

GENERAL PURPOSE STANDING COMMITTEE NO. 2

Tuesday 1 September 2015

Examination of proposed expenditure for the portfolio area

TRANSPORT AND INFRASTRUCTURE

The Committee met at 2.00 p.m.

MEMBERS

The Hon. G. J. Donnelly (Chair)

Dr M. Faruqi
The Hon. P. Green (Deputy Chair)
The Hon. M. R. Mason-Cox
The Hon. N. D. Mookhey

The Hon. Dr P. Phelps
The Hon. P. G. Sharpe
The Hon. B. Taylor

PRESENT

The Hon. Andrew Constance, *Minister for Transport and Infrastructure*

CHAIR: Good afternoon Minister, officers and supporting staff. Welcome to budget estimates 2015-16. Before I commence, I acknowledge the Gadigal people who are the traditional custodians of this land and I pay my respects to the elders past and present of the Eora nation and extend that respect to other Aboriginals who may be present here today. I welcome Minister Constance and accompanying officials to this hearing today. The Committee will examine the proposed expenditure for the portfolio areas Transport and Infrastructure.

Today's hearing is open to the public and is being broadcast live via the Parliament's website. In accordance with broadcasting guidelines, while members of the media may film or record Committee members and witnesses, people in the public gallery should not be the primary focus of any filming or photography. I also remind media representatives that they must take responsibility for what they publish about the Committee's proceedings. It is important to remember that parliamentary privilege does not apply to what witnesses may say outside their evidence at the hearing so I urge witnesses to be careful about any comments they may make to the media or to others after they complete your evidence, as such comments would not be protected by parliamentary privilege if another person decided to take action for defamation. The guidelines for the broadcast of the proceedings are available from the secretariat.

There may be some questions that witnesses could only answer if they had more time or certain documentation to hand. In these circumstances, witnesses are advised that they can take a question on notice and provide an answer within 21 days. Any messages from advisers or members' staff seated in the public gallery should be delivered through the Chamber or support staff or the Committee secretariat. Minister, I remind you and the officers accompanying you that you are free, of course, to pass notes and to refer directly to your advisers seated at the table behind you. Transcripts of this hearing will be available on the web from tomorrow morning. Finally, I ask everyone to turn off their mobile phones for the duration of the hearing.

With respect to the swearing of witnesses, all witnesses from departments, statutory bodies or corporations will be sworn prior to giving evidence this afternoon. Minister, I remind you that you do not need to be sworn as you have already sworn an oath to your office as a member of Parliament. I remind Mr Reardon, from Transport for NSW and Ms Margaret Prendergast from Transport for NSW that they do not need to be sworn as that occurred at budget estimates committee hearings yesterday. As there are a large number of witnesses, we have not been able to accommodate them all at the one table. We will swear all the witnesses at the beginning of the hearing, including those sitting at the table behind the main table. For these witnesses I ask that, when responding to questions, they come forward with their nameplates and change places with a witness at the table.

JIM BETTS, Chief Executive Officer, Infrastructure NSW, affirmed and examined:

FERGUS GAMMIE, Deputy Secretary, Infrastructure and Services, Transport for NSW,

HOWARD PAUL COLLINS, Chief Executive, Sydney Trains,

RODD ANDREW STAPLES, Program Director, Sydney Metro, Transport for NSW,

PETER ROSS GEMELL, Acting Project Director, CBD South East Light Rail, and

PETER ROWLEY, Chief Executive Officer, State Transit Authority, sworn and examined:

TIM REARDON, Secretary, Transport for NSW, and

MARGARET PRENDERGAST, CBD Coordinator General, Transport for NSW, on former oath:

CHAIR: We will commence questioning. As I think you understand, Government members will not be asking questions, so we will be moving in rotations of 20-minute blocks. We will commence with the Hon. Penny Sharpe.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: Minister, congratulations on the new role.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: Congratulations on coming back.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: Thank you—glad to be back. Minister, can you tell us what the value of the contract with SNP Security to provide the security at Sydney train stations was, or is?

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: Obviously this issue has been in the media in the past 24 hours and I think it is important, first and foremost, to say that the Government's focus in relation to the security of customers and the security of our rail assets, is of particular importance. We have 610 members of the NSW Police Force who are now part of the Transport Command who are charged with looking after the safety and wellbeing of our customers. At the same time—

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: If I can stop you there, Minister. I appreciate the background but I have a very specific question and I do not have much time to be able to ask it. I am really just after the figures in relation to the SNP Security contract.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: I can check with Howard Collins. I think the figure was around \$17.6 million or thereabouts.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: For how many years or was it per year?

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: I understand that the contract has now been in place for 10 years. We currently have on weekend nights a total of 220 security personnel working and on weekday nights a total of 181 personnel working. That is alongside the 610 police who are working as part of the PTC.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: Will you confirm that the 17.6 is over 10 years or is it per year?

Mr COLLINS: It is per year.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: I understand that there is authorised funding for 610 Police Transport Command officers, but I also believe that that is currently only at 560 officers. Will you confirm that Mr Collins or Minister?

Mr COLLINS: The number of officers in total who work under the Police Transport Command is, I believe, 610.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: Theoretically there is in terms of people actually in those positions, but the latest document from the police shows it is 559.

Mr COLLINS: Yes, I understand all those frontline positions have been filled. That may include some other officers or backroom staff.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: Where are the missing 50?

Mr COLLINS: I do not know.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: I will take that question on notice.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: Is it correct that you are removing security officers from 12 stations?

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: Fifteen security staff are being removed and we are removing some of those security staff from stations that now have a base for the Police Transport Command. I think the premise of your question that somehow the safety of our customers—

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: I have not made that assertion, Minister. I am trying to get a handle on how much it is costing and how much you are saving. Do you say 15 security staff have been taken off? Can you tell me what the savings of those 15 will be?

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: I will take that on notice.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: Mr Collins?

Mr COLLINS: The efficiencies of the savings made, I believe, are estimated to be just over \$3 million.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: Is it correct that removing these 15 will give you savings of about \$3 million?

Mr COLLINS: Yes. We must also understand that the contract also includes security guards for railway sidings, depots and other areas that have not been affected, including a number of dog patrols and many other forms of security. This is just a review that has taken place from March at stations where we do believe there is a duplication of effort and also that these security guards have been around since about 1994 or 1995 and have not been reviewed at all—the same sort of places, the same locations. A lot has changed since then, including places like Hornsby police command being located and we certainly believe that is the case.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: As you know I am across about where the transport command is.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: Very pleasingly crime has been reduced across the network.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: We would all agree with that Minister—that is terrific.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: And that is the key point. You opposed police being on the network; the Labor Party did that. Very pleasingly we are making arrests, reducing crime and that is a great story for Government.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: Minister it is time for us to move on. If you want to revisit, that is fine.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: It is a great story for the Government.

The Hon. MATTHEW MASON-COX: Great story.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: I direct your attention to contract No. 420436, "Provision of actor services for the assessment centre". Are you familiar with that document?

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: I have to say, if this line of questioning is in relation to the community service advertising that we undertake to promote safety—

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: No, it is not at all. I am asking you about whether you are familiar with it.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: I am not aware of the specific nature of the contract.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: I will provide you with a copy of the contract.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: If you would like to provide me with a copy of the contract, I will take 10 minutes to read it and—

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: It will not take you 10 minutes it will not take very long, but I would like you to have a copy of it. We will just get it to you. I want you to have a copy of it so that you understand. It will not take you 20 minutes; if it did you must take a long time to read your briefing notes. Minister, this contract shows that between September last year and September this year more than \$506,000 was spent on actors to provide role playing services in relation to Transport for NSW. Can you confirm that that is correct?

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: No, I cannot confirm it because you have just given me a document that—

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: It is from the e-tender website as required—Transport NSW Corporate. Perhaps Mr Reardon will confirm it.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: I will take that assertion you are making on notice.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: This is from the Government's own website. I have provided you with a copy of it. It is very standard practice to register your contracts. It was published on 3 July and it says that just over half a million dollars was spent on providing actors to the assessment centre. I just want to confirm that that has happened. I am assuming it has, given that it has been published.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: Let us be clear: We are running television advertisements for Tomorrow's Sydney, Opal card roll out—

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: It has nothing to do with that.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: —and in the next 12 months on community safety.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: If you wanted to do a dixer about your advertising you could do that. I am asking you about role play services.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: If you are going to oppose—and I do not make any apologies for this Government promoting a number of key community initiatives to protect commuters encouraging them to take on Opal safety—

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: Minister, this is nowhere near that question. You have got the Hon. Dr Peter Phelps to ask that question for you, if you wanted.

The Hon. MATTHEW MASON-COX: Point of order—

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: He is not even within a bull's roar.

The Hon. MATTHEW MASON-COX: The Minister should be given the opportunity to complete his answer rather than having excessive interruptions.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: His answer is completely irrelevant to the question.

The Hon. MATTHEW MASON-COX: It will facilitate the orderly running of this Committee. It is about time the member gave the Minister an opportunity.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: It would be good if he could answer the question, that would be good.

CHAIR: Order! The Minister has been asked a specific question. I invite the Minister to complete his answer.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: Absolutely. And—

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: So, what, you are not going to confirm this is a real document?

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: I am going to answer your question. As I indicated—

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: Have you been paying actors to help train staff in Transport for NSW? That is my question.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: The Government is running a number of initiatives around advertising to ensure the people of Sydney and New South Wales—

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: With respect, that has got nothing to do with my question. I am talking about training within Transport for NSW.

The Hon. MATTHEW MASON-COX: Point of order: The member is flouting your ruling. It is about time she gave the Minister an opportunity to answer her question.

CHAIR: Order! The Minister has been invited to answer the direct question that has been put to him.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: As I understand the question it relates to advertising—

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: No, the question is very specific: A contract has been awarded. Your department has paid more than half a million dollars to pay actors to train staff within Transport for NSW. It has nothing to do with advertising, it has to do with the training of staff and whether half a million dollars has been spent on actors.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: I will take the question on notice and I will come back to the Committee.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: Mr Reardon, can you confirm this, given it is on the website?

Mr REARDON: The Minister has indicated we will take it on notice, and is happy to come back with a response.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: If you are going to take questions on notice will you be able to provide the Committee with an outline of what services those actors performed?

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: Again I make this point: If we are running advertisements, we are making no apologies for it.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: This is not about advertising; this is about training and the use of precious taxpayers' money in relation to transport and your department. This has nothing to do with advertising; it has got everything to do with the use of taxpayers' money in your department.

The Hon. MATTHEW MASON-COX: Do you want to ask a question?

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: Yes, I am trying to ask the question but the Minister will not answer it. Minister, will you take on notice what services these actors under the role play Actors College of Theatre and Television Unit Trust performed for Transport for NSW?

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: I said that I would take it on notice.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: In that case, can you also confirm—I am seeking more details—that they played roles such as, and I quote from the website of Role Play Australia: "A vandal on a train trying to avoid detection."? Can you confirm that we have had actors running around pretending to be vandals?

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: You have made an assertion; you have read it on to the record—

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: I have it right here. This is from Role Play Australia, which has a contract with your government—half a million dollars you have paid them in the past year. You do not seem to be aware of it.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: Are you asking me questions or are you making statements?

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: Not even aware of it.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: Are you going to make political statements, or are you going to ask questions this afternoon? I have said—

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: I am asking questions and I am seeking information.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: I have said that I would take that on notice, and quite—.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: Do you think it is reasonable that your department is cutting security staff whilst spending money on actors pretending to be vandals?

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: I am glad you have asked me a question which, quite frankly, your assertions are wrong and naïve.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: Which part of the assertion is wrong when this is a publicly available document?

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: The fact that we have put 610 Police Transport Command officers on to the transport network.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: You have 560 at best, Minister.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: I note that the customer satisfaction with Sydney Trains has gone up by 15 per cent since we have come to government. We have increased our services by 1,730; and customer satisfaction is now at 88 per cent.

The Hon. Dr PETER PHELPS: Point of order: The witness was asked a question. Part of that question the Minister asserts was incorrect in its premise. The Minister is trying to correct the premise which was incorrect and is being continually interrupted by the Hon. Penny Sharpe. She should desist until such time as the Minister has completed his answer at which point she may then ask a new question.

CHAIR: Order! I ask the Minister to address the specific question asked of him.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: First of all the assertion behind the question is that it relates to security staff. The premise of your question is both misleading and wrong. Let me be clear, 610 Police Transport Command officers—

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: Five hundred and sixty.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: —are now on the rail network, and you are asserting that, for instance, at two stations like Campbelltown and Hornsby where we have actually established a Police Transport Command base at the station, they are expecting the Government to continue to have security personnel there who do not have arrest powers. The majority of security officers who work as part of the network are there to protect rail assets. They do not have arrest powers. By introducing police onto the network we have improved customer satisfaction by 15 per cent since we came to office. We are improving the number of services available to commuters.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: I appreciate that answer—

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: But you do not like it, obviously.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: —but I still disagree with you. What do you say to commuters who said in the See Red on Rail survey of 12,000 commuters last year that security is their number one issue when travelling on the public transport network? What do you say to them when you still have an understaffed Police Transport Command and you are cutting rail security for a measly \$3 million while spending, for example, \$500,000 on sending in clowns to pretend to be vandals on the rail network?

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: Again, I think the assertions that you are making are wrong. The performance of Sydney Trains compared with when you were in office has improved remarkably. Since the introduction of the Police Transport Command officers have made almost 9,000 arrests, there have been nearly 17,000 charges, more than 180,000 infringements and customer satisfaction has improved by 15 per cent.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: Yet security remains the number one issue. What do you say to commuters about that?

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: What are you saying?

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: What I am saying is that people are scared to travel on the rail system at night. You keep asserting incorrect numbers in relation to the Police Transport Command and your department is cutting staff yet it is spending money on a range of other issues that come nowhere close to addressing that issue.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: I do not understand your assertion. You want to have security—

The Hon. Dr PETER PHELPS: Point of order: The honourable member has again made a long assertion without asking a question. This is not the floor of the Chamber or a public forum for making speeches. Budget estimates hearings are about asking questions to elucidate information.

CHAIR: Order! The question was being asked and the Minister jumped in and started to give a response. I presume the Minister wants to respond to what was put to him.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: The other point I would make is that we now have 10,000 closed-circuit television [CCTV] cameras across the network to improve customer safety. It is part of our value proposition to look after our customers.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: Can you confirm you have fewer eyes on those cameras than you ever had?

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: For Labor to be questioning this Government about transport and your clear opposition to it is truly remarkable.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: I have a very specific question. You raised the issue, Minister.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: You asked a question with the wrong assumptions.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: Can you confirm that there are fewer eyes looking at the CCTV than there were previously?

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: There are 10,000 CCTVs across the network. Were there 610 police on the transport network when Labor was last in office?

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: Yes, there were 600 transport officers and 300 commuter cops. Let us be honest about that. My question is specifically about CCTV. You might have 10,000 cameras but how many eyes do you have on the cameras? It is too late after the event when people have been beaten up on the trains.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: The point that I would make very clearly is that we are doing everything as part of our value proposition to protect customers. The bottom line is that this Government has been investing in our Police Transport Command. You now want us to continue with security guards where we have put Police Transport Command bases at Campbelltown and Hornsby stations. How ridiculous and absurd is your proposition there?

