fit in with a forward 10-year program. In terms of the precise program at the moment and the release of those programs, as I say, the mini-budget right now is a situation where we have been told quite clearly that nothing is in and nothing is out. I would happily provide you with a further comment on notice following that.

CHAIR: So you publish it through the budget papers, the accrual process?

Mr GLASSON: Generally the major projects will be included in the budget papers.

CHAIR: Your submission also states that in preparing that program of works the Ministry is undertaking scoping studies of a number of stations to examine upgrade options. How many interchanges have been assessed and on what basis are the interchanges selected?

Mr SCARLETT: Scoping studies have been carried out on 25 interchange site locations. There are a further 20 or so that are in the next batch. The basis on which they were determined was by looking at the criteria that the Ministry developed to assess where interchange facilities should be located.

CHAIR: Is this criteria published?

Mr SCARLETT: No, it is not a published document.

CHAIR: Internal management work?

Mr SCARLETT: It is just internal management work, and basically we look at a number of issues in alignment to the metropolitan strategy: the number of passengers, facilities in the area that people need to access. So there is a range of things that are looked at in terms of trying to get a ranking on what are the most important sites to work on. That is the work that is being undertaken to date.

CHAIR: Do you incorporate the commuter experience, like personal security, ambience or being close to shops?

Mr SCARLETT: Closeness to facilities like shops, or medical facilities and the like, would be an issue that would be considered as part of the ranking process. Ambience may be a bit difficult to rank in a strict sense, but obviously the intent is to look at the commuter's experience and try to improve that experience in the overall facility at the end of the day.

CHAIR: In relation to ranking, the Auditor-General's report highlights a lack of planning with respect to Park and Ride and Kiss and Ride facilities at interchanges. Have these facilities now been given a higher priority in the interchange assessment and planning process? Perhaps the Auditor-General can explain his concerns about lack of planning with respect to Park and Ride and Kiss and Ride.

Mr ACHTERSTRAAT: It was probably also lack of information to persons on how to use them, and when they apply, et cetera. Is that what you mean, Chair? Are we talking about recommendation 10?

CHAIR: And recommendation 6. We are dealing with page 26.

Mr ACHTERSTRAAT: In relation to the 10-year rolling plan, which is recommendation 6, it is pleasing to note that the Ministry is undertaking a number of studies—45 studies. It is pleasing to note that once that is completed a program of works will be developed and progressively expanded. I guess that is what we were calling for in recommendation 6, that there be a long-term plan developed and published, and the Ministry has indicated that once they have finished the 45 studies that will go a long way to doing that. In relation to Kiss and Ride—

CHAIR: Page 24, right at the top.

Mr ACHTERSTRAAT: I think what we were saying there is that they just seem to happen. There is no systematic analysis of whether Kiss and Ride is necessary, or whether they are working well.

CHAIR: Kiss and Ride and drop-off zones generally have to be planned. There is parking or no parking, stopping or no stopping. If it is a drop-off zone, presumably it is signposted, or not necessarily? I suppose the question, Mr Glasson, is whether it is your responsibility or RailCorp's responsibility?

Mr GLASSON: In that instance it is the local council's responsibility. They generally control the kerb space immediately outside suburban railway stations and the local parking schemes that surround those stations. Generally those things are developed and/or altered by their local traffic committees.

CHAIR: But some are planned. At Helensburgh station we have just had a Kiss and Ride, I think, in conjunction with a bus stop and turning circle.

Mr GLASSON: Yes, and generally that will be done in the local traffic committee with the input of the local bus operator, the local police and the local council's transport and traffic planning officer.

CHAIR: So not your responsibility?

Mr GLASSON: No, they are not our responsibility. We often attend or make submissions in support of bus operators or others—taxi operators—in relation to public transport accessibility close to station entry points.

CHAIR: If someone wanted a station upgrade, who would they go to?

Mr GLASSON: They would go to the council and the council, if they thought it was a major redevelopment, would often write to us and ask for our comments or our assistance.

CHAIR: As part of your statement to improve people's use of public transport, would it not be something that you could take—

Mr GLASSON: In fact it may well be that we should develop some generic guidelines for local councils to assist them.

Mr ACHTERSTRAAT: As we have noted in our report, at stations such as Mount Druitt station there is only a drop-off for two cars. There may well be scope to increase that. If that is for the local council or the Ministry responsible, they can be working together to decide if two is adequate or should be increased.

CHAIR: Do you have a response to that?

Mr GLASSON: No, I think that is a reasonable comment.

CHAIR: The recommendation says, "Set performance objectives for interchanges such as demand levels, connectivity offered and cost-effectiveness achieved". From your response it is hard to determine if you agree with that recommendation or not. You say you will continue to prepare forward programs of capital works?

Mr GLASSON: Where it is within our power to coordinate government entities, then we will. You have made some comments around the interface with local government and they are certainly things that I will turn my mind to following this afternoon's discussion.

CHAIR: If there is a policy decision you cannot just go up to Sutherland council, for example, and tell them what to do when they say it is their job and not yours?

Mr GLASSON: That is right, but we can seek to work constructively with them around some improved outcomes, and we often do that. We made significant representations to Baulkham Hills Council in relation to bus layover and bus stop areas around Castle Towers and that resulted in significant improvement to the general amenity of the interchange and to the experience of the customers.

CHAIR: Is it generally in new developments that you can get the most improvement or cooperation with other agencies?

Mr GLASSON: New developments or a substantial redevelopment are generally when the opportunities best present themselves for some major change.

CHAIR: Thank you for your time today. We certainly appreciate your involvement. The Public Accounts Committee is following up all of the Auditor-General's inquiries 12 months afterwards. We think that is suitable lead-time for agencies to come to terms with the recommendations of the Auditor-General. If you feel that 12 months is not a beneficial timeframe, please feel free to let us know, either formally or informally. Do you wish to make any closing comments?

Mr GLASSON: No, I do not think there is anything to add.

Mr ACHTERSTRAAT: No, thanks.

(The witnesses withdrew)

(The Committee adjourned at 5.00 p.m.)