

The Hon J Gardiner MLC
Chairperson
General Purpose Standing Committee No. 4
Legislative Council
Parliament House
Sydney NSW 2000

13 March 06

Dear Ms Gardiner,

**Re: Budget Estimates Questions Taken On Notice –
Supplementary Hearing 23 February, 2006**

Please find attached answers to questions taken on notice by attendees at the supplementary hearing mentioned above.

With regard to the question asked of Mr Wilson regarding updated performance statistics on the STA website, Mr Wilson has advised that when the figures are available they will be advised to the Committee, however they are not yet available as Mr Wilson indicated in his response to the Committee.

With the exception of this answer, all other answers are provided.

Kind regards,

The Hon John Watkins MP
Deputy Premier
Minister for Transport

QUESTION ON NOTICE

BUDGET ESTIMATES

Notice Given: 23 February 2006

Asked by: The Hon Jenny Gardiner MLC

Question:

CHAIR: If I could firstly ask in relation to CountryLink, could you advise the Committee how much has been spent by CountryLink since 1 July 2005 on hiring buses due to changes to normal services, including the hiring of buses to commute passengers to other stations as a result of connections being missed?

Mr GRAHAM: Yes, I am happy to provide that information on notice by way of overview. With the issue of guaranteed connections, I think you are referring to recent press comment regarding the need to maintain connections between a train scheduled to arrive from Melbourne into Sydney a little after 7.00 o'clock to connect with a train departing Sydney and going through to the North Coast of New South Wales about half an hour later. Because of speed restrictions currently in place on the main southern line—those speed restrictions imposed sensibly by the Australian Rail Track Corporation—the travelling time of the XPT on the Melbourne to Sydney leg—and bear in mind that the physical train that operates the Melbourne to Sydney XPT leg is a return of a service that operates the Sydney to Melbourne leg with a 40 minutes turnaround at Melbourne—the consequence of these speed projections, imposed by the Australian Rail Track Corporation, impact on that service in both directions, and because of those speed restrictions we have not been able to maintain the connection. Importantly, when our customers buy a ticket on the Melbourne to Sydney service to connect with the Sydney to North Coast service we are selling them a ticket on the basis of guaranteeing that connection. Therefore, because we stand in a public place and with a particular product, in this case a guaranteed connection, our customer service obligation, in our view, is that we will provide that connection. When the train is running late, because of these speed restrictions sensibly imposed by the RATC, we have the option either to delay the departing train from Sydney to the North Coast, in which case we not only inconvenience 250 people on that train, but because of the time of day that train is departing, that is, right in the middle of the morning peak service, by departing that train late we will also disrupt somewhere between four and six peak-hour, metropolitan passenger services. So, in order to meet all of our customers' requirements, to maintain the greatest good for the greatest number of people, we do, when necessary, provide a connection by road coach through to the North Coast. On each occasion we do that, the cost of hiring that coach is approximately \$1,900

Answer:

I am advised:

The cost of the provision of buses due to changes to normal services, from 1 July 2005 to 28 February 2006, is \$3,475,300. This includes the cost for the recent grounding of the XPT fleet.

Changes to services may include:

- Track maintenance
- Extreme weather conditions
- Track damage caused by other operators
- Infrastructure failure of ARTC managed property; or
- Unforeseen mechanical failures

and is provided for in the CountryLink budget.

**The Hon John Watkins MP
Deputy Premier
Minister for Transport**

QUESTION ON NOTICE

BUDGET ESTIMATES

Notice Given: 23 February 2006

Asked by: The Hon Jenny Gardiner MLC

Question:

CHAIR: Thank you. It is good to have all that on the record. However, I actually asked you how much was spent on the last replacement of XPT power car axles. You might have to take that question on notice.

Mr GRAHAM: I am not precisely clear on what you are asking for. Perhaps I can explain and it might help clarify the question. Axles are effectively an eight-foot, machined lump of steel. Their maintenance regime is on an 18-month and three-year basis. At each of those maintenance cycles wheels are pressed off axles and bearing surfaces are re-machined. Therefore, I cannot identify the precise amount of money spent within an overall contract to maintain bogies and to machine the individual axles. I could identify, for example, the annual contract cost of maintaining XPT bogies.

Answer:

I am advised:

The cost for year 2005 is:

XPT Power Car

- 28 bogie overhauls \$3,050,572
- 44 wheel set changes \$969,732

XPT Trailer Car

- 56 bogie overhauls \$3,155,112
- 88 wheel set changes \$1,228,480

Note 1: Bogie overhaul includes the overhaul/test of axles. There are two axles in each bogie.

Note 2: Wheelset changes includes overhaul/test of axles. There is only one axle per wheelset.

During overhaul/testing axles may be rejected and replaced with new types. In 2005 there was one axle rejected then replaced in a Power car bogie at a cost

of \$2521, and one rejected then replaced in a trailer car bogie at a cost of \$2044.

The Hon John Watkins MP
Deputy Premier
Minister for Transport

QUESTION ON NOTICE

BUDGET ESTIMATES

Notice Given: 23 February 2006

Asked by: Ms Sylvia Hale MLC

Question:

Ms SYLVIA HALE: A national report was recently released entitled "WORKability 2", which deals with an inquiry into employment and disability. The report states that access for disabled people to public transport is crucial to their obtaining employment. How much money has been allocated to upgrading stations for disabled access in the past five years?