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: No, I am asking you how much you are saving. I am putting a value proposition to you about where your money is going and whether you are putting money into security or into actors.

CHAIR: Order! The Minister will be allowed to complete the answer.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: I have made my point clear. There are 610 police officers. We are absolutely focused. I do not know if Mr Collins would like to add to this.

Mr COLLINS: To answer the question about fewer eyes, actually there are more eyes. When the security guards were first put in place in 1994 we did not have the Rail Management Centre [RMC]. We now have that. That was put in in 2001-02. We are building a new rail operation centre. We share the CCTV information with the police and ourselves. From a worldwide point of view we have one of the best security centres shared in the RMC. We use our CCTV proactively but also in conjunction with the police. In terms of fewer eyes, I refute that and say there are probably more people being more proactive regarding the closed-circuit television and the other security features that we have started to develop.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: Given the story on the news last night showing that man going berserk at one of the stations and the length of time it took for police to get there, are you able to tell us how long it took?

Mr COLLINS: I viewed that footage. I think it was a fantastic response. It is Central station we are talking about?

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: I do not happen to know. I did not identify it.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: You are now attacking the police, are you?

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: Get lost. No way.

CHAIR: Order! The answer is being given.

Mr COLLINS: Within eight minutes the police responded. We had at least six to seven staff including managers on that site during that incident. This person was going berserk. They protected the customers by shielding them against this attacking person. The police were attacked when they arrived. They subdued this person and now this is a police matter. So I think the response was highly professional and our staff did a good job to protect our customers and staff themselves.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: My question about the security issue comes back to you though, Minister. Do you believe there are enough staff across the network to deal with the security incidents, particularly at night, on our rail system?

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: I have every confidence in the Police Transport Command to get on and do the necessary intelligence-based policing.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: Were you aware that they are still understrength?

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: I have every confidence in the work that Howard Collins is doing to do everything conceivably possible to protect commuters on the public transport network. We are working around the clock. You asking these sorts of general questions, and Labor's smear and fear campaign that you are running in relation to the transport network—

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: They are not general questions. They are specific questions that you have refused to answer.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: Why is customer satisfaction up by 15 per cent? Tell me. You are the one with the knowledge.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: You do not get to ask the questions. I get to ask the questions.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: You have sat there as a shadow Minister for the past four years. I am just interested to know what your read on that is.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: My point is that so long as security remains the number one issue for commuters it is perfectly reasonable for us to ask you questions about what are you doing to address it, particularly in an environment where you are cutting security staff across the network.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: We have cut the staff numbers by 15. As I indicated at the start, we have a total of 220 security guards on weekend nights and 181 on weekday nights. In terms of the work that they are doing, we have the Police Transport Command in charge of customer security and crime prevention, and we also have security guards in place particularly to protect our assets and equipment. The point that I would make is these security guards are not trained to intervene if a crime is occurring. Let us be clear on that.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: I do understand that, Minister. You can give me a lecture all you like.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: Therefore, you want to put untrained security officers at risk in the midst of a crime occurring.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: Understand, Minister, that when you take them away you are leaving commuters completely on their own.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: You do not seem to understand it.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: There is some presence there now that is no longer going to be there.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: Your line of questioning suggests you do not understand this.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: I think I understand it very well, Minister.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: We have now installed an additional 900 CCTVs across the network. We are undertaking measures particularly in terms of cleaning and addressing graffiti and improving the customer experience. Certainly, in terms of safety we will continue our focus. That is why customer satisfaction has gone up 15 per cent since you were in office.

Dr MEHREEN FARUQI: Last year in budget estimates it took me quite a while to get the former Minister for Transport to admit that the Sydney Rapid Transit was in fact a metro service. It is good to see a spade being called a spade. Could you tell the Committee why the Government is choosing to cannibalise the Bankstown line by converting it to a single deck metro service?

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: I think the introduction of a single deck, fully automated, turn up and go, high-frequency train service where we separate the lines out of the city circle to build greater capacity across the network is something that the people of Bankstown would welcome. These trains can deliver 45,000 passengers per hour. It is going to be an exciting initiative for this city. It will transform the city. It will transform the network and it is an initiative that the Government is very proud of.

Dr MEHREEN FARUQI: My question though was specifically about why you are choosing the Bankstown line—given that the Bankstown line had about 15 million journeys in 2014 and there are other lines that have much higher journeys, like the Western line with 34 million journeys. We know that the Western line will be overloaded in five years. So why not improve the capacity of lines that are overloaded, even if you agree that this metro system might work? Why chose a line that already has a lot of capacity on it?

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: First of all, the assertion that we are going to cannibalise anything I would dispute.

Dr MEHREEN FARUQI: So Minister, you are not going to convert that line into a single-deck Metro line?

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: Yes, we are; absolutely. And we are going to deliver a far more effective service for the people of Bankstown.

Dr MEHREEN FARUQI: Even when we know that double-deck lines have a much higher capacity than single-deck lines?

The Hon. Dr PETER PHELPS: That is absolute rubbish.

CHAIR: Order!

Dr MEHREEN FARUQI: Dr Phelps, you have not done your research, have you?

The Hon. Dr PETER PHELPS: I have done a lot of research, considering my brother is a train driver with Sydney Trains. Yes, I have done a lot of research.

CHAIR: Order! Dr Phelps will come to order.

Dr MEHREEN FARUQI: Minister, can you tell me whether studies were done to look at alternatives as to what lines or other ways could be used to increase capacity across the Sydney network? Where are those studies? And, if they exist, will they ever be made publicly available?

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: First of all, we are building greater capacity into the entire network by separating out the lines because, as you would understand, all lines are constrained by the city circle as all lines head there. Separating out the lines gives us greater ability in regard to capacity across the network. In regard to the previous work, I might defer to Mr Rodd Staples in that regard. The point that I make is that we are talking about moving 45,000 passengers per hour on the new train, which is almost double what the existing train capacity is.

Dr MEHREEN FARUQI: Minister, are you aware that by improving signalling and improving the electricity supply to train lines you could double that at a fraction of the \$15 billion that is being spent on the Metro line?

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: We should be doing both. Thank you for that Dorothy Dixier, because we are investing a billion dollars into the Western line for this specific purpose.

Dr MEHREEN FARUQI: I will come back to that. Could Mr Staples tell us what studies have been done to tell us that this is the best system? Where are the cost comparisons of different alternatives and will the public ever see those cost-benefit analyses and business cases?

Mr STAPLES: The rationale for the metro system from the north-west through to the city, the new rail line through the city linking Bankstown, is summarised in "Sydney's Rail Future", which was released in 2012.

Dr MEHREEN FARUQI: Mr Staples, I am not asking for a summary. We are talking about \$15 billion of spend. Where are the documents to show that this is the best way to spend \$15 billion? Where are the detailed studies to show that this will do what the Government says it will do? When will the public see them?

Mr STAPLES: I was just starting by providing some context around that. "Sydney's Rail Future", which was released in 2012, provides a very good précis of the comparison of different types of investment we could make on the rail network—more of the suburban services that we currently have versus doing some new technology introduction with north-west and then ultimately a harbour crossing. That rolled out a five-stage plan which includes investment in our existing Sydney Trains network and the New South Wales Train service as well as introducing the Sydney Metro service, and in particular a fourth rail line through the Sydney central business district [CBD], which is where the significant capacity increase comes from.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: There will be a train every four minutes. We are getting an extra 100,000 people moving.

Dr MEHREEN FARUQI: I am just asking where the detailed studies are, if there is anything more detailed than a summary. Where are they and will we ever see them?

Mr STAPLES: I think what you are looking to understand is some of the rationale as to why the Bankstown line has been chosen.

Dr MEHREEN FARUQI: I am looking to find whether any detailed studies have been done. Where are they and when we will see them? If you do not have them that is fine; that answers my question.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: Just to assist this discussion, first of all, there is going to be growth in the CBD of about 145,000 people in the next 10 years. We have 630,000 commuters coming into town every day as it is. We need to build capacity into the network and, as you have pointed out, the signalling—

Dr MEHREEN FARUQI: Minister, sorry to interrupt, but I understand that. I was asking specifically about detailed studies. If you do not have them, that is absolutely fine. Let us move on. Minister, people using stations to the west of Bankstown on the Bankstown line once it is converted to the Metro line will have to change trains. Do you think that this is an improvement for those people? Thousands of people will have to change trains for no good reason.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: Sydney is growing. Some 1.6 million people are going to move into town between now and 2031. We have to face the facts: People are going to have to get used to interchanging.

Dr MEHREEN FARUQI: Minister, that does not answer the question I asked.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: People are going to have to get used to interchanging in a global city. It happens elsewhere around the world. It is going to happen here. Commuters are interchanging every day of the week as we speak. There is going to be more interchanging.

Dr MEHREEN FARUQI: Minister, can you name any other city in the world where single-deck metro services operate primarily in suburban areas? Can you name me one city where people have to stand on the train on services that operate in suburban areas? Can you give me just one example?

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: The point I would make is that we want to build the capacity of the network. With the capacity that exists currently, during the morning peak in particular, we have a number of lines where the capacity well and truly exceeds 130 per cent. We are taking this very seriously and investing in capacity.

Dr MEHREEN FARUQI: I do not think anyone is disputing that we need to increase capacity.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: But hang on, you just did. I am sorry; I am confused.

Dr MEHREEN FARUQI: But we need to make sure that capacity is increased with the best possible option—that which is most efficient and most effective.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: You just questioned why we should build a metro. That was your question.

Dr MEHREEN FARUQI: That was my first question. We have moved on to my tenth question now. Minister, does the current Government intend to build or run any new train services that will be publicly operated?

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: I note that The Greens are fully supportive of CBD light rail. Guess what? It is going to be privately operated.

Dr MEHREEN FARUQI: We are not supportive of it being run as a private service.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: You support the Inner West light rail.

The Hon. Dr PETER PHELPS: The Greens are not supportive of any private enterprise.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: You cannot pick and choose here.

The Hon. Dr PETER PHELPS: They are running the North Korean model over there.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: You cannot pick and choose your projects.

Dr MEHREEN FARUQI: Minister, my question is very specific. Do you intend to run any services that will be publicly operated? Minister, so today can you admit that the metro plan makes no transport sense whatsoever and is just a ploy to privatise public rail services?

The Hon. Dr PETER PHELPS: Think about that one, Minister.

CHAIR: Order!

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: Let us be real here.

Dr MEHREEN FARUQI: Yes, absolutely; let us be real.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: Sydney will grow by 1.6 million people over the next 15 or so years.

Dr MEHREEN FARUQI: Minister, everyone knows that; that is not the question. How long will the Bankstown line be shut down to construct the Sydney Metro line?

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: At the moment we are taking market soundings in relation to this project and we will work to finalise that. We are engaging nationally and internationally in regard to the expertise required to deliver this project. I would urge you to take a drive out to Cudgegong Road to see what is happening in relation to Sydney Metro North West.

Dr MEHREEN FARUQI: I have taken many drives out there and I do not like what is happening.

The Hon. Dr PETER PHELPS: The Greens do not go west of Summer Hill.

Dr MEHREEN FARUQI: Minister, could you give people some idea about how long the line will be closed? For how long will they have to travel on buses when that line is closed? For how long will people be inconvenienced when you convert the line into the Metro line?

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: Let us be clear about this. We have made an announcement about the project. We are now working through the design and the scope of the project. In due course, I will do exactly that. I note that the Labor Party and The Greens are opposed to the project. You voted against the funding of the project in the Parliament. You voted against the \$1 billion to go into the Western line to do exactly what you are talking about in regard to improved signalling.

Dr MEHREEN FARUQI: When did we vote against that?

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: I am quite bemused as to where this is going. I do not understand your questions.

Dr MEHREEN FARUQI: Minister, let us move on to the Western Sydney rail upgrade program. Minister, how much money has been allocated in the 2015-16 budget precisely for this program?

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: More broadly, can I just say that it was an incredible budget in regard to public transport—

Dr MEHREEN FARUQI: Minister, I want a specific answer as to how much money has been allocated to this program in 2015-16?

CHAIR: Thank you, Minister. I do not think that answered the question that was asked. If we could return to the specific question we would all be grateful.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: I refer to the allocation over 2015-16 relating to the Western Sydney rail upgrade, which includes—

Dr MEHREEN FARUQI: How much money is this, Minister? I know what it includes.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: I am going to give you more information than you are asking for. I am being very kind and helpful here.

Dr MEHREEN FARUQI: I just want to know how much has been budgeted for.

The Hon. Dr PETER PHELPS: I do not want to be informed. Please do not inform me.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: Your time is up, Minister.

CHAIR: Order! Minister, please continue. We are about to move on to the next round of questions.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: I refer the Dr Mehreen Faruqi to Budget Paper No. 2.

Dr MEHREEN FARUQI: We will come back to it in the next round.

The Hon. PAUL GREEN: That is a good segue; I refer the Minister to Budget Paper No. 2. Of the \$4.1 billion reserved for regional transport, we understand that the Government has already allocated \$2 billion to regional road freight corridors: \$1.5 billion to programs including upgrades of the Pacific, Newell, Oxley and New England highways; \$1 billion to regional growth roads, of which \$475 has been allocated to the Hunter and the Pacific Highway; \$500 million to extend the Fixing Country Roads scheme; \$400 million for fixing Country Rail; and \$200 million for the Bridges for the Bush program. Minister, that leaves approximately \$1 billion in unannounced funding from regional road freight corridors. Can you indicate where that \$1 billion is going or will that \$1 billion be included in any infrastructure west of Dubbo?

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: I will take that question on notice and confer with my colleague the roads Minister.

The Hon. PAUL GREEN: That is good news, but are there any rail upgrades west of Dubbo? That is in your portfolio.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: In terms of the Restart and the Rebuilding monies first and foremost we are working through the program to make sure that we handle this. The roads Minister is the responsible Minister for rail freight as well. That is why I was happy to take that question on notice.

The Hon. PAUL GREEN: I understand that.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: This Government has the very clear intent of supporting regional communities. That is why \$6 billion of the \$20 billion is going to regional New South Wales.

The Hon. PAUL GREEN: That is probably why we supported it.

The Hon. Dr PETER PHELPS: Here comes the Nowra to Bega rail link.

The Hon. PAUL GREEN: That is coming about Nowra, but I will actually go straight to the South Coast line. Minister, has there been a drop in the number of security officers on the South Coast line from this time last year?

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: I will take that question on notice.

The Hon. PAUL GREEN: Does the Government intend doing a feasibility study on upgrading the South Coast line, given we are looking at housing affordability and such issues, for those 1.6 million people predicted to be coming into Sydney by 2031?

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: Coming from the region like you, I am obviously fairly conscious of how the region performs in terms of rail. One thing I would say is that we have improved the number of services to the Illawarra. We now have around 125 new weekly express services to Sydney—

The Hon. PAUL GREEN: That is from Wollongong.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: —and 184 extra services, including the 125. I guess your question is specifically aimed at the electrification of the line.

