

**LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL
GENERAL PURPOSE STANDING COMMITTEE No. 4
2003 BUDGET ESTIMATES**

ROADS PORTFOLIO

QUESTIONS TAKEN ON NOTICE DURING HEARING

QUESTION No. 1

Ms Gardiner asked the Minister for Roads, and Minister for Housing, the Hon Carl Scully MP

With respect to the opening of the Chinderah to Yelgun dual carriageway, can you advise:

- (a) What was the expected change in heavy vehicle movements on the Pacific and New England Highways?
- (b) What was the actual change? (Hansard, p.2)

ANSWER:

- (a) While it has long been recognised that there would be an increase in heavy vehicles using the Pacific Highway, it was also known that the number of vehicles to transfer would not be able to be predicted with complete accuracy as there are many factors that influence the route taken by heavy vehicles. These factors include whether pick up or delivery still need to be made along the New England Highway; the relative costs of use of each route; the location of depots and service facilities and to some extent the personal choices made by individual drivers.
- (b) The actual change was a decrease of around 50 B-Doubles on the New England Highway and an increase of around 150 B-Doubles per day on the Pacific Highway. There was also an immediate increase in the number of semi-trailers on the Pacific Highway (about 100 per day). It is important to note that these are early results and the RTA is continuing monitoring exercises to identify long-term changes.

QUESTION No. 2

Ms Gardiner asked the Minister for Roads, and Minister for Housing, the Hon Carl Scully MP

How many rest stops are there for heavy vehicles between Hexham and the Queensland border?

ANSWER:

There are currently 41 rest stops on the Pacific Highway catering for heavy vehicles between Hexham and the Queensland border. These rest stops are:

- 24 rest areas with parking for trucks including B-doubles
- 11 towns with large service stations including truck parking
- 5 large service stations located outside towns with parking for more than 10 B-doubles
- 1 Highway Service Centre, with parking for approximately 15 B-doubles

In addition there are many formal and informal truck stopping bays intended for short term stops such as load checking. Seven new formal truck stopping bays have been constructed during the last six months.

QUESTION No. 3

Ms Gardiner asked the Minister for Roads, and Minister for Housing, the Hon Carl Scully MP

Can you advise whether any moneys are specifically allocated in the budget now under consideration for the problem of heavy vehicle rest areas and the rest stops program? (Hansard, p.2)

ANSWER:

Funds allocated for rest area development in the State 2003/04 budget total \$7.3M. All rest areas being constructed and upgraded in this budget cater for both heavy and light vehicles.

QUESTION No. 4

Ms Gardiner asked the Minister for Roads, and Minister for Housing, the Hon Carl Scully MP

Concerning the length of road proposed in the 10-year Pacific Highway upgrade agreement that commenced in 1996, what length of road has been completed to this point? (Hansard, p.3)

ANSWER:

I am advised no length was specified in the agreement between the State and Federal Governments. Rather, there was an objective of "maximising the length of dual carriageways".

QUESTION No. 5

Ms Gardiner asked the Minister for Roads, and Minister for Housing, the Hon Carl Scully MP

What has been the total cost blow-out of the projects on the Pacific Highway since commencement of the upgrade in 1996? (Hansard, p.4)

ANSWER:

The cost of a number of individual projects has increased for a number of reasons. There have been significant changes in scope on individual projects based on outcomes of community consultation (more interchanges, higher standard design); increased environmental measures in response to changing legislation and the need to address the condition of the existing Highway in many new projects. With regard to the latter, it was originally assumed that large sections of the Pacific Highway would form one carriageway of the reconstructed dual carriageway. However, further investigations resulted in the need for both carriageways to be constructed.

