

# GENERAL PURPOSE STANDING COMMITTEE No. 4

Wednesday 15 March 2006

Examination of proposed expenditure for the portfolio area

## ROADS

The Committee met at 10.00 a.m.

### MEMBERS

The Hon. J. A. Gardiner (Chair)

The Hon. J. C. Burnswoods  
The Hon. D. Clarke  
The Hon. G. J. Donnelly  
The Hon. K. F. Griffin

Ms L. Rhiannon  
The Hon. D. E. Oldfield

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### PRESENT

**Roads and Traffic Authority**

**Mr M. Hannon**, *Acting Chief Executive*

**Mr B. Skinner**, *Director, Finance*

**Mr B. Watters**, *Acting Director, Road Network Infrastructure*

**Mr M. Bushby**, *Director, Road Safety, Licensing and Vehicle Management*

**Mr C. Ford**, *Director, Traffic and Transport*

**Mr L. Wielinga**, *Director, Motorways*

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**CHAIR:** I declare this meeting open to the public. I welcome officers from the Roads and Traffic Authority to this public hearing of General Purpose Standing Committee No. 4. At this meeting the Committee will examine further the proposed estimates for the portfolio area of Roads for 2005-06. Before questions commence some procedural matters need to be dealt with.

As to the broadcasting of proceedings, in accordance with the Legislative Council's guidelines for the broadcast of proceedings, which is available from attendants and clerks, only members of the Committee and witnesses may be filmed or recorded. People in the public gallery should not be the primary focus of any filming or photographs. In reporting the proceedings of this Committee you must take responsibility for what you publish or what interpretation you place on anything that is said before the Committee. Members and staff are advised that any messages should be delivered through the attendant on duty or the Committee clerks. The time allocation will be the usual 20 minutes each.

I declare the proposed expenditure for the portfolio of Roads open for examination. Mr Hannon, do you wish to make a brief opening statement?

**Mr HANNON:** No.

**CHAIR:** I advise the Roads and Traffic Authority [RTA] officers that the Committee has resolved to seek the return of answers to any questions that are generated on notice during today's hearing within 14 calendar days of the date that you receive the transcript of today's hearing. Thank you for appearing today. Mr Hannon, I have a question about the estimates of completion dates for road projects and their estimated costs that are printed in the annual report of the RTA. Can you advise the Committee how often those figures are updated, particularly in appendix 1, which relates to the major works section, in your latest 2005 report? Internally, how often are those figures updated as to estimated completion dates and the estimated costs of major projects?

**Mr HANNON:** Speaking about the development program—I assume that you are talking about Budget Paper No. 4 and the schedule of projects in that budget paper.

**CHAIR:** I am going to ask you about that as well but I am starting by asking you about the annual report. In many columns it says "Not available". The same "Not available" descriptor also appears in the budget papers, which is not very useful to people such as us.

**Mr HANNON:** I start off by saying that the sorts of projects that we report are at various stages of completion. Some of them are in the planning stages and some are in the construction stage. Clearly, as to the projects that are in the construction stage, we are able to give an assessment of what the final cost is going to be and what the final completion time is going to be. It would be normal for the RTA in managing the construction program—those are the projects that are under construction—to meet probably on a monthly basis. We would have regular meetings, discuss the progress of the project, review the costs and we would be asking our project managers to provide us with details of the latest cost estimate, the problems they are encountering and the impact of the problems they are encountering both on cost and time. In terms of managing the construction projects, that would be the approach.

In terms of managing the projects that are in the development or planning stages, clearly the review of the estimates for those sorts of projects would be less frequent because of the nature of the project that we are investigating. So we would need a lot of information. In that regard, we would be looking at different sorts of estimates. We would be dealing in the planning stages with what we call "strategic estimates"—estimates based on a small amount of information. We would progress past the strategic stage to more detail of what the project is about and we would develop what we would call a "conceptual estimate". Then we would have a preconstruction estimate following on that, when we have more detail of the final design—know more about the ground conditions and when we are likely to start and finish. As I said at the outset, when we get to the construction stage we would be looking at that very carefully and have reported to us by the project managers the assessments of cost and of completion time, probably on a monthly basis. Brian Watters is the Director of Road Network Infrastructure and is also responsible for the development program. He can probably give you more detail on the whole process.

**MR WATTERS:** The process that Mike Hannon has gone through means that there is no calendar date on which we review estimates. We review the estimates at different stages in the process of developing a project. At the time of putting together the budget papers, as you see in Budget Paper No. 4, projects that are still in the early stages of planning and we are not confident of the estimate of we do not put the estimate or the completion date in the budget papers. The completion date, of course, is subject to funds being allocated for construction. In Budget Paper No. 4, if in the coming year we are only expecting to undertake planning work, we indicate the funding required to be allocated to that project for the planning process. We indicate in Budget Paper No. 4 that it is the planning and preconstruction phase and the date of completion is usually unknown at that stage because it is contingent on future year budgets. That would explain why in the annual report you have a similar NA notation—meaning "Not available". They are the projects that are at the planning stage.

**Mr HANNON:** Some of the projects that we have listed there are either fully or part funded by the Federal Government. They have a set procedure in terms of the information that they seek from the States as to what stage a project is at and what the cost estimates are. Mr Watters might be able to explain what their requirements are because that is a procedure we have to follow in order to obtain their funds.

**MR WATTERS:** They have a similar process to ours. We follow a process laid down by State Treasury called a "gateway process", where you have various steps in the development of a project. As Mike explained, you develop it up through the strategic phase, concept phase and so forth and the Federal Government has a very similar process. We send a project proposal report to them and they have three stages for the project proposal report progressively, as the project goes from early investigation through to the preconstruction estimate, which we seek Federal approval for the funding of. One of the difficulties we always have with budget papers is that the Federal budget is delivered at about the same time as the State budget and by the time the State budget papers go to print we do not always have confirmation of the Federal allocation. So we indicate in the State budget papers that they are federally funded projects and therefore the allocation of funds and the timing of the project is subject to the Federal budget, which is usually delivered within a few weeks of the State budget.

**CHAIR:** I understand that. Would it be possible for you to provide the latest monthly list of estimates so that the information is as current as possible?

**MR WATTERS:** On which projects?

**CHAIR:** On the "Major works" section.

**Mr HANNON:** Are you looking at the annual report?

**CHAIR:** Yes.

**Mr HANNON:** Do you want a particular schedule updated?

**CHAIR:** Yes, it is appendix 1, "Major works", page 112. That would be good.

**Mr HANNON:** Yes, we will do that.

**CHAIR:** Thank you. In terms of particular projects, it would be helpful if you could provide the information to the Committee in relation to the Moorland to Herons Creek project. Could you give us an assessment of where that is at in terms of its commencement? Could you also advise us of the commencement date of the Kempsey to Eungai project? How much has been expended on those projects so far?

**Mr HANNON:** Yes, we can do that. In fact, we are back here next Tuesday to talk about the Pacific Highway projects, which is what these are.

**CHAIR:** Sure. I will read onto the transcript some specific projects.

**MR WATTERS:** May I give a general answer to your question about the timing of the Pacific Highway projects Moorland to Herons Creek and Kempsey to Eungai? In December the

Federal Minister and the State Minister announced the next three years of AusLink funding for the Pacific Highway. A number of projects were announced at that time as being expected to be under construction in the next three years. There is no certainty of Federal funding beyond 2008-09 because we will enter into a new AusLink five-year program and there is no commitment of Federal funding yet. So the program of works beyond 2008-09 was unknown at that stage and is subject to confirmation from the Federal Government that they will continue the level of funding that they have indicated for the first three years. So, while the State Government has committed its ongoing \$160 million per year, the Federal Government has only committed that to 2008-09. So we have projects that we are working to start construction on in the next three years and there are others beyond that for which the timing is uncertain. So, while we can answer the question on notice, it will be subject to the caveat that the level of funding beyond 2008-09 is unknown.

**CHAIR:** Okay.

**Mr HANNON:** We can tell you which projects are going to start—or are programmed to start—in the next three years if that is useful.

**CHAIR:** Yes, you can do that. That would be appreciated.

**Mr HANNON:** I can give the project names to you now.

**CHAIR:** Sure.

**Mr HANNON:** They are: Karuah to Bulahdelah, stages two and three—these are agreed projects as per Minister Lloyd out of Canberra and Minister Tripodi.

**MR WATTERS:** These projects were included in the media release in December. Some of them will be commenced and completed in three years, others will commence in the three years and others will have preconstruction activity during the three years. I do not want to give the impression that the projects that were in the media release will all be completed within the three years.

**Mr HANNON:** Some dollars will be spent on them. They are: Karuah to Bulahdelah, stages two and three. That goes north. Karuah to Bulahdelah stage one is currently under construction and should finish this year. That goes towards Bulahdelah. There is the Bulahdelah bypass. I can give you lengths and dollars if that is useful to you.

**CHAIR:** Perhaps you can table that information rather than reading it.

**Mr HANNON:** I will just tell you the names. There is the Cooperook to Moorland duplication, the Bonville deviation, Sapphire to Woolgoolga and the Ballina bypass. The last one is the Banora Point deviation. So money will be spent on those projects in the next three years out of the joint Federal-State funding. That is actually attached to a joint media release issued by Minister Tripodi and Minister Lloyd on 23 December.

**CHAIR:** On notice, could you provide the Committee with some information on how much funding has already been expended on the Moorland and Heron's Creek at Kempsey to Eungai projects?

**Mr HANNON:** Yes.

**CHAIR:** And how it has been expended?

**Mr HANNON:** Yes.

**CHAIR:** Could you advise the expected commencement date for any parts of those projects that have not started? If there has been a delay, would you provide the reasons for the delay?

