

BUDGET ESTIMATES 2006-2007 – ROADS PORTFOLIO

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE AND ANSWERS FROM HEARING OF GENERAL PURPOSE STANDING COMMITTEE NO 4 FRIDAY 1 SEPTEMBER 2006

Question 1 – Page 11 – The Hon. Dr Arthur Chesterfield-Evans

Are you willing to underpin their house, as suggested in the Simpson report, which looked at the engineering feasibility of doing that because they did not actually want to move in any case?

Page 12 – The Hon. Eric Rozendaal - I will take the question of underpinning on notice if I can?

Response

I am advised:

The owners of 3 Charles Street have indicated to the RTA that they would be prepared to sell the property. Negotiations are currently taking place in this regard.

Question 2 – Page 15 – The Hon. Dr Arthur Chesterfield-Evans

This happened in 2004. A bunch of motorcyclists were fined, and we got a letter from Mr Stewart, the Parliamentary Secretary for Roads, saying that the motorcyclists would all be refunded. Now they have all been fined again, with the same signs in the same place. Are you aware of that?

Page 15 – Mr Margison - I am not aware of the 2004 issue that you mentioned. What I am referring to is that the sign was rectified in the last few weeks. I am not aware that it was altered in 2004. I will have to take that on notice.

Response

I am advised:

The sign referred to was located at the beginning of York Street near Grosvenor Street – not the Harbour Bridge. This sign was removed in 2004 following the RTA becoming aware that motorcycles were being issued with infringement notices.

Question 3 - Page 24 - Chair

Page 24 – The Hon. Eric Rozendaal - A master plan for the Chinderah to Tugun section of the Pacific Highway has been developed in conjunction with the Tweed Shire Council.

Page 24 – Chair

We have had many hearings on that matter. If you could just table the document?

Page 24 – The Hon. Eric Rozendaal - I am more than happy to do that.

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Response

The master plan was announced by the State Government on 25 September 2006.

I am advised an information leaflet has been prepared and information is available on the RTA's website at www.rta.nsw.gov.au/pacific (click on Lower Tweed and Pacific Hwy Master Plan). Project displays including the Banora Point project commence 10 October 2006.

Question 4 – Page 24 - Chair

Minister, you mentioned the independent review that you have asked the RTA to do in relation to the deep tunnel option. Can you tell us where that review is up to?

Page 24 – Mr Watters - It is under way. I have got no details of the state of the review.

Page 25 – Chair

Do you know when it is due to be completed?

Page 25 – Mr Watters - I would have to take that on notice.

Response

The result of the review was announced on 25 September 2006.

Question 5 - Page 25 – Mr Margison

The issue of improvements around the Lyons Road area has been investigated for some time and the current status is that there has been a working party established for that process.

Page 25 - The Hon. Don Harwin - Who are the members of the working party?

Page 25 – Mr Margison - I am not sure I have got all that detail here. I could take that on notice.

Response

The Working Group is chaired by the Member for Drummoyne, the Hon Angela D'Amore MP, and includes representatives from:

- Roads and Traffic Authority;
- Local Government & Shires Association;
- State Transit Authority;
- Ministry of Transport;
- Rail, Tram and Bus Union;
- Local business.

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Question 6 – Page 25 – The Hon. Don Harwin

Have you received any correspondence from members of the public advocating any of the three options suggested as possible changes at the intersection of Victoria Road and Lyons Road, Drummoyne?

Page 25 – Mr Margison - I would have to take that on notice.

Page 25 – The Hon Don Harwin

Could you also, as part of taking that question on notice, provide any copies to the Committee for our perusal?

Page 25 – Mr Margison - Could you just clarify, that was correspondence from the community?

Page 25 – The Hon Don Harwin - Yes. If I could refer you to the community update that has been put out by the RTA in August 2006. It is specifically about the proposed traffic changes at the intersection of Victoria Road and Lyons Road, Drummoyne. Just to assist I will read a part of it:

The RTA is investigating ways of improving access to Victoria Road from Lyons Road West from Five Dock and Russell Lea. The proposed changes would reduce delays to traffic and buses turning right from Lyons Road West, particularly in the a.m. peak.

The question that I asked, and which you agreed to take on notice, is just related to those specific changes. I am just interested in any correspondence from members of the public advocating those changes.

Page 25 – Mr Margison - I will certainly do that, but, as suggested, we will take on board any issues about privacy in regard to responding to that.

Response

I am advised:

Correspondence received as at 5 September 2006 included support for all three options.

Page 26 – The Hon. Don Harwin - What is the timeline that you are working to in terms of the Victoria Road working party and when they are going to make their decisions?

Response

I am advised the Working Group is expected to report to the Minister for Roads in October 2006.

Question 7 – Page 27 – Ms Sylvia Hale

There is no tonnage limit on the road, yet obviously being a site of dense residential development, plus all the schools, child care centres et cetera, why has there been no tonnage limit placed on Styles Street?