QUESTION No. 6

Mr Harwin asked the Minister for Roads, and Minister for Housing, the Hon Carl Scully MP

Aside from the four projects for the Princes Highway totalling \$36.8 million outlined in Budget Paper No. 4, what are the other major and minor projects in this financial year on the Princes Highway south of Heathcote and right down to the Victorian border? (Hansard, p.5)

ANSWER:

In 2003/04, some \$50 million has been allocated to improve the Princes Highway.

Aside from the four projects totalling \$36.98 million, these include:

- Investigations for additional ramps on Kiama Bypass
- Investigations for a second crossing of Shoalhaven River
- Roundabout at Browns Road, South Nowra
- Overtaking lanes between Milton and Ulladulla
- Widening between Mogo and Moruya
- Pavement improvements at selected locations
- Various junction upgrades, traffic signals, rest areas, installation of guardrail and cycleways

An additional \$10.6 million is allocated for continuing maintenance of the route.

QUESTION No. 7

Mr Harwin asked the Minister for Roads, and Minister for Housing, the Hon Carl Scully MP

With respect to the 10-year \$380 million development of the Princes Highway that began in 1998-99, can you advise:

- (a) Which projects fall within the parameters of this development?

(b) What is the total anticipated cost of each project, major or minor? (Hansard, p.6)

ANSWER:

- (a) The \$380M development of the Princes Highway includes provision of a four lane carriageway from Oak Flats to Kiama, as well as other road improvements. The works from Oak Flats to Kiama include the completed Oak Flats Interchange, the proposed Oak Flats to Dunmore upgrade and the North Kiama Bypass which is currently under construction. Additional works include reconstruction between Yellowpinch and Millingandi, widening between Mogo and Moruya and an overtaking lane between Milton and Ulladulla.
- (b) The Oak Flats Interchange project has been completed at a final cost of \$34M. Estimated costs of \$141M for the North Kiama Bypass project and \$114M for the Oak Flats to Dunmore project were announced in the Budget. Of the additional works noted above, the Yellowpinch to Millingandi project has been completed at a cost of \$9M, while the estimated cost for the overtaking lane between Milton and Ulladulla is \$2M. Widening between Mogo and Moruya is ongoing and the estimated cost for the current stage is approximately \$8M.

QUESTION No. 8

Mr Harwin asked the Minister for Roads, and Minister for Housing, the Hon Carl Scully MP

What completion date is the Roads and Traffic Authority working to at the moment for Main Road 92? (Hansard, p.7)

ANSWER:

Subject to determination of the Environmental Impact Study (EIS) for the upgrading of Main Road No 92 between Nowra and Nerriga, acquisition of necessary property, access to National Park areas and completion of detailed design, it is anticipated that work on the project could be completed towards the end of 2007.

QUESTION No. 9

Mr Harwin asked the Minister for Roads, and Minister for Housing, the Hon Carl Scully MP

Is the Oak Flats to Dunmore dual carriageway project still expected to commence in 2005? (Hansard, p.8)

ANSWER:

Work on the Princes Highway Oak Flats to Dunmore is expected to commence following completion of the North Kiama Bypass, which is presently scheduled for before the end of 2005.

QUESTION No. 10

Mr Harwin asked the Minister for Roads, and Minister for Housing, the Hon Carl Scully MP

The residents of Strongs Road and its ancillary lanes at Jasper's Brush, just south of Berry, have grave concerns in relation to the dangers faced by drivers of south-bound cars on the Princes Highway attempting to turn into Strongs Road. Can you advise:

- (a) Are you aware of residents' concerns?
- (b) Is the construction of a safer turning lane part of your Princes Highway development plan of \$380 million over 10 years (Hansard, p.8)

ANSWER:

- (a) Yes.
- (b) The proposal for a turning lane at Strongs Road will be considered from the RTA's existing recurring budget allocation on a priority basis in comparison with other important projects throughout the State.

