

# Budget Estimates Hearing 2nd March 2020

## Questions on Notice

### Question 1

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** I agree with that, Minister. How many have applied that you are aware of who are ineligible?

**Mr PAUL TOOLE:** I do not have those numbers.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** Are you tracking that at all?

**Mr PAUL TOOLE:** I would have to take that on notice to see if we have that information.

### ANSWER

I am advised:

As at 4 March 2020, the NSW Government had received more than 204,000 successful applications for the regional seniors travel card. About 40,400 applications did not meet eligibility rules at the time of applying.

On 15 February 2020, the Government announced the eligibility criteria would be expanded to include more seniors receiving pensions from the Department of Veterans' Affairs.

### Question 2

**The CHAIR:** What percentage of traffic on that section of the Great Western Highway is trucks versus commuters?

**Mr PAUL TOOLE:** I do not know if Mr Wakelin-King knows—otherwise we would have to take it on notice.

**Mr WAKELIN-KING:** If I may, we will take the specifics on notice. But what we can say is, as a general rule of thumb, when we look at the traffic volumes through highways of this nature, around 10 per cent to 15 per cent of the traffic on the road is heavy vehicles. That varies with the time of day and also during the week, but we will get the specifics for you.

### ANSWER

I am advised:

A traffic count category of 'commuters' is not commonly used, however it can be interpreted as follows:

- 19 per cent of traffic at the Lithgow end of the Great Western Highway Upgrade is heavy vehicles
- 13 per cent of traffic at the Katoomba end of the Great Western Highway Upgrade is heavy vehicles.

**Question 3**

**The CHAIR:** Does the Government have any plans to reinstate the rail services to Byron Bay?

**Mr PAUL TOOLE:** I would have to take that on notice. You would have to respect that I am responsible for over 10,000 projects across the State in roads and rail, unless I can get Mr Staples or even Mr Allaway if they have any additional information about Byron Bay at the moment.

**ANSWER**

I am advised:

Reinstating rail services to Byron Bay does not form part of the NSW Government's rail plans at the present time. While a rail connection to Byron Bay is not identified in current plans, more effective ways to provide better transport to customers in and around Byron Bay are being considered.

**Question 4**

**The Hon. MICK VEITCH:** Minister, a couple of things following on from the questions around bushfires and roads. At the last estimates hearing I asked about Roads and Maritime Services [RMS] process for bushfires and replacement of fences. I did not suspect that we would be coming here six months later having gone through what no-one predicted. The assistance being provided to adjacent landholders around fences, can you remind us what is RMS's responsibility around fences and, secondly, what are they actually doing?

**Mr PAUL TOOLE:** I think it is a bit of an open-ended question because it varies from one region to the next in relation to fencing.

**The Hon. MICK VEITCH:** Do you want to take it on notice and get back to us with an accurate response?

**Mr PAUL TOOLE:** I may give you an answer; we can provide more for you. In relation to that, we also know there are groups out there like BlazeAid that have stepped up and are working with local communities. We have also had the Australian Defence Force [ADF] that has been on the ground in a lot of areas. Even around my area of Running Stream the ADF have been heavily involved.

**ANSWER**

I am advised:

The *Dividing Fences Act 1991* does not impose any liability or confer any rights on Transport for NSW with respect to dividing fences – see section 25 of the Act.

Transport for NSW is assisting property owners where it can in response to the recent bushfires. For example, as part of the Gwydir Highway clean up, dangerous trees were removed from the corridor, which damaged fences. Transport for NSW repaired any fences damaged during the clean-up.

Transport for NSW has provided a significant amount of timber through BlazeAid for rebuilding fences impacted by fires. Damaged guard-railing, which is still useful but does not meet current safety standards, was also provided to BlazeAid for rebuilding stockyards and fences damaged in the fires. The timber and guardrails

went to adjacent property owners, and also those impacted by fire in the areas around the Clarence, Nymboida, Glen Innes, Wauchope and Oxley Highway area.

#### **Question 5**

**The Hon. MICK VEITCH:** Ask it and we will work it out. Tumut aerodrome—no commercial airline goes in and out of there but it is used heavily or extensively for emergencies. In the winter, up until now, it has been used mainly for evacuating people out of the snow in the snow season. During the bushfire season Mr Graham and I had a chance to go and one day they had 65 flights out of there—

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** Sixty-five.

**The Hon. MICK VEITCH:** —but they could leave with the water tankers only two-thirds full because of the nature of the aerodrome. The strip is not long enough and it is not wide enough. Pretty clearly during the bushfires it was one of the main aerodromes being used by the emergency services and when we were there. The day before, it was being used for the ACT bushfires because the smoke was blowing across the ACT and they could not use their aerodrome. They were actually taking it all out of Tumut. Minister, have you had a chance to look at the Tumut aerodrome? Secondly, do you acknowledge that it should be elevated to an emergency standard aerodrome so that it can be used for the snow and the summer seasons down that way?

**Mr PAUL TOOLE:** I would have to probably check the status of that one because with a lot of our regional airports they are actually largely owned or managed by local government, okay?

**The Hon. MICK VEITCH:** Yes.

**Mr PAUL TOOLE:** Let's make that clear. The other thing is they are also regulated by the Federal Government. In relation to that particular question on that particular airport, I would have to take it on notice to actually determine what is needed there. That is the first I have heard of this one.

#### **ANSWER**

I am advised:

Tumut Aerodrome is managed by Snowy Valleys Council. Snowy Valleys Council has publicly expressed interest in improving and extending the runway to increase the water load which air tractor firebombing planes can carry. Questions regarding this should be directed to Snowy Valleys Council.

During emergencies, Transport for NSW's road maintenance and operations team work to ensure road access to key evacuation centres and key exit points, as well as access to key service providers like the Rural Fire Service.

**Question 6**

**The Hon. MICK VEITCH:** On the same theme, Tabulam Bridge was originally announced at \$24 million. What is the final cost?

**Mr PAUL TOOLE:** I would have to take that on notice, unless Mr Regan has that information.

**Mr REGAN:** We can come back with some further information on that this afternoon.

**The Hon. MICK VEITCH:** About \$48 million?

**Mr REGAN:** We can come back this afternoon with details on that.

**ANSWER**

I am advised:

The NSW Government is funding the Tabulam Bridge project to improve road safety and efficiency. The project is approximately 80 per cent complete at a current cost estimate of \$48 million.

**Question 7**

**The Hon. MICK VEITCH:** The RMS *Forward Work Plan Major Projects 2021* indicates that the bridge would be completed by quarter three of financial year 2018-19. The cost has doubled from the original announced cost of \$24 million to \$48 million. Do you accept the project is late, Minister?

**Mr PAUL TOOLE:** We said we would come back to you later.

**The Hon. MICK VEITCH:** So it is late though, is it not?

**Mr PAUL TOOLE:** Let me just check as to the reason why that one is late.

**The Hon. MICK VEITCH:** And the cost. It is late and it is twice the cost. There must be some reasons for that.

**Mr PAUL TOOLE:** We said we would come back to you on that.

**ANSWER**

I am advised:

I refer you to the answer to Question on Notice 6.

**Question 8**

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** Can I just finish. The Minister was unable to tell us how many superannuation and annuity income earners might live in regional New South Wales. These were promised a card, in material that went to them. They have not received a card. How many superannuation and annuity income earners might live in regional New South Wales?

**Mr STAPLES:** I note the conversation you had previously when the Minister was here. We have done our work around what was put to the Parliamentary Budget Office in relation to that and the numbers, and to my knowledge those categories were not included. So I do not think we have done any work around that.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** At no point have you been asked to even model providing to those additional categories?

**Mr STAPLES:** I am happy to take that on notice and see whether this afternoon we have got any information around what other scenarios—

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** I would be comfortable with that but I am asking at a top level. You would be aware if the Minister had asked you? I am happy for you to check, Mr Staples.

**Mr STAPLES:** We will do a check to make sure we are clear on what we have been asked.

**ANSWER**

I am advised:

Transport for NSW did not undertake any modelling on the number of superannuation and annuity income earners in regional NSW.

**Question 9 - 10**

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** This is budget estimates. I think it is fair to ask how many projects do you consider not on time in the Regional Roads portfolio?

**Mr STAPLES:** I do not have a specific number. I will see what we can find in relation to that and what we would be able to provide.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** I think that would be helpful. While you are doing that, we are asking specifically about how many are not on time. As of today at budget estimates, how many are not on budget?