**Mr HANNON:** Yes.

**CHAIR:** No doubt you have heard concerns about the impact of flooding on the Kempsey to Eungai and Maxwell to Urunga routes. Will you provide the Committee with details of community consultations that have taken place in relation to the proposed routes for those parts of the highway?

**MR WATTERS:** I can give a general path line but the specifics on those two projects, it may be better to address at the Pacific Highway inquiry at which Bob Higgins, the Pacific Highway Manager, will be present. He has been involved in the details of those two projects. But I am aware of the issues to which you are referring in terms of flooding. There has been extensive consultation during the different phases of the project. We go through an iterative process of identifying potential options. We have broken up the Pacific Highway into a large number of sections, and you have named a few of those sections already. If you take Kempsey to Eungai as a section of the highway, between the start and finish of that section, we identify potentially feasible routes, based on our desk top studies, contour mapping, knowledge of local features, location of communities and so forth.

We identify options for potential routing of the highway. It usually includes the existing route of the highway, of course, and consult the community over those options and get to a stage of a preferred option. Often a preferred option is subject to a lot more investigation and to variations to the route because of local issues. Kempsey to Eungai had a particular issue with an ecological community of bats at part of the route so there was a detour around that area investigated, and then again further consultation with the community over the specific issues in that particular area.

With flooding there has been extensive consultation, not only consultation with the affected landowners but a lot of specialised study work undertaken by specialist consultants and computer modelling of the likely flooding effects resulting from different lengths of structure. We have gone back to the community with alternative configurations of lengths of bridge or lengths of embankment with culverts. Each design option has different effects on both the rate of flow of the water and also the depth of any inundation. So there has been a process of undertaking technical work, and going back to the affected landowners, discussing it with them. They obviously have preferences in terms of which areas of their land they want to be particularly protected from fast moving water or from inundation. We are very aware of the impacts on agricultural land if the water is standing for longer than a certain number of days. This is obviously flood-prone land we are talking about. It is already flood-prone land. It is just a question of whether the new bypass would make the situation worse, from a landowner's point of view. We are very aware of those issues and we have had a lot of consultation with affected landowners.

**The Hon. DAVID CLARKE:** In previous annual reports you have recorded the completion dates of major roads. Why have completion dates been removed from budget papers?

**Mr HANNON:** The response that Mr Watters gave just a while ago relates to that. You will find that some of the ones where we do not have completion dates are the ones we are in the investigation stage where we do not have certainty as to when the project is going to be completed.

**MR WATTERS:** For example, I am looking at one by random in Budget Paper No. 4, Lawson in the Blue Mountains. We are at the planning stage on that project. It is a very complex project involving relocation and rebuilding of the shops in Lawson, which is being managed by Blue Mountains City Council in conjunction with property owners. The date in which we will be able to build the road is subject to council having completed its negotiations and relocation of the shops. If we were to give a date in last year's budget of the expected completion date it would be a guess because it is dependent on these other pre-construction activities being completed. However, we were allocating \$700,000 for that project in the current year to be able to continue the planning and design work and community consultation work. It is a project which will cost more than \$5 million so it is in Budget Paper No. 4 but it would be misleading to indicate a completion date for that project.

**The Hon. DAVID CLARKE:** Would you therefore indicate the factors that preclude you from giving an estimation of the completion date?

**MR WATTERS:** The format of the budget papers, I understand, is based on Treasury guidance. As to the format of Budget Paper No. 4, it is not a format which allows for text or description of issues associated with each project. You could write an essay about every one of these

projects but I believe Budget Paper No. 4 is not the appropriate place for that, or it is not the custom for it to be included in Budget Paper No. 4.

**The Hon. DAVID CLARKE:** You believe if there are factors that could intervene to preclude you putting a fairly specific completion date that it is inappropriate to put an estimate?

**MR WATTERS:** Quite.

**The Hon. DAVID CLARKE:** Who made the decision to delete any reference to an estimated completion date?

**MR WATTERS:** There are many projects here which do have a completion date, and there are projects which are at the planning stage which do not have a completion date because of the misleading nature of some of our earlier budget paper 4s over past years.

**The Hon. DAVID CLARKE:** There have been instances where you have given completion dates but intervening factors have changed that date. Why cannot you therefore give an estimate for all projects?

**MR WATTERS:** If it has been misleading in the past we do not think it is appropriate to continue to be misleading in the future.

**The Hon. DAVID CLARKE:** You believe that in the past there have been misleading completion dates provided?

**MR WATTERS:** Events have overtaken projects which, with hindsight, have shown that the dates quoted in budget paper 4 a few years ago turned out to be in error. Budget Paper No. 4 does not allow for text or explanation or notes to indicate the state of uncertainty of a project but we are required to put in a project if we are spending money in the coming year. So clearly the project has to be included if it is over \$5 million and we are going to spend money in the coming year. There is not the opportunity to put in a caveat about the uncertainty in the early stage of the development of the project.

**The Hon. DAVID CLARKE:** Who made the decision that in certain instances no estimate of completion dates will be given? Was that a policy decision of the department?

**MR WATTERS:** These papers are produced by Treasury. We provide advice to Treasury. I am not sure who in the chain made the decision, as you described it.

**The Hon. DAVID CLARKE:** It was not a decision of your department?

**MR WATTERS:** We provide advice to Treasury and that advice would have been that we do not have future dates for completion with any certainty.

**Mr HANNON:** The other consideration, if I can add, is that numerous of our major projects—there is probably more of them now that the Auslink network is in place—are part funded by the Federal Government. As Mr Watters indicated earlier, we have a five-year agreement, at this stage we are in the third year of it, with the Federal Government under the Auslink agreement. At this point of time we have got no indication as to what funds are going to be available during the next five years. So for projects which go out several years, and if they are subject to Federal funding, whether it is in whole or in part, we would not have the confidence to be able to close in on a date.

**The Hon. DAVID CLARKE:** How many projects are afoot where there is not even an estimate of a completion date being provided?

**Mr HANNON:** If the projects are under construction we would have estimates of completion dates.

**The Hon. DAVID CLARKE:** For every one of them?

**Mr HANNON:** For projects that are under construction, yes we would.

**Ms LEE RHIANNON:** In relation to the filtration plan for the M5-East—I am not referring to the trial but to the full filtration for the tunnel—on 22 January 2004 a draft document was prepared by Gary Humphrey, General Manager, Motorway Services. What happened to that proposal? Has it been abandoned and, if so, why?

**Mr HANNON:** Could we have access to the document?

**Ms LEE RHIANNON:** Yes, certainly.

**Mr WIELINGA:** The first thing I need to say is that I am not aware of the letter; I have not seen it before but what I can talk generally a little bit. It is about the filtration trial.

**Ms LEE RHIANNON:** I have questions about the filtration trial but I want to clear up this document that I have given you which is an actual filtration plan for the M5-East whereas the trial did not nominate an actual tunnel. What happened to the proposal mentioned in that letter? Was it abandoned?

**Mr WIELINGA:** I think if you have a look at page one Gary Humphrey is referring to a pilot study. I think they are one and the same thing.

**Ms LEE RHIANNON:** Would you clarify it because on my reading it was separate? I understood, and I have questions about the trial, that you never nominated a tunnel for the trial whereas the first part of this document refers to a study, it does not use the term "trial" and then at the bottom of the page it reads that it then refers to actually bringing on this system of filtrating the tunnel?

**Mr WIELINGA:** Gary is now in my area of the RTA. He is the general manager, motorway construction. He has a different title.

**Ms LEE RHIANNON:** When he wrote this letter, who would he have been responsible to?

**Mr WIELINGA:** He would have reported to, I think, our director out at Sydney, David Stuart-Watt.

**Ms LEE RHIANNON:** Of the people sitting here before, who would it come to? Obviously this is a big project, it has been controversial. Surely there is a chain of command that ends up with one of you?

**Mr HANNON:** This is a draft letter. I do not know that the letter was ever issued. Do you have a copy of the letter?

**Ms LEE RHIANNON:** I am trying to work out the paper trail. That is a document we have. I am trying to ascertain from you where it has gone or did it just die at that point?

**Mr HANNON:** We will have to take that on notice.

**Ms LEE RHIANNON:** I will go on to the filtration trial itself. What has happened to the trial? I am interested to know if there is going to be one, considering that the expressions of interest were two years ago, and are those expressions of interest still valid?

**Mr WIELINGA:** The situation with the filtration trial at the moment is that there was a three-stage process. It is up to stage two, which is the preliminary proposal. The first stage created a shortlist. Three companies—Matsushita Electrical Industrial, Kawasaki Heavy Industries and Siemens Filtronic—submitted what were called preliminary proposals. Those preliminary proposals have come in and they are still being considered. There are a few things happening around that as well. In the second half of last year we were focusing on an audit that was being undertaken by the Department of Planning on the M5 East, and we are continuing to work with them on reviewing that audit. The other thing that is happened is on the cross-city tunnel. We now have a different ventilation system in the

cross-city tunnel, a third ventilation shaft, and we are looking at how that ventilation system is performing.

When you look at ventilation on tunnels, it is all about dealing with all of the pollutants in tunnels—with carbon monoxide, with nitrogen oxides, with particulate matters, and so forth—and different ventilation systems can be designed to deal with those. You get compliance standards that come out of the conditions of approval and they are generally based on the World Health Organization air quality goals and they are generally consistent and consistent with international design standards. Once they come, a ventilation system is designed to deal with that. Ventilation systems could be like using the M5 East, which is a fully enclosed system. In most places around the world the system involves air coming in at one end and air going out the other end. There are other bits and pieces you can use to help to control air quality within tunnels. So, there is a combination of design solutions that can be found to meet the air quality standards on a project. With the Department of Planning looking at the way the M5 East was performing and with the new cross-city tunnel opening, we are factoring that material in to see how we go forward on the filtration trial.

