

REPORT ON PROCEEDINGS BEFORE

PUBLIC WORKS COMMITTEE

SYDNEY STADIUMS STRATEGY

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At Macquarie Room, Parliament House, Sydney on Monday, 6 August 2018

The Committee met at 9:15 am

PRESENT

The Hon Robert Brown (Chair)

The Hon. Wes Fang
The Hon. Justin Field
The Hon. John Graham
The Hon. Taylor Martin
Mr Scot MacDonald
The Hon. Lynda Volt

The CHAIR: Welcome to the third hearing of the Public Works Committee inquiry into the Sydney stadiums strategy. Before I commence I acknowledge the Gadigal people. I also pay my respects and those of Committee members to the elders past and present of the Eora nation and extend that respect to other Aboriginal persons present. Today is the final hearing we plan to hold for this inquiry. We will hear today from witnesses from the Department of Planning and Environment, the Sydney Cricket and Sports Ground Trust, Infrastructure NSW, the North Parramatta Residents Action Group and a number of sporting codes.

Today's hearing is open to the public and is being broadcast live via the Parliament's website. A transcript of today's hearing will be placed on the Committee's website when it becomes available. In accordance with the guidelines, whilst members of the media may film or record Committee members and witnesses, people in the public gallery should not be the primary focus of any filming or photography. I also remind media representatives that they must take responsibility for what they publish about the Committee's proceedings. There is a new broadcasting system in this room. Media representatives are asked that when the hearing adjourns for breaks or goes into a deliberative they unplug their sound systems from the network. The secretariat will ensure that they do so. Members are reminded that if that does not happen their conversations during breaks may be broadcast live. The guidelines for the broadcasting of proceedings is available from the secretariat.

It is important to remember that parliamentary privilege does not apply to what witnesses may say outside of their evidence at the hearing and so I urge witnesses to be careful about any comments they may make to the media or to others after they complete their evidence as such comments would not be protected by parliamentary privilege. There may be some questions that a witness could only answer if that witness had more time or with certain documents to hand. In those circumstances witnesses are advised that they can take a question on notice and provide an answer within 21 days. Witnesses are advised that any messages should be delivered to Committee members through Committee staff. Likewise, if any staff wish to pass messages to witnesses at the table they must do so through the secretariat at the side table.

To aid the audibility of this hearing I remind Committee members and witnesses to speak into the microphones. In addition, several seats have been reserved near the loudspeakers for persons in the public gallery who have hearing difficulties. Finally, could everybody please turn their mobile phones off or to silent for the duration of the hearing.

DAVID GAINSFORD, Executive Director Priority Projects Assessment, Department of Planning and Environment, affirmed and examined

The CHAIR: Do you have an opening statement you would like to make?

Mr GAINSFORD: On behalf of the Department of Planning and Environment I would like to thank the Committee for the invitation to speak at the inquiry into the Sydney stadiums strategy. I would like to read an opening statement that summarises the department's role on the stadium projects to date. I am the Executive Director for Priority Project Assessments. I joined the department in this role in October 2015. My experience includes 25 years in New South Wales government roles and the private sector in major project development assessment and infrastructure delivery and I have qualifications in environmental science and planning. The role of the priority projects branch is to assess the merits of State significant infrastructure and State significant development proposals under the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979. We are currently in the middle of the assessment process for the concept proposal and stage one development application for the Sydney Football Stadium redevelopment.

Our involvement in this proposal to date is as follows. We held a planning focus meeting in April 2018 which included representatives from the City of Sydney Council and other government agencies, including Infrastructure NSW. The purpose of this meeting is to gather input from multiple agencies regarding potential key environmental considerations to be addressed in the proponents environmental impact statement [EIS]. The department placed the EIS on public exhibition during 14 June to 11 July 2018. During exhibition we received 726 submissions from the public, government agencies and council. The submissions are publicly available on our website.

The applicant is now expected to provide a response to all submissions received. Our merit-based assessment will include consideration of the EIS, all submissions and the applicant's response to submissions. In this case the Minister for Planning will be the determining authority of the proposal and our assessment will include a recommendation to the Minister for his determination. If the concept proposal and stage one development application is approved, the proponent will need to lodge a second application for the design, construction and operation of the stadium. Any future application would be informed by the terms of any approval of the concept development application.

I also acknowledge that the terms of reference for this inquiry also includes the Parramatta Memorial Pool and I would like to briefly summarise our involvement in the assessment of the Western Sydney Stadium proposal. This project was also a staged State significant development application. The applications for each stage were lodged, exhibited and assessed separately. The concept proposal and stage 1 works application was on public exhibition from 21 July to 19 August 2016 and the department received 82 submissions. This application was approved by the then Minister for Planning on 7 December 2016. The determination was based on the department's assessment and recommendation report.