**Mr STAPLES:** The challenge I am faced with that, to be honest with you, is just what advice we provided into a Cabinet process and what constraints I have got around that.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** I do not accept that because you should advise Cabinet—we are not asking about the advice you provided to Cabinet—you should also advise the Parliament through the budget estimates process. I hope the answers are the same. We are not asking about that advice you are providing elsewhere, but we have got to play our role. We expect to be informed as to what is your advice as the key official on this important question.

**Mr STAPLES:** I acknowledge the point you are making around that. I will have to take that on notice in terms of the specifics.

**ANSWER**

I am advised:

I refer you to my answer in Supplementary Question 9-12.

**Question 11 - 12**

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** I agree with that, Minister. How many have applied that you are aware of who are ineligible?

**Mr PAUL TOOLE:** I do not have those numbers.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** Are you tracking that at all?

**Mr PAUL TOOLE:** I would have to take that on notice to see if we have that information.

**ANSWER**

I am advised:

I refer you to my answer in Supplementary Question 9-12.

### Question 13

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** We will come back to you on notice on some of these projects. What about the Pacific Highway/City Road intersection upgrades at Northcott Drive and Kahibah Road, Highfields, in the Hunter. I might ask about another project in the New England. The Belford to Golden Highway upgrade should have been complete this quarter coming. Again, it will not be complete until financial year 2023-24. Is that correct, that this project will not be complete until the 2023-24 financial year?

**Mr STAPLES:** Just to clarify, are you referring to a particular document in relation to that?

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** I am referring to the document that is in front of you.

**Mr STAPLES:** Yes, but that is the list of the projects, but in respect of the dates.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** I am referring to the RMS Forward Work Plan.

**Mr STAPLES:** Do you have that document there?

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** No, I do not have that document with me.

**Mr STAPLES:** I am just trying to understand the nature of your question. You are asking us to comment on a document that we actually do not have in front of us. It is very difficult for us to respond specifically.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** I am putting to you that is the view of the agency. I am just inviting you to clarify if you have any specific information on this.

**Mr STAPLES:** I think we will take it on notice because at this stage we have not got a document to respond to. I am concerned that we might misrepresent a response. I think it is important that we understand what we are actually talking against.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** I am happy to do that in relation to these 10 projects, all of which on the current work plan are overdue in respect of time. If you could clarify when the completion date is for these, can you give us any information on the completion date for any of these 10 projects as we are here today?

**Mr STAPLES:** I do not think we have that level of information to hand. I think it is best we take that on notice.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** I will invite you to provide the budget overrun as well, as compared to the original work plan as to today, for these 10 projects.

**Mr STAPLES:** You obviously put that to us; I understand that question.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** I am putting it to you now. I accept your view that you do not have the information to hand. I have given you this list, but if you could clarify those two things on notice, one, compared to the original RMS work plan, how late are these, when will they be complete? And, two, how much as to cost also?

### ANSWER

I am advised:

I refer you to my answer in Supplementary Question 9-12.

**Question 14**

**The Hon. MICK VEITCH:** Mr Staples, just moving onto another item, has there been a corridor study completed of the Sturt Highway through the city of Wagga Wagga in recent years?

**Mr STAPLES:** I might have to ask Mr Fuller the best place to direct that question. I personally do not know of that one.

**Mr FULLER:** What I can say is I know that there has been a corridor and movement study for the city of Wagga Wagga and also a regional plan. Whether that is a specific Sturt Highway plan, I do take that on notice. But I know there is certainly a lot of work being undertaken at the moment for a regional plan and a Wagga Wagga corridor and movement study, yes.

**The Hon. MICK VEITCH:** The reason I am asking the question is that Marshalls Creek Bridge, which essentially has two lanes in both directions coming from the Sturt Highway down to a one-lane bridge and then it goes back out to two lanes either side, I was going to ask if the corridor study had picked up the fact that that bridge does need either widening and/or replacing.

**Mr FULLER:** I am aware of the bridge that you are talking about and I know that has been discussed at a local level. We would have to take the information on notice just to understand how it fits into the corridor plan. I would be surprised if it has not been considered.

**The Hon. MICK VEITCH:** If you could take that on notice. The date of that study you spoke about, the movement study, when was that conducted would be handy as well; the date that was concluded.

**Mr FULLER:** Sure.

**ANSWER**

I am advised:

It is anticipated the Marshalls Creek Bridge project will go to tender later in 2020. The Corridor Study was completed in 2016 and has informed the development of broader strategic planning, such as the Wagga Wagga Place Plan which has used data from the study for input.

**Question 15**

**The Hon. MICK VEITCH:** At the last budget estimates Mr Wakelin-King spoke about the Gobbagombalin Bridge intersections at either end. As you would know, there is now a new primary school being built at the suburb at one end of that particular bridge, which I think increases the traffic flow coming off what is colloquially referred to as the Gobba Bridge—because most people cannot say Gobbagombalin—into that suburb. What is the status of that particular roundabout at the northern end of the Gobbagombalin Bridge?

**Mr STAPLES:** I might ask Mr Wakelin-King to talk to that, given he has discussed it last time.

**Mr WAKELIN-KING:** Work is continuing on assessing the options for the improvements of those intersections, and also the same would apply for the Marshalls Creek bridge. We are looking to finalise those options as soon as is possible.

**The Hon. MICK VEITCH:** Which means when?

**ANSWER**

I am advised:

Design options are still being considered for the upgrade of the intersection at Old Narrandera Rd and Olympic Highway

**Question 16**

**The Hon. MICK VEITCH:** What are the options for the particular intersection on the northern end of the Gobbagombalin Bridge? What are the options that you would be looking at? I am just cognisant of the geography here.

**Mr WAKELIN-KING:** Yes, sure. There would be a number of options that would be considered. I would need to, obviously, take them on notice. But all of them would be aimed at enhancing the traffic efficiency for those intersections, taking into account the growth that you have mentioned—not only about the school but broader growth more broadly.

**ANSWER**

I am advised:

Preferred design options for this intersection are being developed and will be displayed for public feedback once complete.

**Question 17**

**The Hon. MICK VEITCH:** Then, at the other end—the southern end of the Gobbagombalin Bridge, the one on that floodplain there, which has been elevated because of the bridge—what is going to happen there? That is a slightly different scenario.

**Mr WAKELIN-KING:** To be precise, we are looking at this as a single package of works. That is why we are doing a number of options for them to see how that would best impact on the network, to get the best possible outcome for that. That work is ongoing and I am happy to provide some specifics on those.

**ANSWER**

I am advised:

Preferred design options for the Travers Street intersection at the southern end of Gobbagombalin Bridge are being developed. The designs will be displayed for public feedback when this process is complete.

**Question 18**

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** Mr Staples, I might just outline what I think will be helpful in relation to these 11 projects. Feel free to give us any guidance, though. What we would like to know is: For the 10 projects plus the Tabulam Bridge that we have provided to you, can you tell us the completion date of those projects? Can you tell us what the budget is for those projects? Can you tell us if there have



been any changes to the budget and any changes to the scope of the project? That is for the 10, now 11, projects. That would seem to us to be a sensible way to proceed. Are you comfortable with that?

**Mr STAPLES:** I am happy to see whether Mr Wakelin-King has got any specific information available because he looks after projects. Otherwise, we will take that on notice.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** Yes. I am comfortable on notice.

**Mr STAPLES:** We can certainly provide that to the Committee.

**ANSWER**

I am advised:

I refer you to my answer in Supplementary Question 9-12.

**Question 19 - 20**

**Mr WAKELIN-KING:** We are in the process of concluding the review of environmental factors for that. We will be going into detailed design. There have been a number of issues we have needed to take into account from a community perspective, which has been particularly important as part of the REF process. I need to take on notice about specifics of time frames, but by and large within current budget. Belford to Golden Highway upgrade, which is part of that broader Golden Highway package and program that I referred to previously, we have had to make some changes in design in relation to this project. That has been particularly important to take into account local landowner considerations and their requests and concerns.

...