**Ms LEE RHIANNON:** Considering it has been two years and the bulk of your answer was about looking at different ventilation systems and the experience with the cross-city tunnel, it gives the impression that this trial is on hold or may have even been cancelled. You said it was up to stage two. We are two years later and half a million dollars have been spent. That is the impression I was left with. Do you think that is a fair impression considering the bulk of your answer was about other systems?

**Mr WIELINGA:** All I can say is we are continuing to look at the filtration trial at this stage but we are continuing to look at that in conjunction with the other things I spoke to you about.

**Ms LEE RHIANNON:** When will stage two be completed and you will go to stage three?

**Mr WIELINGA:** We need to with work through these other issues and look at the outcome of these other performance things. I am unable to give a firm timetable.

**Ms LEE RHIANNON:** You just said that the M5 East is a fully enclosed system. I am far from an expert on how tunnels work and ventilation works, but considering that the RTA has applied to Planning NSW to vary the conditions so more air can be released at the portals, how can you call it a fully enclosed system?

**Mr WIELINGA:** We have not submitted an application to the Department of Planning to do that at this stage.

**Ms LEE RHIANNON:** But I go back to my question, leaving that aside. How can you call it a fully enclosed system when I do not think you are denying there are periodical releases, not all of the polluted air is going out through the stacks, periodically it is going out through the portals?

**Mr WIELINGA:** What I need to clarify is when the system is functioning normally and traffic is flowing normally it is a fully enclosed system.

**Ms LEE RHIANNON:** How often would you estimate it functions normally?

**Mr WIELINGA:** It functions normally most of the time. I cannot give you exact percentages. We would have to do some research on that, but if you look at the conditions of approval, when there are incidents in the tunnel itself, for example, an accident occurs or when maintenance is going on at night, and so forth, portal emissions are allowed in those circumstances, and that does happen.

**Ms LEE RHIANNON:** Could you take that on notice and provide to the Committee details of how much of the time the tunnel is functioning normally, that is, it is fully enclosed?

**Mr WIELINGA:** Will do.

**Ms LEE RHIANNON:** Staying with filtration, I want to ask why you have not filtered in the tunnel. I want to understand your reason for it, given that the in-tunnel filtration would significantly increase airflow, reduce haze and reduce the carbon monoxide levels and therefore reduce the number of lane closures and traffic management. Would it not have been a better outcome, given that the RTA's chief job is traffic management, for you in delivering that outcome if you had filtered the tunnel and you would not have to close lanes?

**Mr WIELINGA:** The first thing I need to deal with is that filtration systems do not deal with carbon monoxide. The two filtration systems that are around are electrostatic precipitators, which deal with particulate matter, and there is emerging technology that deals with nitrogen oxides. Carbon monoxide is not dealt with by those systems. When you look at the world standards for designing tunnels and the compliance standards that we are given with the World Health guidelines, they focus on carbon monoxide. Essentially the system is designed to deal with carbon monoxide levels. Some further consideration is given to nitrogen oxide. Generally when you design a system that deals with carbon monoxide you deal adequately with other pollutants in the tunnel. But it is very important to deal with carbon monoxide. That is the prime designs in driving the design of the ventilation system in tunnels.

It varies depending on the type of tunnel, whether it is a very long tunnel or a short tunnel, the type of ventilation system you set up. The principles are essentially introducing fresh air into the tunnel as part of the dilution and getting away from the tunnel through a ventilation stack or a portal depending on how you do it and dispersing that air. Carbon monoxide is the primary design gas. We have all these ventilation systems, it starts with a set of compliance standards. The RTA is given a set of compliance standards to be met on the project. As I said, they invariably revolve around carbon monoxide. They are the key ones that come from the World Health Organisation. We then get our contractors to design a ventilation system that meets those compliance standards and requirements, and that is what we focus on.

**Ms LEE RHIANNON:** Can you tell me what is the latest figure for the cost of running the ventilation system that you have?

**Mr WIELINGA:** I am sorry, I cannot.

**Ms LEE RHIANNON:** Can you take that on notice?

**Mr WIELINGA:** Yes.

**Ms LEE RHIANNON:** The cross-city tunnel: Why is Bourke Street still closed considering that if it was reopened it would not lead to any compensation to the cross-city tunnel consortium?

**The Hon. JAN BURNSWOODS:** Point of order: Madam Chairman, in the light of the fact that the select committee dealing with cross-city tunnel has produced an interim report and is continuing to meet and to produce its later report, can you guide us as to what matters dealing with the cross-city tunnel can be dealt with by this Committee?

**CHAIR:** The member is entitled to ask general questions relating to the cross-city tunnel. It is acknowledged that there will be some overlap between current committee inquiries. If Ms Lee Rhiannon wishes to ask questions on the general subject of inquiries before the committee, that is okay.

**The Hon. JAN BURNSWOODS:** Can you also guide the Committee, given that the interim board is listed for debate—you, in fact, started that debate in the House—does that impact at all on this Committee's discussions?

**CHAIR:** I do not think so, no.

**Ms LEE RHIANNON:** So, back to Bourke Street. I am keen to hear your answer?

**The Hon. JAN BURNSWOODS:** I am sorry, surely—

**Ms LEE RHIANNON:** This is just time wasting.

**The Hon. JAN BURNSWOODS:** Surely what the Chair just said is that general questions can be asked but not the type of specific question you have just asked.

**CHAIR:** The other point is the committee has made its interim report. It is before Parliament, so that part of the report is completed.

**The Hon. JAN BURNSWOODS:** But that does not seem to fit your previous ruling. I am confused now.

**CHAIR:** I am adding to my previous ruling

**Ms LEE RHIANNON:** So, Bourke Street please?

**Mr HANNON:** I understand we have been invited back to the cross-city tunnel inquiry later this month.

**Ms LEE RHIANNON:** I am still keen to hear from you. It is an ongoing problem. You are obviously aware of the concerns about traffic movement. My question specifically related to the fact that as no compensation is involved and it was a six-month trial, what is the RTA's argument for keeping it closed?

**Mr HANNON:** I understand what is now going to happen is consultation with the community. As you are no doubt aware there are a couple of communities up there, some strongly in favour of having Bourke Street closed and stay close, and several communities up there strongly in favour of having it open. There will now be consultation with those groups with a view to forming a view as to how to go forward.

**Ms LEE RHIANNON:** But considering it was only to be a six-month trial, why are you not considering that the default is having it open while you have these consultations?

**Mr HANNON:** I did not say we are not doing that. I just said we are going to have some consultation before a decision is made.

**Mr WIELINGA:** The process was run under condition 288 of the cross-city tunnel to close the southern side of Bourke Street. Part of that decision was that we would come along in six months and again in 12 months and review that decision. As part of the six-monthly review, about a month ago the consultation document was sent around to different community people asking for comment on the way forward and how that six-monthly review should take place. Our team that is working hard has been taking comments from various community people about that process with a view to finalising a way forward.

**Ms LEE RHIANNON:** I want to go back to Mr Hannon. Did I understand correctly that you said, in response to my question about the default position, that the RTA could open Bourke Street while these consultations were taking place?

**Mr HANNON:** I did not say that.

**Ms LEE RHIANNON:** I am just trying to clarify, because I thought you said that was a possibility.

**Mr HANNON:** Obviously the possibilities are it stays closed or it stays open. We have sent a document around to arrange appropriate consultation so we can form a view.

**Ms LEE RHIANNON:** I still want to go back to that point, though. Considering it was a six-month trial, why can you not open it while the consultation is going ahead?

**Mr WIELINGA:** No doubt we will get that sort of input from the community people, and those things will be considered as part of that input from the community.

**Ms LEE RHIANNON:** Back to M5 East. How much did the RTA pay out to BHBB for the increased costs due to the increased traffic volumes since the tunnel opened in December 2001?

**Mr WIELINGA:** When you look at these sorts of contracts, that information is commercially in confidence. Perhaps if I take a minute or so to explain why. When these large companies tender on projects like that, they compete in a competitive environment. Invariably they compete for the work on price and invariably they win projects because of their detailed pricing strategies on individual items that are part of these contracts. That is their sustainable competitive advantage and the construction industry going forward. They are very reluctant, understandably, for that information to be released. When we enter into these contracts with these contractors and when we change orders they would ask us to execute agreements that include confidentiality clauses. When arguing commercial in confidence and their future competitiveness, we believe that is a reasonable position.

**Ms LEE RHIANNON:** How can you argue about commercial in confidence, considering former Chief Justice Laurence Street considered it to be in the public interest to have the information made public and has done so, as you saw yesterday? Is there not enormous inconsistency? Should not Sir Laurence Street's findings be respected?

**Mr HANNON:** Exactly what did Sir Laurence Street say?

**Ms LEE RHIANNON:** Sir Laurence Street released a range of papers, including one document from your consultants, Evans and Peck. Amongst that material we came across information that it could be justified for BHBB to put in a compensation claim, and the figure of \$14 million is mentioned. Obviously Sir Laurence Street has not spoken about that, but he has put those documents into the public domain. That means that he did not judge it was warranted that they be under commercial in confidence or privileged in any way. Should not the RTA respect that decision? Also, you would have the opportunity to clarify the figure of \$14 million.

**Mr HANNON:** I am advised that we are precluded from releasing the information because of the confidentiality clause in the deed of release for each of the claims that have been submitted.

**Ms LEE RHIANNON:** Who advised you of that?

**Mr HANNON:** My legal advisers.

**The Hon. KAYEE GRIFFIN:** Mr Hannon, lately there has been publicity about workers compensation claims, specifically for stress-related illnesses. Are you able to give the Committee members the costs involved for staff on leave from stress-related illnesses? I understand that the 2005-06 financial year is not yet complete. Are you able to give the Committee some figures and tell us whether or not there has been an increase in workers compensation due to stress-related illness as opposed to other workers compensation claims?