The Hon. PAUL GREEN: That is a great perception on your behalf.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: And it is probably the correct one. At this stage we have no plans to do that because of the cost associated with doing so. One point I would make is that we are in the midst of improving the intercity fleet with a procurement of new intercity trains. It is a live tender at this moment. The provision of that modern fleet of trains will also improve the customer experience for the people of the region.

The Hon. PAUL GREEN: I dare say that is good for Sydney, but it is not very good for the residents of rural and regional New South Wales. This sort of service is a necessity, not a luxury. I turn now to a University of Sydney train station. This week in the media there has been a push to have a train station at the intersection of Cleveland Street and City Road, near the Seymour Centre. Would it not be a smart idea to put a station there given that the University of Sydney has more than 50,000 enrolled students?

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: That is a great question. We are in the midst of working through the scope of the metro project. As part of the decision-making we have to determine whether we are best to locate a metro stop at Waterloo or at the University of Sydney. Internally we have established a process to do that, recognising first and foremost the risk to the project and also taking feedback from the university through to other players, including UrbanGrowth, which has a view point in relation to Waterloo. We will be looking to finalise that decision later this year and, again, it is part of this exciting project.

The Hon. PAUL GREEN: What is the distance between those two proposed opportunities?

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: We have been doing geotechnical work through both areas. I do not know if there is an exact distance between them.

The Hon. PAUL GREEN: Roughly.

Mr STAPLES: Are you talking about the distance in travel time?

The Hon. PAUL GREEN: The Waterloo suggestion as opposed to the University of Sydney suggestion.

Mr STAPLES: I think in the scheme of comparing the two options it is a fractional difference in length but that is not really the factor that is going to weigh up. I think it is more about what it does for each particular location—for the university in terms of access to educational facilities and so forth versus Waterloo and some urban renewal opportunities.

The Hon. PAUL GREEN: Why would we not consider both if we are talking about accessibility, efficiency, connectivity?

Mr STAPLES: In terms of this particular metro line you cannot really split it in two. You would ultimately have to split it and have two separate tunnels servicing the two separate stations—and that is not really a good fit. We are trying to deliver a high-frequency metro service. What we want is a simple route from Central to Sydenham via one of those stations. Obviously we are looking at the transport solutions for all that area.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: And obviously it is below ground all the way to Sydenham.

The Hon. PAUL GREEN: You have commented in the media that light rail is needed to accommodate the massive growth in the number of apartments around Green Square in southern Sydney. You also commented that "more mass transport will be required to prevent the area from becoming a congestion choke zone for the whole of Sydney". What are the projected growth estimates for this area and how many light rail services will be required to cater for the estimated growth increases?

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: That is another terrific question. We are seeing growth in that part of Sydney at an unprecedented level and we are going to have the highest concentration of apartments anywhere in the nation in that part of Sydney. I could get you the exact projections that planning have in relation to that, but

my expectation is that we just cannot continue to badly plan our public transport solutions to areas with this type of growth. There have been plenty of opportunities to try to get this right in the past. I was specifically asked a question in relation to the City of Sydney's proposal for a light rail project through that part of Sydney. It has invested around \$40 million into the route.

Given the advent of CBD light rail, the potential for spur lines and the high number of people who will be living in that area, obviously from a transport planning perspective we would want to look at that as an option. We do not want what is already a choke point to become a massive choke point without a mass transit solution. Whilst people point to Green Square train station, it must be remembered that to the east of that train station there is a very significant precinct. I have asked the agency to look at that in consultation with the City of Sydney. Given that the Government wants to crack on with three light rail projects in this State at this point in time, I think that light rail will—as it is elsewhere around the world—play an important part in moving Sydneysiders in the future. It is just a shame that the trams were taken away years ago.

The Hon. PAUL GREEN: Just like water tanks, which we are now putting back.

The Hon. Dr PETER PHELPS: Like the line from Campbelltown to Camden.

The Hon. PAUL GREEN: I note that Mike Carter, local Chief Executive Officer of Mitsubishi Motors, said he was, "keenly interested in various upcoming New South Wales projects". Would I be correct in assuming that he was referring to projects in New South Wales such as the Sydney Metro and the Parramatta light rail? Has any interest been expressed for a high-speed rail link on the east coast?

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: The Government has not shied away from wanting to support the future of high-speed rail in Australia, particularly in New South Wales. The point I would make is that it is probably uneconomic at this point of time but, that said, I think if you were going to look at high-speed rail you would look at it in the context of growth in the Hume corridor in particular and the ability of the Southern Highlands and Goulburn to expand as an urban development project.

The Hon. PAUL GREEN: Decentralisation.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: Absolutely. Again my point comes back to this: Planning should be a terrific customer of transport, transport should not be driving the plan. That is why it is really important that we look to all sorts of means to get people around as we develop this great State.

CHAIR: Thank you, Minister.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: Mr Chair, can we come back to the initial question asked in relation to that contract and actors?

Mr REARDON: I will respond to that. Transport for NSW contract No. 420436 is for people to come in and test prospective frontline staff in real-life situations. We only want the best people as our frontline staff, so we use actors as an assessment tool. That is best practice across government and the private sector. It is an effective way of training the hundreds of staff that we have.

The Hon. PAUL GREEN: It is like a secret shopper.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: I make no apologies—

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: Thank you very much. It is now my time to ask questions. I appreciate the clarification from the department.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: I presume you support the training of our staff. Customer satisfaction is up.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: You did not seem to understand that that was what I was asking you earlier.

The Hon. Dr PETER PHELPS: The member had to think about that: "Do I support staff training?"

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: The Minister did not understand the question last time. I am glad that he finally has. Let us move on. Minister, as a former Treasurer and now Minister for Transport and Infrastructure, you would be familiar with the New South Wales Treasury's detailed reports on budgeted forward estimates.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: I have been Treasurer of the State.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: I am clarifying that you know about them. I am glad.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: Thank you for the heads up.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: As a former Treasurer and now Minister for Transport and Infrastructure, are you concerned that the projected overtime budget for 2014-15 was \$16.49 million but the revised projection is \$100.6 million? I can provide you with a copy of the Treasury report, if you would like, Minister.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: What is your claim?

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: The claim is that in the detailed reports on the budgeted forward estimates the original projection for the last budget, 2014-15, was \$16.49 million, let us call it \$16.5 million. The revised projection provided recently is \$100.7 million—an \$84 million increase in the overtime bill for Transport for NSW.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: According to Budget Paper No. 3, page 440—

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: That is not the document I am drawing the information from. That is why I asked you about it in the beginning.

CHAIR: It is the detailed budget.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: These are the details. I am happy to give you a copy.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: I am happy to receive it.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: Minister, as you are looking at the document, could you respond to this question. The budget for overtime in 2011-12 was \$552,000. That is the equivalent of \$1 of overtime for every \$66 of salary paid. In 2014-15, it is projected to be \$100.98 million. That is \$1 of overtime for every \$12 of salary paid. Can you confirm that that is correct?

Mr REARDON: Could you repeat the figure you quoted from the 2015-16 budget?

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: The figure for 2015-16 is \$100.98 million.

Mr REARDON: What was the question on the 2014-15 budget?

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: If you look at the projected budget for overtime in the document you have before you, you will see that it was \$16.5 million for 2014-15. The most up-to-date figures, which were provided to the Parliament through the call for papers for budget estimates, suggest that it is now \$101 million. I am asking you to explain the discrepancy.

Mr REARDON: I will take that on notice, as I am unaware of the document you have tabled. The figures we have for 2015-16 and 2014-15 do not accord with the numbers you have provided.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: Minister, how do you explain Treasury reporting one thing on Transport for NSW and the department reporting another?

Mr REARDON: I am not clear on what that document is.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: The document is from the New South Wales Treasury. It was provided to the Parliament as part of the call for papers. It gives us detailed information on line items in the budget. It is standard material that provides us with a lot more detail than the budget papers.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: We are happy to take that on notice. I will consult the Treasurer.

Mr REARDON: But it does not accord with our figures.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: On that basis, I ask you to check the following figures. Minister, the bill for consultants for 2011-12 was around \$6 million. In 2014-15 it was projected to be \$11 million. The revised figure has been doubled to \$22 million. Will you please confirm the figure for the bill for consultants and report to the Committee on what is happening in your department.

Mr REARDON: Are you referring to Transport for NSW?

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: I am. You will see that the document I provided to you says, "Agency 68, Transport for NSW, Operating statement, New South Wales Treasury". These are not surprising documents. I would have thought the former Treasurer would understand them.

Mr REARDON: I am happy to respond, Minister. I am not aware of the documents that you have tabled. I can only refer to the information I have before me. I am aware of our consultancy budget for 2014-15. Our expenditure for every budget is in our annual report every year. The consulting budget for 2014-15 will be in our annual report when we release it.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: I am happy to look at consultancy bills, given what Labor spent in 2010.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: This is a simple question about your budget.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: We are getting on with this fantastic project. We have a great budget, a record budget, and you are niggling about consultants.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: You have been in government for five years and you have been making lots of promises. Is a discrepancy of hundreds of millions of dollars not something to be concerned about?

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: You have produced a detailed report from Treasury from 2013 and come here and asked us silly questions. I am happy to take it on notice.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: These are documents that your Government provided in response to a call for papers, as it is required to in the upper House.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: We can easily get you the answers.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: You can deny the figures and kick this down the road, as you have with every question that has been a bit hard this afternoon.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: I am not denying them. I have just indicated that we will take it on notice.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: These are documents provided by your Government, from your Treasury.

The Hon. Dr PETER PHELPS: Point of order.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: What is interesting is that I was not Treasurer in 2013, which is when this tabled document dates from.

CHAIR: Order! I think the question was about to be asked. The Hon. Dr Peter Phelps has the call.

The Hon. Dr PETER PHELPS: My point of order goes to the scope of estimates hearings. The member is asking the Minister and officials about documents that were not prepared within their department but are in fact Treasury documents. The member should either direct her question to the Treasurer or seek, on notice, any clarification of numbers within those documents.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: That is exactly what I am doing.

The Hon. Dr PETER PHELPS: It is unfair, Chair, to ask witnesses to have a detailed knowledge of documents that were prepared in another department.

CHAIR: I think the answer has been resolved in that the Minister is taking the questions on notice.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: I do not think it is unreasonable for me to take on notice a question on a detailed report from 2011-12, a Treasury document, to verify it.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: I appreciate that, Minister.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: I was not Treasurer in that year. I was not Treasurer in 2013 either.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: I was hoping you would be able to shine some light on this. I thought you would be familiar with the documents.

Mr REARDON: I reconfirm that the Transport for NSW information is published every year in our annual report. That is available. The 2014-15 information will be available as well.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: I look forward to the reconciliation of those figures. I also ask for reconciliation of the figures relating to contractors. How much is being spent on contractors? It was projected that for 2014-15 it would be \$114.5 million. That has been revised to \$159.2 million. I ask you to explain that.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: There is a lot of building happening. Take a drive around the State and see what is happening.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: I look forward to the answers being provided. You do not seem to know your own Treasury documents.

The Hon. Dr PETER PHELPS: We are a State on the move.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: A State on the build.

CHAIR: Order!

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: Mr Reardon, is it the case that the light rail project for the central business district is going to cost \$2.1 billion?

Mr REARDON: The budget for the CBD and South East Light Rail is \$2.1 billion.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: Is that \$2.1 billion reflected in the forward estimates over the next four years?

Mr REARDON: The \$2.1 billion is a profile because it is a public-private partnership. That means we will have certain expenditures over the forward estimates, which we have placed in the forward estimates. They are on record.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: Is the New South Wales Government contribution over the four years, either from consolidated revenue or the Restart NSW fund, about \$2.1 billion?

Mr REARDON: I am not sure I understand your question. I think I just answered it.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: The New South Wales Government contribution to the scheme is \$2.1 billion?

Mr REARDON: The forward estimates indicate the expenditure.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: So it is \$2.1 billion.

Mr REARDON: No.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: How much is it then?

Mr REARDON: The entire budget for the project is \$2.1 billion. The forward estimates are on the public record.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: Is the New South Wales Government contribution to the scheme \$2.1 billion?

Mr REARDON: I have indicated that the forward estimates indicate what we will have as expenditure over the forward estimates.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: So it is \$2.1 billion?

Mr REARDON: No, I have indicated that the forward estimates are published. The entire budget for the project is \$2.1 billion. The forward estimates are on the public record.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: I understand that, but is the New South Wales Government contribution \$2.1 billion?

Mr REARDON: Yes it is; that is the budget for the project—not over four years.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: The \$220 million to be contributed by the City of Sydney, has that been paid?

Mr REARDON: I will take that on notice.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: Minister, are you aware whether or not the City of Sydney's \$220 million contribution has been paid?

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: Can I just congratulate you on your first comments having been sworn in about modernising Sydney and making it easier for the city to move around? That is inspirational.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: I am sure having read my first speech you understand the source of my motivation for wanting to understand this point. Has the \$220 million from the City of Sydney—

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: I am just perplexed as to why you are not supporting a CBD light rail. You want to build a bus tunnel under the city, which will not work.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: Has the \$220 million been paid?

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: The secretary of the department has just indicated that the \$220 million we will take on notice.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: Mr Reardon, when is the \$220 million due to be paid?

Mr REARDON: I have taken it on notice.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: Minister, can I ask—

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: Can we thank the City of Sydney for its contribution towards this project?

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: —was it the case that in June 2014 the anticipated cost of the CBD light rail project was \$1.6 billion?

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: Let us just be clear: This has been widely canvassed already. There were a number of key scope changes to the project—

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: Thank you, Minister, I am just asking you, in June 2014 was the anticipated cost of the CBD light rail project \$1.6 billion?

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: As I indicated, the cost of the public-private partnership is \$2.1 billion—

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: Perhaps to illustrate I am happy to provide you with a copy of the document.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: —and there have been scope changes, since you are now running around with that figure.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: What are the scope changes?

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: I can refer them to the secretary of the department, who is happy to refer them to Peter Gemmell as well.

Mr REARDON: In terms of the public-private partnership [PPP] we entered into we have a total project budget of \$2.1 billion, and that is what we are working to.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: My question was specifically what are the scope changes that justify a \$500 million blow-out in the course of 12 months?

Mr REARDON: In terms of getting to the final budget and what has been contracted, there are a range of matters that you basically take into account when a project is being finalised.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: Do you know the scope changes?

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: Yes. Some of them include the ability to put increased capacity on the trains. We can provide you with a list of those exact changes but, either way, we are making the better project.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: Would you like to take that on notice? Would you like that to be your tenth question you take on notice?

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: I find it somewhat offensive that the Labor Party is not backing the project.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: Minister, do you know what the scope changes are that justify a \$500 million blow-out?

CHAIR: Order! Minister, you have been asked a question. Gratuitous commentary really is not part of the budget estimates process. I invite you to answer the question or take it on notice.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: Sorry, can you repeat the question?