The stage 2 application was exhibited from 9 March to 7 April 2017. The department received 27 submissions. The department assessed the stage 2 proposal and approved the project under delegation from the Minister for Planning on 31 August 2017. All documentation related to the application, including our assessment reports, is publicly available on our website. I hope that this overview of the process was useful to the Committee. I am happy to answer any questions that the Committee may have.

The CHAIR: We will proceed with questions from the Opposition, crossbench and then Government members. Mr Graham, you have the call.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Mr Gainsford, thank you for your rundown on the process. I ask particularly about the timing of the approval itself and when you expect that. Obviously the timing is quite important. It is referred to a couple of times with different dates in the KPMG report. What is your final expectation of when the final approval will be given?

Mr GAINSFORD: As I mentioned in my opening statement, the determination of the project will be by the Minister for Planning. At this point in time it is not possible for me to give an estimate on that timing. The timing will be, I guess, dependent on receiving a response of submissions from the applicant. What the applicant actually has got is a full list of those 726 submissions. Their role now is to respond to those submissions and until such time as we have got those response, I could not—

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: What is your expectation though? The timing is obviously pretty crucial to the public process here. Give us some sense of what we are talking about?

Mr GAINSFORD: Our assessment process, I guess, is we benchmark. A number of projects go through the State significant development application process. Roughly around 75 days tends to be the duration of that assessment process. That is what we internally benchmark towards but that does not include the Minister's deliberation and determination process.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: So where would that leave us after that 75-day process? The reason I ask is that page 234 of the KPMG report talks about a target date of October 2018, although then it refers earlier on page 213 to authority approvals being complete by 9 November this year. Do they sound like realistic dates; presumably the second is more realistic than the first?

Mr GAINSFORD: Look, again, it really does depend on when we get that response to submissions. Until such time that we have that response to submissions—

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: But even going as quickly as the Parramatta stadium approvals—that went in record time for a much smaller project—you would be going flat chat to hit that 9 November date; you would be pretty happy with that, from a planning department point of view?

Mr GAINSFORD: Maybe to clarify the Parramatta—the Western Sydney Stadium approval process, the time frames that we took for the determination of both those applications that I mentioned in my opening statement were around about the average time that we take on State significant development projects so that process was, yes, roughly around about five months from the completion of the EIS process. That is a similar type of process to what we are undertaking.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: So that would put us in November, that five-month time frame?

Mr GAINSFORD: By the maths, I think that is around about right.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Were you concerned, in the agency submissions to the EIS, by the view of Transport for NSW, particularly about the transport surveys that were conducted and the methodology that was used. This is what they said: "TfNSW advises that the surveyed events were not significant in crowd number and therefore not indicative of the traffic and transport issues for the stadium." They were skewed towards the closure of Moore Park Road, rain during the other. They really weren't indicative of the sort of transport pressures. Has Planning got a view about those surveys?

Mr GAINSFORD: At this point in time we do not have a view. We are obviously aware of some of the issues that have been raised by Transport and other submitters, but the process is for the applicant to respond to those issues. At the moment we have not commenced our merit-based assessment.

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: Going to those transport issues, the Committee has heard from the Centennial and Moore Park Trust who stated they had not had any input into the environmental impact statement [EIS] process. That was probably reflected in their EIS in that their master plan identifies moving the car park away from Moore Park land to another place. They also have not been included in the traffic assessment. Are you seeking further information about that anomaly? Are you marrying the two up?

Mr GAINSFORD: Centennial and Moore Park Trust I know did provide a submission as part of the EIS. Again, our expectation would be that the applicant engages with the Centennial and Moore Park Trust and addresses those issues.

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: But they have not been considered as part of the traffic study that has already been undertaken.

Mr GAINSFORD: I cannot speak to the EIS. That is really a matter for Infrastructure NSW.

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: I show you a letter that was written by the Minister for Sport and the Minister for Counter Terrorism. Has that document been included as part of your EIS process?

Mr GAINSFORD: At this point in time I am not familiar with that letter.

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: Perhaps could you take it on notice. You will also see attached a response from the Minister for the Environment, the Hon. Gabrielle Upton. That notes that there will be some meetings and reports. Could you take on notice to notify the Committee of whether there have been any follow up meetings or reports based on the Minister for the Environment's response to that letter?

The CHAIR: When the request goes out in writing for Mr Gainsford to respond, I take it the response will be attaching copies?

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: Absolutely. It is a publicly available document.

The CHAIR: We would show which documents we are talking about?

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: Yes.