**Mr HANNON:** There have been reports that there is an enormous amount of stress in the RTA. That was in the papers a short while ago. The reality is that the RTA has a work force of around about 7,000 people spread throughout the State operating in all areas associated with traffic, roads and the like. We have many construction workers, project managers and registry people throughout the State. We have officers who test people who want to get drivers' licences and the like. So we have a work force that is quite diverse in what they do. I am advised that for the period from July last year to January this year of the 7,000 people working for us 16 took leave for work-related stress purposes—16 out of 7,000. That 16 had a total of 142 days off and the cost to the organisation was about \$27,000. The report that one-in-five people in the RTA is off on stress leave is nowhere near the mark. In fact, the number for this year is 16 in 7 months. I understand the number last year was somewhat similar—probably about 30 or 40 out of 7,000 people.

**The Hon. KAYEE GRIFFIN:** In terms of the previous financial year and the current financial year up to the end of December, there is a correlation between the number of people who are on workers compensation for stress-related illness?

**Mr HANNON:** The numbers are very low.

**The Hon. GREG DONNELLY:** Mr Bushby, would you be able to advise the Committee how the New South Wales Government is improving heavy vehicle safety?

**Mr BUSHBY:** I think I am probably the most appropriate person to comment on that issue. Heavy vehicle safety is obviously a significant issue for the community. We have a lot of concern about the operation and mix of vehicles on the road network. There are quite a few actions that have been taken by the RTA and the Government in relation to heavy vehicle safety, which I can probably give you a little bit of information about. One of these relates to legislation that was put through last year in relation to speed limiters in heavy vehicles and the fact that where vehicles are detected travelling at greater than 115 kilometres per hour there is a deeming provision that the speed limiter is not working.

While that means that we can have a driver responsible for the speed of the vehicle, we can also address the operator and whether his vehicle was actually operating in accordance with the law. That is an important aspect of being able to control speed on the open highways. Another facet of the heavy vehicle safety issues that we have been addressing is the fact that we are looking at each vehicle and we are undertaking heavy vehicle inspections as part of the registration process. We probably lead the jurisdictions in relation to that around Australia. Some work that was done in 2003 showed that the fleet of vehicles registered in New South Wales had a lower rate of defects when a comparison was done across the jurisdictions. That is important. It shows that the heavy vehicle inspection system is working. It means we are getting heavy vehicle operators to make sure that their vehicles are roadworthy and less likely to cause problems in relation to their operation on the road network.

The RTA has also undertaken some in-car speed trials. What this means is we have used our heavy vehicle inspectors to go out with speed cameras inside vehicles to trial the operation of whether we could target the heavy vehicles speeding by the use of in-vehicle speed cameras. That trial has been completed and the work is still being finalised, but it looks like it is a possible way forward. That in itself may be another aspect of ensuring heavy vehicle safety at some stage in the future. Importantly, last year we also had the compliance and enforcement legislation, which is the Road Transport (General) Act, passed. A very significant aspect of that legislation which has been introduced in the new law relates to the chain of responsibility. This means that it is not just the driver of the vehicle who is being looked at when we are looking at safety in the whole chain of operation for a logistics business. It means that we can go right back to the organisational person who is asking for the freight to be transported, right through to the freight forwarder, the operator of the company, the driver and even the receiving depot. All of those parties have an obligation under the new law to make sure that road law is being complied with.

There are some very significant powers that are in this new legislation to ensure that we do have all of those parties in the chain doing their part to ensure that road law is observed and that we are getting good, safe outcomes. That affects road safety, of course, but it also affects the asset protection with less chance of overloading affecting bridges and road pavements. It becomes a legislation that is going to be important in moving forward in managing heavy vehicles. It is worth noting that some of the first breaches of that legislation have come before the courts in the last week or so. Some quite large fines have been put in place relating to \$10,000 to \$20,000 in relation to overloads of 25 to 30 per cent. Those are massive overloads. They are really flouting the law. They are causing concern in relation to both the assets and the safety aspects of those vehicles and they need to be met with significant fines. That is what this new legislation has provided for.

We are also working in relation to the safety of the vehicles that are actually operating as part of their heavy vehicle fleet. Last year there was an announcement that we had moved to 26 metre B-doubles. There was to be no increase in the load carried but it was to provide a safer outcome for both the operators of the vehicles and the operators of cars and other vehicles on the road, the other road users. What was required as part of that move was for the vehicles to have front underrun protection and cabin strength in relation to rolling over. Front underrun protection is really important because it means that the trucks need to be able to engage with light vehicles. There has been a lot of work done in relation to safety improvements in cars.

If a car goes underneath a truck, then the energy absorption of the car is no longer engaged. You do not actually get the occupant protection that is required. These new trucks and the requirements for front underrun protection will engage the vehicle in a way that their energy absorption will be appropriate, the design will be used, and give greater occupancy protection to cars. We have obviously had ongoing campaigns relating to things like truck drivers wearing seat belts and improving the behavioural aspects of truck drivers in their responsibility for interacting with other vehicles on the road network. We continue to be able to provide campaign materials that support those behavioural changes.

**The Hon. GREG DONNELLY:** That chain of responsibility legislation is very significant legislation.

**Mr BUSHBY:** Yes.

**The Hon. GREG DONNELLY:** We can all hope it is going to make a major contribution to improve road safety in New South Wales. Given the nature of freight transport, which obviously crosses between interstate borders, particularly along the east coast, has there been any enthusiasm from the Commonwealth Government to support New South Wales initiative in this area and perhaps work with other States to get similar legislation introduced?

**Mr BUSHBY:** It is an important point that you raise. The model legislation that New South Wales has put in place last year has been co-operatively put together across the country. New South Wales led several aspects in relation to the implementation arrangements and we have made that available to other States. Certainly Queensland also has chain of responsibility legislation and the other jurisdictions will progressively be falling into line with that model legislation. We recognise that the heavy vehicle industry is a national industry. It means that the jurisdictions need to be able to work together to have a consistent approach, but also to be adaptable enough to meet the local requirements in relation to the jurisdictions where the legislation has been put in place.

**The Hon. KAYEE GRIFFIN:** I understand there have been changes in the cost of road freight. Mr Bushby, could you elaborate on that?

**Mr BUSHBY:** As part of the AusLink agreement last year, which was negotiated between the New South Wales Government and the national Government, there was a requirement that was put on New South Wales through that agreement that we move to a greater adoption of higher mass limits on heavy vehicles. We are moving to deliver higher mass in that sort of context in a way that does not compromise asset protection or road safety. There will be a significant increase in the amount of freight over the next 15 years. The Bureau of Transport and Regional Economics is talking about a doubling of freight by 2020. To support the economy there is a need to be able to be more efficient in the way we move freight and moves to things like B-doubles, which are 13 per cent more efficient than semi-trailers and so on, give us the capacity to go forward.

Obviously that needs to be treated in a national sense for the same sort of reasons we were just talking about. But in moving to those more efficient vehicles, we have the opportunity also to improve the arrangements under which the heavy vehicle industry works. I will give some examples of that. When we moved to B-doubles we not only said there will be a second trailer and we end up with a more stable arrangement—it dynamically performs better on the road network—but we also required those vehicles to have ABS brakes. We required those vehicles to have spray suppression on their wheels so that they are friendlier and more capable on the road network when they are operating. So while they give an efficiency gain to the trucking operators, they also operate better in the overall mix of traffic.

I mentioned the move to higher mass limits. That will be very much restricted to specific routes. We have done that because of the capacity of the road network to be able to take those trucks which will be no bigger—you will not be able to tell them—but they will have higher axle loads. In doing that, we have required some technological requirements as well and those vehicles, when they operate in New South Wales, will be required to have GPS tracking. A process is being put in place nationally called the Intelligent Access project [IAP] which will set up a legislative arrangement for monitoring the location of vehicles. What we will be doing is only allowing high mass limit vehicles

to go on particular routes. We want to be able to ensure for community safety and asset protection that they stay on those routes. So the IAP is all about getting warning when they go off those routes.

So in moving to higher mass limits we are looking to be supporting the increased efficiency of the transport industry but at the same time doing it in a way which will be bounded by safeguards for the community in terms of safety and asset protection. In doing that, the higher mass limits are based on no increase in damage to the assets via a reduction in the dynamic loading. One of the things we are leading is the requirements on the trucking industry to maintain their suspension so that this dynamic loading does not increase over time. That is getting into the technical side of the operation of heavy vehicles but in general language it means that there is less bounce in the suspension, with a road-friendly suspension as long as it is well maintained.

If the maintenance is not done over time there is potential for greater damage to the road pavements and obviously that is not desirable. So we also are insisting that the Commonwealth have brought in funding to set up an arrangement to maintain those suspensions as they operate on the road network. The balance is trying to improve efficiency of the heavy vehicle fleet but at the same time try to ensure that asset protection, the roads and bridges, are looked after and that road safety is not compromised as we move forward.

**The Hon. JAN BURNSWOODS:** I want to ask a question about the M5 East which partly follows on from earlier questions but I guess stems from my feeling a bit bemused by the beat-ups in the *Daily Telegraph*. I would have thought that any road that gets a lot of traffic, particularly a road where the traffic has increased massively, regardless of whereabouts in the world or in New South Wales it was, would always generate the need for more expenditure on maintenance, upkeep, whatever it is, whether it is a tunnel or a road. A lot of the discussion that we have been hearing seems to me to be quite wrong headed. It is about a successful road being used by a lot of people and therefore it actually needs money spent on it because so many people are using it. Is that a fair summation?