Mr GRAHAM: I understand that we have spent about \$400 million to date on meeting the disability obligations for stations in the CityRail network, bearing in mind that we have 302 stations. We have completed approximately 25 per cent of the stations on the network. The stations in that 25 per cent constitute approximately 65 per cent of patronage on the network. This financial year we are expending approximately \$22.9 million on meeting our obligations for disabled access to our stations.

Ms SYLVIA HALE: That is in addition to the \$400 million?

Mr GRAHAM: That is correct.

Ms SYLVIA HALE: Over what period was the \$400 million spent?

Mr GRAHAM: I will take that period of time on notice. It is certainly five-plus years.

Ms SYLVIA HALE: I would appreciate it if you could give me the breakdown for the last six years. You said that approximately \$23 million has been allocated for next year.

Mr GRAHAM: For the 2005-06 budget year it amounts to approximately \$23 million, yes.

Ms SYLVIA HALE: How many stations received an upgrade last year?

Mr GRAHAM: I will take that question on notice. Could I just be precise, when you say "last year" are you talking about the 2004-05 year or a calendar year?

Ms SYLVIA HALE: The 2004-05 financial year.

Mr GRAHAM: I will take that question on notice.

Ms SYLVIA HALE: How many stations are scheduled to be upgraded in the financial year 2006-07?

Mr GRAHAM: I think that in Budget Paper No. 4, which has already been published, you will be able to identify the number of stations where the design work has been undertaken. But, again, to be accurate in my answer I am happy to take that issue on notice.

Ms SYLVIA HALE: You said that there are 302 stations in the City Rail network and that about 25 per cent of those have been upgraded to permit disabled access. That is about 70 so, presumably, approximately 230 remain to be upgraded, is that so?

Mr GRAHAM: Yes.

Ms SYLVIA HALE: How long do you expect it will take until you have completed the entire program and all of those stations have disabled access?

Mr GRAHAM: With 75 per cent of those stations remaining, and 25 per cent having cost \$400 million, the unit cost of those can be calculated. Obviously the rate at which one can proceed with those will be dependent on the funding that is available on a year-by-year basis.

Ms SYLVIA HALE: That is a recipe for "never, never ever". Are you able to give a more tangible answer than that?

Mr GRAHAM: No. I cannot give a more tangible answer than that. I know that there is a commitment for funding for those easy access stations that have already been announced. The allocation for 2006-07 for the easy access program will be a matter of government policy determination, and published in the forthcoming budget.

Ms SYLVIA HALE: As you would be aware, in metropolitan strategy there is an emphasis upon 60 per cent of population growth being provided for along major transport corridors. An area with which I am familiar is the Marrickville local government area. Do you know how many stations in the Marrickville area, which is densely populated, are scheduled for an upgrade, have been upgraded, or have disabled access?

Mr GRAHAM: Yes. I would certainly have that information available for you. Importantly, I would just like to get a clear definition about what one means by the "Marrickville area"?

Ms SYLVIA HALE: I suppose if you take the State electorate of Marrickville—

Mr GRAHAM: I will take the State electorate of Marrickville as the geographic definition and advise you on that.

Ms SYLVIA HALE: Thank you. Will you also advise at that time whether any stations in that area are scheduled to be upgraded, because my understanding is that there is disability access to none of them at the moment.

Mr GRAHAM: I will come back to you with that information.

Ms SYLVIA HALE: How many people are employed to manage the scheduling of upgrade works?

Answer:

The Easy Access program for CityRail stations is part of the NSW Government's commitment to providing equitable access to public transport for all sections of the community.

These facilities make it easier for people with young children, luggage or disabilities to access CityRail stations and services.

Extensive works have been undertaken across the network to bring stations up to an accessible standard, including the installation of ramps, lifts, tactile tiles, improved lighting, and hearing loops.

By the end of 2005 more than \$372 million had been spent on Easy Access upgrades, making 78 stations or 25 percent of CityRail stations now independently wheelchair accessible for all members of the community.

This brings the total number of independently accessible stations to 86.

In addition, a further 63 or 21 percent of CityRail Stations are wheelchair accessible to passengers with helpers or carers.

During 2005, Easy Access upgrades were completed at Wyong, Gymea, Blaxland, Thirroul, Kingsgrove, Gordon and Granville Stations.

This years budget has allocated \$22.9 million including the design and planning of 14 new easy access station upgrades.

This is in addition to stations that will become accessible under other programs:

- The redevelopment of Chatswood Station is in progress, and is currently scheduled for completion in 2008;
- Construction work is underway at Rhodes and Berowra Stations and both are scheduled for completion in 2006; and
- The Transport Infrastructure Development Corporation has advised that work on the three new stations on the Epping Chatswood Rail Link, which will also be fully accessible, is scheduled for completion in 2008.

Comprehensive advice on the accessibility of CityRail services is provided from the CityRail website, the "Accessing CityRail" brochure, or by calling 131 500.

All Easy Access upgrades are subject to a Development Application process and as such are exhibited publicly and submissions invited from the community.

Providing equitable access to public transport services is a key Government objective. To meet this objective, barriers to access are being progressively removed to meet the travelling needs of people with disabilities.

As part of that process of removing barriers, CityRail is progressively undertaking easy access upgrades of its rail stations. Priority for easy access upgrading is based on a number of factors including station patronage, access to educational and medical centres, parking, bus services, shopping, tourism and whether the station is a rail interchange.

In addition to those involved in the construction at each location, there are about 16 staff members involved full time in the delivery of the Program.