QUESTION No. 11

Mr Harwin asked the Minister for Roads, and Minister for Housing, the Hon Carl Scully MP

Another fatality at the notorious Heggo's corner on the Princes Highway just north of the Bendalong turnoff in July you requested a pavement audit. Can you advise:

- (a) Have you received the findings of the audit?
- (b) What were the results? (Hansard, p.8)

ANSWER:

- (a) An investigation into the accident, which occurred on 20 July 2003, on a slight bend (85km/h advisory speed sign) approximately 700 metres north of "Heggo's Corner" has been completed.
- (b) This investigation indicated that the road was generally in a sound condition. However, minor improvement works are being developed to enhance travel conditions in this area, with works scheduled for this financial year. In the interim, the speed limit on this section of the highway was reduced in August from 100 km/h to 80 km/h.

QUESTION No. 12

Ms Gardiner asked the Minister for Roads, and Minister for Housing, the Hon Carl Scully MP

Minister, in 2002 you told this Committee that 79 percent of that year's maintenance package for roads would be spent on rural and regional roads. Is it correct that this year only 60 percent of the maintenance package will be allocated for rural and regional roads? (Hansard, p. 18)

ANSWER:

The projected expenditure on rural and regional roads in 2002/03 of the additional revenue raised from the increased Sydney Harbour Bridge toll and other service charges in the area of licensing and registration was 79%; the actual expenditure was 76%. The projected expenditure in 2003/04 is 73%.

QUESTION No. 13

Ms Gardiner asked the Minister for Roads, and Minister for Housing, the Hon Carl Scully MP

Considering the cost of the new Cross City Tunnel ventilation shaft:

- (a) What alternative options were considered in order to meet the new carbon monoxide goal?
- (b) What was the cost of each alternative? (Hansard, p.19)

ANSWER:

- (a) Alternative options were discussed in Section 2.2 Proposed Alteration, Appendix K, Volume 2 of the Cross City Tunnel Representations Report for the Supplementary EIS. Various options were considered in order to meet the new carbon monoxide goal. These options included:
 - (i) Extraction pickup at the crossover ventilation station
 - (ii) Extraction pickup at the crossover ventilation station and at the ramps
 - (iii) Extraction pickup east of Riley Street exit ramp in the westbound tunnel.

Option (i) proved to be the only viable option in terms of required flow rates and ventilation control.

- (b) The only viable option costs \$30M.

QUESTION No. 14

Ms Gardiner asked the Minister for Roads, and Minister for Housing, the Hon Carl Scully MP

With respect to the Lane Cove tunnel, what were the costs paid and the current market values of the properties that were purchased in relation to the stacks? (Hansard, p.19)

ANSWER:

Two sites have been purchased by the RTA for air exhaust stacks for the Lane Cove Tunnel Project.

No. 5 Sirius Road, Lane Cove was purchased on 22 October 2002 for \$4,559,740, made up as follows:

Market Value	\$3,950,000
Plus 10% GST	\$395,000
Disturbance	
Conveyancing to RTA	\$2,000
Removal expenses	\$2,000
Survey Fee	\$1,000
Legal fees on purchase	\$3,000
Refinancing	\$4,000
Stamp Duty	\$202,740
Total	\$4,559,740

No. 16 Marden Street, Artarmon was purchased on 26 June 2002 for \$9,110,375, inclusive of GST.

In negotiations the RTA needed to meet the vendor's asking price to secure the vacant site which had Special Value to the vendor as an approved concrete batching plant close to the Sydney CBD.

Exclusive of GST the price was \$8,300,000. The RTA valuation was:

Market Value	\$4,520,250
Special Value	\$2,260,125
Abortive Expenditure	\$200,000
Total	\$6,980,375
Conceded by RTA to secure vacant site	\$1,300,000
GST	\$830,000
Total Payment	\$9,110,375

QUESTION No. 15

Mr Harwin asked the Minister for Roads, and Minister for Housing, the Hon Carl Scully MP

Is specific funding included as part of this budget for the complete reconstruction of the intersection of the Pacific Highway and the Asquith rail bridge overpass to improve safety problems there? (Hansard, p.21)

ANSWER:

The RTA is currently investigating residents' requests to ban the right turn movement from the Baldwin Avenue off-ramp onto the Pacific Highway.