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: Do you know precisely the scope changes that justify a \$500 million increase in project costs in the last nine months?

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: I am happy to take all of your questions on notice in relation to this project.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: Maybe I should ask the project director of the Sydney Light Rail. Do you know what the scope changes are that apparently justify a \$500 million blow-out?

Mr GEMELL: I will take it on notice.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: In respect of that \$500 million increase in budget, how much of that is to be recovered from the private sector?

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: I will take it on notice.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: In respect of the private sector, Mr Reardon, you said just then that the PPP agreement has been entered into.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: December last year.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: Has a contract summary been prepared for the CBD light rail project?

Mr REARDON: Yes, it has.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: Has it been reviewed by the Auditor-General?

Mr REARDON: We are working with the Auditor-General on that review as per the requirements.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: Has it been published?

Mr REARDON: Not that I am aware of.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: Mr Reardon, are you aware of the New South Wales Government's public-private partnership guidelines?

Mr REARDON: Yes, I am.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: Are you familiar specifically with requirement 5.1?

Mr REARDON: I do not have that in front of me.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: 5.2?

Mr REARDON: I will take that on notice.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: 5.3?

Mr REARDON: I will take that on notice.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: 5.1—GIPA Act requirements—"All New South Wales PPPs are subject to Ministerial Memorandum ..." Do you recall that? Perhaps I will skip to 5.3:

Contract Summaries for PPPs—In addition to the above public disclosure requirements, a contract summary should also be disclosed to NSW Parliament. The procuring agency must ensure that a contract summary is made available to the Auditor-General for audit within 45 days of the contract becoming effective (that is, within 45 days after all conditions precedent to the contract have been satisfied).

Within 90 days of receipt by the Auditor-General, the audited contract summary must be tabled in Parliament by the responsible Minister.

Has that occurred?

Mr REARDON: What is your question?

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: Has this Minister or his predecessor tabled the contract summary in the Parliament as required by the New South Wales Government's own PPP regulations?

Mr REARDON: The contract summary has been prepared.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: So no.

Mr REARDON: The contract summary has been prepared.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: And that was entered into, you said, in November?

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: December.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: So 90 days from December puts us in April.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: Are you listening to our answers? I am losing your line of thought here.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: It is pretty straightforward. Have you followed your own regulations?

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: Minister, if you are unable to understand let me repeat it. Mr Reardon, has a contract summary been completed?

Mr REARDON: A contract summary has been prepared.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: Has it been reviewed by the Auditor-General?

Mr REARDON: We have been working with the Auditor-General on that.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: Given that your PPP requirements say that the contract summary must be tabled in Parliament by the responsible Minister and, in the case when Parliament is not sitting, the Clerk of the Legislative Assembly should receive the contract summary within 90 days, on the basis of the fact that you have just confirmed that you entered into that contract in December, was that not due in April?

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: So you have just worked out that it is late.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: Thank you, Minister; you accept the fact that it is late.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: Congratulations; you have worked out that it is late. There is a headline for you.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: Minister, are you aware of a claim by your predecessor that the light rail project will deliver \$4 billion worth of economic benefits?

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: This is a project that is going to move 9,000 passengers per hour and will be transformative for this great city.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: Are you aware of a statement by your predecessor that it would deliver 10,000 jobs—

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: It was supported by the Labor candidate for Newtown at the last election and Labor has now changed its view on the project.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: Mr Reardon, are you aware of a statement made by the previous Minister that the contract will deliver \$4 billion worth of economic benefits and create 10,000 jobs?

Mr REARDON: The benefits and costs of these projects are put into the EIS like every other project.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: Understanding that, and I am referring specifically to the CBD and South East Light Rail business case summary document that you released in November 2013, which says, "A detailed appraisal of the net economic financial and sustainability of the projects has been undertaken", is that where that figure is derived from?

Mr REARDON: I am not aware of what you are referring to. I have just indicated that the benefits and costs are put out through the EIS process.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: I am referring to your own document in which—

Mr REARDON: They are on the public record.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: Yes, I am aware that Transport for NSW—I presume this is a business case that you committed to—says, "A detailed appraisal of the net economic"—

Mr REARDON: No, I have referred to the EIS—that is on the public record.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: Who undertook the modelling that justified that claim?

Mr REARDON: Which, the traffic modelling or the economic modelling?

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: I am talking about the \$4 billion worth of benefits and the 10,000 jobs. Who did that modelling?

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: Why do you not table the document and we will take it on notice?

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: Who undertook the modelling? Has there been any modelling undertaken on the CBD—

Mr REARDON: In terms of the CBD and South East Light Rail and the CBD itself, a lot of modelling.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: Who has undertaken that modelling?

Mr REARDON: Many people.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: As a department?

Mr REARDON: Many people—many different external advisers and internal people have undertaken one.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: Any part of the Transport for NSW cluster?

Mr REARDON: I could go through each mode. There has been a lot of modelling undertaken.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: It is a big agency and we are doing a lot.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: Infrastructure NSW?

Mr REARDON: I am responding to your question.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: I am asking additional questions. Has any part of the Transport for NSW cluster undertaken that economic modelling that has justified the Government's claim?

Mr REARDON: No, I have indicated we have undertaken a lot of transport and traffic modelling, which is what I thought your question was.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: So you have not. Mr Betts, has Infrastructure NSW undertaken any modelling that has justified the Government's claim?

Mr BETTS: No. Infrastructure NSW is not sponsoring the project.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: So presumably the Government is claiming the \$4 billion on the basis of an economic analysis that we do not know who undertook?

Mr REARDON: I have indicated that benefits and costs were certainly undertaken and that was part of the EIS. So certainly economic evaluation, light transport and traffic modelling was undertaken.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: Were any alternative solutions to the light rail project modelled by Transport for NSW?

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: I know the answer to this because we examined the bus tunnel proposal of Labor, which is an abject failure that puts community safety at risk, and that is your great plan. I am very nervous for the people of Sydney if you start building a tunnel from Circular Quay or York Street to Central.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: Who undertook the analysis to which you just referred?

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: Transport for NSW had a look at it.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: Will you release that analysis?

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: I have. I have spoken about it in the Parliament when the shadow Minister started to embarrass himself—

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: So you have released that modelling?

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: I am happy to release the information provided to me by Transport for NSW in relation to this project because it just proves how stupid Labor's policy is.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: Which budget are you referring to? The CBD light rail project or the—

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: You asked about alternatives. The alternative which the Labor Party is proposing is for a bus tunnel. We are building a metro, there is an existing rail network in and around the city— all these utilities—and you want to put buses, particularly buses run by gas, into a tunnel under the city. We have some concerns for community safety. The light rail project is a way forward; that is what we are getting on with. I wish you well with your policy.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: Mr Betts, have you undertaken any alternative modelling on any alternative solutions?

Mr BETTS: Infrastructure NSW did look at some alternatives to the light rail project back in 2012. It did about six weeks' work—it did not talk to anybody in the Transport portfolio—and that was the genesis of this bus tunnel idea. That was included as an option in the 2012 State Infrastructure Strategy that Infrastructure NSW [INSW] prepared, but it was a very preliminary option and subsequently Transport's response to that was along the lines that the Minister has described.

CHAIR: Dr Faruqi.

Dr MEHREEN FARUQI: Minister, back to the Western Sydney Rail Upgrade program. You referred me to Budget Paper No. 2, which actually allocates \$19 million for rail network efficiencies, Western Sydney Rail Upgrade program for 2015-16. Minister, that is 2 per cent of the \$1 billion for the Western Sydney Rail Upgrade program. What is the timeline for the completion of this program? How many years or decades, maybe, might it take to complete this program?

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: I will just grab the Western Sydney notes.

Dr MEHREEN FARUQI: Is there a timeline for the completion of the Western Sydney Rail Upgrade program?

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: Can I just say first of all, it is an important initiative—

Dr MEHREEN FARUQI: Minister, I know that is the case; that is why I am asking the question. Is there a timeline for the completion of this upgrade?

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: On that basis, if you think it is important then why did you vote against the funding of it?

Dr MEHREEN FARUQI: Minister, I am asking a specific question.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: I mean, why did you vote against rebuild, where the billion dollars from the poles and wires transaction is going to go directly into this project? I am perplexed by that approach by you.

Dr MEHREEN FARUQI: Minister, is there a timeline for the completion of the Western Sydney Rail Upgrade program? There is a simple yes or no answer. Is there a timeline? Do you have it?

Mr REARDON: There are two parts to the question. One, in terms of the Western Sydney Rail Upgrade, it is a significant scope of work. Some of that scope of work is to underpin the next timetable we are getting focused on, that next timetable over the next four years. That timetable is really important. It will undertake enabling works to introduce that timetable and to introduce North West Metro services. So there are certain parts of work that we are doing for that. Some of the short-term work we have got underway—

Dr MEHREEN FARUQI: Mr Reardon, is there a timeline for the completion of the whole upgrade?

Mr REARDON: Dr Faruqi, I am trying to answer your question because the question you are asking involves a series of deliverables.

Dr MEHREEN FARUQI: And what is the timeline to complete all those deliverables?

Mr REARDON: I have just indicated the first part of those deliverables, in terms of over the next four years. In terms of some projects, they will come online earlier because some of them are enabling works, as I have said, for the next timetable. Beyond that, we will keep working at it and we have allocated it in the State Infrastructure Strategy, \$1 billion for Western Sydney upgrades. There is a series of work that is even beyond the 2018-19 timeframe that we will continue to deliver.

Dr MEHREEN FARUQI: Could I ask, Mr Reardon, when will the signalling upgrades be done or completed for the western line?

Mr REARDON: I think you will probably need to be a little bit more specific than that.

Dr MEHREEN FARUQI: How much of the \$19 million allocated for 2015-16 is for signalling upgrades?

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: We can take that on notice. The Lidcombe to Granville Corridor upgrade will be completed in 2017.

Dr MEHREEN FARUQI: If you could take that on notice.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: Yes.

Dr MEHREEN FARUQI: I am specifically interested in how much of the \$19 million is for signalling upgrades and how much of the \$19 million is for upgrades to power supplies. Is this program on track? I will put those on notice as well, but if you could take them on notice.

Mr GAMMIE: If I could just add, in regard to the Westmead to Granville signalling upgrade, which will increase the capacity of the western line, this program includes new signals and trackside equipment, modifying existing cabling and the rail control system. It is scheduled to be completed in 2016.

Dr MEHREEN FARUQI: Thank you. Minister, do you have any figures on how many service interruptions or interruptions to service due to tracks and supply take place every year?

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: I would have to take that on notice. In terms of track possessions, obviously these have to be well planned in advance because of the very nature of the network. We try to minimise disruption across the whole network in that regard, so if I can come back to you with the right estimates.

Dr MEHREEN FARUQI: If you could take that on notice, that would be great. Minister, the former Minister for Transport said in a media release on 25 November 2014:

Together the SRT and Western Sydney Rail Upgrade Program will deliver a 60 per cent increase in the number for trains accessing the CBD during peak hour.

Minister, could you explain a little bit more on how much of the 60 per cent is going to be due to the Western Sydney Rail Upgrade and how much due to Sydney Metro?

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: What I can confirm is that in mid 2017, to meet growing demand on the T1 Western corridor, two additional express services will be introduced in the peak between Parramatta and the CBD. We are going to undergo, between now and when the Metro is complete in 2024-25, I dare say two timetable changes in relation to the Sydney network. The first one will happen in 2018 with the advent of Sydney Metro Northwest and then obviously, as we see the rest of the Metro.

Dr MEHREEN FARUQI: Minister, do you have any idea how much of the 60 per cent is due to one and how much—a breakdown of the percentages?

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: The key point that I would make, coming back to your question in relation to Bankstown, was the fact that we, as a result of the constraints of the City Circle—

Dr MEHREEN FARUQI: Minister I think I have said we have moved on from that question. Could you take that on notice?

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: No, I am going to answer it; I am happy to answer it.

Dr MEHREEN FARUQI: Okay, so how much of the 60 per cent increase in capacity is due to the Western Sydney Rail Upgrade and how much is due to the Sydney Metro?

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: Well, given that all lines lead to the City Circle and we are, in essence, untangling the City Circle line, we are able to increase the capacity across the network. That is going to, obviously, be defined once the timetable changes happen on two occasions between now and the provision of the services.

Dr MEHREEN FARUQI: Thank you, Minister. Minister, how many staff are employed by Transport for NSW to work on the Sydney Metro Northwest project?

Mr STAPLES: Just to clarify—how many Transport for NSW employees—

Dr MEHREEN FARUQI: Yes, how many Transport for NSW staff are working on the Sydney Metro Northwest project?

Mr STAPLES: It would be approximately 80 employees working within the Transport for NSW Sydney Metro delivery office.

Dr MEHREEN FARUQI: Mr Staples, how many media and communications staff are working on the project with Transport for NSW?

Mr STAPLES: So in terms of staff, we have a person who runs our stakeholder and community area and a couple of other employees, but it is a very small number.

Dr MEHREEN FARUQI: How many?

Mr STAPLES: It is a few people who are actual Government employees in that area. If you want a specific number I am happy to take that on notice.

Dr MEHREEN FARUQI: A ball park figure will do for now and then specific on notice.

Mr STAPLES: Yes, it is a few people who are Government employees.

Dr MEHREEN FARUQI: A few—10, 20?

Mr STAPLES: No, it is three or four people in total.

Dr MEHREEN FARUQI: How many technical staff are employed?

Mr STAPLES: We have 80 or so employees.

Dr MEHREEN FARUQI: Are all the others technical staff?

Mr STAPLES: No, it is a combination because, just to sit back and think about Sydney Metro and what we are trying to do over all the scheme, it is very much a customer-facing product drive with a whole series of technical engineering things to be done. So we have people who look at it through a customer prism, in terms of customer requirements and we have people—

Dr MEHREEN FARUQI: Would you please take that on notice, I wanted specific numbers, if that is okay?

Mr STAPLES: To be clear about what you mean by "technical" because that is a fairly broad term and it would be helpful to understand that because if you just mean engineers then that is a specific number. But I would argue that it is a very technical project and just about every person working on the project has some technical—

Dr MEHREEN FARUQI: Sure, I just wanted to know the number, thank you. Minister, in the last term of the Labor Government, \$500 million was wasted on the 2008 CBD Metro proposal. As we know, there are already blow-outs on the CBD and South East Light Rail and huge variations on the North West Rail Link. Can you assure that such blow-outs and waste of money will not be repeated in your term as Minister for Transport.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: Your assertions are wrong. This is from a Government that delivered the South West Rail Link 12 months ahead of schedule and \$300 million under budget, and we are tracking incredibly well with our projects. Your assertion in relation to the CBD Light Rail is wrong and the Government is entitled, as we have worked through projects, to change the scope, make improvements having engaged with the wonderful private sector, that wonderful private sector that is out there that can deliver services and deliver infrastructure incredibly well, thousands of people employed in the private sector to deliver these types of services. And we will obviously refine our final business costs when it comes to projects. So, the assertion there is some sort of blow-out is wrong. We have a final business costing which was signed up to, under contract, back in December last year and we will continue to deliver fantastically well for the people of this State.