The Hon John Watkins MP
Deputy Premier
Minister for Transport

QUESTION ON NOTICE

BUDGET ESTIMATES

Notice Given: 23 February 2006

Asked by: The Hon Melinda Pavey MLC

Question:

The Hon. MELINDA PAVEY: What is the annual cost of administering the pensioner voucher scheme?

Mr GRAHAM: I will take that question on notice.

The Hon. MELINDA PAVEY: What is the estimated revenue from the introduction on 1 March of the pensioner voucher tax?

Mr GRAHAM: Again, I can get a more precise figure for you, but I do know that approximately 30 per cent of the patronage on XPTs is by way of pensioner vouchers.

Answer:

I am advised:

RailCorp does not produce separate costs of administering the Pensioner Voucher Scheme.

The revenue from this scheme is not yet known.

**The Hon John Watkins MP
Deputy Premier
Minister for Transport**

QUESTION ON NOTICE

BUDGET ESTIMATES

Notice Given: 23 February 2006

Asked by: The Hon Melinda Pavey MLC

Question:

The Hon. MELINDA PAVEY: What is the estimated saving for the 2005-06 financial year from the closure of CountryLink centres and the downgrading of staff numbers in existing centres?

Mr GRAHAM: The modifications that we have made CountryLink sales offices involves approximately 82 staff. In terms of the precise number, I am happy to provide that estimate for you.

CHAIR: Mr Graham, would you mind providing a breakdown station by station?

Mr GRAHAM: Certainly. That is not a problem.

CHAIR: I would like to have a look at Tamworth, for example, but all of them would be of use.

The Hon. MELINDA PAVEY: I would like to look at Queanbeyan. How are you advising pensioners and those who do not have access to the Internet to make their bookings on CountryLink services?

Mr GRAHAM: We have quite a diverse range of options available for booking on CountryLink services. We have recently introduced Internet capability. Clearly that works well for the backpacker market, but does not necessarily work as well for the seniors market. What we have instituted, however—

The Hon. JAN BURNSWOODS: Madam Chair, should we perhaps have a short break? It is very hard to concentrate on what Mr Graham is saying with all these consultations going on with Ms Rhiannon.

The Hon. MELINDA PAVEY: I am following up on how pensioners now book?

Mr GRAHAM: In terms of the options available for pensioners, in addition to the travel centres that remained open in the country, obviously there are travel agents in town who they are able to book through. That process has been made easier as well by the Internet front end. Obviously, travel agents are

quite competent in utilising that. We have also, in order to broaden the availability, entered into an arrangement with Australia Post, which has 970 agencies throughout New South Wales. It is now possible for those who want to exercise another choice to ring up our CountryLink call centre, book their tickets, go forward to anyone of the 970-odd Australia Post outlets to pay for their tickets and it is then subsequently sent to them.

Answer:

As the savings at various stations involve transfers of staff and a policy of no forced redundancies, these figures are not possible to quantify.

**The Hon John Watkins MP
Deputy Premier
Minister for Transport**

QUESTION ON NOTICE

BUDGET ESTIMATES

Notice Given: 23 February 2006

Asked by: The Hon Melinda Pavey MLC

Question:

The Hon. MELINDA PAVEY: Of the staff who have nominated for redundancy, how many are currently filling positions?

Mr GRAHAM: Again, I will come back to you with the precise details, but I will give you an indication that of the total of 82 staff positions I think we had somewhere in the high 60s of people who volunteered for the redundancy package. For those who did not, we have been able to do sensible swaps because in some locations we have individuals whose jobs were not perhaps the ones that were affected by this, but because of their stage of life they found the voluntary redundancy attractive. We have now been able to finalise all of these arrangements with our staff, and I think we have done so on a commonsense and compassionate basis.

The Hon. MELINDA PAVEY: All the redundancies have been finalised?

Mr GRAHAM: Yes, we have a joint union process.

The Hon. MELINDA PAVEY: All this will happen before the 4 per cent wage increase, which is due in April?

Mr GRAHAM: Sorry?

The Hon. MELINDA PAVEY: There is a 4 per cent wage increase due in April 2006. I am asking whether all this will be put to bed before that wage increase?

Mr GRAHAM: As I understand it, all of our CountryLink regional rural staff review processes with the unions have been completed sensibly.

Answer:

As this involves transfers of staff and a policy of no forced redundancies, these figures are not possible to quantify.

**The Hon John Watkins MP
Deputy Premier
Minister for Transport**

QUESTION ON NOTICE

BUDGET ESTIMATES

Notice Given: 23 February 2006

Asked by: The Hon Jenny Gardiner MLC

Question:

CHAIR: What is the latest estimate of the numbers of people who are travelling without a ticket, and what is the estimated loss of revenue from such people travelling without a ticket?

Mr GRAHAM: I will get you the more precise detail of that, but going back a couple of years the estimate was that that probably was of the order of \$18 to \$20 million and recent surveys have indicated a reduction in that fare evasion level, but I am happy to take the precise answer to that question on notice.

Answer:

I am advised:

RailCorp estimates that the loss of revenue from fare evasion journeys is about \$11.9 million, based on a fare evasion rate of 2.3% (as at October 2005).

**The Hon John Watkins MP
Deputy Premier
Minister for Transport**

QUESTION ON NOTICE

BUDGET ESTIMATES

Notice Given: 23 February 2006

Asked by: The Hon Melinda Pavey MLC

Question:

The Hon. MELINDA PAVEY: What level of RailCorp staff would be on stress leave currently as at today?