On the Burley Griffin Way and Irrigation Way intersection upgrade at Yoogali—I think I may have briefed the Committee on this at the last Committee meeting. This is a very complex project because of utilities. At this location we have irrigation channels, we have got every key utility, obviously—telephone, gas, electricity—that we have to relocate. As the Committee may recall or may be aware, there is a railway line that is also impacted by these projects. We are working very closely with council. Council has asked us to take into account some redesigns, which we have been working with council on and we have reached agreement on. We are working to conclude this project as soon as possible. It is one that I will need to get a latest update on for the Committee and therefore I will take that on notice. Barton Highway, I think I have briefed the Committee at length on this particular matter and we are currently not only at the REF but also in procurement for an alliance partner. We are hopeful of awarding that contract soon and commencing. This is for stage four which is the duplication works north of the Australian Capital Territory [ACT] border.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** I think it would be helpful if you could provide exactly the information on notice about these projects.

**Mr STAPLES:** Yes. We will take it on notice that you want completion dates and budgets for each of those projects.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** Yes. Let us just clarify what those are—completion date, budget, change in budget, change in scope. Those four things for those projects.

**Mr STAPLES:** That list of projects plus Tabulam Bridge?

**ANSWER**

I am advised:

I refer you to my answer in Supplementary Question 9-12.

**Question 21**

**The Hon. MICK VEITCH:** Mr Staples, with regard to the pilot driver arrangement as a form of SafeWork insisting on rail operators to run railways, in New South Wales—this is an ARTC question—have we used pilots at any stage on ARTC? You may have to take it on notice.

**Mr STAPLES:** Yes, I will take that on notice and I will see whether I can get something back to you this afternoon. But whatever we say, I do not want it to prejudice in any way what the process might have been at Wallan.

**The Hon. MICK VEITCH:** Yes, that has got nothing to do with it; just New South Wales.

**ANSWER**

I am advised:

The use of 'pilots' within the ARTC NSW network has occurred previously.

**Question 22**

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** This is a Westpac financial product that a citizen of New South Wales is being provided by the Government. How do we know their financial data is protected?

**Mr STAPLES:** I would have to take that on notice in terms of the detail on that, but clearly we would have gone through a due diligence process around it. It may be best that Treasury provide that response, because they obviously do a lot of the transactional work for us. But I will see what we can provide from the department.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** I am unconcerned if the Government sees it as a data mine. I am interested in whether Westpac does.

**Mr STAPLES:** I would suggest you direct that question to NSW Treasury. I am happy to take it on notice and see what information the department can provide as well. I am not trying to avoid it.

**ANSWER**

I am advised:

Westpac is bound by State and Commonwealth privacy legislation regarding the use of any regional seniors travel card data. This means that any datasets that Westpac has access to as a result of its involvement in the regional seniors travel card program are only permitted to be used for the purpose of delivering card services to NSW seniors.

The NSW Government's Banking Agreement with Westpac states that Westpac must only collect, use, access, disclose or hold personal information for the purposes of performing its obligations.

The Regional Seniors Travel Card product disclosure statement, which is publicly available and provided to all applicants, specifically outlines privacy and other protections.

#### Question 23

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** Yes, and feel free to keep answering this in whichever way you choose. Who is the first line of enforcement? Perhaps it is a provider who might not be supplying something or an allowed provider but a disallowed product. Is Westpac or the Government running that first line of checking?

**Mr STAPLES:** It is not a manual checking. There are transaction types that qualify or not around that.

#### ANSWER

I am advised:

As part of the regional seniors travel card trial, purchases using the card have been restricted to retailers who provide the services that are permitted in the card terms and conditions, such as fuel stations and taxis. Transport for NSW is monitoring the uptake and use of the Regional Seniors Travel Card and is able to identify instances of misuse or fraud.

#### Question 24

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** It is a system, yes. Whose system is it? Is it Westpac's or is it the Government's?

**Mr STAPLES:** It is Westpac's because Westpac provide the transaction service. If people have issues with that, their place to go is Service NSW and then Service NSW will work back with Westpac.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** You have answered my question: It is Westpac's system, by which you would conclude that Westpac do have access to all those transactions. It would be impossible for them not to.

**Mr STAPLES:** Yes, but I would not want to imply from that that it automatically means that people's private information about transactions is being used in any way. As I said, I will take on notice what information—you clearly want to understand what privacy protections there are.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** Yes.

**Mr STAPLES:** I will take it on notice to see what we can provide as a department around that, because that would have been a definite conversation for my people with Treasury around that.

#### ANSWER

I am advised:

Westpac is bound by State and Commonwealth privacy legislation regarding the use of any regional seniors travel card data. This means that any datasets that Westpac has access to as a result of its involvement in the regional seniors travel card program are only permitted to be used for the purpose of delivering card services to NSW seniors.

The NSW Government's Banking Agreement with Westpac states that Westpac must only collect, use, access, disclose or hold personal information for the purposes of performing its obligations.

#### Question 25

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** I think that is helpful. The follow-up question is really—and we will direct this to Customer Service but if you can tell us anything feel free to—where government is handling the application what information flows to Westpac? Some must.

**Mr STAPLES:** We will see what we get this afternoon, in the next hour or so, that might help clarify that a little bit today and we will take anything further on notice.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** Great, thank you. On the question about vendors, how many vendors at the moment are able to accept the card as a payment?

**Mr STAPLES:** I will have to take that on notice.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** Is that something that Transport handles or are we better asking that elsewhere?

**Mr STAPLES:** Let me take that on notice and I will try and come back to you this afternoon.

#### ANSWER

I am advised:

Transport for NSW does not track the number of vendors that can accept the regional seniors travel card.

The card has been restricted for use at Australian retailers based on their merchant category code. Merchant category codes are used to classify businesses by the type of goods or services they provide.

The card will work at retailers or service providers using travel-related merchant category codes such as service stations, fuel sellers, passenger railways, coach services and taxis.

#### Question 26

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** Yes. So what is the system in place?

**Mr STAPLES:** Part of the process of Westpac is providing a level of control about how those cards are used, in terms of vendors, but then within a particular business the type of purchase that is being made. That is the advantage of having a card as opposed to cash—that you know full well that it can be controlled and monitored. Will people try to abuse that? Quite possibly. Will we have instances where that has not been appropriately done? Quite likely. What we will need to do is if we identify that, and if anyone has any examples of that, the sooner we hear about that the sooner we can assess whether or not further controls are required.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** But what you are telling us is Westpac is really the front line on detecting those instances?

**Mr STAPLES:** Yes, and that is why we have gone with an obviously experienced bank.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** For instance, if one of the merchant category codes is 5541—service stations with or without any ancillary services—if that merchant category code is entered that should be allowable. It is obviously a very broad category code. Are you concerned that is not specific enough to prevent the sort of misuse that you might be concerned about?

**Mr STAPLES:** I understand what you are asking is how are we getting assurance that this is going to the appropriate categories. I will take that on notice just to give you a little bit more insight on what we have done in the background to give ourselves some assurance around that.

**ANSWER**

I am advised:

The regional seniors travel card has been restricted for use at Australian retailers based on their merchant category code. Merchant category codes are used to classify businesses by the type of goods or services they provide. The card will work at retailers or service providers using travel-related merchant category codes such as service stations, fuel sellers, passenger railways, coach services and taxis.

Seniors who receive the regional seniors travel card would have read and accepted the Product Disclosure Statement and the Terms and Conditions when applying for the card, which stipulates that the card is to be used for travel-related purchases only.

The transaction will only be accepted if the business or service is operating with one of the included merchant category codes.

As part of the trial, Transport for NSW will be reporting on spending patterns, customer and retailer feedback to allow us to determine the cards are being used correctly.

**Question 27**

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** Thank you, Chair. We were asking about the XPT centre pins.

**Mr STAPLES:** Yes.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** You were telling us how many.

**Mr STAPLES:** Yes. I said about 35 per cent. In fact, it is actually about 85 per cent now—so 16 of the 19 castings have been replaced with three to go.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** Of the three to go, are they currently on the rails or off the rails? Are they in operation?

**Mr STAPLES:** I would have to take that on notice, but I think we talked about this last year in relation to the assurance program that we had in flight, which is that we were doing regular monitoring of the centre pins to identify any early signs of wear that would warrant them being taken off. So I think with the testing regime we were continuing to run XPTs. We had a period there where we did not run some because we had a few where the testing regime identified sufficient wear and risk that we would not run them, but we are not in that position now.

**ANSWER**

I am advised:

The three power cars are in service and in compliance of the testing regime in place. Centre pins on all three power cars will be replaced by 27 April 2020.