Dr MEHREEN FARUQI: Minister, what specific processes do you have in place to ensure that project blow-outs do not happen, even if you do not believe that they have happened before or do not admit that they have happened before? What processes do you have in place to make sure that they have not?

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: Are you asserting that I am lying?

Dr MEHREEN FARUQI: I am asking you the processes.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: No, I want to know what your assertion is in relation to your point.

Dr MEHREEN FARUQI: I am not asserting anything.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: Because it is bordering on—it is way out of line.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: Point of order—

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: Chair, you are chairing the Committee and I have just had an assertion that I am misleading the Committee.

CHAIR: Order! A point of order has been taken, Minister, let us deal with it.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: The Minister has to allow the member to ask her question and he should be generally relevant in his answer. Hectoring and asking other members of the Committee their own questions is not actually part of the process for budget estimates.

The Hon. PAUL GREEN: To the point of order: Yesterday in budget estimates you ruled that lying was unparliamentary. If the member takes offence that there is an insinuation or a person has been imputed, you need to have that withdrawn, to be consistent.

The Hon. Dr PETER PHELPS: To the point of order: The member used quite argumentative language in her question and asserted that there had been a blow-out. The Minister was then seeking to correct that by indicating it was not a blow-out as might have been used in a press release or in the media but that it resulted largely from a change of scope within the project. The member then sought to impugn the Minister and the Minister rightly defended himself.

CHAIR: Order! My understanding is that it was a general statement about the expenditure blow-out. I did not interrupt as it applied to this particular project. However, as it was a general statement I did not believe offence could be taken from a general statement.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: I accept the ruling. In relation to project assurance, we undertake those assurance functions through Infrastructure NSW. I think it is only fair that I defer to the chief executive officer of Infrastructure NSW to talk about the assurance processes.

Mr BETTS: The scale of the infrastructure investment program which the Government is now undertaking is so great that it has required Infrastructure NSW to step up and to take on a new function; that is, to provide external assurance for all major capital projects across government. That includes projects that we identify as being the significant ones that we characterise as high profile and high risk. At key points along the way during the lifecycles of those projects from their inception through to the procurement stage, post business case and then through to delivery, Infrastructure NSW provides an external assurance check and uses external experts to come in and review the projects, intensive and deep reviews, and to report to government on any issues that we see emerging—risk issues that need to be dealt with so we can make sure we anticipate any cost pressures or schedule pressures and that they are dealt with appropriately. So that is a key function that Infrastructure NSW is now providing on behalf of the Government.

The Hon. PAUL GREEN: I refer to the South Coast line, the poor cousin of most rail lines. A constituent from Bomaderry recently expressed frustration with the chilly conditions at Kiama station which is uncomfortable in winter and with the Government's decision to cut services. He has spoken to the local members of Parliament who said that they would talk to the Minister but they just came back with some gobbledegook answer about the South Coast line having sufficient services. I also note that the member for Kiama, Mr Gareth Ward, said he would continue to push the transport Minister about upgrades to the line. He also said, "The Government's line is that it will continue to monitor the South Coast line but I have not got a yes or no answer yet." Could you define what works are happening on the South Coast line and what upgrades are planned for that line?

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: It would be remiss of me not to acknowledge the member for Kiama and his advocacy. No doubt he will take great delight from the fact that he has been featured in a budget estimates committee hearing. The Shoalhaven district has a diesel shuttle service that operates between Bomaderry and Kiama. As the member for Bega I wish that our founding fathers had gone further down the corridor and had built right down the coast. As I indicated earlier, there are no plans to duplicate or electrify the track. We want to improve the services on the South Coast line. We are making changes with the advent of the Opal ticketing system. There are some projects down there, for example, the Shellharbour Junction project and new commuter car parks have been constructed at Kiama. Back in 2013 the timetable review delivered additional train services to the region.

We are going to do another timetable review which will be completed in 2018 and I am hopeful that we can further improve services to a growing part of the State. Ultimately the game changer for the whole rail network will be the metro. The interface between inner city trains and the suburban network will change as a result of the increased capacity and improvements to the suburban network. We will keep our focus on trying to improve the customer experience for South Coast residents.

The Hon. PAUL GREEN: I find it quite amazing that we have a visionary government, yet it is so short-sighted on the electrification of the South Coast line.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: If I had a money tree to build that capacity—

The Hon. PAUL GREEN: I think you got that recently Minister, with all due respect. On 6 August 2015 the *Indian Pacific* operator Great Southern Rail confirmed it would halve twice weekly peak season services and increase fares for pensioners and veterans. The operator has reportedly blamed the \$9 million cut in travel subsidies for those groups by the Federal Government in last year's budget. Great Southern Rail hoped that the government owned operator, NSW TrainLink, would help to fill the gaps. Has that been considered? Is it a possibility?

Mr REARDON: I am happy to respond. Great Southern Rail plays an important role as does NSW TrainLink in the western corridor. As you would be aware, over a long period we have assisted all customer groups—adults, pensioners and other concession groups—on those services and we will continue to do so. I will ask Mr Gammie, Deputy Secretary, Infrastructure and Services to talk about the western service and about Great Southern Rail.

Mr GAMMIE: I do not have any detail.

The Hon. PAUL GREEN: On 27 August 2015 the *Daily Telegraph* reported official figures show that despite the New South Wales Government introducing 1,000 new rail services a week less than two years ago, in peak hour more than 80 passengers are forced to stand together in a single carriage, which is akin to the in Tokyo-like crushes. "Peak load capacity" is defined as the number of passengers as a percentage of seat capacity. When passenger numbers exceed 135 per cent of seating capacity it is considered to be "crush load". Latest figures from the New South Wales Bureau of Statistics show that the maximum load factor across the network of trains running between 8.00 a.m. and 8.59 a.m. is 167 per cent with the Western line, Inner West line, Bankstown line and South Coast line the worst. How does the Government plan to deal with that dire situation?

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: We have to recognise that some of the services in the morning peak are an enormous challenge, in particular, for commuters. It is a legacy issue and one that we are trying to address as part of stages two and three of Sydney's Rail Future. That is why I will continue to work on this issue as it relates to Sydney Metro as it will be the absolute game changer. I defer this question to Howard Collins to address the issues that he has taken.

Mr COLLINS: I have had 2½ years in Australia and 35 years in London. I know what crush loading is after travelling on the tube which is used by 4.5 million people every day. Last year's figures have fallen in a few locations and corridors but that does not mean we are complacent about this. We are certainly working with Fergus Gammie on further timetable changes. One of the reasons why the Western line improvements will take place is to deal with that crowding. We are working through a number of areas and we are using a great source of data. The Opal data is useful for us to understand crowding issues, card by card. We are making an effort to work through these issues.

I travel on the system every day from the shire and, yes, some services in the evening are pretty busy. We are looking at the whole timetable structure for the next few years. It is a success story with 3 per cent growth in 2013, and I think we will be publishing the same sort of number very soon this year. People are flocking back to public transport and we will have to make adjustments through great services such as the metro system. I came from a place where suburban rail was very much metro. We will be seeing a combination of heavy metro or the heavy operation of suburban rail, which I am in charge of, plus Mr Staples' delivery, which will make a massive difference to capacity improvements and remove some of that crowding.

The Hon. PAUL GREEN: Will you update the Committee on how the Opal card system is going? I note the ending of the paper-based ticket system means a change for hundreds of thousands of pensioners who have not signed up to the Opal card. I wonder whether you can reflect on how that is going and what you are doing to encourage pensioners to transition to the Opal card.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: We are going to phase out 57 paper-based tickets as of 1 January. That is in response to the fantastic take up of Opal across the board. There is no point in the Government running two ticketing systems. That is why I took a very deliberate decision to give a six months heads up that we were phasing out the paper-based tickets, including the pensioner excursion tickets. As part of the Opal rollout we have the Gold Opal, which in essence is the provision of a senior's Opal card that provides no difference in the existing fare structure of \$2.50.

I have noted some commentary relating to the fact that seniors have to fill in an application. Having been ageing Minister and observing a million seniors apply for a Seniors Card I think the same principle can apply in the sign up to the Gold Opal. There is a fantastic fare structure for seniors in this State. It is not being taken away but we do need to check the bona fides of people when they are applying for the card. We want to ensure that the bona fides of people who are entitled to it are correct and at the same time we want to catch out those who want to abuse it.

CHAIR: We will now take a short break. We will add the time we took for the break onto the end of the hearing.

(Short adjournment)

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: Mr Betts, is it the case that in 2012 or thereabouts Infrastructure NSW undertook a comparative analysis between light rail and a bus rapid transport [BRT] system?

Mr BETTS: Yes, that is correct.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: Is it the case that in the analysis the BRT was suggested to have a capacity of 20,000 and the passenger capacity of light rail was 9,000, which has been subsequently revised up to 13,000?

Mr BETTS: I would have to check that. I do not have that documentation.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: Is it the case that in that document Infrastructure NSW drew the attention of the Government and the public to the suitability of light rail in the CBD, specifically making the point that the Sydney CBD is extremely congested and solutions that work in lower density CBDs such as Dublin or Amsterdam are unlikely to work here?

Mr BETTS: I believe that is an accurate quote from—

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: On the basis of that quote did your chairman at the time say, "... light rail down George Street does not work remotely well as a mass transit activity"?

Mr BETTS: I could not tell you.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: Who was your chairman at the time?

Mr BETTS: The chairman of Infrastructure NSW before my time as chief executive officer was Nick Greiner.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: So Mr Greiner said in the *Australian Financial Review* that light rail down George Street does not work remotely well as a mass transport activity.

Mr BETTS: You are telling me that.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: I am prepared to table that if you wish. Minister, why did your Government ignore that advice?

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: What advice?

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: Minister, were you paying attention?

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: I have just listened to Mr Betts—

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: Can you remove your hand? I cannot hear you.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: —talk about processes back in 2012 or 2013.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: Were you a member of the Government at the time?

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: Mate, the point that I would make is that the project is going ahead.

CHAIR: Order! It is appropriate to refer to members by their correct titles.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: Sorry, I should address Mr Mookhey—the man who wants to modernise Sydney. The point that I would make is that we are investing in a light rail project that will remove 220 buses off city streets. We are going to transform this great city. It is one transport solution out of many that are happening across the city. Close to 100 projects are underway in the CBD at this time and light rail is integral to those. We have appointed a CBD Coordinator General in Margaret Prendergast, who is here and happy to take questions specifically in relation to this.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: Minister, was Mr Greiner wrong?

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: In regard to a bus tunnel that extends from—

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: No, in regard to the specific quote I have provided that light rail down George Street does not work remotely well as a mass transit activity. Was he wrong?

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: In regard to this project points of view have been conveyed all over the place by a number of people, including Nick Greiner, but this is going to be a wonderful project for Sydney. It will transform George Street.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: What specifically have you done to mitigate Mr Greiner's concerns?

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: What do you mean by "mitigate Mr Greiner's concerns"?

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: He said that light rail does not work remotely well as a mass transit activity.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: We have appointed a CBD Coordinator General to get on with and deliver this fantastic—

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: Mr Betts, have you provided any advice to Government on the design of the light rail that would mitigate Mr Greiner's concerns?

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: Excuse me. Are you going to let me answer your question or are you just going to continue to—

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: Sorry, the Chair is in charge.

CHAIR: Order! The question has been put. Minister, it is your turn to respond.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: The question that I was trying to answer related to Nick Greiner's view in regard to light rail. But I am giving you the Government's view. We are going to crack on and deliver what is going to be a world-class light rail project for this CBD, moving 9,000 passengers an hour down a revitalised George Street across a city which is transforming. That was backed by your party before the last election and all of a sudden walked away from after the election. If you want to continue this line of questioning I am happy to point to the views of the member sitting next to you, who ran as a Labor candidate for Newtown and backed this, along with the Labor Party who backed this, and then all of a sudden changed their view. I have never been able to understand the reasons behind Mr Foley's view and enlightened experience in relation to the light rail project but I would be happy for you to pass that view through to us as a panel.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: Mr Betts, in 2012 did Infrastructure NSW advise the Government that using 60-metre trams was not considered feasible in Sydney's central business district [CBD] as it would be too obstructive for retail loading access points?

Mr BETTS: Are you quoting that from "First Things First: the State Infrastructure Strategy 2012"? If you are, I will take your word for it. It is in the public domain.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: I am prepared to table the document from which I am quoting. I am happy to tell you that it is from the Infrastructure NSW State Infrastructure Strategy. Did you provide advice to Government that said, "Using 60-metre trams is not considered feasible in Sydney's CBD as it would be too obstructive for retail loading access points"?

Mr BETTS: I have never provided that advice.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: Did Infrastructure NSW?

Mr BETTS: Quite possibly, yes. If you are saying that is a quote from the 2012 State Infrastructure Strategy, then obviously yes.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: Life has moved on. It is 2015.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: I might direct my next question to the project director for Sydney Light Rail, Mr Gemell. Mr Gemell, what is the length of the trams that have been purchased?

Mr GEMELL: It is 66 metres.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: Minister, given that Infrastructure NSW pointed out that 60-metre trams are not considered feasible in Sydney's CBD and the project coordinator just confirmed that 66-metre trams have been purchased, on what basis did you reject the advice of Infrastructure NSW?

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: I think we are taking on notice some questions in relation to scope changes. I indicated to you that obviously trams were part of that. The point I would make is that this is going to be an incredible project. I want to know why you changed your view in relation to it without any reason.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: You have just asserted this is going to be an "incredible project". On that basis, what measures have you taken to address the obstruction of retail loading access points by this "incredible project"?

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: I will hand that question to Margaret Prendergast, the CBD coordinator general.

Ms PRENDERGAST: We have undertaken traffic modelling to look at the impact of having two 33-metre trams coupled together and moving through the Sydney CBD. There was no issue for retail loading. We have modelled unloading into all of the loading docks and driveways. There are some issues around swept path analysis and we are looking at that individually in each zone in terms of local access. We have also looked at the intersection modelling and there are no issues there.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: Is that traffic modelling public?

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: Ms Prendergast, did I just hear you say that there are no implications?

Ms PRENDERGAST: There are swept path analysis issues and issues about turning into and out of driveways, but the way that we are configuring the light rail we are looking at local access both during construction and after construction for each and every zone.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: Is that on the basis of modelling you have undertaken?

Ms PRENDERGAST: We have taken out a truck and actually done a swept path analysis. We tested it for the Myer loading dock, which was one of the most problematic on George Street. We proved that it was okay.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: Are you prepared to release that analysis?

Ms PRENDERGAST: We have some film footage that we could show.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: Have you undertaken any consultations with the chamber of commerce or any other retail associations?

Ms PRENDERGAST: Absolutely. We have been consulting very heavily with the Sydney Business Chamber, the Property Council and the Tourism and Transport Forum.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: On that basis, do you think Infrastructure NSW was wrong?