**Mr HANNON:** Yes, in our assessment that is a fair summation. The issue here is that I think the M5 East has been compared to privately owned toll roads where all the cost of the operation and maintenance is borne by the consortium that runs the toll road or the motorway. That is the case with the M7, the cross-city tunnel and—

**The Hon. JAN BURNSWOODS:** The M2 and so on.

**Mr HANNON:** And the M2 and the like. In the case of the M5 East that is not a toll road; it is a free road. It was built by the Government with a design, construct and maintain contract which was awarded to Baulderstone Hornibrook. Part of that contract involved them maintaining the road and the tunnel—because it goes from King Georges Road through to General Holmes Drive—for 10 years. Part of the contract was that they would be paid for doing that. The contract that was awarded had assumptions in it that they based their bid on, and that was that the traffic would be at a certain level. As has certainly been in the papers lately, the road was probably too successful and the amount of traffic that is using the tunnel is probably 20,000 or 30,000 vehicles per day more than were originally anticipated. So the contractor would have priced his maintenance arrangements in terms of the resources that he would use and the work he would have to do and the filtration systems he would have to run on the basis of a certain amount of traffic. There has been more traffic than that and as a result he has submitted a claim to the RTA. This is a contract which the RTA has with him so there is no consortium to pay the bill. It is a bill that government should rightfully pay.

**The Hon. JAN BURNSWOODS:** But if the RTA had built the road it would be exactly the same.

**Mr HANNON:** It would be exactly the same. What we are paying for is the additional cost associated with maintaining a road and tunnel that takes that amount of traffic. If those numbers had been known at the time it was tendered one would expect that at tender time they would have priced accordingly so there would not be a claim at this point in time.

**The Hon. JAN BURNSWOODS:** But it is not a claim that arises out of any fault; it is the sort of thing that could happen to any road anywhere as population and usage grows.

**Mr HANNON:** It is additional work that he has to undertake because of the amount of traffic.

**The Hon. DAVID OLDFIELD:** Who is the best person on tollways and speed cameras?

**Mr HANNON:** Ask the question and I will tell you.

**The Hon. DAVID OLDFIELD:** First, in a particular location on Spit Hill on the southern side of The Spit Bridge there was a speed camera which had been removed and is now being replaced. There is a series of cameras, as you are probably aware, on that road. There are three in the space of about 400 metres. What was the thinking behind taking it away and now putting it back.

**Mr FORD:** As you correctly point out, we originally had three speed cameras on that section of Spit Road at Spit Hill. Two were facing the southbound direction, which is in fact up the hill, and a third camera was located at the top of the hill near Medusa Street monitoring northbound traffic. Quite some time ago, early last year, we removed one of the southbound cameras and relocated that camera to the F3 at Calga and relocated the remaining camera that was pointing in the southbound direction to a location midway between the two camera sites on that hill. There were two reasons for that essentially. There were issues in relation to the accuracy of the cameras in relation to the detection of heavy vehicles. At that time we had difficulties in accurately identifying speeds of buses on the grade and as a result of that a number of infringements were incorrectly issued to buses. They were subsequently withdrawn.

On our close inspection of the pavement, the condition of the road, the leading axles of the buses were triggering a movement in the concrete in the pavement and as a result introducing an error in relation to the measurement of speed. To fix that problem we needed to relocate the detection equipment in the pavement to a location on Spit Hill where the pavement was more stable, and in doing so relocated the second camera. So at this point we have two cameras, one facing the northbound direction and one facing the southbound direction, effectively monitoring the same section of road, which includes the S bends at the southern end and the grade from The Spit Bridge. So the area that the cameras actually surveil is roughly the same as what it was before.

**The Hon. DAVID OLDFIELD:** Why are we now moving the third camera back? The impression is that there is now a third camera being put back in place.

**Mr FORD:** Sorry, a camera has been relocated to Calga. There will be two cameras operating on Spit Hill.

**The Hon. DAVID OLDFIELD:** So there will not be a third camera put back.

**Mr FORD:** That is correct, yes.

**The Hon. DAVID OLDFIELD:** Currently there is a series of signs which have been blanked out but there have been various stories in the local papers of the impression that there is a camera being put back. So there is no third camera being replaced on Spit Hill.

**Mr FORD:** That is correct, yes.

**The Hon. DAVID OLDFIELD:** You mentioned camera accuracy. Are there in general difficulties with camera accuracy, not just with buses but with other vehicles? I ask that question because also there have been quite a lot of reports recently of successful actions taken against the RTA because of infringements issued improperly or as a result of what was alleged or proven perhaps to be inaccurate cameras?

**Mr FORD:** The camera accuracy is extremely high. The device conforms to international standards and as such they are very rigorous. I can come back to the Committee with details of those standards. Areas where we strike problems with the camera are more related to the condition of the pavement in which the camera is operating or the environment in which the camera is operating. But still the level of accuracy is extremely high. I am not quite sure of the instances you are referring to in

relation to successful challenges but perhaps I could illustrate by way of example. For example, in 2004-05 we had 409,000 fixed speed camera infringements. Of those, 1,335 were defended, that is, they went to court, and the vast majority of those camera related matters heard by the court were upheld. Of those 1,335 out of the 409,000 camera offences, 178 matters were dismissed as either not guilty or dismissed under section 10, which enables the magistrate to exercise discretion based on, for example, the driving record of the person involved. In those cases, however, the demerit points still apply. Of the 178, we were successful on a number of appeals. We actually appealed the dismissal and had the decision reversed. That is an indication of the robustness and accuracy of the cameras. There were 409,000 offences.

**The Hon. DAVID OLDFIELD:** Sure. It has been reported that cameras are not serviced in accordance with the recommendation of the manufacturers in regard to the frequency of servicing and also training of personnel. Is that correct?

**Mr FORD:** No, that is absolutely incorrect.

**The Hon. DAVID OLDFIELD:** With regard to car tollway users being charged as trucks, has that problem been rectified?

**Mr FORD:** We have a number of quite different systems operating on different motorways in Sydney. As you would be aware, a private consortium operates the M4, M5, and M2. The RTA looks after the Sydney Harbour Tunnel and Sydney Harbour Bridge. The Eastern Distributor and the W7 are private systems. Since the introduction of electronic tolling, invariably there were quite significant differences between the different systems that were put in place in different motorways. Unlike the system in Melbourne, which has one motorway and one motorway company that has identical system configurations; in Sydney we have at least five different systems operating against quite a different toll regime.

By that I mean that on the Sydney Harbour Bridge and in the Sydney Harbour Tunnel we have a flat charge; we do not discriminate between the charge for cars or trucks. By comparison, on the Eastern Distributor, the M5 and the M4 we do. The systems in place on those motorways are quite different from the systems we have on the Sydney Harbour Bridge. The concerns that were raised recently to my knowledge related to the incorrect classification of a vehicle that was either towing a trailer or had an object on its roof. The vehicle was misclassified as a truck, and the user was charged accordingly. When I checked on that, two motorways were mentioned—the M5 and the Eastern Distributor.

I checked on the Eastern Distributor and found that on three occasions in the previous month a vehicle had been incorrectly classified. The Minister has asked me to personally take up with the motorway companies a customer satisfaction regime. In each case, I should add before I go any further, once identified that there was a problem it was immediately corrected with the accounts. The owners of the vehicles involved were, in fact, charged the correct amount. The key performance indicator [KPI] against that service regime—which is currently being discussed through the motorway companies—would be, for example, 99 per cent of any such occurrence. The account would be rectified within 24 hours. It is not a major problem.

**The Hon. DAVID OLDFIELD:** From what you have said previously, the accuracy of the cameras is not in doubt, but issues surrounding accuracy are related more to the aspects of triggering and the road surface and the surrounds?

**Mr FORD:** That is correct, yes.

**The Hon. DAVID CLARKE:** Mr Hannon, is there any planing in the department that involves the use of further tolls?

**Mr HANNON:** What tolls?

**The Hon. DAVID CLARKE:** Toll generally.

**Mr HANNON:** The North Coast Motorway agreement was signed between the two Ministers in December. It relates to the work to be done on the Pacific Highway. Within the memorandum of understanding that has been signed there is reference to looking at tolling options. The agreed actions signed off by the two Ministers said that they would explore the creation of a working party, including officers from New South Wales agencies, that is the RTA and Treasury, and the Department of Transport and Regional Services. They have actually added to that the Department of Finance in Canberra to undertake economic and financial analysis of the motorway proposal and to develop and finalise details regarding issues including year-by-year funding arrangements, including options to accelerate completion such as tolls and private-sector involvement.

**The Hon. DAVID CLARKE:** That is in regard to the North Coast Motorway?

**Mr HANNON:** Yes.

**The Hon. DAVID CLARKE:** What is the date of that agreement?

**Mr HANNON:** The date of the memorandum of understanding is 23 December 2005 and signed by Minister Tripodi and Mr Lloyd. I can table that, if you like.

**The Hon. DAVID CLARKE:** Yes.

**North Coast Motorway Memorandum of Understanding tabled.**

**The Hon. DAVID CLARKE:** Is there any other planing in regard to the use of further tolls?

**Mr HANNON:** With the high value projects, it is a matter of how they are going to be funded. It is a significant issue for both governments, another project that was explored earlier, and followed on from the M7 project. When the environmental impact study was announced, Minister Anderson announced at that time that there would be a study for a connection between the F3 in the north and the M2. Work has been done on that project and the Federal Government chose what it called the purple option, which is effectively a connection from Wahroonga to the M2 at West Pennant Hills. That option is a tunnel of about eight kilometres. The work done so far indicates that in broad numbers, and I could be corrected by Mr Watters, it could be a \$2 billion project, which would require, if tolled, major contributions from both governments. At this time, the Federal Government has not given the go-ahead for that project to proceed to the next stage. In fact we are looking at other options.

