



*Minister for Roads*  
*Minister for Commerce*

**Question on Notice**

Question taken on Notice from the Hon Don Harwin MLC during the Estimates Committee hearing on 26 October 2007.

**The Hon. DON HARWIN:** I will pick a project. I refer to page 5-60 of the infrastructure statement, South Nowra to Jervis Bay Road safety upgrade, where you refer to State and Federal funding and give the estimated cost. What is the estimated cost to the State, Minister? That \$19 million figure is not the estimated cost to the State, is it? The estimated total cost is \$19 million. You correctly say "State and Federal funding" under the description of the program. That \$19 million is not a cost to the State of that project, is it?

**The Hon. ERIC ROOZENDAAL:** On my advice, the total cost of the project is \$19 million.

**The Hon. DON HARWIN:** That is not what I asked. I asked: That is not the total cost to the State's taxpayers, is it?

**The Hon. ERIC ROOZENDAAL:** I will have to take that question on notice.

**Answer**

I am advised:

In respect of the amount of project information contained in Budget Paper 4, the Federal contribution to each project is generally available from public sources. For example, DOTARS media releases and project outlines on the Auslink website clearly set out the amounts contributed by Federal Government to these projects.

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### **Question on Notice**

Question taken on Notice from Dr John Kaye MLC during the Estimates Committee hearing on 26 October 2007.

**Dr JOHN KAYE:** Let's talk about Bike Plan 2010 and let's talk about route 17 in Bike Plan 2010, which is the Harbour Bridge to Woolloomooloo. My understanding is that it is scheduled for completion in 2005. My question is: When will you start work on it?

**The Hon. ERIC ROOZENDAAL:** Interestingly enough I do not have details here. I will have to take that on notice.

**Dr JOHN KAYE:** You would not have any details because you do not have a senior manager anymore who is interested in that. Likewise, Bike Plan 2010, route 18, University of New South Wales to Sydney University, that is scheduled for completion in 2006. When are you expecting to start work on that?

**The Hon. ERIC ROOZENDAAL:** I will take that on notice.

**Dr JOHN KAYE:** How much is budgeted for those two projects and in which years?

**The Hon. ERIC ROOZENDAAL:** I will take that on notice.

### **Answer**

I am advised:

The RTA has a commitment to improve cyclist safety via the provision of off-road cycleways wherever practicable when major roads are built or upgraded. Accordingly bicycle facilities have been and continue to be delivered by major road infrastructure projects, some of which were not represented in BikePlan 2010. Specifically to Sydney, projects such as the Bangor Bypass, Windsor Road upgrade, Cross City Tunnel and Lane Cove Tunnel have and will provide significant facilities for cyclists. These unlisted major projects have changed the delivery priorities as originally outlined in the Bike Plan 2010.

Initial investigations into the Harbour Bridge to Woolloomooloo route have begun including a concept design report completed in 2005. Construction cost was estimated at \$2.5M, and will be considered in future budgets.

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### **Question on Notice**

Question taken on Notice from the Hon Duncan Gay MLC during the Estimates Committee hearing on 26 October 2007.

**The Hon. DUNCAN GAY:** Minister, would you therefore agree with the Roads and Traffic Authority's website, which states that the Gladesville Bridge's physical condition is good?

**The Hon. ERIC ROOZENDAAL:** I will take the advice of the Roads and Traffic Authority in relation to the engineering and maintenance of the Gladesville Bridge. I will obtain information as to the maintenance regime of the Gladesville Bridge over the past three years, if that is the question being asked, but I have every confidence in the Roads and Traffic Authority's maintenance program. I think we spend on maintenance a year \$933 million. In relation to the maintenance of the Gladesville Bridge—

**CHAIR:** You will take that on notice, specifically in relation to the Gladesville Bridge?

### **Answer**

I am advised:

The Gladesville Bridge's physical condition is good. The last inspection was in March 2007 and the final parts of this inspection are currently being completed with specialised access equipment. Prior to this an underwater inspection was undertaken in 2006. The bridge was assessed as being in good condition.

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**The Hon. DUNCAN GAY:** Part of your historic testing has been to track that arch, the rise and the fall. My question was: What was the movement of the arch between the most recent test and the one before?

**Mr WIELINGA:** We will have to get back to you on that.

**The Hon. DUNCAN GAY:** Minister, who carried out the test, the Roads and Traffic Authority or a contractor?

**Mr WIELINGA:** Again, we will have to come back to you with the detail.

**The Hon. DUNCAN GAY:** I understand that for a number of years the Roads and Traffic Authority has had specialised equipment, a one-second theodolite, that it has used to carry out this sort of work on the Gladesville Bridge. Does the Roads and Traffic Authority still own a one-second theodolite?

**Mr WIELINGA:** I will have to come back to you on that.

**The Hon. DUNCAN GAY:** If the Roads and Traffic Authority does not own a theodolite, could you indicate how the bridge will be monitored without it and how you are able to fit the recent observations with the historic observations?