#### Question 28

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** What is the safe working life of the XPT centre pins that were withdrawn?

**Mr STAPLES:** The safe working life?

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** Presumably for most of these components they would have a safe working life. What is the assessed safe working life for those centre pins that need—

**Mr STAPLES:** I would have to go back to the original design of the train for that.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** Yes.

**Mr STAPLES:** I think the important thing is probably, at this age of train, to worry less about what the theory of the life is and to really rely on good current practice of testing and monitoring the system that we have to make sure that we are on top, which is essentially what has happened here. We have identified that early and then we came up with systems to monitor to give us the assurance that no train was going out there that was at risk.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** Let me put to you the question in another way, which again you are welcome to take on notice. Was the issue here that this was an unexpected fault that developed, detected and is now well in the process of being replaced, or was it a case of operating these centre pins beyond their assessed safe working life?

**Mr STAPLES:** I am not aware of them going beyond any assessed safe working life, but these are, as you know—and we have said this—trains that are towards the end of their life. There is more intensive monitoring regimes on any asset of this sort of age.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** I am comfortable. If you could take that on notice, I would appreciate it.

#### ANSWER

I am advised:

The nominated design life of the XPT trains at the time of manufacture was: “a minimum of 25 years.” XPT trains have shown no indications of fatigue to the underframes or structural members.

The XPT centre pins were designed to last the life of train under the design track conditions of the time. As the centre pins were designed for a minimum of 25 years, Sydney Trains expects that their life would actually be equal to the rest of the train. Apart from a small number of centre pins with cracks, centre pins were assessed to be suitable for continued operation with additional testing in place.

The XPT centre pins have been tested every 18 months, when bogies are removed for overhaul or wheelset replacement, since the introduction of the trains. Sydney Trains procedures also require bogies to be replaced and centre pins checked after a derailment.

A crack was identified after testing the centre pins following a derailment. This derailment was not caused by the centre pin cracking.

An additional program of testing of all pins was rolled out as a precautionary measure after the crack was found. The crack testing standard was raised, and undertaken at six-weekly intervals.

Crack testing requires the car to be lifted off the bogie and can take up to 12 hours. As a precautionary measure, it was decided to replace all pins to eliminate the issue and need for additional testing.

### **Question 29**

**The Hon. MICK VEITCH:** Just while we are going back to previous questions, I did ask about asbestos on big buildings. If I can just quote from the ARTC's 2017/2018 NSW Lease Annual Condition Report, July 2017 to June 2018, and I will quote sections on which to base some questions. It states:

ARTC conducted an Asbestos audit in 13/14 and some buildings/structures have been identified containing asbestos. Issues identified by this audit have been raised with Country Rail Contracts. ARTC and Country Rail Contracts are yet to formally agree to a Management Plan relating buildings/structures that contain asbestos.

I am not sure who Country Rail Contracts are. Can you shed some light on who that is?

**Mr STAPLES:** I have to take that one on notice, I am afraid, in terms of the specifics on that. But I do not think it changes anything we said before about the operator side. But that is something in the lease agreement by the sounds of it, which we will take on notice.

### **ANSWER**

I am advised:

Country Rail Contracts is a business unit based within Transport for NSW. It manages regional rail contracts such as the Deed of Lease with the ARTC and the contract with John Holland Rail for the operation and maintenance of the Country Regional Network.

**Question 30**

**The Hon. MICK VEITCH:** Thank you, Mr Wakelin-King. Mr Staples, the other thing that was raised with us on Friday around the Newcastle bypass was the time frame for the receipt of submissions. I know there was an extension of time through to a couple of weeks ago—

**Mr WAKELIN-KING:** This is Singleton, sorry?

**The Hon. MICK VEITCH:** This is Singleton bypass. That was raised with us as being, because it was over the Christmas period, as an inappropriate time frame available for people to take in the volume of information and then prepare their submissions. Was that raised at all, the request to extend beyond what was the extension period?

**Mr STAPLES:** I would have to ask Mr Wakelin-King whether he has any visibility on that.

**Mr WAKELIN-KING:** The actual period closed yesterday.

**The Hon. MICK VEITCH:** Yesterday, 1 March.

**Mr WAKELIN-KING:** The normal period is four weeks usually for the display of an RAF or documents of a similar nature. We usually extend over the period of Christmas and New Year. We usually extend that roughly to six weeks if we are going out not too long before Christmas and we usually extend that into early February. I will come back to you with the exact timings. Apologies, I do not have it to hand.

**The Hon. MICK VEITCH:** That is okay. You can take it on notice.

**ANSWER**

I am advised:

Transport for NSW invited feedback from the community about the Singleton bypass concept design and Review Environmental Factors on 16 December 2019. The feedback period extended for 11 weeks and ended on 1 March 2020. During this time Transport for NSW also held community drop in sessions on 30 January and 6 and 11 February 2020.

**Question 31**

**The Hon. MICK VEITCH:** Speaking of beautiful parts the world, Mr Staples, Brindabella Road. Snowy Valleys Council has been in touch and provided a very good document, the Brindabella Road upgrade business case, November 2018. It has been circulating that again. Has the department undertaken any work on the upgrade of Brindabella Road from Tumut through to Canberra?

**Mr STAPLES:** I might ask Mr Fuller for the best place to direct that question. I am not sure myself.

**Mr FULLER:** I have not seen it. I will have to take that on notice. I am aware that the print document is around, but we have not really done anything.

**The Hon. MICK VEITCH:** I think there is a renewed—

**Mr DINAN:** Interest?

**The Hon. MICK VEITCH:** —interest in the Brindabella Road project as a part of a post-fire strategy for this part of New South Wales. They want to maintain jobs, but also to get the Canberrans to come across and spend some money in our beautiful part of the world.



**Mr DINAN:** Certainly our south-west regions are aware of the document and even though they are fairly preliminary, the discussions, we would certainly be able to take on notice and give you more feedback on that.

**ANSWER**

I am advised:

Brindabella Road is a local road, under the full care and control of Snowy Valleys Council. As such, Transport for NSW has not undertaken any work on this road. It is the responsibility of Council to determine priorities, fund and carry out works on its local road network.

Council can seek funding from the NSW Government via the Fixing Country Roads Program for improvements on rural and regional roads with a freight significance, and the Fixing Local Roads Program to repair, maintain or seal local roads.

**Question 32**

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** I might turn to one other specific project and that is the set of issues that have been raised largely about safety on Hillsborough Road. What update can you give us about Transport for NSW plans for Hillsborough Road and the set of issues that have been raised by the community?

**Mr STAPLES:** I might just ask Mr Fuller to see whether he has any information in relation to that or whether he needs to take it on notice.

**Mr FULLER:** No, other than being aware that Hillsborough Road is a pretty major corridor sort of connecting Warners Bay up into Charlestown area in Newcastle. I am not aware of any recent correspondence we have had in terms of safety upgrades, but we can certainly take that on notice.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** I think that is what has caused the issue to be raised: the fact that those have not occurred. I might put a couple of issues to you to guide your response on notice. Could you let us know where plans are up to, when is the Lake Macquarie traffic study going to be released and where is the spending up to? In particular, there are issues around a couple of the sets of traffic lights there, particularly at Hillsborough Road and Macquarie Road roundabout and also at Hillsborough Road and Chadwick Street. The timing on those traffic light upgrades are the things that are most agitating the community.

**Mr FULLER:** Okay.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** Reportedly, one local campaigner has sent 123 pieces of correspondence in relation to this matter, so there should be a file.

**ANSWER**

I am advised:

Plans for upgrades along Hillsborough Road continue to be developed. The road has been examined in detail, including the roundabout at the intersection with Medcalf and King streets and the two-lane, two-way section of road between Crockett Street and the Newcastle Inner City Bypass.

The Lake Macquarie traffic study is an internal planning document at this time and will not be made public.

### Traffic light upgrades

The intersections at Chadwick and Crockett streets and the Hillsborough Road and Macquarie Road roundabout are also included in the strategic business case for Hillsborough Road, along with the duplication of the final single lane section into four lanes. Timing for construction works associated with these upgrades to Hillsborough Road will be subject to further funding approval.

Early works have been completed at the intersection of the Newcastle Inner City Bypass and Hillsborough Road. Investigations have demonstrated short term efficiency and safety benefits by completing these works.