Mr GRAHAM: Again, I will take that on notice for you.

Answer:

RailCorp advises:

There are currently nine employees on leave with conditions relating to stress.

**The Hon John Watkins MP
Deputy Premier
Minister for Transport**

QUESTION ON NOTICE

BUDGET ESTIMATES

Notice Given: 23 February 2006

Asked by: The Hon Melinda Pavey MLC

Question:

The Hon. MELINDA PAVEY: How many internal RailCorp investigations are going on in relation to faults, derailments and SPADs.

Mr GRAHAM: Again, I do not carry that level of statistical information in my head. I am more than happy to take that question on notice.

The Hon. MELINDA PAVEY: What is RailCorp's current policy on mandatory drug and alcohol testing for staff involved in accidents or SPADs?

Mr GRAHAM: I will take you back to the Waterfall commission of inquiry, if I could. The Waterfall commission basically made a number of recommendations in regard to drug and alcohol testing. The commission recommended that random alcohol testing be implemented. We have gone further than the commission's recommendation and implemented random alcohol and drug testing. For random alcohol we undertake as a target 15,000 tests per annum and for random drug we undertake a target of around 3,000. We are currently performing in excess of those targets. The Waterfall commission also had a recommendation across the industry that there would be post-incident drug and alcohol testing.

The Hon. MELINDA PAVEY: And that is mandatory.

Mr GRAHAM: That is what the commission was proposing. If you actually go to the ITSRR quarterly reports on the implementation—

The Hon. MELINDA PAVEY: Pages 6 and 13.

Mr GRAHAM:—you will see where ITSRR are currently working up for the industry at large a definition of what constitutes an "incident".

The Hon. MELINDA PAVEY: So there is currently no mandatory testing after an incident. We are just waiting on the ITSRR recommendations.

Mr GRAHAM: No, that is not correct. We do extensive mandatory alcohol testing after an incident. Again, I am being very cautious here because I am not sure what you understand by the term "incident" compared with what I

understand by that term. That is precisely the work that ITSRR is currently undertaking on behalf of the industry. ITSRR have produced some guidelines which are discussion drafts with industry.

The Hon. MELINDA PAVEY: What does RailCorp regard as an incident worthy of mandatory drug and alcohol testing?

Mr GRAHAM: Let me take you back to comment you made earlier. You referred to the number of investigations and SPADs. For the benefit of the Committee, the acronym SPAD refers to signals passed at danger. A signal passed at danger is a signal that a driver goes past if the signal is red. A driver can go past a signal at red because of either driver error or because of the fact that the signal goes back to red in the driver's face. For example, a circumstance where that occurs is during significant electrical storms when you get a lightning hit on the network. It will generate a pulse signalling systems failsafe. If they experience those power surges the signal goes to red. If a SPAD occurs because it is a technical SPAD versus a driver SPAD you would take a totally different approach in terms of the incident management of that, as we do. I only quote that example to demonstrate to you that the definition of an "incident" is a little more complex. That is why ITSRR, as the industry regulator, are doing the work that they are doing.

Answer:

I am advised:

The total number of ongoing investigations into incidents relating to derailment and Signal Passing at Danger (SPAD) at the end of January 2006 was 17.

**The Hon John Watkins MP
Deputy Premier
Minister for Transport`**

QUESTION ON NOTICE

BUDGET ESTIMATES

Notice Given: 23 February 2006

Asked by: The Hon Jenny Gardiner MLC

Question:

CHAIR: Has any member of the Tcard consortium or ERG been paid any moneys by the Government in advance of the delivery of the Tcard project?

Mr GLASSON: I am happy to provide to you on notice details of payments under the contract but I do not believe that they are being paid in advance of delivering on certain milestones within that contract.

CHAIR: Would you provide that?

Mr GLASSON: I would need to check on the confidentiality but I am happy to go back and do that.

Answer:

The contract for the delivery of the integrated ticketing system provided for a prepayment against the first stage of the project (that being the commencement of the first full field trial) but that payment was immediately returned to the government by Intelligent Transport Systems Limited' (ITSL), as part of its security deposit, so no cash changed hands.

The only significant payments were for work done in developing and operating the interim School Student Transport System; this was in partial operation in 2004, and has been in full operation since the beginning of 2005.

**The Hon John Watkins MP
Deputy Premier
Minister for Transport**

QUESTION ON NOTICE

BUDGET ESTIMATES

Notice Given: 23 February 2006

Asked by: The Hon Jenny Gardiner MLC

Question:

CHAIR: In June 2005 former Premier Carr talked about speeding up travel in Sydney's central business district. How many new bus lane enforcement cameras have been installed in the central business district since 22 June 2005?

Mr GLASSON: I would have to take that question on notice. The RTA would have been doing the installation on those. I would have to get that detail for you.

CHAIR: Have the operating hours of bus lanes been extended since June 2005? If so, what are the new operating hours?

Mr WILSON: I do not recall any changes to the operating hours themselves but there have been additional bus lanes installed. We can provide details on that if you wish but I know, for example, in both Chalmers and Elizabeth streets there have been additional red lanes installed.

Answer:

Matters related to bus lane enforcement cameras should be directed to the Roads and Traffic Authority.