The RTA has no objections to this proposal. However, Hornsby Shire Council's written concurrence to this proposal is required and in this regard Council must satisfy itself that it will not compromise the needs of local residents. Accordingly, a process of community consultation is to be undertaken.

The RTA is currently involved in a consultative process with Council in relation to this matter.

There are no proposals in the RTA's current program of works for "the complete reconstruction" of the intersection.

QUESTION No. 16

Mr Harwin asked the Minister for Roads, and Minister for Housing, the Hon Carl Scully MP

The construction of traffic lights at the intersections of the Pacific Highway, Excelsior Road and Beryl Road in Mount Colah are a problem, as is the construction of traffic lights at the intersection of Galston Road and Grevillea Crescent at Hornsby Heights. When will an allocation of funding be made for these projects? (Hansard, p.21)

ANSWER:

Requests for traffic signals are assessed by the Roads and Traffic Authority (RTA) in terms of specific criteria. This process ensures that the funds available for the type of facility in question are allocated to those locations demonstrating the greatest need on a Statewide priority basis.

The RTA is currently investigating a number of options for the section of the Pacific Highway between Excelsior Road and Beryl Avenue, Mount Colah to improve safety and access. Community consultation will be undertaken once options are developed. The progress and funding of this work will be dependent on its priority with other competing works throughout the State.

The RTA recently carried out an investigation into the provision of traffic signals or a roundabout at the intersection of Galston Road and Grevillea Crescent. The site investigations included traffic counts, an analysis of traffic accidents that have occurred at the location, and other relevant factors.

Having regard to conditions at the site generally, the competing demands for improvement works at other locations throughout the Sydney metropolitan area, and the availability of funds, the installation of signals or a roundabout could not be justified at this time.

QUESTION No. 17

Mr Harwin asked the Minister for Roads, and Minister for Housing, the Hon Carl Scully MP

- (a) What plans are in place to overcome the existing bottleneck on the Pacific Highway at Pymble railway station?
- (b) Does the Roads and Traffic Authority have a timetable for the replacement or maintenance of the existing bridge over the rail line at Pymble? (Hansard, p.21)

ANSWER:

The Pacific Highway at Pymble railway station, like other sections of the Highway, is monitored by the RTA to achieve maximum traffic flow efficiency. No major works at this location are currently planned. The structural maintenance of the bridge is the responsibility of the Rail Infrastructure Corporation. The maintenance of the bridge pavement is the responsibility of the RTA, which it carries out on a regular basis.

QUESTION No. 18

Mr Harwin asked the Minister for Roads, and Minister for Housing, the Hon Carl Scully MP

What plans are in place to relieve peak hour and weekend traffic congestion on the Pacific Highway between Wahroonga and Chatswood? (Hansard, p.21)

ANSWER:

Current arrangements are to monitor the route's performance and address any shortcomings that may occur.

In the longer term, there may be some relief provided with the completion of a National Highway connection between the F3 Freeway and the M2 Motorway. However, this would be dependent on the route adopted.

The Federal Minister for Transport and Regional Services has announced that construction of this link would begin in 2007, provided that an acceptable and affordable solution is found and all approvals are obtained. Construction is expected to take four years.

QUESTION No. 19

Ms Gardiner asked the Minister for Roads, and Minister for Housing, the Hon Carl Scully MP

- (a) Has the department done a review of the housing maintenance backlog?
- (b) If so, what is the current level of the backlog? (Hansard, p.22)

ANSWER:

The Department has completed a review of the housing maintenance backlog and has implemented, and will further examine, a range of methods to reduce any outstanding maintenance works.