### **Question 33**

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** Reportedly, one local campaigner has sent 123 pieces of correspondence in relation to this matter, so there should be a file. I will turn to a couple of the responses to the supplementary questions. Thank you for the answers we got in a range of areas; those were very helpful. I want to pick up, firstly, on one of the issues my colleague was asking about, which was the replacement of signage after the fires. What is the expected expenditure on the replacement of signage as a result of the fires?

**Mr STAPLES:** I do not think we have that specific cost here with us. We could almost go corridor by corridor and have to work that through, so we will have to take that on notice to see what we can make available for the Committee.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** You have provided us that cost in previous years, so I appreciate that on notice. In 2018-19 it was \$4.4 million each year over the past five years. It is really to get a bit of a sense of, compared to that, what the—

**Mr STAPLES:** You can expect that it will be substantially more than that this year.

### **ANSWER**

I am advised:

The following is a breakdown by region of the estimated cost to complete signage replacement due to bushfires:

<b>Region</b>	<b>Estimated cost \$ (includes expenditure to date and estimate to complete)</b>
Western	70,000
Southern	450,000
South West	125,000
Hunter	200,000
Northern	250,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,095,000</b>

#### Question 34

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** Thank you. I was less happy with this answer, which was about the new train sets. We were asking how many stations on the network will need to be lengthened to accommodate the new 10-car train sets.

**Mr STAPLES:** Just to clarify, are you talking about the new Intercity fleet?

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** I am talking about the Central Coast & Newcastle line and the Illawarra line. It was the specific question on those two lines.

**Mr STAPLES:** I just wanted to clarify. To date we have been talking about the new diesel replacement for the XPT. The question you are referring to is actually the new Intercity fleet, which is replacing the V sets.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** The answer was that the information is publicly available. What is the answer? How many stations will need to be lengthened to accommodate the new 10-car sets?

**Mr STAPLES:** I will find out what is publicly available and come back to you.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** I think we would be happy with just those two lines.

**Mr STAPLES:** So the Central Coast and—

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** Newcastle, and the Illawarra line.

#### ANSWER

I am advised:

I refer you to the answer given at the Hearing.

#### Question 35

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** Newcastle, and the Illawarra line. The other question on notice I asked was in relation to the on-demand bus trials in Eden and Candelo. We have covered this at previous budget estimates hearings. The agencies were very helpful in supplying information through the course of the hearing. I was entirely comfortable with that. I then asked, though, on notice how many people had caught the bus at Candelo as part of this trial. I think it might have been a \$300,000 trial. The answer you gave me on notice was to refer me back to the transcript. The question I was asking was not how many trips were caught, which you provided rapidly in the course of the hearing; 38 trips was the answer. My question was, how many people caught this bus. There were 38 trips. There are media reports of a single couple catching this expensive on-demand bus trial. I want to know how many persons caught this bus. If you can tell me now, I am open to it. I am comfortable if you take it on notice.

**Mr STAPLES:** I certainly do not have that information in my head or to hand, but Ms Wise may have some information about that.

**Ms WISE:** While these services are generally booked, we might be able to go and seek that information from the operator. We would not routinely collect that information and it is not part of the information that is published. I would be concerned, if it was a very small number, that we would not breach anybody's privacy. We can certainly see what we can get from the operator down there. I would point out, though, that the patronage on all of those Sapphire Coast on-demand services has increased significantly since the changes were made in July of last year. In December, in fact, we had over 1,000 people using that service, so it is going very well now.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** I am happy with those caveats, if you want to go away and collect what information can be collected as a result of the monitoring of this trial to answer the question: How many people caught this bus?

**ANSWER**

I am advised:

14 unique customers took the 38 Candelo trips while it was in service.

**Question 36**

**The Hon. MICK VEITCH:** Okay, we will get used to it. Mr Staples, I just want to go back to questions around the bushfire recovery. This is a pretty specific issue, but it is a significant and substantial issue. The Dunns Road fire burnt between 40 per cent and 50 per cent of the softwood plantation in that part of the State. It is quite a substantial hit, about an \$800 million economic hit to the Snowy Valley's economy every year for the next 20 years. One of the issues is that they can still harvest what is referred to as black timber—that is, the burnt softwood. There is a very small window, between eight to 12 months, the locals are telling us, that they can get that wood out of there and it can still be harvested and used.

The problem is that coming into winter in that part of the State there is a lot of rain and snow, which shortens the window. What that means is there is going to be a lot more heavy vehicles hauling pine and softwood timber out of the mountains and down into the mills at Tumut. Acknowledging that there is a lot of work to be done around getting the roads back to a safe enough standard to have them reopened, and the road signage and the furniture, these particular roads in the mountains, in the alps, the high country also need to be got up to speed so we can actually get the trucks there to meet the requirement to harvest that black timber, the burnt timber. What work is being done with the council to make sure that that is the case, that those roads are at a standard that will take a lot of trucks out of the mountains in a very short period of time?

**Mr STAPLES:** I understand the context. I will ask Mr Dinan whether he has got any specific detail on that matter. I think you highlight an example of a lot of little things that have come up for us in terms of requests from local businesses and communities about things that we could do to support. We have certainly been endeavouring to do that, both on the North Coast and the South Coast in particular and even out in the Central West. I will ask Mr Dinan whether he has got any specific knowledge of the matter you were raising.

**Mr DINAN:** Specifically, we have been assisting council with reopening that road over time. We have done that over probably the last month, assisting them with getting more tree-logging crews down there. On that specific harvesting of the timber, I am not aware of it so I would have to take that on notice. That said, we did assist access to some forestry areas in Eden in probably late January, early February for a mill to start reopening and things like that. I would have to take that on notice and specifically assist work with Snowy Mountains council, but it is something that we could probably put in some strategy to assist.

**ANSWER**

I am advised:

Transport for NSW administers Natural Disaster Assistance on behalf of the Office of Emergency Management, including reviewing and approving council claims. Transport for NSW has made a commitment to provide Council with assistance to facilitate these claims as quickly as possible.

Further, all State Roads within the Snowy Valleys Council area are now open. We are working on reinstating damaged signs and safety barriers as soon as possible. Guideposts and reflectors on barriers have been reinstated. Transport for NSW is undertaking safety inspections of the State Roads within Snowy Valleys Council on a regular basis to ensure that they are safe for use.

**Question 37**

**The Hon. MICK VEITCH:** We were there a couple of weeks ago and you could already see the number of trucks coming out of the forests with the softwood. There were two intersections that were specifically raised with Mr Graham and me when we were down there. I live there and he came down to visit my patch. There has been a substantial amount of work conducted at this intersection already. It is the Batlow-Wondalga Road and Snowy Mountains Highway intersection. It has got some unique issues. There is a bridge over the Gilmore Creek and poor vision essentially in both directions on the Snowy Mountains Highway, but certainly coming out of that Wondalga Road, which is where the trucks will be coming with the timber. They will come to an intersection and they cannot see, so they just nose on out—they pretty much roll the dice every time they come down to that intersection. With the volume of traffic, there is going to be an accident. As I said, there has already been a substantial amount of work done there and money spent in probably the last five or six years to do it up, but it is still a dangerous intersection. What can be done in this time frame when there is going to be increased trucking traffic at this intersection? It is for the safety of everyone.

**Mr DINAN:** I could not answer that specifically. There are some strategies. We have construction sites, we could get something similar to that where we manage larger amounts of truck movements. I would have to look at that site specifically.

**The Hon. MICK VEITCH:** Can you take it on notice?

**Mr DINAN:** I will.

**The Hon. MICK VEITCH:** It is really important. Once you understand what is going to happen with the volume, you can just see. If you could take it on notice—

**Mr DINAN:** I certainly understand your concern and, yes, we could certainly have a look at that.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** It really is just an issue over this 12 months. They are going to be operating at three times their capacity, going flat chat with trucks up and down there. Then there is a real risk it will turn off altogether. It is a temporary problem but quite a drastic one.

**ANSWER**

I am advised:

The linemarking at this intersection will be refreshed by 30 June 2020. Funding of \$310,000 has been allocated under the Safer Roads program to implement further

safety treatments at this intersection. The project is currently in design, and it is anticipated that the works will be completed in 2020.