Ms PRENDERGAST: I am sorry but I am not aware of the earlier work. All I know is that we are doing current modelling. It is iterative and it is ongoing. We are testing every scenario, every zone, all of the turning points, all of the intersection analysis and all of the cumulative impacts of light rail plus the other 89 projects going on. We are dealing with it block by block.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: Minister, how many minutes per hour will east-west traffic be able to cross George Street?

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: I am happy to take that question on notice.

Ms PRENDERGAST: We will take that on notice and report in a couple of years because, to be quite honest, the end state—

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: That is extraordinarily rude.

Ms PRENDERGAST: I am sorry—

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: You have taken it on notice, thank you. The answer is complete. Minister, how will east-west traffic on King, Market, Park and Druitt streets be impacted?

Ms PRENDERGAST: There are two different impacts: one during construction and one post construction.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: Sorry, but I asked my question of the Minister.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: This is not a game of gotcha; this is a very serious project.

CHAIR: Order! It is important that we all listen very carefully as to whom the question is addressed. In this case, I think it was addressed to the Minister.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: Would you like me to repeat my question, Minister?

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: No. I just refer you to my previous answer.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: The one that you are taking on notice?

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: That would be the one.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: So you are taking this one on notice as well?

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: It seems like it.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: This is about the twentieth question you have taken on notice so far.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: You are very astute.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: Minister, can I ask how many bus passengers will be required to interchange or walk longer distances because of the changes in scope being made?

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: This is budget estimates and you can ask me questions. You asked me can you ask me, and I have said yes.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: Okay, well, I will ask you: How many bus passengers will be required to interchange or walk a longer distance because of the changes being made?

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: Again, I am happy to hand that question to the CBD coordination officer. The point I would make in relation to the bus network is that it is going to change on 4 October. This is a complex project because we are taking out George Street. There will be winners and losers in terms of proximity to workplaces as a result of the network changes. We have made no secret of this. In fact, I think it has been on the public record.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: Thank you for taking the question on notice. It you wish to defer to the CBD coordinator that would be great.

Ms PRENDERGAST: Approximately 35,000 bus passengers arrive in the city during the peak in one hour. We estimate an additional 3,800 interchanges is required. They have a bus-to-bus interchange option, they can walk a little longer or they can change to rail.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: Mr Reardon, did Transport for NSW conduct or receive modelling in respect of the impact of the light rail on Cleveland Street, Anzac Parade and Lang Road?

Mr REARDON: I think I have indicated before that we have undertaken a range of modelling and that modelling looks at the area around the light rail route. So for the CBD and south-east light rail route we would do a precinct model. You might have to repeat the three routes you referred to.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: Cleveland Street, Anzac Parade and Lang Road.

Mr REARDON: Yes.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: What does the modelling show?

Mr REARDON: I would have to take that question on notice because it would require a detailed answer and I am not sure that is available to us in terms of the time to respond to that.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: I do not know if you have been down Cleveland Street or walked down George Street lately and seen how congested it is—

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: Mr Reardon, thank you for taking that question on notice.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: —but I suggest if you want to modernise the city you should back the CBD light rail.

Mr REARDON: But what I can say in terms of the modelling of the intersections is that it is in the public domain, and again within the environmental impact statement there will be—

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: Is that precinct analysis you referred to in respect of Cleveland Street, Anzac Parade and Lang Road in the public domain?

Mr REARDON: Sorry, I was trying to respond to your question. We would undertake in the environmental impact statement a range of impacts of a project like this in terms of traffic impact assessment, as we would do for every other project. In terms of the specific intersections I want to be clear whether you are talking about during or post construction.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: Both.

Mr REARDON: Certainly the environmental impact statement would go through post construction activity in terms of their operation; and in terms of during construction, we have the benefit of going through, as Ms Prendergast has indicated, a lot more detail about the operational impacts. As we go through the construction we get down to further levels of detail and as each zone is under construction we would have to refine that modelling. We continue to do that, and will continue to do throughout the construction phase.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: Mr Reardon, on the basis of the modelling you have referred to and the environmental impact study and precinct analysis—all of which I assume is one form of modelling that you guys do—is it the case that the intersections of Bridge and Grosvenor, Elizabeth and Devonshire, Anzac and Cleveland will be interrupted 60 times per day?

Mr REARDON: Can I just correct you there. It is not all one and the same modelling. I indicated that there was modelling undertaken, as is normally done for an environmental impact statement, to put on public display. As we go into the contract and start refining, we continue to refine. As Ms Prendergast has pointed out, we will continue to refine across all of the construction scheduled zones. So as one zone is closed and we undertake construction in that zone we will model for how all intersections will work, and will continue to do that throughout.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: Have you modelled the effect of the light rail on intersections like Bridge and Grosvenor, Elizabeth and Devonshire, Anzac and Cleveland?

Mr REARDON: Yes.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: Does that modelling show that those intersections will be interrupted 60 times per day?

Mr REARDON: Again, are you talking about post—

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: I cannot hear, Minister, when you are talking over your officials.

Mr REARDON: —operations or during?

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: Sorry?

Mr REARDON: Post operations or during construction?

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: Both. I will be quite clear. Is it likely to be interrupted 60 times per day post construction?

Mr REARDON: I am not sure what you mean by 60 times per day.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: I presume you mean that trains will have to cross the intersections, which is what happens.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: Will they be crossing the intersections 60 times per day?

Mr REARDON: In terms of the timetable? If you are quoting from a figure that is in the public domain you might indicate that to me, but the timetable will be the timetable.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: I am not. Would you like to take the question on notice?

Mr REARDON: Sure.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: Minister, I do understand the point you made before and I will now ask you directly. Does the Government maintain its view that the light rail will replace 220 bus services per hour?

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: We have said that we are going to introduce a light rail project that will remove buses from Sydney streets. Obviously it will provide the opportunity to move 9,000 passengers per hour, particularly from the Eastern Suburbs—in and around the university, the hospital, Kensington, Randwick, through to the city and down to Circular Quay. I do not think there is any secret in the fact that if you introduce a light rail service that it will result in a reduction of the number of bus movements into town.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: How many bus services per hour?

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: We are aiming to remove 220 buses from Sydney streets as a result of this project.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: You said you are "aiming". What do you mean by that?

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: We have more than 1,000 services in terms of buses coming into town of a morning. The buses will continue to provide an important transport mode for people into the city.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: Is it correct to say that the figure of 220 is an aspirational figure?

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: Ms Prendergast will answer that question.

Ms PRENDERGAST: With the advent of light rail servicing to and from journeys from the south-east, and providing that incredible spine through the city to access the CBD, we forecast that we will remove 220 buses from the CBD every day during the AM one-hour peak period.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: Did you say 220 per day?

Ms PRENDERGAST: Per day.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: Not per hour?

Ms PRENDERGAST: I would have to clarify that. Two hundred and twenty buses will be removed from the CBD.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: Minister, are you aware that the Government claims to be removing 220 buses per hour?

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: I think you have made a terrific observation that if we build a light rail project we are not going to have as many buses in the morning peak.

Ms PRENDERGAST: It was from the morning peak I thought.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: I understand. I thank the Minister for complimenting me on my observation. Given that you have claimed that this project has a cost-benefit ratio of 2.5; that you have added an additional \$500 million to the project without being able to specify what exactly that money is being spent on; and the Government constantly justifies this project on the basis that it is removing 220 bus services per hour, is the Government actually going to remove 220 bus services per hour?

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: We have just indicated that we will be removing bus services. We are introducing a new network in October. Obviously with the advent of the light rail project coming on board and the removal of George Street we are going to have fewer buses coming into town, and we have said that that will be 220 buses. I would hope with the advent of the metro and everything else there will be an improvement. I indicated before, but you were too busy talking, that this is in the AM peak. You did not hear that. You have just taken three to four minutes of blustering questions without listening to my answer.

CHAIR: Order! The Minister will cease being gratuitous.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: I would urge the member to listen to the answers I give.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: Mr Chair, I do not take any offence. How many per day will use the light rail?

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: As I have said, it will move 9,000 passengers per hour and there are 24 hours in a day.

Ms PRENDERGAST: Can I just clarify something?

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: No, thank you. Does that mean there is going to be an under capacity per hour of 4,500?

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: Labor has turned up this afternoon and asked about actors who have been in place since 2005 in the department—

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: Sorry, but it is a pretty basic question.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: You are now asking me questions—

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: Is there going to be an under capacity of 4,500 per hour?

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: Minister, have you done any preparation for this hearing? You cannot answer any of the questions we are asking.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: I have spent a bit of time preparing.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: You cannot tell.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: Minister, do you know what the maximum capacity per hour of the light rail is?

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: The opening day capacity is 124,000 passengers in each direction—

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: Per hour or per day?

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: —based on 266 trips between 5.00 a.m. and 1.00 p.m. and frequency is between 15 per hour at peak and 10 per hour at off-peak.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: What is the hourly capacity of the number of passengers capable of being moved?

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: I have just answered your question.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: No, you have not. You have given me a different figure. I am asking you a quite specific question. Are you able to tell us per hour?

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: The opening day capacity is 124,000 passengers in each direction.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: You have given us the opening day capacity. Within 12 months how much is the maximum capacity meant to be?

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: I have just answered the question.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: You have told us the opening day capacity. Within 12 months what is the capacity meant to be?

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: I do not quite understand your question. We are building a light rail project to provide capacity. The capacity is the capacity.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: Within 12 months what is the rate of capacity growth that has been factored into the budget?

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: The capacity on transport modes can change. Governments can bring on more trains—

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: You are the transport Minister. Do you understand the concept of capacity growth?

The Hon. MATTHEW MASON-COX: All I know is that you are demonstrating limited capacity.

CHAIR: Order! Let's keep this civil.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: Minister, do you understand the concept of capacity? Do you know how capacity is meant to grow in transport?

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: I understand that transport agencies monitor capacity.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: Governments plan for capacity growth. What capacity growth is being planned for?

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: I have given you the figure for opening day capacity. We will monitor the capacity as the service is rolled out.

Dr MEHREEN FARUQI: Minister, asbestos was discovered on the construction site of the Skytrain component of the North West Rail Link. Would you tell me where the asbestos was found?

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: It was terrific to be with the Premier this morning to inspect the Skytrain.

Dr MEHREEN FARUQI: Minister, I do not want to hear the story about you and the Premier. I asked a specific question. Where was the asbestos discovered on site?

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: I will hand over to the project director, Rodd Staples, to answer.

Mr STAPLES: As with all large projects, when excavation starts, you identify areas of contamination. The one you are referring to, the Surface and Viaduct Civil [SVC] contract, was on a site that we acquired on Schofields Road. We subsequently discovered a significant amount of material that had asbestos in it.

Dr MEHREEN FARUQI: Was the site a disused quarry?

Mr STAPLES: Part of the site appears to have been used as a quarry at one stage and has been backfilled with material.

Dr MEHREEN FARUQI: Minister, disused quarries usually become illegal dumping grounds. Did you do any testing in the quarry to check for contamination?

Mr STAPLES: We have done a series of investigations across the corridor.

Dr MEHREEN FARUQI: Was testing done in that quarry to find out whether asbestos was present?

Mr STAPLES: Some testing was done during the planning process. The extent of the contamination was not identified until we got further into excavation works.

Dr MEHREEN FARUQI: Mr Staples, did you know that the site contained asbestos before the contract was signed with the Skytrain contractors?

Mr STAPLES: We were aware that the site could pose a contamination risk. Whether it was asbestos was unclear. It was clear that material had been dumped at the site that needed to be cleared. We identified that. The extent of the contamination only became clear after the contract was awarded.

Dr MEHREEN FARUQI: Did the cost of the contract include removal of the contaminated material?

Mr STAPLES: No. We had to adjust the contract value to deal with the means by which we decontaminated that site.

Dr MEHREEN FARUQI: If you knew about the material beforehand, why was that not made part of the contract?

Mr STAPLES: As I said, we were not aware of the extent of contamination at that location prior to the contract being awarded. As the landowner, we take very seriously our responsibility for cleaning the site. We looked at a range of options. We took the option that involved the most extensive clearing of the site and

removal of material to ensure that that site, which will have a railway on it for decades to come, did not have any remaining contamination.

Dr MEHREEN FARUQI: Thank you. Minister, there was a \$50 million variation to that contract recently. Would you tell me how much of that money was spent on cleaning up the asbestos? What was the rest for?

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: The Skytrain contract is \$387 million. There were variations associated with the remediation of the site. I can provide the breakdown of that. There have been other improvements to the scope of the project.

Dr MEHREEN FARUQI: Could you take that on notice and provide information on how much of the \$50 million was spent on cleaning up asbestos.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: I am happy to answer your question.

Dr MEHREEN FARUQI: Do you know how much of the \$50 million was spent on asbestos removal and how much was spent on other things?

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: I was about to outline the other things.

Dr MEHREEN FARUQI: I need to know the breakdown for asbestos and other things.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: We might be able to provide that breakdown. It depends on the commercial sensitivities of the contract. I will take the question on notice, and if I can answer it I will.

Dr MEHREEN FARUQI: Thank you, Minister. Mr Betts, part of the function of Infrastructure NSW is to review and evaluate proposed major infrastructure projects. Is that right?

Mr BETTS: Yes.

Dr MEHREEN FARUQI: Has Infrastructure Australia carried out reviews of the biggest rail project, the \$15 billion metro, to assess the business case and cost-benefit analysis and to consider alternatives?

Mr BETTS: You said Infrastructure Australia. Did you mean Infrastructure NSW?

Dr MEHREEN FARUQI: Sorry. I meant Infrastructure NSW.

The Hon. Dr PETER PHELPS: Point of order: My point of order goes to information. It could well be the case that Infrastructure NSW has done an analysis of which this department might not be aware. Surely the member could ask the witnesses only about those elements of which they are aware?

CHAIR: Order! I thought that was what the member was doing.

The Hon. Dr PETER PHELPS: She asked whether Infrastructure NSW had done any analysis. The witnesses here can give evidence only on what they are aware of.

Dr MEHREEN FARUQI: My question was about a review, an evaluation, of any cost-benefit analysis.

CHAIR: Order! Mr Betts is the Chief Executive Officer of Infrastructure NSW. The question is in order.

Mr BETTS: Was the question specifically about Sydney Metro?

Dr MEHREEN FARUQI: Yes.

Mr BETTS: The initial decision to commit to the broader Sydney Metro, as opposed to the north-west component, was taken by the Government prior to the last election. The task at hand for Rodd Staples and the

team is to develop a full business case for that project, prior to a final investment decision being taken next year. Infrastructure NSW will be reviewing that final business case.

Dr MEHREEN FARUQI: So that project has been announced, with an allocation of \$15 billion, without a business case? That is interesting.

Mr BETTS: It was made very clear in the State Infrastructure Strategy, in the recommendations that we made and the Government accepted, that the next step was to develop the business case. That is prudent for a project of this scale.

Mr REARDON: It is the process we undertake for every other major project, through Infrastructure NSW.

Dr MEHREEN FARUQI: Thank you. Minister, I turn to the Newcastle rail line, which has been shut down. Will you confirm that the Government was deliberately trying to get around the Transport Administration Act when it transferred ownership of the Newcastle rail line to the Hunter Development Corporation for \$10 last year?