**The Hon John Watkins MP
Deputy Premier
Minister for Transport**

QUESTION ON NOTICE

BUDGET ESTIMATES

Notice Given: 23 February 2006

Asked by: The Hon Melinda Pavey MLC

Question:

The Hon. MELINDA PAVEY: In light of the attack on a State Transit bus driver in Ashfield on the night of Wednesday 28 December 2005 on the 480 bus route, what checks were made on the closed circuit television [CCTV] equipment on the bus prior to the night of the incident?

Mr WILSON: Our CCTV equipment on buses undergo regular weekly checks by maintenance contractors. In addition, if the staff become aware that the CCTV equipment is not working they are asked to report that and we would take immediate action to have that defect rectified.

The Hon. MELINDA PAVEY: Were any reports completed on this particular CCTV unit?

Mr WILSON: I am sorry, I do not have that information.

The Hon. MELINDA PAVEY: Would you provide that to the Committee?

Mr WILSON: Yes.

The Hon. MELINDA PAVEY: If a report was done on that CCTV would you also provide that to the Committee?

Mr WILSON: Yes, I will take that on notice.

The Hon. MELINDA PAVEY: State Transit conducts weekly checks of CCTV units on all its buses?

Mr WILSON: That is a regular check independent of the driver. You will see a flashing red light on the equipment and if that light is not flashing the driver is supposed to report the equipment.

The Hon. MELINDA PAVEY: Is that as far as the checking goes or is there a weekly check as well?

Mr WILSON: It is as well as the weekly check. The weekly check is done by contractors independently of the driver.

The Hon. MELINDA PAVEY: How many buses are currently fitted with security screens?

Mr WILSON: I would need to get back to you with the exact number. We have a number of screens fitted on our latest model buses.

The Hon. MELINDA PAVEY: Will all new buses be fitted with security screens?

Mr WILSON: Yes.

The Hon. MELINDA PAVEY: Is it a policy to retrofit all other buses in time?

Mr WILSON: We will examine the issue of retrofitting and I would imagine that any program we undertake of retrofitting would start with the new buses and progressively work back.

The Hon. MELINDA PAVEY: Do you have a stated goal to achieve that?

Mr WILSON: We are currently examining that in detail at the moment. I am not able to give any specific commitment as to exactly what will be done in terms of retrofitting but we are certainly looking at this issue and I would expect that we will be doing some retrofitting but whether it is the whole fleet is not certain. There are issues of the difficulty of actually fitting the screens in some of the older buses so that will need to be examined in a fair bit of detail.

Answer:

I am advised:

An investigation was conducted to determine why footage of the incident involving a bus operator on 28 December 2005 was not captured on the CCTV tape.

New procedures are being adopted to eliminate as far as possible any future problems.

Concerning security screens, there are currently 90 buses fitted with security shields.

**The Hon John Watkins MP
Deputy Premier
Minister for Transport**

QUESTION ON NOTICE

BUDGET ESTIMATES

Notice Given: 23 February 2006

Asked by: The Hon Melinda Pavey MLC

Question:

The Hon. MELINDA PAVEY: What buses were put onto STA bus routes this morning compared with yesterday or even last Thursday?

Mr WILSON: I do not have figures from this morning. We have a very high level of bus availability in the morning and that has improved considerably over the past 12 months so I would expect that bus availability would have been almost 100 per cent this morning. When I say "100 per cent" I am not saying 100 per cent of our total fleet would have been available but 100 per cent of what we require to run the peak would have been available. In addition, we have also had provided at that you get around this time of year. So we would have, in fact, quite possibly provided more than our peak requirement this morning.

The Hon. MELINDA PAVEY: Would you provide the figures for today, yesterday and last Thursday?

Mr WILSON: Yes, I will take that on notice.

Answer:

I am advised:

The full quota of buses scheduled for 23, 22 and 16 February were put into service.

**The Hon John Watkins MP
Deputy Premier
Minister for Transport**

QUESTION ON NOTICE

BUDGET ESTIMATES

Notice Given: 23 February 2006

Asked by: The Hon Melinda Pavey MLC

Question:

The Hon. MELINDA PAVEY: Mr Wilson, could you give us some information regarding complaints about reliability on various routes associated with the cross-city tunnel? Have they been gathered and analysed?

Mr WILSON: In terms of providing a detailed answer, I will take that on notice. But what I can say is that we do have a good record of every complaint made through our 131 500 service. Every complaint lodged is examined individually. If people request a call back on that complaint they will receive it and I will undertake to have some analysis done of those along the lines you have requested and we will provide some information.

The Hon. MELINDA PAVEY: So you will give us a breakdown of the number of phone calls and complaints that you have received to that line?

Mr WILSON: That is, to a certain extent, a how long is a piece of string question. What I will do is endeavour to relate the issue you are asking about to the cross-city tunnel and the routes affected by that, which from our point of view we have had impacts probably, especially to the immediate east of the city. There have been more general impacts on other corridors as well, but when the complaints are made they are classified into various classifications—late running is one of them—and we will have a look and see what we can provide for you there.

The Hon. MELINDA PAVEY: Have you analysed the travel times since the opening of the cross-city tunnel for your commuters?

Mr WILSON: Yes, we did surveys of running times in the city.

The Hon. MELINDA PAVEY: What are the results of those surveys?

Mr WILSON: Again, I do not recall the details, and that can be provided, but we had mixed results. We had improvements on some corridors following the opening of the tunnel and deterioration on others.

The Hon. MELINDA PAVEY: Can you provide details to us of the deterioration and the positive outcomes?

Mr WILSON: Yes.

Mr WILSON: Yes, I will take that on notice.