#### **Question 38**

**The Hon. MICK VEITCH:** The other intersection, which I did raise at the last estimates hearing, is the intersection of the Gocup Road with the Snowy Mountains Highway. I was advised that there was actually some work to take place that would assist. There is no line delineation at that intersection. You come up the Gocup Road and you do not know that you have to give way at this intersection. Seriously, people think they are on a main road coming up the Gocup Road. They do not know that they are about to hit the Snowy Mountains Highway and they are actually going to have to give way. As they come around the corner to the intersection they cannot see until it is too late. They just shoot across. Until something is done with the intersection—a roundabout or whatever—there needs to be regular marking of the road pavement so people know they either have to stop or give way. If someone can take on notice the need to go and have a look at this intersection particularly because, again, the harvesting of the black timber is going to put an increased number of heavy vehicles at this intersection under speed.

**Mr STAPLES:** I think all I can do today is acknowledge the issue you have raised and the concerns around that. We will take it on notice and give some sort of response, but in the meantime we will also get the people down in that region to have a look at that.

#### **ANSWER**

I am advised:

The intersection will be upgraded with medians and a right turn bay for vehicles turning into Capper Street to improve safety at this location. Enhanced intersection warning signs will also be installed on the Gocup Road leg of the intersection.

The physical works on site are due to be completed by the end of this financial year. The enhanced signs, including some electronic signage on the Gocup Road approach, are also planned for installation prior to end of June. However, Transport for NSW has been advised of some delays due to Covid-19 travel bans and the shutdown of workplaces in China as some of the components are being manufactured and sent from China.

#### **Question 39**

**The Hon. MICK VEITCH:** Thank you. The NRMA put out a very good report on a regular basis. They do a survey where you rate your road, essentially. People go on and rate their road. It is a good body of work. I am just wondering what happens to it within the department. How is it treated? What happens to it? This is a body of work the NRMA undertakes on behalf of its members. Some 23,400 people across the State voted. I think it is actually a good body of work. What happens to it?

**Mr STAPLES:** I am aware of the work that they do. I cannot speak personally. I would ask Mr Fuller and Mr Dinan whether they have got any knowledge of how we engage with the NRMA and what use we may make of that information.

**Mr FULLER:** We obviously engage with the NRMA on a whole range of things. It is not something that the NRMA has come to us with recently. We will certainly reach out and find out where it is with that and see whether that feeds into the work that we are undertaking for statewide planning.

**The Hon. MICK VEITCH:** I guess that is the question: Does it feed up into the planning processes of the department?

**Mr FULLER:** I would have to take that notice. I am not aware that it has in recent times.

#### **ANSWER**

I am advised:

Transport for NSW does not utilise the NRMA survey of road ratings for customers as it only surveys NRMA members, and as a result is not sufficiently detailed to advise Transport for NSW on decision-making processes.

#### **Question 40**

**Mr DINAN:** There was also an opportunity where we took some drinking water into Tibooburra, an area in the unincorporated area where we maintain the road. We acted kind of as a de facto local government in that area and assisted them. It is just indicative of one of the things that we have done over the drought period.

**The Hon. MICK VEITCH:** If I can clarify, when you say you took water into Tibooburra, that was on road?

**Mr DINAN:** Yes, it was.

**The Hon. MICK VEITCH:** Was the RMS involved in the delivery of the water or just getting the road to a standard so that private contractors could deliver the water?

**Mr DINAN:** I have advice in front of me that we arranged the water to be delivered but I am not across the total level of detail on that. We could have been able to get—some of our hired plant contractors are also water carters, like potable water carters, so we may have been able to access that.

**The Hon. MICK VEITCH:** For the sake of clarity, can you take that on notice?

**Mr DINAN:** Yes, I will do that.

#### **ANSWER**

I am advised:

Transport for NSW is not typically involved in the delivery of water. In one particular instance water was delivered to Tibooburra in 2014/15 during extreme drought conditions to ensure town supplies were maintained. Tibooburra is in the Unincorporated Area of NSW.

Transport for NSW and our contractors plan, organise and supply construction water for our projects.

**Question 41**

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** Mr Staples, I want to return to the questions we were asking the Minister about a range of safety measures that are now on the agenda under active consideration by the Government. The chief one of those I was asking the Minister about was the point-to-point cameras or the average speed safety cameras. I am interested in you giving us some background about how they are operating at the moment, what the history of them has been, you or any of your officials. I might start by asking how many of these are active in New South Wales?

**Mr STAPLES:** You are talking about the point-to-point for heavy vehicles?

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** Yes.

**Mr STAPLES:** I will have to take on notice the number and the corridors they are on but we can get that information and provide it to you. I know they have been in place for some time and obviously they are there for speed but also for monitoring and providing information to our heavy vehicle inspectors about the use of the vehicles, how long they are travelling for and so forth. So that was the genesis, to provide a better oversight of the trucking industry around making sure that drivers were taking appropriate breaks and those sorts of things as well. It is not just about speed.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** Accepted.

**Mr STAPLES:** But it has got a broader application. Mr Fuller tells me he has got some of that information.

**Mr FULLER:** There are actually 25 average speed cameras that cover an enforcement length of 726 kilometres of road.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** Can you tell us what corridors they are on? Because I think the Minister, or one of you, made the point they are on some corridors, not others, which I think is a really good point. Can you tell us which corridors they are on?

**Mr STAPLES:** We can take that on notice. They are spread right throughout the State, I know.

**ANSWER**

I am advised:

There are 25 active enforcement lengths in New South Wales:

- Length 1 is on the Princes Highway and Mt Ousley Road between Bulli and Mt Ousley
- Length 2 is on the Great Western Highway between Meadow Flat and Raglan
- Length 3 and 4 are on the Hume Highway between Yass and Gundagai
- Length 5 is on the Newell Highway between Forbes and West Wyalong
- Length 6 is on the Monaro Highway between Bredbo and Cooma
- Length 7 is on the New England Highway between Muswellbrook and Aberdeen
- Length 8 is on the New England Highway between Singleton and Muswellbrook
- Length 9 is on the Newell Highway between Eumungerie and Gilgandra
- Length 10 is on the Newell Highway between Peak Hill and Tomingley
- Length 11 is on the Pacific Highway between Kew and Port Macquarie
- Length 12 is on the Pacific Highway between Nabiac and Taree



- Length 13 is on the Pacific Highway between Port Macquarie and Kempsey
- Length 14 and 23 are on the Pacific Highway between Tyndale and New Italy
- Length 15 is on the Federal Hwy between Goulburn and Collector
- Length 16 and 24 are on the Pacific Highway between Woodburn and Ballina
- Length 17 is on the Mitchell Highway between Molong and Cundumbul
- Length 18 is on the Golden Highway between Sandy Hollow and Merriwa
- Length 19 is on the Gwydir Highway between Glen Innes and Inverell
- Length 20 is on the Oxley Highway between Tamworth and Gunnedah
- Length 21 is on Picton Road between Wilton and Cataract
- Length 22 is on the Pacific Highway between Valla and Urunga
- Length 25 is on the Great Western Highway between Mt Victoria and River Lett Hill.

#### Question 42

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** When you say 726 kilometres of road, what you will be measuring is the distance between the gantries, is that right?

**Mr FULLER:** The combination of point to point in accumulation across those 25 areas, yes.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** How long on average are they then? What is the average distance between the gantries?

**Mr FULLER:** We can take that on notice. There might be some variation on those according to local conditions.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** Almost all of these are on regional corridors. Are all of them on regional corridors?

**Mr FULLER:** We will take that on notice as well but I certainly know that a majority are in regional areas.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** I am very happy for you to take it on notice but are you aware of any that are not on regional corridors?

**Mr FULLER:** Not off the top of my head. We will take that on notice.

#### ANSWER

I am advised:

The distance in length between gantries ranges from approximately 10 kilometres to 90 kilometres.

At present all average speed camera lengths are on regional corridors.

There are 11 new lengths currently under construction in Sydney metro areas. The first of these are due to go live around June 2020.

#### Question 43

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** That is fine. I am happy for you to take it on notice. Can you tell us how many offences were issued, say in the last year for speeding through these cameras?

**Mr STAPLES:** We will take that on notice and see what we can provide.

#### ANSWER

I am advised:

In 2019, a total of 1,562 infringement notices were issued for detected average speed camera offences.

#### Question 44

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** Do the cameras detect those cars? Will they take photos?