QUESTION No. 20

Ms Gardiner asked the Minister for Roads, and Minister for Housing, the Hon Carl Scully MP

Can you advise how much the department spent on contractors in 2002-03? (Hansard, p.22)

ANSWER:

Expenditure on consultancies is reported in Annual Reports. All expenditure is in accordance with the appropriate guidelines.

It is not possible to predict so early in the financial year the likely expenditure on consultants in 2003-04.

QUESTION No. 21

Ms Gardiner asked the Minister for Roads, and Minister for Housing, the Hon Carl Scully MP

The 2002-03 budget has an allocation of \$36.6 million for maintenance and fire safety on public housing properties, as well as the Aboriginal Housing Office upgrades. What was the figure for the residences that were upgraded in that year out of that allocation? (Hansard, p.23)

ANSWER:

The \$36.6 million was allocated and fully spent in 2002-03 as part of critical asset improvement work.

QUESTION No. 22

Mr Harwin asked the Minister for Roads, and Minister for Housing, the Hon Carl Scully MP

- (a) How much did the Government spend on the modification of public housing to accommodate people with disabilities in 2002-03?
- (b) How much is specifically allocated in this budget for the modification of public housing? (Hansard, p.24)

ANSWER:

- (a) \$5.051 million was spent in 2002-03 on the modification of public housing to accommodate people with disabilities.
- (b) \$4.339 million was allocated for the modification of public housing in the budget for 2003-04.

QUESTION No. 23

Mr Oldfield asked the Minister for Roads, and Minister for Housing, the Hon Carl Scully MP

With regard to the Aboriginal Home Ownership program, what sorts of discounts are offered to Aboriginal people who want to buy their homes? (Hansard, p.26)

ANSWER:

Tenants of Aboriginal Housing Office dwellings may obtain a loan to buy the home they live in, under the ATSI/NSW AHO Home Purchase Scheme.

Tenants of Department of Housing dwellings may apply to buy the home they live in, under the Sales of Homes to Tenants Program. Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal tenants may apply. Tenants must obtain their own finance. In both cases the properties are sold at market value.

QUESTION No. 24

Ms Hale asked the Minister for Roads, and Minister for Housing, the Hon Carl Scully MP

What are the estimated rates of homelessness among people with a disability, including people with a psychiatric disability and acquired brain injury? (Hansard, p.28)

ANSWER:

There is currently no data available that estimates rates of homelessness among people with a disability including people with a psychiatric disability, and acquired brain injury.

QUESTION No. 25

Ms Hale asked the Minister for Roads, and Minister for Housing, the Hon Carl Scully MP

- (a) What measures are in place to address homelessness among people with a disability?
- (b) How much will be spent on these measures in 2002-03?

(c) How much will be spent in 2003-04? (Hansard, p. 28)

ANSWER:

- (a) The NSW Department of Housing is the lead agency for the NSW Government's Partnership Against Homelessness, a network of 12 Government agencies, working together to address homelessness issues through a rolling program of reforms across NSW. In addition to the Partnership Against Homelessness the Office of Community Housing provides long term supported housing for people with a disability under the Community Housing Assistance Program.
- (b) Total expenditure on specific measures to address homelessness amongst people with a disability is not aggregated across targeted and mainstream programs.
- (c) It is not possible to estimate the percentage of spending on homeless initiatives for people with a disability for 2003/04 as this measure is currently not reported.

QUESTION No. 26

Ms Hale asked the Minister for Roads, and Minister for Housing, the Hon Carl Scully MP

Once transfers, asset sales, demolitions and new commencements and purchases are accounted for, there will be an overall net decrease in public housing of 1,233 units over the next 12 months. Can you advise:

- (a) In view of your concern for the homeless, why is the Department of Housing reducing its stock?
- (b) How do you envisage this strategy assisting the 91,000 people who are currently on the department's waiting list? (Hansard, p.28)

ANSWER:

- (a) In terms of the net reduction in the number of public housing units in 2003/04, the transfer of 1,000 properties to community housing accounts for the bulk of the reduction.