Answer:

I am advised:

The following table provides the number of phone calls regarding reliability information for services using the William Street corridor.

YEAR/ MONTH	TOTAL CALLS
'05 Mar	51
'05 Apr	26
'05 May	34
'05 Jun	29
'05 Jul	30
'05 Aug	34
'05 Sep	28
'05 Oct	26
'05 Nov	32
'05 Dec	56
'06 Jan	18
'06 Feb	55

**The Hon John Watkins MP
Deputy Premier
Minister for Transport**

QUESTION ON NOTICE

BUDGET ESTIMATES

Notice Given: 23 February 2006

Asked by: The Hon Melinda Pavey

Question:

The Hon. MELINDA PAVEY: In relation to the Ministry of Transport, have all the Sydney region bus contracts been finalised?

Mr GLASSON: Yes.

The Hon. MELINDA PAVEY: What are the guidelines for assessing applications by Sydney private bus operators for additional bus services?

Mr GLASSON: In simple terms, the bus operator has to demonstrate clearly the capacity issue on the route that they want to introduce new services on and under the contracts there is a test, which is a public interest test, to ensure that there are not some underutilised services or significantly underutilised services somewhere in the contract area that could be better utilised on a route with more demand, prior to approving additional buses.

The Hon. MELINDA PAVEY: Would it be possible for the Committee to have a copy of guidelines?

Mr GLASSON: Certainly. The generic contract is on our web site, and I would happily provide that. That provides the details.

Answer:

I am pleased to provide the Committee with a copy of the generic Sydney Metropolitan System Bus Contract, which is also available on the Ministry of Transport's website at www.transport.nsw.gov.au/busreform.

**The Hon John Watkins MP
Deputy Premier
Minister for Transport**

QUESTION ON NOTICE

BUDGET ESTIMATES

Notice Given: 23 February 2006

Asked by: The Hon Jenny Gardiner MLC

Question:

CHAIR: In relation to the grain lines, which were alluded to earlier, can you advise the Committee what is the department's intention, the Ministry's intention, in relation to the 15 branch lines?

Mr GLASSON: I think the Government has stated a commitment to funding of 11 of those branch lines up till the end of the 2007-08 financial year, and there is a detailed explanation from the Minister as to what that entails.

CHAIR: So beyond 2007-08 it is up in the air, is it?

Mr GLASSON: Well, I think the Minister has been having discussions with New South Wales Farmers and others about a process beyond that time.

CHAIR: And what about the other four?

Mr GLASSON: They are suspended as government policy, so it is a matter that the Minister would need to be asked.

CHAIR: So government policy is that they are suspended indefinitely?

Mr GLASSON: That is as I understand it.

The Hon. MELINDA PAVEY: Where are those four grain lines?

Mr GLASSON: I can provide you with the detail of which ones are suspended.

Answer:

The suspended lines are:

- Willbriggie to Yanco
- Rankins Springs to Barmedman
- Burcher to West Wyalong
- Gwabegar to Binnaway

**The Hon John Watkins MP
Deputy Premier
Minister for Transport**

QUESTION ON NOTICE**BUDGET ESTIMATES**

Notice Given: 23 February 2006

Asked by: The Hon Jenny Gardiner MLC

Question:

CHAIR: In relation to the CCTV monitors in taxis and for extra security staff at taxi ranks, can you provide the Committee with information as to the amount that the Government is committing to funding the installation of those CCTV monitors in cabs and for any extra security that is provided or will be provided at taxi ranks?

Mr GLASSON: I am happy to come back with the detail on that but, essentially, the Government is still in discussions with the industry about the funding of all the additional cameras and the Minister has made a statement in relation to the extension of the secure ranks initiative within New South Wales in consultation with local councils and police.

CHAIR: I would just run through some questions and you can answer them on notice if you like. Firstly, who would ensure that the installation of the monitors and the extra security staff would be put in place? What is the expected time frame for all taxis to have these CCTVs installed? How many taxi ranks are currently monitored by CCTV? What checks are done to ensure CCTV monitors are functioning properly? Who will be paying for the images to be downloaded, if they need to be downloaded? If we could get the answers to those questions on notice it would be very much appreciated.

Mr GLASSON: I am happy to do that.

Answer:

I am advised:

The Ministry of Transport is still in discussions with the taxi industry to determine the level of funding required. Currently, Sydney taxis are required to be fitted with either taxi screens or cameras. The decision to fit either an approved camera or screen was previously the province of the individual operator as some drivers had a preference for screens, whilst others prefer cameras.

The Ministry of Transport already requires taxis to undergo periodical inspections at Authorised Taxi Inspection Stations (ATISs). These inspections are in addition to the Roads and Traffic Authority's annual registration inspection.

With regard to the functioning of taxi security cameras, taxi drivers are able to check whether the camera is functioning at any time by initiating the camera's in-built test procedure. Additionally, those taxis fitted with cameras are required to have their functionality certified by a technician when the taxi submits to its periodical ATIS inspection.

Police pay for the cost of downloads in cases where the incident is reported to Police and the images are required for evidentiary purposes.

**The Hon John Watkins MP
Deputy Premier
Minister for Transport**

QUESTION ON NOTICE

BUDGET ESTIMATES

Notice Given: 23 February 2006

Asked by: The Hon Melinda Pavey MLC

Question:

The Hon. MELINDA PAVEY: In relation to TIDC, what is the current cost estimate breakdown for each of the clearways projects, considering the total cost has blown out by \$500 million?