**Mr STAPLES:** They would certainly be detecting them because there actually has to be a back-of-house analysis as to the nature of the vehicle and it has gone through number plate identification, and so forth. There would be a monitoring process of some sort.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** They monitor the car. They would detect the number plate of the car. They take an image of the car to do that. Is that correct?

**Mr STAPLES:** I am not sure exactly how it captures the information but we can soon find information on the means by which we capture that information, if you like.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** Yes, so maybe how that information is captured and whether that is retained. That is captured in some way at the start and captured in some way at the end, or measured in some way at the start and measured in some way at the end.

**Mr STAPLES:** Well, it is captured at each end.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** Yes.

#### ANSWER

I am advised:

Every vehicle that is detected is photographed as they pass the cameras.

The system uses a combination of vehicle classification information and number plate recognition to identify heavy and light vehicles.

Data is captured and stored in a secure Transport for NSW camera enforcement system to enable the identification of heavy vehicle speeding offences.

#### Question 45

**Mr STAPLES:** It is basically a data point. Then for a heavy vehicle, where I know what happens, there is a cross-correlation of matching data from start and end and then there will be an analysis of the journey time relative to what would be expected if you travel at speed, so it gives you a pointer straightaway. That also feeds into heavy vehicle monitoring around what truck drivers are actually doing—are they following appropriate shift patterns and those sorts of things as well?

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** Yes. Understood.

**Mr STAPLES:** I think it is important that this did not start out as a speed program alone. It actually started out as a broader program about oversight of the heavy

vehicle industry, which is partly now done under the regime of the heavy vehicle regulator nationally, which is a good thing. But, yes, it is more than just point to point speed.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** I accept that entirely although the additional policy decision was made by the New South Wales Government to not retain that data about cars travelling under these gantries. That is correct, is it not?

**Mr STAPLES:** I will take on notice what we have got in relation to data, but certainly obviously it is not a policy for fining motorists for—

**ANSWER**

I am advised:

The Safe-T-Cam system monitors fatigue. Average Speed Cameras, however, are different in that they measure average speed between two or more points.

Average speed cameras detect all vehicles that pass through. However, enforcement is limited to heavy vehicles.

**Question 46**

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** Yes, correct. I agree with that. That is not my question though. I agree with your characterisation that it is not a policy for fining motorists. I am asking a separate question about whether the policy was to not hold back data about what we can tell about traffic behaviour of cars.

**Mr STAPLES:** We will see what data is actually available—

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** Yes. I was not sure whether that policy decision was made by the New South Wales Government as these came in—this is in relation to data. It has always been the case that we are not fining cars. When was that decision made in relation to data?

**Mr STAPLES:** Yes. I will clarify that. I am not aware of any recent change—

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** Correct.

**Mr STAPLES:** —in the data capture and what we are doing around that.

**ANSWER**

I am advised:

Average speed cameras detect all vehicles that pass through. However, enforcement is limited to heavy vehicles.

This original decision not to analyse the data for light vehicles was taken in 2011.

**Question 47**

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** I will follow on from that with asking about the 100 kilometres default speed limit on New South Wales roads. I am comfortable if you want to take some of these on notice but I wanted some general background and to know what proportion of roads in New South Wales are on the default speed limit of 100 kilometres per hour.

**Mr STAPLES:** Are you talking about State roads or are you talking about roads in total?

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** I am happy to be guided as to which I should be asking about.

**Mr STAPLES:** It is not usually my role to be asking you questions so I am just trying to clarify.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** That is okay. Feel free.

**The Hon. MICK VEITCH:** That is okay: Seek clarification.

**Mr STAPLES:** I just want to clarify what you are seeking. We will see what we can provide with what is available to us.

#### **ANSWER**

I am advised:

The default speed limit applies to drivers when a length of road does not feature speed limit signage.

There are two types of default speed limits:

- 50 kilometres per hour in urban (built-up) areas
- 100 kilometres per hour in rural (non-built-up) areas.

A built-up area means an area in which either of the following is present for a distance of at least 500 metres:

- buildings, not over 100 metres apart, on land next to the road
- street lights not over 100 metres apart.

There are approximately 185,000 kilometres of roads in NSW. This includes approximately 27,500 kilometres of carriageway lengths which are currently signposted at 100 kilometres per hour, and a further 87,500 kilometres (approximated) of road which are 100 kilometres per hour default speed limit.

#### **Question 48**

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** The thing that would be helpful is—if you could just give us some guidance and if you want to break it down—how many roads are on the default? What is the process now for not being on the default road speed, if you are at or around 100 kilometres an hour?

**Mr STAPLES:** I do not know whether Mr Fuller or Mr Dinan has anymore background on that but they are signposted in this. I think what you are referring to is actually the full un-signposted roads, of which there is a number but hopefully that is a really small portion because most of them—

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** Well, I am not sure if that is what I am asking about but I might ask this question then because the Government has floated a proposal about changing the default speed limit on New South Wales from 100 kilometres an hour: Does that refer to non-posted speed limits? I took it to refer to the fact that 100 kilometres an hour is most roads. There are a few now at 110 on very safe roads where you are going a bit quicker. Is it the default speed limit for the purposes of being the maximum?

**Mr STAPLES:** I think there is a little bit of a misunderstanding about what is in public commentary. Firstly, the 110 kilometres an hour, that applies to certain types of road, typically motorway, typically separated carriageways where the risk of having a collision—

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** Unless you are in that category, it is 100?

**Mr STAPLES:** The Government has just basically taken the lead. Both Ministers have put out a release about a road safety summit, to which I think you have been invited. There is no policy position or policy proposal from the Government about adjustment to speed or the application. There has certainly been commentary in the media, I acknowledge that.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** It is on the agenda in the Minister's press release, though.

**Mr STAPLES:** Yes. There are conversation points but that is not to say that it is about an un-signposted road speed. There might be some roads out there today that are signposted at 100 that someone might suggest be reduced to 80. Minister Toole this morning talked about the fact that he was not talking about a blanket reduction here; it was more a case of looking at some of the roads that are currently 100 and whether it would be appropriate to be 80.

#### **ANSWER**

I am advised:

Speed limits in NSW are set in accordance with the NSW Speed Zoning Guidelines.

A range of factors are taken into account when setting speed limits, including crash history and road characteristics such as the alignment, lane width, access points, roadside hazards etc. A copy of the NSW Speed Zoning Guidelines is available here:

[https://roadsafety.transport.nsw.gov.au/downloads/nsw\\_szg\\_dl1.html](https://roadsafety.transport.nsw.gov.au/downloads/nsw_szg_dl1.html).

The NSW Speed Zoning Guidelines are under review and led by the NSW Centre for Road Safety. As part of this review, there is no intention to change default speed limits from a rural default of 100 kilometres per hour.

The default speed limit applies to drivers when a length of road does not feature speed limit signage.

There are two types of default speed limits:

- 50 kilometres per hour in urban (built-up) areas
- 100 kilometres per hour in rural (non-built-up) areas.

A built-up area means an area in which either of the following is present for a distance of at least 500 metres:

- buildings, not over 100 metres apart, on land next to the road
- street lights not over 100 metres apart.

Speed zone reviews can be requested via the Safer Roads NSW website:

[www.saferroadsnsw.com.au](http://www.saferroadsnsw.com.au)

#### **Question 49**

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** Can you take on notice what is referred to as a default speed limit? That is not a specific road having its road speed lowered. It is

the default speed limit that has been referred to in the Minister's press releases. I would like to understand exactly what you understand from an agency point of view when we talk about the default speed limit of 100. If it is not a specific project, what is it? But I would be happy for you to seek clarification and come back. That could be quite important.

**Mr STAPLES:** I think from our point of view what would be really important in any change is to not take generic approaches but to really look at corridors on their merits and the appropriateness of their speed.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** I accept that, yes. I am really just looking for some general background but whatever you can provide will be helpful and we will certainly put it to use.

#### **ANSWER**

I am advised:

There are two types of default speed limits:

- 50 kilometres per hour in urban (built-up) areas
- 100 kilometres per hour in rural (non-built-up) areas.

A built-up area means an area in which either of the following is present for a distance of at least 500 metres:

- buildings, not over 100 metres apart, on land next to the road
- street lights not over 100 metres apart.