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Page 27 – Mr Wielinga – We will take that question on notice.

Response

I am advised:

Styles Street is a classified regional road. The function of a classified regional road is to supplement the primary arterial roads in providing for through traffic movements.

The load limit proposal developed by Council indicated that less than 2% of vehicles using this section of roadway were heavy vehicles, which is considered a low volume when compared to similar regional roads.

The proposal was therefore not supported as it is not consistent with the function and classification of the subject route.

Question 8 – Page 27 – Ms Sylvia Hale

On numerous occasions the local member, Sandra Nori, has committed to having it resheeted. Is there a timetable for the resheeting of Darley Road-Foster Lane?

Page 27 – The Hon. Eric Roozendaal – We will take that very specific question about the resurfacing of one street on notice so that we can give an appropriate and accurate response.

Response

I am advised:

The RTA has resurfaced Foster Street between Marion and Allen Streets in recent years and will undertake further works on remaining sections in the current financial year.

The 2006/07 Budget announced \$3M had been allocated for this work.

Question 9 – Page 27 – Ms Sylvia Hale

Will the RTA enter into negotiations with the council about a reduction of the speed limit from 60 kilometres an hour to 50 kilometres an hour?

Page 27 – The Hon. Eric Roozendaal – We will take that question on notice for an appropriate response.

Response

I am advised:

Council has requested that the speed limit is reduced from 60 km/h to 50 km/h. The RTA has reviewed the speed limit and considers the 60 km/h speed limit appropriate at this time.

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Darley Road has very limited development on the western side and is part of a classified state route carrying traffic between urban centres.

Question 10 – Page 27 – Ms Sylvia Hale

Will the RTA commit to a pedestrian crossing at the very least at Charles Street and Allen Street?

Page 27 – The Hon. Eric Rozendaal – I will have to take that question on notice in relation to a commitment.

Response

I am advised:

Leichhardt Council is currently in the process of designing a pedestrian refuge at Darley Rd/Charles St for construction this financial year. The project will be 50/50 funded with both the RTA and Leichhardt Council contributing \$25,000 each. The facility will include kerb blisters, enhanced line marking and a central refuge island to provide a safer two stage crossing of Darley Road at this location.

A pedestrian crossing across Darley Road at Allen Street is not supported by the RTA due to the current roundabout facility at this location.

Question 11 – Page 27 – The Hon. Dr Arthur Chesterfield-Evans

Can you inform the Committee of the number of fatalities of motorcyclists due to wire rope and Armco fences?

Page 28 – Mr Bushby – My understanding is that with the wire rope there have been no fatalities. In terms of the Armco fences, I would have to check the database to give you a response.

Response

I am advised:

RTA data indicates that there was one motorcycle fatality involving an impact with a wire rope and seven motorcycle fatalities involving an impact with Armco fencing since 2000. There were a total of 412 motorcycle fatalities over this period.

Question 12 – Page 29 – The Hon. Dr Arthur Chesterfield-Evans

Can you give a breakdown of the difference between administrative costs and the weight cost component in registration?

Page 29 – Mr Bushby – I would have to take that on notice.

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Response

I am advised the cost of registration of a motorcycle is made up of two components:

1. A registration fee of \$50.00, which contributes to the RTA's costs in processing and maintaining the register of motor vehicles. This is the same fee for all motor vehicles.
2. Motor vehicle weight tax, which is \$47.00 per annum for all motor cycles, established under the Motor Vehicle Taxation Act 1988.

The weight tax for cars with tare weight up to 975 kg is \$157.

Question 13 – Page 29 – The Hon. Dr Arthur Chesterfield-Evans

Have you looked at the difference in road demand as the percentage of motorcycles goes up?

Page 29 - The Hon. Eric Roodendaal – I will take that question on notice.

Response

I am advised:

Analysis of traffic demand is based on estimates of various categories of vehicle usage.

Future estimates of traffic are based on a number of factors including expected population, employment forecasts and vehicle usage combined with expected splits between private and public transport.

Question 14 – Page 30 – The Hon. Dr Arthur Chesterfield-Evans

Do they regularly cop charges when their E-tag does not register because there is no way of mounting it?

Page 30 – Mr Margison – I am not aware of any.

Response

I am advised:

No administration charges are levied on motorcyclists, who have a valid tag account, if their tag is not detected after passing a tag reader. Only the toll payable is debited to their account.

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Question 15 – Page 30 – The Hon Dr Arthur Chesterfield-Evans

Do you say that they do not cop fail-to-read charges?

Page 30 – Mr Margison – I am not aware of any.

Page 30 – The Hon. Dr Arthur Chesterfield-Evans – It may be the case?

Page 30 – Mr Margison – I would have to take that on notice. I am not aware of any.

Response

I am advised:

No administration charges are levied on motorcyclists, who have a valid tag account, if their tag is not detected after passing a tag reader. Only the toll payable is debited to their account.