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: Are you seriously suggesting that the Government sought to breach the legislation?

Dr MEHREEN FARUQI: I am asking a question.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: The Government is revitalising Newcastle. The community is excited about what the Government is doing there. I am bemused by the opposition to it from The Greens and the Labor Party. It is another transport project that is strongly opposed by The Greens and the Labor Party.

Dr MEHREEN FARUQI: It still has no business case or cost-benefit analysis. If the Hunter Development Corporation is blocked from removing rail infrastructure by the Supreme Court, as a result of section 99A of the Transport Administration Act, will the Government introduce legislation to close the Newcastle rail line?

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: I am not going to answer hypothetical questions. There is a court process underway and the Government will await the ruling of the court.

Dr MEHREEN FARUQI: Has the Government worked out how much it would cost to reintroduce heavy rail services on the closed Newcastle line?

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: We are not going to do it. We are getting on with the job. I will have services up and running in Newcastle to revitalise that fantastic city, the second largest city in the State. It is important for the community that there is change in Newcastle. I do not understand the opposition to it.

Dr MEHREEN FARUQI: Minister, does the Government plan to run the Newcastle light rail along the existing rail corridor, to the east of Wickham transport interchange, or along Beresford Street?

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: This issue has been very well canvassed.

Dr MEHREEN FARUQI: Would you respond to me? Is the Government planning on running light rail along the existing rail corridor or along Beresford Street?

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: Following the successful lease of the Port of Newcastle, the Government has secured funds for the revitalisation of Newcastle. It is investing in the transformation of the city.

Dr MEHREEN FARUQI: It is a very specific question about the light rail route. Will it be along the existing rail corridor or along Beresford Street?

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: The preferred route was announced in 2014.

Dr MEHREEN FARUQI: What was it?

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: It is about combining the best elements of the existing rail corridor and a route down Hunter Street. It is well canvassed. The information is in the public domain.

Dr MEHREEN FARUQI: You said the existing rail corridor.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: It has to take in part of it.

Dr MEHREEN FARUQI: Last year the transport Minister said that it would be along Beresford Street. More recently the Government has released images and a video that appear to show light rail travelling across Stewart Avenue and Beresford Street. Now you are saying it will run along the rail corridor. Would you clarify your position?

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: I will respond to your claims. I do not understand why you would be opposed to light rail, to revitalise Newcastle.

Dr MEHREEN FARUQI: This is not about opposition. I am asking for the details of this project. If you do not know where the light rail is going to run, how will you revitalise Newcastle?

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: Why do you not listen? I have just outlined it to you. I will make it clear. Last year the Government released the preferred route for the light rail project. I do not understand the line of questioning. We want to include the best of the residential and business opportunities down Hunter Street.

Dr MEHREEN FARUQI: If it is the corridor why are you still releasing images and videos that show the light rail running on Beresford Street?

Mr REARDON: We have certainly looked at the three route alignments that we looked at during 2013-14 but, as the Minister said, we have released what is the preferred route alignment. Any imagery we may have may be indicative only but we are certainly pursuing the preferred route that has been announced.

The Hon. PAUL GREEN: I want to ask some questions about Opal cards. I have noted reports that some pensioners do not want to have automatic top-ups over concerns that bank accounts might be overdrawn, while other seniors were concerned about the lack of their ability to travel anonymously with the Gold Opal card. Do you have any comments on those concerns?

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: I understand the nature of—

The Hon. PAUL GREEN: With that you might be able to help with the next question. What sort of personal information is captured by swiping the Opal cards on public transport and who has access to that information?

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: First of all, all data rests with Transport for NSW. The key point that I would make is that we have to check the bona fides of people who are applying for the \$2.50 pensioner excursion fare—that is only fair on the taxpayer. That is where there is that application. I am happy to defer the question to Mr Reardon or Mr Gammie to give you some further information.

Mr REARDON: In relation to the Opal card, as you are aware, you can either have an Opal card that is registered—and most people have taken up registered Opal cards—or you can have an anonymous card. A registered Opal card obviously has greater benefits for you; if you lose it we can return it to you, have it hot listed and make sure that your funds are secured. In regard to taking up a registered Opal card, that can be an adult Opal card or, as the Minister has pointed out, for concession cards, because there is a large volume of concession cards for customers across a range of concession areas—whether it is job seekers, apprentices, trainees, pensioners and seniors or tertiary students, amongst others—we require registration of those groups because we are offering either a half fare or a \$2.50 fare or, indeed, in some circumstances free travel. For the benefit of taxpayers we ensure that they are registered.

We go through a fairly significant process. The process that Transport has gone through for Opal registering concession cards is large in scale and literally millions of customers are involved. So it is a large-scale process. We keep as much information as we need to ensure we can verify independently that concession beneficiaries are indeed who they say they are and when they are out on the network those identifications can be

verified. Referring to the use of information we, like everyone else, have to comply with the privacy legislation and that is certainly what we do. In regard to having ongoing discussions with the Privacy Commissioner, that is clearly something we take on. Both the Information Commissioner and the Privacy Commissioner continue to liaise with us, even most recently around our Privacy Week when we highlight and promote the need to ensure that any information we have from the large volume of customers is appropriately protected.

The Hon. PAUL GREEN: So when someone swipes a card what information—

Mr REARDON: It depends on the category but, as you would know from your own Opal card, if it is registered—

The Hon. PAUL GREEN: I do not have one. I come from a rural and regional area. That is my next question.

Mr REARDON: I am happy to furnish you with an Opal card.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: I am the member for Bega and I have one.

The Hon. PAUL GREEN: My son has to go to a sporting event in Homebush. I said that he could either come and stay with me overnight or he could go home. He is going to catch a train. I do not know whether he needs an Opal card or whether he can get a ticket—

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: As of 1 January we will still have single and return tickets.

The Hon. PAUL GREEN: For me this represents the real lives of people, of parents. Not everyone has an Opal card at this point in time and not everyone understands the system, particularly pensioners, hence my line of questioning about pensioners. I will resolve the issue on Thursday and learn something.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: We are investing in initiatives to encourage seniors in particular to take up the Gold Opal card.

The Hon. PAUL GREEN: My point is that in regional areas many parents are not using the system because they have cars and that is their main transport.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: That is why we will still be offering the single and return paper-based tickets as a one-journey fare.

The Hon. PAUL GREEN: But you said you were going to phase out paper tickets.

Mr REARDON: In the greater metropolitan area of Sydney where the Opal card footprint is we will phase out paper tickets.

The Hon. PAUL GREEN: So there will be 100 per cent Opal cards in metro areas?

Mr REARDON: No, as the Minister has indicated. All Opal cards, with the exception of single and return tickets at that point in time.

The Hon. PAUL GREEN: That brings me to my next question. I think this time last year we were talking about the Opal card top-ups and accessibility to get to top-up machines. I do not think they were at the railway stations at that point in time. What is the plan and where is the rollout up to in regional and rural areas, because accessibility was a real problem for many pensioners?

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: We are rolling out about 350 Opal top-up machines at this time. Hopefully they will be installed in the new year. I will defer the regional component of your question to Mr Gammie.

Mr GAMMIE: As the Minister said, over 350 of these machines will be rolled out. A large number of top-up machines have already been rolled out at stations.

The Hon. PAUL GREEN: Can you give us a number?

Mr Gammie: I will have to get back to you with the number. Essentially, these machines will be spread out across the whole network and will be targeted particularly to where the usage is, but they will be spread throughout the whole inner city and suburban network.

The Hon. Paul Green: What about rural areas such as Kiama, Bomaderry and places like that?

Mr Gammie: Wherever Opal is used there will be machines across the whole Opal network.

The Hon. Paul Green: I want to ask a question about Uber. I am surprised it has not come up yet. I have received a fair bit of correspondence about and representation on Uber. Most of the correspondence specifically relates to the unfairness of the playing field. Cab drivers have to dish out thousands of dollars for registration plates and the like while Uber does not have those overheads. Has the Government considered either cutting some of the overheads for cab drivers or subjecting Uber to the same overheads faced by cab drivers?

Mr Andrew Constance: That is an important question at this time because the taxi industry, which is facing a complexity of issues, plays an important part in the point-to-point transport market. Unlike the Opposition, the Government is not 100 per cent supportive of Uber which has disregarded the challenges besetting the taxi industry at this time. The taxi industry wants a level playing field. We are in the midst of a task force inquiry relating to the point-to-point transport market. Coming from a regional background, as you do, you would be mindful of the fact that the sustainability of the taxi industry in the bush is a real problem. There are a number of factors behind that, including the provision of club courtesy buses affecting the ability of taxi operators on Friday and Saturday nights to provide community transport. So we need to look at it holistically.

At the same time, we have challenges as many self-funded retirees have invested their life savings in the plates and they, too, are being subjected to some obvious challenges as a result of the technological innovations we are seeing associated with, in particular, the UberX product. A task force is underway at present. It has been taking submissions and only last week released a discussion paper. Hopefully we will find a way forward following input from the task force, knowing that there are complexities in the regulations and some obvious costs associated with putting a taxi on the road, which those who are outside the Passenger Transport Act do not have to comply with. So it is an enormous challenge in that regard and we are going to work through this and find a solution.

The Hon. Paul Green: I wish you luck with it. We look forward to it; it will be the wisdom of Solomon.

Mr Andrew Constance: I am not the face of UberX, unlike the good member sitting next to you.

The Hon. Paul Green: I note that real-time tracking is available for Sydney buses via certain apps. I recall that there were about 2.3 million downloads for real-time transport apps. Of course, this allows commuters to make informed judgements regarding delays and whether to catch other buses or trains on other routes when they are running late. I have also received feedback that some bus lines such as Veolia do not have real-time GPS tracking across their bus routes. Can you inform the Committee what the status quo is regarding GPS tracking across the various companies that service New South Wales and do you have any intentions of rolling out tracking to other bus lines in New South Wales?

Mr Gammie: Certainly, on all services in the Sydney metropolitan area they do have what is called the Ptip system on them and they are tracked and that is the database that is used for the real time apps. I am not sure actually what services you were referring to because my understanding is that all the services inside the Sydney metropolitan area have that service available. Can I just answer the question around the number of Opal machines? There are 102 on the system today.

The Hon. Paul Green: That is 102 in the metro?

Mr Gammie: Yes, they are mainly in the metro area right now and, as we said before, there will be 357 when the rollout is finished and they will be spread across the whole Opal area.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: Mr Betts, did Infrastructure NSW [INSW], in its comparative analysis published in 2012 between a bus rapid transit [BRT] and light rail say that under a BRT George Street would be fully pedestrianised?

Mr BETTS: Could you repeat the last bit again?

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: Did you in your comparative analysis published in 2012 between a BRT and light rail say that George Street under a BRT would be fully pedestrianised?

Mr BETTS: I would have to check that. As I said before, the analysis which supported INSW's comments at the time about a BRT was based on just six weeks work. It was very preliminary.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: Mr Gemell, under the Government's current design for the light rail, is George Street likely to be fully pedestrianised?

Mr GEMELL: Pedestrianised between—

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: As in exclusive use for pedestrians.

Mr GEMELL: The pedestrian zone is between Hunter and Bathurst Streets on George Street.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: So it is not fully pedestrianised?

Mr GEMELL: I am sorry, that section is the pedestrianised section.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: Minister, given that George Street is not going to be fully pedestrianised under your light rail proposal, how many vehicles, both cars and delivery trucks, will be driving through the pedestrian zone each day?

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: I will throw that over to the CBD coordinator general to respond to that.

Ms PRENDERGAST: We have 35,000 delivery vehicles come into the CBD every day. We are just doing the quantification of those that will still need to move into the George Street zone. Of course, during construction and post construction, there will be a lane available for local access delivery and, of course, for emergency services.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: Does that apply just to delivery trucks or does that include cars?

Ms PRENDERGAST: It includes local residents needing to access either by taxi or their private vehicle into their driveway for apartments, delivery vehicles, tradies and, of course, emergency vehicles.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: How many residents are in the pedestrian zone?

Ms PRENDERGAST: I would have to take that on notice.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: Do you know how many cars are in the pedestrian zone or registered with the City of Sydney as to having permissible parking in that area?

Ms PRENDERGAST: I would have to take that on notice also.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: Minister, how many minutes an hour will east-west traffic be able to cross George Street?

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: I will take that on notice.

Ms PRENDERGAST: We are still determining that. When I talked about four years' time, I was not being flippant. We are modelling what is happening during construction as we close each zone and then modelling the end state. So that is really not going to be determined in the next year or so. There is so much

development happening along George Street, there are so many development applications [DAs] along there. The development is going to increase, so we will be actually modelling that as we get those increases.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: How many minutes an hour of east-west traffic currently crosses George Street?

Ms PRENDERGAST: I would have to take that on notice. That is part of the detailed modelling.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: It has been done though?

Ms PRENDERGAST: We are looking at the east-west. That is why we are actually investing in capacity improvement projects. There are 17 projects being undertaken—

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: I am not disputing that.

CHAIR: Order! Let the witness answer the question please.

Ms PRENDERGAST: That is actually providing additional east-west capacity, an additional westbound lane on Market Street and additional capacity on King Street. It is relevant to the question. So we are looking at capacity improvements to increase east-west capacity, knowing how critical that is.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: It is pretty congested at the moment, if you go down and have a look.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: Minister, how many buses per two hours are likely to be diverted down the corner of Pitt and Hay streets, Hay and Elizabeth streets and Elizabeth and Hunter streets during construction?

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: It will be under the Bus Plan. It is a public document. Go and have a look at the Bus Plan. If you want to ask me about the 180-odd routes into town—

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: Minister, you have disputed every public document we have tried to put forward to you today.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: If you want to ask me questions about individual—

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: Either you take it seriously and answer the question or you will not.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: Are you going to let me answer the question?

CHAIR: Order! Can we have a specific question asked and then the relevant person answer?

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: During construction, how many buses are likely to be diverted down the corner of Pitt and Hay streets, Hay and Elizabeth streets and Elizabeth and Hunter streets?

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: I will hand over to Marg Prendergast.

Ms PRENDERGAST: Of the thousand services that enter every morning, 330 are being removed from the core, the core being Elizabeth, Liverpool, Bridge and Clarence. There will be an additional about 30 services an hour on Elizabeth, the Pitt and Hay intersection was shown up as a hotspot, and we are currently doing some capacity improvements to increase throughput. We would have to come back with specific bus movements through those intersections.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: Thank you. Minister, have you commissioned any report, brief or any other document, a model, to examine the effect of the CBD light rail project on Christmas sales?

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: On Christmas sales? To assist in this answer, we are working through a business reference group with the business community over the Christmas period. I am very pleased, under the leadership of Peter Gemell and Marg Prendergast, that we have worked tirelessly with the business community to mitigate the effects of the construction activity on the Christmas period. It is why we are running a series of

advertisements. We are encouraging people to shop at Christmas in town here. I have been very honest and upfront about the disruption associated with this project.