#### **Question 50**

**The Hon. MICK VEITCH:** Exactly, blackberries in particular but other weeds as well. At the first show of rain, people say, "Oh, it is lovely and green" but you actually get down and have a look at it and they are all weeds. On a lot of those burnt roadsides now is the time to get in and conduct some activity around the blackberry regrowth that is just starting. Have we made an allocation of funding so that we can get in and undertake that work before they explode again?

**Mr STAPLES:** I will ask Mr Fuller and Mr Dinan and see whether they have got any more information about that.

**Mr FULLER:** I might ask Mr Dinan on any specifics but obviously vegetation management broadly is part of what we do in regional maintenance space across the network. I am not aware whether we have increased immediately there after the fires, but obviously because there is probably a bit of a rebalance with our program and the fires will have affected things, maybe there is an opportunity there to look at what we are doing with vegetation management.

**Mr DINAN:** Thanks, Mr Fuller. We do have an allocation for vegetation management and weed spraying for road safety purposes. Weed management within the road reserve is usually a council responsibility and they access it via their rural lands protection and things like that. I would have to take on notice about exactly what we are doing there in this period of time. I think both councils and us are probably reeling from just recovery at this stage, but certainly take on notice perhaps the appropriateness of doing it perhaps between now and some time in the future. I do not have anything specific on that at the moment.

#### **ANSWER**

I am advised:

Weed management is mostly the responsibility of local councils and we work with local councils to undertake this work.

At this point, no additional funding has been requested or is currently required for fire impacted areas. Within the road corridor, weeds are managed within the road reserve under routine maintenance.

#### Question 51

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** I was interested in asking about these cameras in regional areas but, firstly, the Government does not have specific signs saying there is a mobile phone detection camera coming up but it does have generalised signs saying that mobile detection cameras are active in New South Wales. How many of those signs are currently up on New South Wales roads?

**Mr STAPLES:** I have to take that one on notice. I do not know the number of general signs, just like we have a number of general speed signs as well warning about speed cameras

#### ANSWER

I am advised:

A total of 326 signs, including 22 fixed permanent signs and 304 variable message signs, are being used as part of a broad communications campaign to help inform the community about the program.

16 of the fixed signs are located outside Sydney on key regional transport routes and the remaining six are installed in Greater Sydney.

#### Question 52

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** Yes, but it is a key lever—you would agree with that; having the signs up reminding people that these cameras are about? There is a policy argument about whether they should be specific or general; there is no argument that having signs up, having general signs up, helps remind motorists it is a good thing.

**Mr STAPLES:** Certainly it can be there as a reminder. I would expect people who go through their licensing process actually know in getting their licence that it is actually illegal to be using—

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** I am advocating the Government's position here. I am simply asking you, how many of these are up?

**Mr STAPLES:** The point I would make is that we should rely alone on the science. We are using a multitude of channels to educate people through social media channels, marketing campaigns—

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** Mr Staples, we are in agreement here. You are being very defensive. It sounds like there might not be a lot of signs up.

**Mr STAPLES:** I will take on notice number of signs that are up.

**ANSWER**

I am advised:

I refer you to the answer to Question on Notice 51.

**Question 53**

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** Very good. That would be useful and I would also like to know—given we are in regional transport—how many of those signs are in regional areas? If you take it on notice, if you could provide that breakdown? Some 31,300 people were, during the three months that these cameras have been operating, reported in the media as having been detected. Is that figure accurate, firstly?

**Mr STAPLES:** That does sound correct. I am just checking on that.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** That was the number that ran in the paper yesterday.

**Mr STAPLES:** Yes, that is correct.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** How many of those were in regional areas?

**Mr STAPLES:** I do not have the breakdown between Sydney and regional in relation to those.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** So, perhaps on notice? You have told us where those cameras were operating in regional areas so I accept they have been roving widely into regional areas. How many of those detections occurred, on notice, would be useful?

**Mr STAPLES:** So 31,345 were detected in the warning period. If you want us to split that into Sydney metropolitan—

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** Yes. That would be useful.

**Mr STAPLES:** —and the rest of New South Wales, we can do that.

**ANSWER**

I am advised:

A total of 326 signs, including 22 fixed permanent signs and 304 Variable Message Signs, are being used as part of a broad communications campaign to help inform the community about the program. 16 of the fixed signs and 62 of the Variable Message Signs are located outside Sydney on key regional transport routes and the remainder are installed in Greater Sydney.

The warning letter period for the mobile phone detection cameras has now been finalised. The original warning letter numbers provided were based on data up to 25 February 2020.

Over the full three month warning letter period from 1 December 2019 to 29 February 2020 there were 33,921 warning letters issued from the mobile phone detection cameras program:

- 31,859 were issued from cameras located in the Greater Sydney area
- 2,062 were issued from cameras located in the Regional and Outer Metropolitan area.



**Question 54**

**The Hon. MICK VEITCH:** As a matter of interest, how much money has been set aside for the rest area strategy across the forward estimates?

**Mr STAPLES:** I do not have that. I will have to take that on notice.

**The Hon. MICK VEITCH:** That is how much has been allocated. How much has been spent to date, say, over the past couple of financial years on the rest area enhancement? Can you take that on notice?

**Mr DINAN:** We will take that on notice.

**Mr STAPLES:** We will take on notice expenditure for the past two years and what is in the budget going forward for the rest areas.

**ANSWER**

I am advised:

There has been no direct expenditure on the development of the NSW Rest Area Framework.

The 2018-19 expenditure on rest area maintenance was \$11.467 million. The 2019-20 budget for rest area maintenance is \$11.98 million. Management of rest areas is a part of Transport for NSW's active management of the road environment and expenditure varies based on demand and an assessment of asset condition.

**Question 55**

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** Could you tell us on notice—apologies if you have already provided this—the number of stations then that as these come online currently have trains stop at them that will not have trains stop at them?

**Mr REGAN:** Yes, we can take a look at that. I am not sure any will fall into that category. But we can take that on notice.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** If the answer is zero I would be reassured.

**Mr STAPLES:** We are not intending to not stop trains at any of these stations. It will just be the service application we provide. Mr Allaway can make some more comment.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** You are telling us, without being on notice, the number is zero. Thank you.

**ANSWER**

I am advised:

Some intercity stations will have their platforms extended to make full use of the 10-car New Intercity Fleet. On the South Coast Line these stations are: Port Kembla, Wollongong, Thirroul, Waterfall, Bellambi and Kiama. On the Newcastle and Central Coast Line these stations are: Hamilton, Adamstown, Wyong and Gosford.

Some platforms at Central Station will also be extended.

As is the case today, the train may exceed the length of the platform at some intercity stations. You must be travelling in the right train carriage to be able to exit the train. A list of short platform stations is available on the Transport for NSW website.

A feature of the New Intercity Fleet is automatic selective door operation technology, which ensures doors only open in carriages that are aligned to the platform.

#### **Question 56**

**The CHAIR:** My office gets quite a lot of inquiries from people in different regions, trying to understand how the community transport works in their region or why it seems to be incredibly expensive from their perspective. There are also some inconsistencies in pricing. For example, they will talk about a couple who will be charged a flat rate as one entity, as opposed to two separate passengers who are not a couple and just happen to share, who get charged separately. Are you saying then that it is going to be a case-by-case scenario as to how that operator is running things?

**Ms WISE:** It will depend. I would probably like to refer to the Commonwealth guidelines. I am pretty sure they are published. We can probably get you some information about those in particular. But I am pretty certain that the Commonwealth likes the operator to take into account their costs in providing the service. Obviously different community transport providers have differing levels of efficiency and higher costs associated with providing their services, depending on where they are, how many vehicles they have and whether they use paid drivers or volunteer drivers. A number of things would factor into how much it costs a community transport operator to provide those services and, therefore, how much they are charging people. It works a whole lot more like a deregulated service than a straightforward public transport service, where the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal determines the fares.

#### **ANSWER**

I am advised:

Community Transport Service Providers are not subject to regulated fares but are required to establish and publish their own fees policy. Generally, these are aligned to the Commonwealth House Support Program (CHSP) Client Contribution Framework, which is a requirement of the Commonwealth Government, which provides the bulk of the funding for community transport.

A link to the National Guide to the CHSP Client Contribution Framework is provided: [www.health.gov.au/resources/publications/national-guide-to-the-chsp-client-contribution-framework](http://www.health.gov.au/resources/publications/national-guide-to-the-chsp-client-contribution-framework)