**MR WATTERS:** Some revisiting of the traffic forecasts has been requested by the Federal department. Essentially we undertook that work at the request of the Federal department, the Federal Minister. That work was completed and it more recently asked us to revisit some of the traffic forecasts. That work is under way but it is all moving pretty slowly. I do not think there is great urgency from the Federal Government to go forward with that at the moment.

**The Hon. DAVID CLARKE:** Mr Hannon, apart from the ones you have mentioned, the North Coast Motorway, F3 and M2 link and possible link between West Pennant Hills and Wahroonga, there are no other projects where the imposition of a toll has been considered?

**Mr HANNON:** The Metropolitan Strategy that was released late last year referred to an extension of the M4. At this stage we have not progressed to the stage of looking at how it might be funded.

**The Hon. DAVID CLARKE:** The possibility of a toll is being actively considered by the department, is it?

**Mr HANNON:** Not at this stage.

**The Hon. DAVID CLARKE:** So it is not being considered at all? Is that what you are saying?

**Mr HANNON:** I said, "Not at this stage".

**The Hon. DAVID CLARKE:** Right, but it could well be in the future?

**Mr HANNON:** When you have major infrastructure you have to look at all the options for funding.

**The Hon. DAVID CLARKE:** So it is a possibility in future?

**Mr HANNON:** Everything is a possibility.

**The Hon. DAVID CLARKE:** Yes, including the imposition of a toll in respect to the addition to the M4?

**Mr HANNON:** They could do it in all sorts of ways.

**The Hon. DAVID CLARKE:** Yes, including on that project?

**Mr HANNON:** The Government has not made a call on that at this stage, so I cannot say whether they will or they will not. It is a funding option, yes.

**The Hon. DAVID CLARKE:** Any other projects come to mind?

**Mr HANNON:** Not that I am aware of.

**The Hon. DAVID CLARKE:** So you are not aware of any other projects for which the imposition of a toll is being considered.

**Mr HANNON:** Active consideration of a toll, no, none.

**The Hon. DAVID CLARKE:** When you say "active consideration" is there some other consideration that is not active? Is there inactive consideration?

**MR WATTERS:** I could refer to a project which, from our point of view, has been completed as a study, which did consider tolling. There continues to be a push from the Central West for what is called a Bells Line of Road Motorway. A study was completed last year on the engineering feasibility of that, and cost estimate, and the potential for a toll on that. From our point of view that work has been concluded. It is dormant. Whether it is active or not, the answer is "no", but that work was done.

**Mr HANNON:** Inactive consideration.

**The Hon. DAVID CLARKE:** So there is inactive consideration for a toll in respect of the Bells Line of Road project?

**MR WATTERS:** In our view it was not only dormant. The toll was many hundreds of dollars because it was a \$3 billion capital cost. It is below dormant.

**The Hon. DAVID CLARKE:** If that project is activated so will consideration of the toll?

**MR WATTERS:** I think that is highly speculative.

**The Hon. DAVID CLARKE:** But it is possible?

**MR WATTERS:** Highly speculative.

**The Hon. DAVID CLARKE:** Any other projects for which a toll is considered, dormant or otherwise?

**Mr HANNON:** No.

**The Hon. DAVID CLARKE:** Mr Hannon, on a previous occasion I asked you whether tolls were being actively considered for the Pacific Highway. I think you indicated to me that they were not. Do you remember those questions and that answer?

**Mr HANNON:** I would have to check.

**The Hon. DAVID CLARKE:** You do not recall?

**Mr HANNON:** I remember some discussion. Can you tell me what date that was?

**The Hon. DAVID CLARKE:** On the last date that you gave evidence before this Committee, I do not have the exact date in front of me.

**The Hon. JAN BURNSWOODS:** It was last year, so it would pre-date the memorandum of understanding and the media release between the State and Federal governments.

**The Hon. DAVID CLARKE:** Exactly. Do you recall the questions?

**Mr HANNON:** I recall the questions.

**The Hon. DAVID CLARKE:** At that stage you indicated that you heard of no proposals for a toll to be imposed on any part of the Pacific Highway.

**Mr HANNON:** My recollection is the question was whether I had had discussions with the Minister about tolls.

**The Hon. DAVID CLARKE:** Right. You are saying you said that there was no discussion with the Minister?

**Mr HANNON:** I said that I had had no discussions with the Minister.

**The Hon. DAVID CLARKE:** Or that you were not aware of any discussions that people in your department had had with the Minister, I think it was Minister Tripodi at that time.

**Mr HANNON:** That may have been the case.

**The Hon. DAVID CLARKE:** If you were not aware at that time of any discussions between Minister Tripodi and yourself or any member of the department in regard the imposition of a toll on any part of the Pacific Highway?

**Mr HANNON:** Around about—

**The Hon. GREG DONNELLY:** Obviously there was a line of questioning at that time and the record shows the question and the answer. He is trying to recall something from long ago.

**Mr HANNON:** The toll was mentioned in the memorandum of understanding that was signed in December last year.

**The Hon. DAVID CLARKE:** When did you first become aware of the discussions involving the memorandum of understanding that involves the question of the toll?

**Mr HANNON:** I will have to check that. I will take it on notice.

**CHAIR:** Mr Watters, referring to the Bells Line of Road matter, which you said was dormant as a project, do you mean generally speaking, or in connection to the question of a possible toll, if that went ahead?

**MR WATTERS:** I took the question as referring to the question of being a toll. The general question was about investigations of projects that could be funded through tolls and it was in that

context that I would say that it was dormant, to the extent that we are not considering it in any way as being feasible as a toll road.

**CHAIR:** Alternatively, are you still considering it as a non-toll road?

**MR WATTERS:** No, we are not doing any further work on that particular investigation. The \$3 billion cost estimate really puts it out of the question in terms of the benefits. The benefit cost ratio, from memory, was about point one or some very poor return on that level of investment and both the Federal and State governments have indicated an intention to upgrade the Great Western Highway as the primary route to the Central West.

**CHAIR:** Mr Hannon, in relation to RTA centres, can you give the Committee advice as to how many RTA centres have been closed, if they have been closed, in the last 12 months and if so, which ones have been closed?

**Mr HANNON:** We cannot think of any at this stage that have been closed.

**CHAIR:** Could you check that and provide it on notice.

**Mr HANNON:** What do you call "centres"? Are you talking about registry offices, offices generally or works depots?

**CHAIR:** Any RTA centres that have been closed, and if you could provide that information for the last 10 years, that would be appreciated as well. Can you tell the Committee how do you assess whether an RTA office, motor registry or installation is suitable for closure? On what do you base such a decision?

**Mr HANNON:** I should say at the outset that the Premier has indicated that there will be no closures of registry offices going forward so we do not propose to close any offices going forward.

**CHAIR:** For ones that have been closed, how did you come to that conclusion that they should be closed?

**Mr HANNON:** I am not aware of any recent closures.

**CHAIR:** There was not one in the Blue Mountains in the last year or so?

**Mr HANNON:** That is proposed to be closed but it has not been closed as yet.

**CHAIR:** You just said there will not be any closures; the Premier said so.

**Mr HANNON:** Two have been announced and they are actually not closures, they are activities. The activities are being handed over to Blue Mountains City Council and to Bland Shire, so the two that have been on the record are the West Wyalong registry office and two registry offices in the Blue Mountains, at Springwood and at Katoomba, and negotiations are underway with the councils to take over the RTA operations in those three locations.

**CHAIR:** And no others beyond those ones are proposed to be closed?

**Mr HANNON:** No more are proposed, no.

**CHAIR:** How long is the undertaking not to close any? What is the time frame for that? Is that in the next 12 months?

**Mr HANNON:** It is not my undertaking.

**CHAIR:** What is the Government's undertaking?

**Mr HANNON:** I do not know the time frame.

**CHAIR:** In relation to the Timber Bridges Program, can you advise how much has been spent in the last 12 months on replacing timber bridges in New South Wales?

**Mr HANNON:** Under the Rebuilding Country Roads Program, a component of that was the Country Timber Bridge Program and 140 bridges have been completed.

**MR WATTERS:** They have all been completed and this year the Rebuilding Country Roads Program was \$135 million. Within that there is the Country Timber Bridge Program but I do not know the precise amount this year on country timber bridges.

**Mr HANNON:** That program has been running for about six or seven years.

**CHAIR:** Can you give us the information on notice?

**Mr HANNON:** So the question is how much money was spent on the Country Timber Bridge Program in 2004-05.

**CHAIR:** Yes. Do you have a regional road timber bridge program? Is that what the new program is called?

**Mr HANNON:** The program was announced some time ago but that was deferred.

**CHAIR:** For how long has it been deferred?

**Mr HANNON:** Approximately two years.

**CHAIR:** How long will it be deferred?

**Mr HANNON:** That is a matter for the Government.

**CHAIR:** It is basically on hold; it is in limbo?

**Mr HANNON:** It is currently on hold, yes.

**CHAIR:** Does that explain why, for example, the timber bridge at Nundle, which was affected by floods back in 2000, has still not been replaced?

**Mr HANNON:** I am not aware of the Nundle bridge specifically, but if it was damaged as a result of a natural disaster, separate natural disaster funding is made available for that sort of damage and that comes straight from our program so that is a natural disaster funding requirement.

**CHAIR:** No, there was a bridge at Nundle that was washed into Chaffey Dam, which was replaced but the main timber bridge to the village is still in dire need of replacement. In relation to the upgrade of the Pacific Highway at Banora Point, are you able to provide to the Committee the Sexton Hill bore hole logs and any documents that show the RTA's assessment of those logs?

**MR WATTERS:** Obviously we do not have those with us. I will take that on notice.

**Mr HANNON:** You want the bore logs and the report for the Sexton Hill project?

**CHAIR:** Yes, that would be good. In relation to the RTA's traffic modelling processes, presumably the RTA undertakes traffic modelling?