The point that I would make though is that I would say to the wider community to look at the bigger picture, once this project is in. Those businesses are going to benefit enormously from the uplift associated with the light rail project, as evidenced by other jurisdictions around the world. So we will work and continue to work with the business community. We have brought forward the timetable to commence on 5 October as opposed to 23 October. That does free up some capacity in and around the construction zones during 23 December through to 4 January to assist with pedestrian movements during the busy Christmas and Boxing Day sales. Everyone should come and shop in town. You should bring your family in and shop in town.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: Thank you, I am sure everyone should and I concur with you in your view. But the work that you just described, in terms of the partnership approach that you just described that the Government is undertaking with the affected retailers and their associations, has any of that work been informed by any modelling as to the likely quantum of sales? You said you were working with them to mitigate the effect. What is the effect?

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: We are running a very technical and complex construction build and there are a number of zones, around 30-odd construction zones. We are starting with zone 5 and zone 6 in the centre of George Street. We want to be in and out of those construction zones by Christmas 2016. We are going to transform the city and we make no apologies for that.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: I am not asking for an apology. I am asking specifically whether or not you have undertaken any modelling on the likely retail effects so as to inform and provide comfort to the retailers who are currently concerned.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: We have had input from the key organisations that are involved in representing business in the city.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: Minister, when did you make the decision to bring forward the planning for Christmas for two weeks, as you have just described it?

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: I absolutely commend the work of Peter Gemell, his team, the consortium, to do everything possible to mitigate the effects of the construction activity during the peak period from 23 December onwards. I do not know whether Peter wants to add to that.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: I might ask a question on that basis to Mr Gemell. Mr Gemell, when did you provide advice to the Minister on the likely effect on Christmas?

Mr GEMELL: I beg your pardon?

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: Firstly, did you provide advice to the Minister on the need to bring forward to Christmas the work that the Minister just described from 23 October to the 4th?

Mr GEMELL: Yes.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: When did you do that?

Mr GEMELL: Can I give you the context of it?

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: You can, but because I have limited time can I ask when precisely?

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: I will go back and look at the exact date.

Mr GEMELL: I do not know the exact date.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: Minister, when did you announce it?

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: In the past couple of weeks. I cannot recall the exact date. This is a fairly complex—

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: It was 13 August.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: No, just in response. Mr Gemell has worked tirelessly in terms of managing particularly utilities around zone 5 to see what could be done in order to minimise the construction footprint during this period. There has been and continues to be ongoing work involving the Government with the contractors to achieve this.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: Why did it take you until August to foresee the effects of Christmas?

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: I am well aware of Christmas being on 25 December. It is a big event on the calendar.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: So you are aware that Christmas falls on 25 December?

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: Thank you for confirming my awareness.

Mr GEMELL: In May the newsletter was issued that had the dates for occupation that is in the contract. Zone 5 was over the Christmas period from Christmas 2015, work to commence on 23 October and to be completed in August. At the time we were having extensive discussions with various retail representatives, particularly a number of the ones specifically affected in zone 5, and it became apparent from their issues that the less intrusive work we could possibly do the better off their business was. Footfall traffic across the front of their businesses was critical.

While we have to continually provide access to their loading docks, as you have already mentioned, which is a task on its own, it became obvious that we could advance the work for the pit that is outside Myers near the Myers entry stair by three weeks so that that obstruction was neither visually or in a pedestrian way in front of the Myers store at the southern end and on the eastern side of George Street immediately north of Market Street.

That then was able to mitigate the impacts on Dymocks because we were able to then do the early works up opposite Dymocks but not at the same time, so we could split the two. That early stage of works is very soft but it is critical for us to do it because if not we ran the risk of progressing into Christmas 2016, as the Minister said. So it was a plan evolved over that time, as the detail for the utilities became known. As you know, you have got to investigate to find your work and then you try to design out of it.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: Is Boston Consulting Group [BCG] currently engaged to do any work for the transport cluster?

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: I will pass that to the Secretary of the department.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: In addition, will you tell us the value of the contract with BCG?

Mr REARDON: Sure. Boston Consulting has assisted with the realignment of Transport for NSW so we have realigned the organisation. Since it began in 2011 it has had the same structure. During the period from April to now we have basically gone through realignment. Boston Consulting has assisted with that process. They are the contractors around \$2.99 million—

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: Per annum?

Mr REARDON: No, it is a one-off \$2.99 million to assist.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: When did the contract start?

Mr REARDON: Boston commenced its work early this year and they have basically completed their work and assisted us to go live with the new structure within Transport for NSW on 17 August 2015.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: Minister, I refer to Unanderra train station and your plans to provide it with a disability access upgrade. Do you have a time frame?

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: Not at this stage.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: None at all for Unanderra?

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: Not at this stage. We have a number of projects that we are assessing under the Transport Access Program in terms of priority.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: Will you provide that list of projects to the Committee on notice?

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: No, because we are still working through that work.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: You are able to tell us you are not upgrading Unanderra but you will not tell us which ones you are upgrading?

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: There is nothing to provide the Committee in terms of us working through the prioritisation of Transport Access Program projects. I am well aware of the effort that has been undertaken in terms of promoting Unanderra but, first and foremost, we are working through a process to assess the priority particularly based on patronage and getting feedback through the agency.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: Will you provide the Committee with information about the assessment criteria for how you decide prioritisation?

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: I can provide the names of the stations that have been made accessible since March 2011.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: No, I have read those on the website, Minister. I do not need them. I am interested in how you prioritise accessibility upgrades across the network.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: I am sorry?

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: I am sorry if you a bit tired, Minister, but I ask you to provide to the Committee the criteria you use to decide which stations across the network are being upgraded.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: We have a process. I am happy to throw over to the Secretary of the department.

Mr REARDON: More broadly, as you know, we publish a Disability Action Plan that outlines a whole range of measures we undertake well beyond just a fixed infrastructure, rolling stock and a whole range of other areas, including what we do for people with disabilities within our own organisation and the service delivery agencies. In terms of criteria, we go through a whole range of areas including demand forecasts at certain stations. We go through the level of accessibility, what other facilities are within an area, whether it is a health precinct or an education precinct, to set those priorities.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: Is there a policy for that?

Mr REARDON: The Disability Action Plan sets our policy.

Dr MEHREEN FARUQI: Minister, the State Transit Authority [STA] states on its quarterly performance reports that it is committed to growing patronage. How do you rate the performance of Newcastle buses in terms of meeting that commitment: poor, very poor, or a total failure?

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: I am glad I have been asked that question because I have a response in relation to Newcastle buses. On average, about 65,000 customer trips per month using the bus services which are replacing the train services between Hamilton and Newcastle station. They started operating on 26 December 2014.

Dr MEHREEN FARUQI: Minister, I am asking about the loss of patronage. Hopefully you are aware there were 88,000 fewer trips taken on Newcastle buses and ferries in the September 2014 quarter compared to

the same quarter in 2013, and in the year before that there was a similar story. Could you or Mr Reardon please illustrate which particular routes and areas are specifically suffering?

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: I will take that question on notice if you are concerned about individual routes, and I am happy to provide that feedback to the Committee. I have a list of patronage numbers based on month by month.

Dr MEHREEN FARUQI: I have the list of patronage numbers also that was published. Which areas are being impacted? We know that part of that impact could be because of the closure of the rail line.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: I will take those questions on notice.

Dr MEHREEN FARUQI: Will the Government cut the Newcastle buses fare-free zone when the light rail starts, if it ever does?

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: I will not speculate what we might and might not do into the future in relation to fare arrangements. We are investing very heavily in public transport in Newcastle. There are a number of modes that are run. We are introducing a new inner-city fleet as part of a procurement package that is going to improve the experience. We have got light rail; we have got the ferry services; we have got the bus services.

Dr MEHREEN FARUQI: I am asking the question because there is already speculation in leaked Cabinet document 71 that there have been discussions about cutting the fare-free zone. Will you provide an answer from your perspective?

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: At the moment there is no change but I will not guarantee what might or might not happen into the future.

Dr MEHREEN FARUQI: It is good that \$890 million is allocated over the next four years for the Transport Access Program, but of that amount how much will be spent on building ramps and lifts to provide accessibility at stations?

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: Again as I indicated, we are working through the projects in terms of the Government's priorities in that regard. I cannot really answer that question.

Dr MEHREEN FARUQI: It is budget estimates and probably half of our stations need accessibility. Surely there is some program that states how much will be allocated specifically to improve accessibility?

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: Can I say more broadly that this is a legacy issue over many years where governments of both political persuasions have not invested at levels required to improve access, particularly for people with disabilities. On the rail network and the number of stations we have a long way to go, but we have more than 80 per cent of patrons now catered for in terms of access. We have some key stations that are being worked on at this time.

Dr MEHREEN FARUQI: Coming to the key station, could you inform the Committee of the expected completion date for the Redfern lift project?

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: I would have to take that on notice.

Dr MEHREEN FARUQI: You would know that a single lift is being installed on platforms 6 and 7. Are there plans to install lifts on any other platforms at Redfern station?

Mr REARDON: We will go through the scope of work we have in front of us at the moment. Like every other station, we will continue to track what patronage does through a station before we take any further steps.

Dr MEHREEN FARUQI: Most people know that Redfern station has huge patronage and so—

Mr REARDON: As do many others.

Dr MEHREEN FARUQI: —it does require lifts. What is the budget for the Redfern lift project?

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: I will take it on notice and get back to you. We have some commercial sensitivities around the projects we are doing under the Transport Access Program. I am happy to take that on notice.

Dr MEHREEN FARUQI: As you know, many buses are being affected or rerouted because of the introduction of the CBD and South East Light Rail. In fact, we have had a long discussion on that. Buses from the eastern suburbs to the city are particularly affected. Will the Government fast-track the installation of a lift at Edgecliff station?

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: Local member Gabrielle Upton, the Attorney General, is doing a tremendous job and advocating very hard for that project. It is under consideration. It is without doubt a key interchange point, but my observation is that the line is probably a little under-utilised. I would encourage more people from the eastern suburbs to get on the train and use that line where possible, particularly given the obvious challenges we are going to face with the construction of the CBD light rail.

Dr MEHREEN FARUQI: Obviously it is a challenge for people who have not been given the required accessibility. Is there any plan to fast-track the installation of a lift at that station, yes or no?

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: I have said it is under consideration.

The Hon. Dr PETER PHELPS: We could open Woollahra, the ghost station.

Dr MEHREEN FARUQI: Absolutely we could. Rather than spending \$15 billion on cannibalising lines we could expand our public transport system.

CHAIR: Was that a question?

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: I think that was a statement. Maybe it is a policy.

Dr MEHREEN FARUQI: Does the Government support integrating public transport fares across modes so that people using different modes of transport on the same journey are not double or triple charged?

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: This is why the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal is conducting a review into this. To be frank, we are going to have to make some decisions on this given the challenges we are facing with a growing city.

Dr MEHREEN FARUQI: Will the Government commit to retaining the element of the Opal card that allows free travel after eight trips?

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: Again, I am not going to speculate about what might or might not happen into the future. The Opal rollout has been an incredible success story. More than 3.3 million people have now taken it up and there are a number of incentives in place to encourage people to do so. You have just spelt them out.

Dr MEHREEN FARUQI: Has the Government considered extending concessions to part-time students mainly due to the high cost of living in New South Wales and particularly in Sydney?

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: We do offer a number of concessions and we will continue to do so into the future. We hope that there will be some focus on this in the near future in relation to the Opal rollout.

Dr MEHREEN FARUQI: The State Transit website provides quarterly performance information on bus performance but usually it is quite late, months after the quarter has ended. Do you know why they are published so late and could the Government commit to improving the waiting times?

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: I am happy to take that issue up if you are concerned about when that material is being published. The point that I would make is that we are seeing improvements in customer satisfaction across the board and buses are part of that success story.

The Hon. PAUL GREEN: The suburb of Cobbitty near Camden is reportedly experiencing a high rate of growth and it is undergoing renewal in residential development. Demographer Mark McCrindle noted it is growing at 10 times the rate of Sydney itself, and Sydney is growing faster than the national average. He also said that the fact is that by 2032 the west of Sydney will be larger than the rest of Sydney and with that growth and population come a need for infrastructure. Given its obvious growth projections, how much has been allocated for infrastructure for the Camden region? Since Badgerys Creek is around the corner what transport projects are you planning for this region?

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: First of all, we have to get the planning right. During the election campaign there was a commitment in relation to a Macarthur integrated transport hub plan and a small amount of money was put aside for that work. The observation I would make about that part of New South Wales in particular is that, unfortunately, decisions that were made some 10 years ago where the appropriate corridors were not protected for passenger rail has now led to some very significant challenges in the delivery of that infrastructure into the future. Therein lies a big challenge. Unfortunately, homes have been built on very obvious transport corridors. We are in the midst of a very difficult consultation with the community at this time. There are people who are affected as a result, but we have to do that consultation.

We cannot continue to see the growth that we are seeing in that region without the appropriate transport. That is why we are consulting on a route for a south west rail extension, in particular Bringelly South through to Narellan and Camden. I acknowledge that is disruptive for some residents and some business owners, but we cannot not do that. Obviously, I cannot guarantee when the infrastructure might go in but at the end of the day, because there has not been the right degree of planning in years gone by, taxpayers of today have to fork out a lot of money to build tunnels under suburbs. If there had been the appropriate planning in the first place that would not have to happen. In the south-west we are trying to play catch up.

The Hon. PAUL GREEN: There have been rumours surrounding the future of steelmaking in the Illawarra and BlueScope workers still fear for their jobs after reports emerged that the firm planned to cease manufacturing in the region by 2017. South Coast Labour Council Secretary Arthur Rorris said if all governments used local steel that would "have a dramatic impact on the demand and sales at BlueScope Steel". BlueScope workman George Papaconstantinos said that we are very worried for our jobs that \$3.3 billion would be taken out of the economy of Wollongong and the Illawarra area. He said that what we need the New South Wales Government to do is to buy Australian steel products for their infrastructure projects. Quite simply, is the Government committing to using more locally produced steel for its infrastructure projects, particularly transport projects?

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: First of all, the Government is already a very large customer of Australian steel. I am very mindful, coming from the country, of the importance of us using Australian products. We all recognise the challenges besetting BlueScope at this time. Procurement policy obviously is centrally within government under the responsibilities of the Minister for Finance. At the same time, as a country we have free trade agreements in place too, which can affect the procurement policies of government. That said, obviously where possible that preference should be given. Given the amount of work that is on I am very mindful that the Australian industry benefits. It is a \$68.6 billion infrastructure program we are running across government. An amount of \$38 billion of it is going to public transport and that does not include the additional \$20 billion that we are putting in from the poles and wires transaction. There is recognition from this Government of the importance of the steel industry and BlueScope particularly to the Illawarra. We will continue to work through those issues facing that region and that business.

The Hon. PAUL GREEN: It is much easier to keep a job than create another one. Maybe high-speed rail might keep them employed for a while.

CHAIR: Thank you Minister, officers and staff for coming along today. It has been appreciated.

(The witnesses withdrew.)

The Committee proceeded to deliberate.