Question 16 – Page 35 – The Hon. Don Harwin

Is the RTA pollution hotline still in operation?

Page 35 – Mr Wielinga – I need to confirm that. I will take the question on notice.

Response

I am advised:

The M5 East Air Quality reporting line is in operation and the telephone number is published on the RTA's website.

Question 17 – Page 35 – The Hon. Don Harwin

Minister, is the RTA responsible for managing litter on the side of State roads and highways, such as the Pacific Highway and the F3?

Page 35 – Mr Watters – I am able to answer that. I believe the answer is yes, and no. The freeways are entirely the RTA's responsibility, if it is a declared freeway. If it is a State highway, there is a shared responsibility with the local council. I am not sure how many metres away from the centre line it is, but there is a metre distance within which the RTA manages, and beyond that it is a council responsibility.

Page 35 – The Hon. Don Harwin – By way of an answer to our question on notice, could you inform the Committee what the exact arrangements are?

Page 35 – Mr Watters – Yes.

Response

I am advised:

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The RTA is responsible for maintaining the road surface, shoulders, drainage and verges on more than 17,900 kilometres of state roads in NSW as well as for removing rubbish up to four metres from the “edge line”, or outside painted line, of these roads - rubbish outside that area is a local council matter.

Essential safety related maintenance is completed immediately and routine maintenance is ongoing. Rubbish removal in the four metre corridor either side of these roads is undertaken several times throughout the year.

Question 18 – Page 35 The Hon. Don Harwin

In relation to the RTA's area of responsibility for managing litter, how many contracts have been awarded this year to do that, how many contracts were awarded last year, and have there been any cuts to these programs?

Page 35 – Mr Wielinga – We will need to take that on notice and give you a comprehensive answer.

Response

I am advised:

The RTA currently engages 87 Councils under contract to deliver road maintenance services.

These contracts were last awarded in 2004 and have another two years to run.

There has not been a reduction in the level of service for litter collection.

Question 19 – Page 35 - Chair

Minister, can you advise the Committee how much money the Government has expended to date on legal bills and other professional advice in relation to the Cross City tunnel?

Page 35 – The Hon Eric Rozendaal – I will have to take that question in relation to legal fees on notice.

Response

I am advised:

This information is publicly available and was provided to the Joint Select Committee on the Cross City Tunnel on 21 July 2006.

Question 20 – Page 35 - Chair

If you could give us a breakdown of the professional bodies, companies, and so on, that have provided each piece of advice, that would be appreciated. How much compensation will the Government be forced to pay to the operators of the Cross City Tunnel?

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Question 21 – Page 37 - Chair

Can you advise the Committee of the latest assessment of the value of timber bridges?

Page 37 – The Hon. Eric Rozendaal – I think we will take that on notice.

Response

I am advised:

The estimated value of the timber bridges controlled by the RTA is in the order of \$90M.

140 bridges were replaced or upgraded by the RTA at a cost of \$163 million between 1998 and 2004.

Question 22 – Page 38 – The Hon. Don Harwin

In 2004, a \$30 million package for safety improvements to the Princes Highway was announced following the 2004 RTA Princes Highway audit. How much of that \$30 million has been spent to date? What is proposed to be spent in this financial year? Where was it spent in previous financial years and how much on each project? Where is it planned to be spent this year and how much on each project?

Response

The NSW Government considers the Princes Highway a priority, having spent more than \$505 million since 1994/95; compared to \$39 million by the Federal Government over that same period.

For every \$1 the Federal Government spends on the Princes Highway, the NSW Government spends more than \$13.

I am advised:

In the next four years, the New South Wales Government will continue to upgrade the Highway. This includes completing the three year \$30 million road safety improvement program announced in 2004. It will also complete the 12 year, \$380 million upgrade program announced in 1998/99.

Funding for the Princes Highway has increased 32 per cent to \$49.7 million in this current financial year. The NSW Government invests more in one year on the Princes Highway than the Federal Government has spent in a decade.

Information relating to maintenance, infrastructure and road safety expenditure is publicly available in the NSW Budget Papers, is regularly updated on the RTA's website at www.rta.nsw.gov.au and in community newsletters distributed by the RTA.

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Question 23 – Page 42 – The Hon. Dr Arthur Chesterfield-Evans

Do you have any data on the fate of people involved in accidents with four-wheel drive vehicles? Will you give us statistics on the fate of occupants of smaller vehicles involved in these?

Page 42 – Mr Bushby – I will certainly undertake to see if there is research in relation to that.

Page 43 – The Hon. Dr Arthur Chesterfield-Evans – If there is no research, will you do so?

Page 43 – Mr Bushby – We will have to look to see.

Response

I am advised:

Information relating to traffic crash statistics is provided annually by the RTA in the publication “Road Crashes in NSW”, which is publicly available on the RTA website.