**MR WATTERS:** Yes.

**CHAIR:** Can you explain to the Committee what type of measures you build into those models to ensure that the predicted numbers of patronage are reasonably accurate?

**Mr FORD:** Travel demand forecasting is a very complex process and is largely dependent upon the accuracy of other forecasts, particularly in relation to parameters such as population, employment, car ownership, so you get a twofold effect. There is the accuracy of the travel demand forecasting models in their own right but, more importantly, the accuracy of independent assumptions of other parameters such as population, employment, work force, car ownership; and those sorts of forecasts we take from other agencies such as the Department of Planning.

Coming back to the forecasting models themselves, they are generated directly by assumptions in relation to land use patterns—I mentioned population, employment and car ownership. A travel demand matrix is generated as a result of those forecasts. That matrix then is applied to a number of vehicle types or whether it is a bus passenger, a car passenger or a car driver, et cetera. So by the time we get down to that part in the process, which is fairly complex, a number of errors can come into the equation.

At the final level we undertake a process called traffic assignment whereby we put assigned travel volume for forecast travel volumes onto a simulated road network and at that point a very detailed calibration is undertaken against known traffic volumes on roads, known bus passengers on certain corridors, what we call screen lines across a number of routes in a corridor, and that is used to validate and adjust, if necessary, the robustness of the travel demand forecast.

At a stage lower than that we have what we call a micro simulation model that looks at an area like, say in the Sydney CBD, the traffic flows into each link. That micro simulation model—the model we currently call peramics—is, in fact, interfaced with the real time operation of the traffic signals in the CBD and so, in that sense, we have got simulated traffic by block in, say, the Sydney CBD running over detectors in the road, which are all simulated, which drive through our SCAT system, which is a real time traffic signal operational system, cycle times, traffic plans, screen time allocations and signals. That in turn is fed back in, to have a look at a reassignment or readjustment of traffic in the simulation model. That is a very, very complex and extremely detailed process. It is quite robust and we have used that particular technique on numerous occasions in assessing the traffic impacts of major projects. I can go on at length. How much time have you got?

**CHAIR:** No, I appreciate that. At any time does the Minister become involved—

**The Hon. JAN BURNSWOODS:** Madam Chair, I think your time has expired. I am getting more and more anxious about how much time is going to be left. Your time expired during the last question.

**CHAIR:** Okay, I will ask for this question to be taken on notice.

**The Hon. JAN BURNSWOODS:** You can do that later.

**Ms LEE RHIANNON:** No, she cannot do it later. You know that. You always oppose us putting questions on notice.

**The Hon. JAN BURNSWOODS:** You can do it at the end of other members' questions.

**CHAIR:** If you could provide on notice the answer to this question. If the Minister for Roads is involved in any final approval of any traffic modelling figures at any stage and if, after the completion of the approach, does the RTA and/or the Ministry for Roads, undertake any evaluation to assess the accuracy or otherwise of the modelling figures?

**Mr HANNON:** I would be pleased to.

**Ms LEE RHIANNON:** Mr Hannon, is the M5 East tunnel meeting the highest air quality standards?

**Mr HANNON:** It is my understanding that it is complying with the planning requirements.

**Ms LEE RHIANNON:** Does that mean that you understand or you agree with the statements that have come from NSW Health studies that show that inside and outside the tunnel there are

problems with air pollution and also the planning audit report, which found that they could not get accurate air quality monitoring. Therefore, how can you say that you are complying?

**Mr HANNON:** It is certainly my understanding. I can have that confirmed, if you like.

**Mr WIELINGA:** The M5 East has a compliance requirement to meet 87 parts per million for 15 minutes. When you are looking at complying with standards you need to consider inside the tunnel, ambient air quality outside the tunnel and I think what you are referring to in the audit report is the monitoring of air quality inside the ventilation stacks itself. Inside the tunnel we are meeting those compliance standards of 87 parts per million for 15 minutes. All of the information for the four monitoring stations, including one community-based monitoring station outside that are monitoring the ambient air quality, are meeting the air quality standards. The issue in the audit report related to some continuous monitoring of air flows and air pollution inside the ventilation stack. The Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources had an issue that it was only on line for about 80 per cent of the time. Part of the problem, which has now been fixed, is that those measuring devices were inside the airflow—inside the ventilation stack itself—and it was had to get in for maintenance. That has been corrected by shifting the device outside the tunnel with a monitoring point inside the tunnel so that they are easier to get to. We are expecting a significantly higher percentage online of those particular devices.

**Ms LEE RHIANNON:** In an answer to an earlier question about filtrating the tunnel, you said—if I understood you correctly—that it would not have an impact on carbon monoxide levels. Does that mean that you disagreed with the RTA's PowerPoint presentation on this or are you unaware of it? The RTA's PowerPoint presentation by Gary Humphrey in April 2004 identified that putting filtration in the tunnel would allow them to control carbon monoxide levels by increasing ventilation flow and allowing them to expel some clean filtered air out of the portals. Are you unaware of that? I understand that claim was repeated in the RTA report on tunnels in Japan after your visit to that country. It was acknowledged that filtration kept the air moving and was a way of controlling carbon monoxide.

**Mr WIELINGA:** I will need to look at the presentation but I think I can clear up the issue. There are actually two different things happening here. One, you are assuming that a filtration system is removing particulate matter and perhaps nitrogen dioxides. The improvement in the carbon monoxide does not come from that filtration system; it comes from, as he mentioned, the introduction of additional air into the tunnel because of portal emissions. So you get further fresh air in the tunnel mixing with the other air, which, therefore, lowers the carbon monoxide. It is that that is doing it, not the filtration system.

**Ms LEE RHIANNON:** You acknowledged it then but you are contradicting the answer you gave to a previous question when you said that it was not impacting on carbon monoxide levels.

**Mr WIELINGA:** I was just talking about filtration systems. You could have a filtration system with no air going out of the portals at all and the effect would not be achieved.

**Ms LEE RHIANNON:** Back to the cross-city tunnel, a number of residents have contacted my office with concerns about safety issues due to the narrowing of streets as part of the Queens Cross gateway project. I understand from these constituents that fire officials, police and ambulance drivers have informally expressed great concern about these developments. Could you let me know whether the RTA has canvassed the concerns of emergency services personnel? I am talking about the people who must contend with the traffic problems in east Sydney, not the higher levels of management.

**Mr WIELINGA:** I am not aware of the specific details. I believe they have been talking to them as part of the consultations, but I will confirm that.

**Ms LEE RHIANNON:** Could Mr Hannon or somebody else answer that question because I would expect someone to know that?

**Mr HANNON:** We will have to check that out for you.

**The Hon. DAVID OLDFIELD:** I am not sure who should answer this question. I have a question about a particular road—I would not be surprised if you are not familiar with it—that runs from Rylstone to Sandy Hollow through Bylong. I think it is called Bylong Valley Way. Do you have any responsibility for that road at either end or somewhere along the track or is it the responsibility of local council?

**Mr BUSHBY:** My understanding is that the Bylong Valley Way is the responsibility of the local council.

**The Hon. DAVID OLDFIELD:** Mudgee local council.

**Mr BUSHBY:** Yes.

**The Hon. DAVID OLDFIELD:** My other question is, I think, for Mr Watters. Earlier in answering a question from the Hon. David Clarke with regard to tollways you raised as an example that the Bells Line of Road has been looked at and was now, in your words, "dead". With regard to the question of tolls and new roads, I gather that the Bells Line of Road is "dead", as you put it, because it is too expensive for the State Government to build without having somebody build it for them and impose a toll. Where does that place the citizens of New South Wales with regard to new roads and tollways? Are there to be no new roads without tollways?

**MR WATTERS:** My preference to its being dormant or perhaps dead was made in the context of investigations of a potential toll road on the Bells Line of Road. The general question was about which projects, if any, we are considering tolls for and I was giving that as an example of some work that is now completed in regard to potential toll roads.

**The Hon. DAVID OLDFIELD:** Am I wrong in recollecting that you went on to say that because of cost the whole thing was really gone? You were talking \$3 billion. I got the impression from what you said that it was dead in the sense of investigation as a toll road but it was also dead in the sense of doing anything because of the cost. You went on to say that the Government is now looking at upgrading the Great Western Highway as the distributor for the west rather than doing anything new.

**MR WATTERS:** The study found that a \$3-billion motorway on the general line of Bells Line of Road was not economically justifiable.

**The Hon. DAVID OLDFIELD:** Using that as an example, my question relates to new roads and tollways. What opportunities do the people of New South Wales have for the creation of new roads that are not tollways given your example of the Bells Line of Road?

**MR WATTERS:** There would be other examples of road upgrades that would not be \$3 billion. The investigation was conducted at Federal Government request and was jointly funded by the State and Federal governments. It was very specifically to be a four-lane motorway standard as opposed to the existing program of upgrading the Great Western Highway. So it was a very specific question that has been answered and is still before both governments in terms of future funding. The study work is finished and it is now a matter for governments to consider whether they have \$3 billion to invest in a new road with a very low economic return. We would argue that other parts of the road network would be a higher priority for government funding.

**The Hon. DAVID OLDFIELD:** Which would be?

**MR WATTERS:** Accelerating the Pacific Highway, the Princes Highway and the Great Western Highway.

**The Hon. DAVID OLDFIELD:** What is the estimated cost of upgrading the Great Western Highway?

**MR WATTERS:** We have not got an upgrade estimate for the entire length but I believe the figure announced some years ago for Penrith to Katoomba was \$380 million.

**The Hon. DAVID OLDFIELD:** Would you believe the expectation is that the Great Western Highway can be fully upgraded without any toll being introduced?