Mr GLASSON: I am happy to come back with the detail. They report directly to the Minister, but I am happy to come back with some information.

The Hon. MELINDA PAVEY: What is the estimated cost of the Bondi Junction turnback?

Mr GLASSON: That is really Mr Graham's area. These are Mr Graham's questions in that he is paying for those matters.

The Hon. MELINDA PAVEY: You have a co-ordinating role as director general in the Ministry of Transport?

Mr GLASSON: We do have a co-ordinating role but TIDC is run as a separate board reporting to the Minister.

Answer:

The Government will commit a total of \$1.5 billion to Clearways, to meet the public transport needs of our growing city.

The additional investment in Clearways includes allowances for inflation of costs such as labour and materials on all projects, over the construction period, and to achieve completion by 2010.

Under this program the Bondi Junction Turnback is costed at \$77 million.

**The Hon John Watkins MP
Deputy Premier
Minister for Transport**

QUESTION ON NOTICE

BUDGET ESTIMATES

Notice Given: 23 February 2006

Asked by: The Hon Melinda Pavey MLC

Question:

The Hon. MELINDA PAVEY: In relation to ITSRR, why have the target dates slipped for 20 of the Waterfall inquiry recommendations?

Mr GLASSON: They report independently to the Minister. I can take that on notice and forward it to ITSRR.

The Hon. MELINDA PAVEY: And in forwarding that could you also find out information as to why recommendation 55 of the Waterfall inquiry has taken so long to implement, which is in relation to the testing of drivers for alcohol or drugs in relation to accidents?

Mr GLASSON: I will pass that through to ITSRR.

Answer:

I am advised:

The 20 recommendations referred to relate to longer term national initiatives involving extensive consultation with industry, stakeholders and Government in the development of nationally consistent regulations. As reported in published ITSRR Quarterly Reports to Parliament, this process has involved the referral of these recommendations to the National Transport Commission.

The target dates specified in published ITSRR Quarterly Reports have always identified and reported as "interim dates" due to the nature and complexity of actions required.

Regarding the testing of drivers for drugs or alcohol, RailCorp already undertakes random drug and alcohol testing, as do a number of other large rail operators.

**The Hon John Watkins MP
Deputy Premier
Minister for Transport**

QUESTION ON NOTICE

BUDGET ESTIMATES

Notice Given: 23 February 2006

Asked by: Ms Lee Rhiannon MLC

Question:

Ms LEE RHIANNON: Mr Glasson, can you explain why there have been so many delays in introducing integrated ticketing?

Mr GLASSON: I am not certain as to which delays you are referring to.

Ms LEE RHIANNON: If you could run us through that because periodically we hear it is going to happen and then we do not hear anything for a long time. If you could give us a background, say over the last couple of years? I think it is about two years since the Minister announced we were about to have integrated ticketing.

Mr GLASSON: In general terms I will give you an overview, and if you want some more I am happy to come back with some more. A decision was made some 12 months or more ago by the Government to bring forward school student Tcards onto the private bus operators in advance of the program as it was then. My understanding is that the original delivery of the project was for November this year and it is likely that that has some slippage in it, probably to around March next year. There are all sorts of reasons for that. A lot of them will be related to technology, ironing out bugs in what is a new and quite complex system.

Ms LEE RHIANNON: So that is one just for school students?

Mr GLASSON: No, that is the total program. My understanding is that the total program was originally to be delivered by November this year, and that is likely to be around March next year.

Ms LEE RHIANNON: You mentioned about the school students. Where is that one up to?

Mr GLASSON: That is in all the private buses.

Ms LEE RHIANNON: So that is the one you are referring to?

Mr GLASSON: Yes, that is right. There is also a field trial scheduled for late May this year and I think there was some slippage of about a month in that. Overall, that is related mainly to technology.

Ms LEE RHIANNON: Where will the field trial occur, please?

Mr GLASSON: It is around the Punchbowl area.

Ms LEE RHIANNON: Is that just involving trains or private buses and buses?

Mr GLASSON: It is both private and State Transit buses.

Ms LEE RHIANNON: So, just buses?

Mr GLASSON: That is my understanding. Does it include the rail stations?

Mr WILSON: My understanding is there is some limited rail on that as well.

Mr GLASSON: I will clarify that for you.

Answer:

The first commuter field trials will involve a selection of buses and trains in Sydney's inner western suburbs.

**The Hon John Watkins MP
Deputy Premier
Minister for Transport**

QUESTION ON NOTICE

BUDGET ESTIMATES

Notice Given: 23 February 2006

Asked by: Ms Lee Rhiannon MLC

Question:

Ms LEE RHIANNON: Now a bus question. It is a long-running one. I hope you have some background on it. I have been told it has been going for 14 years. A government bus goes from Swansea to Morisset and is causing a great deal of difficulty for many locals because it is not able to pick up in certain areas. The private contractor, Busways, has the bus franchise for around Vales Point Road and Mannering Park. It is causing difficulties because people are not able to get to some of the shopping centres and then Wyee station, that they are delivered to, has 94 steps. So there are issues in getting to local shopping centres and accessibility. Why can the government bus not stop in that area that is covered by Busways?

Mr GLASSON: That is truly a matter from the old and the current bus contracts, which are exclusive rights.

Ms LEE RHIANNON: Yes. Why is it still a problem, considering we have got into the new contracts?