**Mr WIELINGA:** One of the things you should perhaps appreciate is that structures tend to be monitored with a lot more detail than they were in their initial couple of decades, for obvious reasons: concrete shrinks. You get to know the history, and you can monitor what is happening with bridge bearings and those sorts of things, to have any pointers for potential problems. We can provide all this detail, but if you have a specific issue you are concerned about, tell us about it and we can look at it.

**The Hon. DUNCAN GAY:** I am seeking general detail on inspections, given that the Roads and Traffic Authority's website was reasonably less than specific about what was happening in the inspections. Minister, I understand that the Gladesville Bridge rises with heat in summer, obviously because of the expansion, and that it lowers in the cold of winter, and that there are thermometers within the bridge that monitor these changes. Are these thermometers still being monitored, if so, how often are they monitored, and when was the last inspection done?

**Mr WIELINGA:** We will find out and come back to you.

**Answer**

I am advised:

Monitoring of the deck has been undertaken for many years, with more frequent monitoring occurring in the initial years after construction. The last monitoring of the deck measured movement in the order of 10mm – which is within expectations for similar structures.

It should be noted that monitoring of this structure was undertaken primarily to confirm that the operational performance of the bridge matched with those of the designer's predictions, as creep and shrinkage effect on prestressed concrete were not well understood at that time.

The current knowledge of creep and shrinkage effects and the study of the monitoring results, indicate that the movements of the bridge due to these effects have stabilised.

The monitoring of the deck has always been undertaken by the RTA.

The original one second instrument was a Wild T2 model optical reading theodolite. These instruments have not been used for many years. The RTA currently uses the most up to date one second electronic reading total stations. The RTA has recently purchased Leica 1201 model which is used for similar monitoring work. This is a 'one second electronic total station' which is more accurate than the Wild T2.

There are 16 thermometers installed in the bridge and a recent inspection has confirmed that all thermometers are in working order. It should be noted that the temperature readings are only required for correction of deck measured values to take into account temperature effects.

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**Question on Notice**

Question taken on Notice from the Hon Fred Nile MLC during the Estimates Committee hearing on 26 October 2007.

**CHAIR:** Who bears the cost for these special drug-testing vehicles? Is it the RTA or the Police Department?

**The Hon. ERIC ROOZENDAAL:** That is a good question? I will come back to you with the exact details,.....

**CHAIR:** And that would include the actual vehicles. I understand you need a special vehicle to do it?

**The Hon. ERIC ROOZENDAAL:** Yes. I will come back with that information.

**Answer**

I am advised:

The RTA bears costs incurred by the NSW Police Force for random roadside drug testing. This includes the cost of the actual drug testing vehicles.

To cover these costs, the NSW Government approved a \$2 increase in licensing fees from January 2007. Treasury has allocated these funds to the RTA which are expected to total \$5.62 million over 3 years.

Roadside drug testing uses different technologies and processes to random breath testing. This requires a purpose built roadside drug testing vehicle to ensure the integrity of the testing processes at the roadside. Key features of this vehicle include a large flat workbench to accommodate the testing process and a large refrigerator in which to store the oral fluid samples.

These testing processes have proven to be effective, reliable and resource efficient.

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**CHAIR:** Another issue that puzzles me is the large sound barriers that are put on these expressways and so on, obviously to protect residents from noise.

**CHAIR:** So there is a scientific purpose behind it? It is not that somebody just does it?

**Mr WIELINGA:** Mr Chair, we can show you the modelling that is done and how the decisions are made about noise wall heights and so forth. We can show you the process. The Roads and Traffic Authority has a set of noise guidelines that might assist your consideration.

**The Hon. ERIC ROOZENDAAL:** Do you have a particular corridor in mind?

**CHAIR:** Almost all of them that I drive on at I see a very high natural barrier with a high fence on top. It does not make sense to me, bearing in mind the costs involved.

**Answer**

I am advised:

The Roads and Traffic Authority (RTA) is committed to minimising the potential effects of highway traffic noise on the community through the use of noise reduction or mitigation measures.

In NSW the guidelines for road traffic noise are documented in the *Environmental Criteria for Road Traffic Noise* available online at [www.environment.nsw.gov.au/resources/roadnoise.pdf](http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/resources/roadnoise.pdf). The RTA's Environmental Noise Management Manual also provides guidance on assessing and managing noise and vibration from road construction and operation. Detailed information regarding the options available for noise mitigation can be found at [www.rta.nsw.gov.au/environment/noise](http://www.rta.nsw.gov.au/environment/noise)

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### **Question on Notice**

Question taken on Notice from Dr John Kaye MLC during the Estimates Committee hearing on 26 October 2007.

**Dr JOHN KAYE:** How many applications have you had for matching funds from local governments?

**Mr WIELINGA:** We can get those details for you.

**Dr JOHN KAYE:** So you will take that on notice. Could you also at the same time tell us how many of those applications have been knocked back? And can you give us an indication here of, roughly speaking, how many get knocked back or do most of them get funded?

**The Hon. ERIC ROOZENDAAL:** With respect, rather than give rough indications I think it is appropriate that we take that request on notice and come back with exact information.