**MR WATTERS:** We have an ongoing program of achieving a four-lane divided road on the Great Western Highway as far as Katoomba using State funding. It is now within the AusLink national network. Sydney to Dubbo is now part of the AusLink national network. We will be bidding for Federal funding for the next five-year period of AusLink. They have not allocated any money in the first five years of AusLink funding. But we are doing a corridor study. All the AusLink corridors across the nation are going through corridor studies this year, and Sydney to Dubbo is one of those corridors. We will be identifying the deficiencies. That study has not started yet. It will be conducted later this year jointly with the Federal department to identify the cost of upgrading the entire route.

**The Hon. DAVID OLDFIELD:** Just quickly, Mr Bushby—

**The Hon. JAN BURNSWOODS:** Madam Chair, it is time for Government members' questions, is it not?

**The Hon. DAVID OLDFIELD:** No, I would not think so. Was the time allocation not 20, 20, 20?

**The Hon. JAN BURNSWOODS:** Yes, but you had 10 minutes and Ms Lee Rhiannon had 10 minutes and the bell just went.

**The Hon. DAVID OLDFIELD:** We did not have 10 and 10. That was the bell for 10, not 20 minutes.

**The Hon. JAN BURNSWOODS:** You had 10 minutes before Opposition members' questions. It is now time for Government members' questions.

**CHAIR:** Yes, that is right. It is.

**The Hon. JAN BURNSWOODS:** What is being done to prevent identity fraud and improve security in relation to drivers licences?

**Mr BUSHBY:** It is probably appropriate that I respond to that question. There is growing concern in the community about identity fraud and the security of licences as being a major document that is provided by government in relation to licensing for driving but also for identification purposes. We replaced the card several years ago and in doing that we added security features that are important in themselves. We have the magnetic strip on the back, holograms, ultraviolet watermarks and micro text on the drivers licence. To try to copy a drivers licence card is very difficult but the criminal element out there will try to do that. So we have got to be looking continually at ways of improving things.

There has been talk of biometrics and further improvements in relation to identification—making sure the person who is holding the card is that actual person. New South Wales has been working in an overall Australian context through the organisation Austroads, which is all the road authorities working together, to look at a facial recognition trial. We have been doing some work in relation to that. It involves using the photos that are stored to try to identify individuals and be sure that we have high-quality photos that can be used for that sort of facial recognition. My understanding is that the Commonwealth Government are doing a fair bit of work on facial recognition as well.

The most important transaction that we undertake with somebody who is obtaining a drivers licence is when they enrol with the RTA for the first time. Our requirements are quite stringent in terms of their being able to prove their identity to us and the documentation that allows them to do that. It is most important that we concentrate on that area and ensure that the enrolment is appropriate so that we do not end up either with individuals setting up multiple identities or the wrong person being identified when a drivers licence is issued. We work with other agencies like the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade and Immigration to ensure that when we enrol someone on our system it is the person they say they are and they can prove that.

In recent months quite a few things have occurred that we have been able to identify by ensuring that our enrolment process is working appropriately. There have been cases of fraud in relation to Irish licences and some other frauds as well. They were identified by the rigorous actions of motor registry staff in looking for security features on the documents that are presented as evidence of identity at the enrolment stage. We are also working with agencies to try to improve the verification of documents that are put in front of us. There are some examples where that has been quite effective. In recent days we have been working with Centrelink. We acknowledge the benefit in relation to drivers license benefits and we have now set up an arrangement where we can deal directly with Centrelink to verify the documents that are put in front of us.

I think it is important to recognise that the RTA has been undertaking a lot of work in relation to identity fraud and security. In doing that for government, we have also taken on the role of managing the Photo Card, which was rolled out just before Christmas, for people who do not have a drivers licence. We now offer a card that is available to anyone who does not have a drivers licence that has the same features and security requirements as a drivers licence. We have done that quite deliberately because of the use that a drivers licence, and now a Photo Card, can be put to for identification purposes. It has a magnetic strip, a hologram et cetera. We have to go through the same enrolment process in order to ensure that the person who is coming onto our Photo Card system is who they say they are.

**The Hon. JAN BURNSWOODS:** Is that done in conjunction with other States?

**Mr BUSHBY:** Other States have different arrangements. In New South Wales the Photo Card is a New South Wales initiative. In other States they have Proof of Age cards and so on, like we used to have.

**The Hon. JAN BURNSWOODS:** So someone moving to New South Wales from another State would have a lower level of security than we have here.

**Mr BUSHBY:** In terms of Photo Card, my understanding is that there is no equivalent elsewhere other than the Proof of Age cards, which are really available only for the 16- to 25-year-olds.

**The Hon. JAN BURNSWOODS:** What is the Government doing to improve the actual safety of motor vehicles, cars specifically? I know you spoke earlier about trucks.

**Mr BUSHBY:** Vehicle safety is one of the aspects relating to safety in general. There are different facets that need to be managed to try to improve the road safety performance on the road network, behavioural issues, engineering issues relating to the road network and there are vehicle issues. Generally the vehicle issues are handled at a national level through the design rules et cetera, and the features that vehicles need to meet are specified through those design rules. But it is most important to recognise that we are trying to influence consumer behaviour and making road safety, and the safety capability of a vehicle, as being one of the choices in identifying what vehicle to buy. Over the past 15 years a lot of work has been done in relation to crash testing of vehicles to try to progress the industry in terms of manufacturers putting in better features, more effective features within vehicles.

Last year the RTA opened a new facility called Crash Lab at Huntingwood in Western Sydney. It is a state-of-the-art facility for crash testing vehicles. It is used for both research and development for companies that are trying to develop new products and also for the Australian New Car Assessment Program. The RTA is involved in that program with motoring organisations in the other States to assess the safety of the cars that are available on the market. Several types of tests are undertaken in relation to Crash Lab. There is an offset test where a car is travelling along at 60 kilometres per hour. It is a solid steel block offset and the performance of the vehicle in terms of its safety facilities is used to categorise the vehicle into a number of stars, with five stars being the highest level.

That facility that we have now opened is capable of also doing head-to-head crashes, so two cars, simulating a head-on crash. This is all done inside a facility. It is quite state-of-the-art and it is able to demonstrate the differences between manufacturers. We also did a research project before

Christmas relating to the change in the safety performance of vehicles over the past 15 or 16 years since we have been doing this crash testing and hence how effective we have been in being able to improve the outcomes for the occupants of vehicles. The crash that was done was a 1989 vehicle versus a 2005 equivalent on a head-to-head crash. The difference in performance between the two vehicles was really dramatic in terms of the survivability of the crash. It was a new five-star rated vehicle with air bags in front and the side and actually survived the crash in remarkably good condition. The 1989 vehicle was less survivable, put it that way.

That recognises the changes that have been occurring in terms of vehicle safety over that time that we have been doing this crash testing and the fact that the manufacturers are taking it seriously that they need to improve their safety outcomes. As a result, the underlying aim of trying to improve the safety, and what the consumers choose to buy in terms of new vehicles and their safety performances, is a key focus for improving the safety outcomes on the road network.

**The Hon. JAN BURNSWOODS:** Is there any research on whether we have impacted on consumer choice of what to buy as well as impacting on manufacturers?

**Mr BUSHBY:** I think the fact that we are now starting to see some of the manufacturers using their new car assessment program rating in their advertising is demonstrating that they are taking it seriously and they believe that consumers are taking that as part of their buying choice.

**The Hon. JAN BURNSWOODS:** For instance, is there evidence that the recent decline in the sale of four-wheel drives has been affected by the publicity about how unsafe they are in roll overs and things like that?

**CHAIR:** That is the last question.

**The Hon. DAVID OLDFIELD:** As opposed to rolling over in a non four-wheel drive do you mean?

**Ms LEE RHIANNON:** As we have a number of questions that we were not able to ask—

**The Hon. JAN BURNSWOODS:** Is that question going to be answered?

**Ms LEE RHIANNON:** Ms Burnswoods said earlier that we could read out our questions so they could take them on notice, could we now do that?

**The Hon. JAN BURNSWOODS:** That question that you said was my last question going to be answered?

**CHAIR:** Yes, and then Ms Lee Rhiannon can put her questions on the notice paper.

**Mr BUSHBY:** In terms of the decline in sales of four-wheel drives anecdotally at least it would appear that that is largely driven by concerns about fuel prices rather than safety issues. I think it is also fair to say that a lot of the four-wheel drive manufacturers are seeing the safety of their product as being an important issue, and are providing safety features in those vehicles as well. There has been some testing done under the Australian New Car Assessment Program of four-wheel drives and the results were released last year in relation to that.

**Ms LEE RHIANNON:** Considering it was expected—

**The Hon. JAN BURNSWOODS:** Madam Chair, are we all going to read out our questions? We do not normally do it that way.

**Ms LEE RHIANNON:** I am happy to put them in writing.

**The Hon. JAN BURNSWOODS:** We normally agree that they will be put on notice. We do not have to sit here in our lunch break and read them out.

**CHAIR:** If you are happy for Ms Lee Rhiannon to submit them?

**Ms LEE RHIANNON:** I am happy to put them in writing but I know Ms Burnswoods has objected to that before and that is why I want to clarify that we can get them in.

**The Hon. JAN BURNSWOODS:** No. Last time they were circulated to members of the Committee by email and we had a certain time to get back to the clerk and say, "Yes, that is fine". We can do the same with ours. Obviously it is quite unfair to sit here and make the witnesses sit here while we read out things.

**Ms LEE RHIANNON:** I agree with you. If you have come to a sensible agreement it is wonderful.

**The Hon. JAN BURNSWOODS:** I am just repeating what we did in this Committee on the last occasion that we met.

**CHAIR:** If members of the Committee are happy to do that, great.

**The Committee proceeded to deliberate.**

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