Mr GLASSON: Because the new contracts in the outer metropolitan areas, including Swansea, will not be finalised until later this year. The metropolitan was done first. Now Central Coast, Newcastle, Blue Mountains and the Illawarra following that.

Ms LEE RHIANNON: Do you understand that this issue is being addressed in the new contracts?

Mr GLASSON: It is my understanding that it will be addressed in the new contracts, but I am happy to come back and clarify that.

Ms LEE RHIANNON: What I mean by addressed, will public buses be able to pick up in those areas? So, if you could check on that?

Mr GLASSON: Under the new contracts and the consolidation, we are trying to abandon the differentiation between public and private or private and private exclusive areas. We are designating large areas where you get an integrated network and whoever is the provider can pick up. I think it will

resolve the situation you are talking about but I am happy to come back on the details of that specific route.

Answer:

I am advised:

State Transit's Route 352 commenced service during 2001 and travels from Belmont to Morisset via Swansea on weekdays. It does two return trips each day, one in the morning and one in the afternoon.

Busways' Route 97 (Mannering Park via Wyee) does up to 14 round trips on weekdays and two round trips on Saturdays and Sundays.

I am advised that State Transit's Route 352 service is unable to pick up and set down passengers due to the existing contract which gives Busways exclusive rights to the area.

Under the Outer-Metropolitan Bus System Contract, "pick-up and set down" restrictions on strategic corridors are lifted immediately. Restrictions on other "traversing routes" are lifted within 12 months of the new contract under a Neighbouring Service Provider Agreement which coordinates the timetabling of routes provided by different operators.

State Transit will be able to continue operating this route as a "traversing route" and with the new contracts scheduled to be executed this year, it is expected that new arrangements will be put in place during 2007.

**The Hon John Watkins MP
Deputy Premier
Minister for Transport**

QUESTION ON NOTICE

BUDGET ESTIMATES

Notice Given: 23 February 2006

Asked by: Ms Lee Rhiannon MLC

Question:

Ms LEE RHIANNON: I want to ask you about Newcastle and buses. Do you judge that the fare-free zone in Newcastle has been a success?

Mr WILSON: There is no significant impact on patronage, if that is what your criterion for success is.

Ms LEE RHIANNON: I was interested in how you were examining it. What are the estimated losses in the fare box revenue associated with the fare-free zone in the Newcastle central business district, say, for last year?

Mr WILSON: I would need to take that on notice and come back to you.

Ms LEE RHIANNON: If you could give it to us on a monthly basis for 2005, that would be good. I would also be interested if you are seeing there has been an increase in ferry revenue, for instance, and if you are finding that more people are doing park and ride, like to Stockton and leaving their cars there and catching the ferry, and whether there has been an increase in bus patronage outside the CBD in that same period? So, I am asking that as a question which I understand you will need to take on notice. Are you making an assessment of the revenue patterns of the public transport use in Newcastle since the introduction of this fare-free zone?

Mr WILSON: As I said, we will need to come back to you specifically with any data, but my general impression for Newcastle is that it has not provided any increase in patronage.

Ms LEE RHIANNON: So, those studies have been done? You have data there where you are making those comparisons, have you?

Mr WILSON: We have information about every boarding we have on the buses, the date, the time of day, the route, the direction of travel, the section point. We have systems where we can monitor the patterns in that on a regular basis, and none of the views I have taken of Newcastle has suggested that there has been any beneficial impact on Newcastle patronage as a result of the fare-free zone.

Ms LEE RHIANNON: As far as the plan itself, that is safely in place now or is it under review, the fare-free zone?

Mr WILSON: In relation to that, we will do what we are requested in relation to fares. Under the new contracts it is the prerogative of the director general to say where we do and where we do not offer free fares.

Ms LEE RHIANNON: You have not been asked to review it?

Mr WILSON: No, it remains in place for the time being.

Answer:

I am advised:

The estimated the cost of conducting the fare free bus zone for 2005 is \$390,000.

State Transit advises that it is not possible to give exact monthly figures.

State Transit monitors patronage demands and makes adjustments to services as required.

**The Hon John Watkins MP
Deputy Premier
Minister for Transport**

QUESTION ON NOTICE

BUDGET ESTIMATES

Notice Given: 23 February 2006

Asked by: Ms Lee Rhiannon MLC

Question:

Ms LEE RHIANNON: Just asking about the use of coaches and buses on the Casino to Murwillumbah line, do you have an involvement with that or is that purely under rail?

Mr GLASSON: That is rail organising that.

Ms LEE RHIANNON: So you have no involvement in that at all?

Mr GLASSON: Look, I am happy to clarify that, but I understand CountryLink would be ordering those coaches and paying for them.

Ms LEE RHIANNON: I would appreciate it if you would clarify that. I have a number of questions about the increased use of coaches there and how much money has been spent on them, and about the contracts those bus operators are operating under. So, if you could take that on notice, I would appreciate it.

Mr GLASSON: I will. If that is under RailCorp, you would be happy for me to refer it to Mr Graham to include in his answers?

Ms LEE RHIANNON: Yes.

Answer:

I am advised:

The original Brisbane, Robina, Surfers Paradise to Murwillumbah Coach contracts commenced in November 2002.

When the Murwillumbah – Casino rail line closed in 2004, the contracts were extended.

A new contract was also awarded in October 2005 for the Murwillumbah – Casino – Murwillumbah express afternoon service, to connect with the XPT to/from Sydney.

All contracts were subject to commercial tender.

The Hon John Watkins MP
Deputy Premier
Minister for Transport