The CHAIR: Can you take that question on notice?

Mr GAINSFORD: I am happy to take it on notice. As I mentioned before, we have not commenced our merit-based assessment at this stage. I cannot talk to what is included as part of the EIS .

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: If you take it on notice you will be able to have a look at it and consider it.

Mr GAINSFORD: Okay.

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: There were no public hearings about the EIS process. What will be the process from hereon in?

Mr GAINSFORD: For the Sydney Football Stadium?

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: Yes.

Mr GAINSFORD: For the Sydney Football Stadium, as I mentioned in my opening statement and earlier remarks, the process from here is that the applicant responds to the submissions that have been received. We prepare a merit-based assessment report. Then we make a recommendation to the Minister for Planning. The Minister for Planning then is the determining authority. That is the same process for all government infrastructure projects. Part of that process is that we will continue to receive input from the community.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: You have not answered the question about the meeting. It was quite specific: Will there be a consultation meeting?

Mr GAINSFORD: An inquiry I think was the question?

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: Public hearings.

Mr GAINSFORD: Public hearings are not part of that process, no.

Mr JUSTIN FIELD: You have said a couple of times it is up to the proponent to respond to the submissions, potentially to engage with some of the stakeholders on the concerns that they have raised.

Mr GAINSFORD: Yes.

Mr JUSTIN FIELD: If they do not, or do not do that sufficiently, what is available to your organisation to go back and ensure that those matters have been considered adequately? Can you press pause on the process? Can you write letters? Can you have other meetings? How do you go about doing that?

Mr GAINSFORD: The assessment process, when we have received that response to submissions as you have raised, is an intuitive process. We will carefully scrutinise the information that comes back as part of the response to submissions. If we feel that some of those issues have been insufficiently addressed we do have recourse to either go back to the applicant and ask for further information, or we can go to submitters and engage with them directly and seek our own information. That is typically part of the process. It is quite intuitive as we get into the assessment process.

Mr JUSTIN FIELD: How will stakeholders know before you have started the merit review whether or not their concerns have been adequately considered? Will that response to submissions be published before you start that process?

Mr GAINSFORD: The response to submissions will be published normally in the early stages of the assessment process that we do. We will put it up on our website. So yes, stakeholders and people who have made submissions will be able to see how the response to submissions has responded to their issues.

Mr JUSTIN FIELD: If at that stage they feel that their issues have not been adequately responded to, what avenues are available to them to engage?

Mr GAINSFORD: Again, we encourage the community to continue to engage with the department. We are more than happy to continue to take submissions and where the community wants to raise further issues we are happy to continue to engage in that process.

Mr JUSTIN FIELD: As part of that process, once a decision has been made is there any merit review or merit appeal process available to any stakeholders?

Mr GAINSFORD: There are avenues through the Land and Environment Court.

Mr JUSTIN FIELD: Who would have access to those sorts of avenues for a State significant process?

Mr GAINSFORD: Objectors have some rights through that process.

Mr JUSTIN FIELD: A merits appeal process?

Mr GAINSFORD: I am not sure it is. Can I take that on notice?

Mr JUSTIN FIELD: Yes.

Mr GAINSFORD: As to what the actual specific appeal rights are.

Mr JUSTIN FIELD: Obviously the political time line here has been made pretty clear, I think. Have you had any dates given to you by anyone in government, by officers senior to you or by the Minister's office? Have you been given a time line people would like to see achieved?

Mr SCOT MacDONALD: Point of order: There is argument in the question when it says there is a "political time line". I ask that the witness be informed that he does not have to respond along those lines, or agree.

The CHAIR: I will uphold that point of order. The witness is to disregard the first statement. He can answer the substantive question.

Mr GAINSFORD: Could you just repeat that part of the substantive question please?

Mr JUSTIN FIELD: Has any time line been suggested to you from the Minister's office?

Mr GAINSFORD: From the Minister for Planning's office?

Mr JUSTIN FIELD: Yes.

Mr GAINSFORD: No.

Mr JUSTIN FIELD: Has any time line been suggested to you from anyone senior within your department?

Mr GAINSFORD: No.

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: The final business case from KPMG included a time frame. How did they assess that time frame? Was that provided by the Department of Planning and Environment?

Mr GAINSFORD: No, it was not.

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: That would have been their assessment of what the time frame will be, is that right?

Mr GAINSFORD: I would assume so, yes.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: You do not feel bound by that time line?

Mr GAINSFORD: No.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: How many of the more than 700 submissions are opposed to the development?

Mr GAINSFORD: Of the 726 submissions, 672 were objections.

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: You feel confident that once the responses to the submissions are published people who have standing in the planning process will have a legal avenue to contest that decision?