### **Answer**

I am advised:

For 2007/08, 209 50/50 funding submissions were received by the RTA from local government for bicycle related projects.

Of the 209 submissions received from Councils for 2007/08 50/50 funding, 93 projects were accepted by the RTA, and the 116 project submissions that were unsuccessful will be considered for RTA funding in future years.

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**Dr JOHN KAYE:** My question is how many routes in Bike Plan 2010 have been completed?

**The Hon. ERIC ROOZENDAAL:** I will have to take that on notice.

**Answer**

I am advised:

16.

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**The Hon. DUNCAN GAY:** I understand that. I understand one inspection of the bridge a number of years ago found concrete cancer in a section of the bridge and it was immediately repaired. Are these sorts of inspections continuing and are you finding cancer or not?

**Mr WIELINGA:** The short answer is the inspections do continue. The concrete cancer problems tend to be worse on the far North Coast because of acid sulphate soil. We use special concretes these days to deal with that particular problem and we have higher concrete covers over steel. We had some issues with the bridges in the Ballina area and they have been repaired. This was some time ago but we do inspections and we deal with it.

**The Hon. DUNCAN GAY:** Gladesville Bridge, you will get me these details?

**Mr WIELINGA:** Yes.

**CHAIR:** Details of what?

**The Hon. DUNCAN GAY:** Concrete cancer.

**Answer**

I am advised:

The last inspection was in March 2007 and the final parts of this inspection are currently being completed with specialised access equipment. Prior to this an underwater inspection was undertaken in 2006. Bridge condition assessments are carried out generally every 2 years by an experienced Bridge Inspector and underwater inspections are undertaken every 4 years by experienced divers.

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**Dr JOHN KAYE:** I take you briefly to subsidies for B-doubles. What is the current registration fee for B-doubles?

**Mr WIELINGA:** I will come back to you on that.

**Dr JOHN KAYE:** Could you come back with the current registration for B-doubles?

**The Hon. ERIC ROOZENDAAL:** State or federally registered?

**Dr JOHN KAYE:** State registration, the annual New South Wales registration and permit fee for B-doubles as of 1 July 1996, so the current and the 1996 figures?

**Mr WIELINGA:** I will take that on notice.

**Answer**

I am advised:

In April 2007 the Council of Australian Governments announced a series of reforms for heavy vehicle charges in response to the Productivity Commission Inquiry into Road and Rail Freight Infrastructure Pricing.

This included the removal of cross-subsidies between vehicle classes, including the cross-subsidies currently received by B-doubles.

The removal of cross-subsidies is expected to be implemented as part of the forthcoming Heavy Vehicle Charges Determination, currently being prepared by the National Transport Commission for consideration by all states and territories.

Registration charges for B-doubles, like all heavy vehicles, are based on vehicle configuration and the number of axles. Information about the charges currently applied to B-doubles can be found on the Roads and Traffic Authority's website at [www.rta.nsw.gov.au](http://www.rta.nsw.gov.au).

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### **Question on Notice**

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**Mr Wielinga:** There is a program called the Australian level crossing assessment model (ALCAM), which looks at the priority of these into sections and recommends treatments for level crossings. They are done in priority order in accordance with the budget that we have got. In addition, when we do major new road construction projects, we tend to incorporate grade separated interchanges at railways when we do that. For example, we are exploring one at Riverstone at the moment.

**Chair:** Could you calculate that you might do 10 a year?

**Mr Wielinga:** Can we come back to you on that? If you are talking about a number of treatments at level crossings, we can come back to you with the number, or are you talking about the number of separated treatments?

**Chair:** Where you actually put a bridge over crossings?

**Mr Wielinga:** That is a grade separation. We will have to come back to you on that.....

### **Answer**

I am advised:

There are more than 3000 level crossings in NSW, including more than 1600 public crossings.

The job of upgrading these railway crossings is undertaken by a range of agencies and is coordinated by the NSW Level Crossing Strategy Council, chaired by the Director General of the Ministry of Transport.

Member agencies of the LCSC include:

- Australian Rail Track Corporation

- Independent Transport Safety and Reliability Regulator
- Local Government Association and Shires Association of NSW
- Ministry of Transport
- NSW Police
- Rail Infrastructure Corporation
- RailCorp; and
- NSW Roads and Traffic Authority (RTA)

The NSW Government has allocated at least \$36M over the next 4 years for improvements to level crossings in NSW. In 2007/2008, at least \$9M will be spent in the Level Crossing Safety Improvement Program for projects in NSW.

In the past 5 years the RTA has constructed six grade separated rail crossings to eliminate at-grade rail crossings:

- 1 on the Princes Highway at Bombo (over a siding into a quarry)
- 4 on the Hume Highway in Albury as part of the Albury Bypass
- 1 on the Olympic Highway at Gerogery

In addition the RTA Level Crossing Safety Improvement Program funds major and minor improvements to at-grade level crossings including the provision of bells, lights and booms, road widening, signposting and pavement markings.

In the three years to 2006/2007 more than 10 sites were completed annually. To date 8 sites have been improved in 2007/ 2008.

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