In 2003/04 the department expects to receive \$26 million less from the Commonwealth than in 2002/03. This reduction in funding impacts on the number of new dwellings that can be built this year.

The department continues to allocate a large proportion of new tenancy agreements to priority households each year. This directly assists homeless people.

- (b) There was a downward trend in the number of households on the housing register this year from 90,926 at 30 June 2002 to 80,188 at 30 June 2003.

QUESTION No. 27

Ms Hale asked the Minister for Roads, and Minister for Housing, the Hon Carl Scully MP

Of those 1,000 units being transferred to the community housing sector, including 38 units to Aboriginal housing, how many of these units will be transferred with sitting tenants? (Hansard, p.29)

ANSWER:

The exact number of properties to be transferred with sitting tenants is not known at this stage.

QUESTION No. 28

Ms Hale asked the Minister for Roads, and Minister for Housing, the Hon Carl Scully MP

How much revenue did the Department of Housing receive from the sale of public housing stock in the last financial year? (Hansard, p.29)

ANSWER:

The Department of Housing received \$70.474 million from the sale of public housing stock in the last financial year to provide both affordable home ownership for disadvantaged residents and improve the existing housing stock supply-demand match.

QUESTION No. 29

Ms Hale asked the Minister for Roads, and Minister for Housing, the Hon Carl Scully MP

What is the estimate for revenue from the sale of public housing stock in this financial year? (Hansard, p. 29)

ANSWER:

\$50,301 million.

QUESTION No. 30

Ms Hale asked the Minister for Roads, and Minister for Housing, the Hon Carl Scully MP

Exactly how many units of public housing stock were sold last financial year? (Hansard, p.29)

ANSWER:

559 units of public housing stock were sold in the 2002-03 financial year to provide both affordable home ownership for disadvantaged residents and improve the existing housing stock supply-demand match.

QUESTION No. 31

Ms Hale asked the Minister for Roads, and Minister for Housing, the Hon Carl Scully MP

What is the location of these units both within Sydney and outside Sydney? (Hansard, p.29)

ANSWER:

The regional locations of the 559 units of public housing stock sold in 2002-03 are as follows:

- 29 units were located in Central Sydney
- 124 units were located in Greater Western Sydney
- 260 units were located in Southern and Western NSW
- 146 units were located in Northern NSW

QUESTION No. 32

Ms Hale asked the Minister for Roads, and Minister for Housing, the Hon Carl Scully MP

What is the budget for the Housing Appeals Committee? (Hansard, p.29)

ANSWER:

The budget for the Housing Appeals Committee for 2003/2004 is \$941,000

QUESTION No. 33

Ms Hale asked the Minister for Roads, and Minister for Housing, the Hon Carl Scully MP

- (a) What measures are in place to improve participation levels by tenants with disabilities in public housing tenant participation programs?
- (b) What funds are available for this purpose? (Hansard, p.32)

ANSWER:

- (a) The Department of Housing annually funds the Public Housing Customer Council to enhance their work in representing the needs of social housing tenants. Members are selected on their ability to represent social housing tenants and identified interest groups such as people with disabilities. There are currently some members on the council who have a disability.
- (b) In 2003/04, \$50,000 is available for funding the Public Housing Customer Council.

QUESTION No. 34

Ms Gardiner asked the Minister for Roads, and Minister for Housing, the Hon Carl Scully MP

How many FOI requests did your department advise your ministerial staff about in 2002-03? (Hansard, p.33)

ANSWER:

Applications under the FOI Act are dealt with in accordance with the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act 1989. Any applicant who feels aggrieved by the process, the outcome of the complaint or actions by the department has a complaint/appeal mechanism with either the Ombudsman or the Administrative Decisions Tribunal.

Statistics on FOI administration can be found within the Annual Reports of departments and agencies.