Mr GAINSFORD: As I mentioned before, I will take that question on notice if I can.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: The Environment Protection Authority [EPA] in its recommendation said before demolition commences the proponent should do a hazardous material survey for asbestos. That obviously might slow this down. Is that something that Planning is likely to support?

Mr GAINSFORD: Again, from our point of view, those issues that have been raised in submissions, we have required the applicant to respond to those and we are waiting for that response.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: It sounds like a pretty serious one, though, does it not?

Mr GAINSFORD: I would not hazard an opinion on how serious it is.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I want to ask about the site establishment processes and your understanding about how they fit with the approval process and with the demolition process. Those site establishment processes—temporary fencing and setting up the actual demolition—would not occur before approval took place, would they? Is that correct?

Mr GAINSFORD: I would assume that work associated with the demolition would need to wait until determination, that is correct.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Until after approval, appropriately.

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: When you say it will wait for approval, does that include the removal of the infrastructure inside the stadium, such as the seating?

Mr GAINSFORD: Again, I believe it is part of the application. The demolition includes the removal of those facilities, so yes.

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: No seating can be removed until it is determined?

Mr GAINSFORD: If it is part of the demolition application—

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Which it is.

Mr GAINSFORD: So no.

The CHAIR: That is about it time-wise. I will now proceed to Government.

Mr SCOT MacDONALD: Mr Gainsford, I just want to go to the Government's submission page 7 of 13, 5.3, where it states: "Three community information sessions in relation to the Sydney Football Stadium redevelopment were held in May 2018." Can you give me a picture of that—the detail, the number of people who attended? What were the themes that came out of it and, as much as you like, you can give us on that?

Mr GAINSFORD: Yes. Those community information sessions were held by Infrastructure NSW as the applicant for this project. The Department of Planning and Environment attended those community information sessions primarily to give the community an understanding of what the planning determination process is. The feedback that I have received from the people who attended those community information sessions was that they were well attended. I believe approximately 100 people attended those three community sessions.

Mr SCOT MacDONALD: Across the three?

Mr GAINSFORD: Across the three. That is my understanding. I was not present at those community information sessions. A full range of the issues associated with the applications were obviously discussed. Mainly Infrastructure NSW was on hand to respond to those issues because, as I mentioned before, it is their environmental impact statement [EIS] process, but the Department of Planning and Environment, as I mentioned, was there to help with the information on the planning determination process.

Mr SCOT MacDONALD: If you were a member of the public from a nearby neighbourhood or whatever and you attended, people asked questions in the forums and got responses?

Mr GAINSFORD: Yes.

Mr SCOT MacDONALD: Was there any mood or request for any other sessions? I see there were three in May. Did anybody pipe up and say, "We need more" or anything like that?

Mr GAINSFORD: I am aware, again, that prior to the EIS Infrastructure NSW conducted a number of community forums. I know they sent out letters and conducted what they called pop-up stalls at various venues as well.

Mr SCOT MacDONALD: The pop-ups are edition to these three?

Mr GAINSFORD: That is correct, yes. That is my understanding.

Mr SCOT MacDONALD: Can you describe them a little bit for me?

Mr GAINSFORD: Again, it was Infrastructure NSW. I know that the Department of Planning and Environment did not actually attend those pop-up stalls, but pop-up stalls traditionally are functions that you have perhaps at fêtes or those sorts of functions where you literally have a stall in those areas and provide information on the project.

Mr SCOT MacDONALD: Infrastructure NSW conducted them. You were more in the observing sort of role there from what I can work out.

Mr GAINSFORD: That is correct.

Mr SCOT MacDONALD: Can you give me your opinion in terms of the Department of Planning and Environment whether they were satisfactory? Was there good coverage? Was there good awareness about them—

and not just them but I suppose the pop-ups as well? In other words, has the community had a good chance to absorb it and have their say and get across it, if you like?

Mr GAINSFORD: Look, I believe so. Certainly, our expectation at the Department of Planning and Environment now is that consultation occurs right throughout the process.

Mr SCOT MacDONALD: So it does not stop there.

Mr GAINSFORD: That is correct, yes. Obviously there is the pre-EIS community consultation, which is very important to getting that information out to the community about any type of project that goes through the planning determination process. Similarly, there is obviously the environmental impact statement and the importance of that process being on exhibition. We also have an expectation that engagement continues beyond the exhibition process as well.

Mr SCOT MacDONALD: Before I hand over to my colleague, I am trying to understand whether the information sessions in May were attended by the general public? We have heard and we have had submissions as well as people appearing before us who are more organised, if you like—the resident action groups, whatever. Who is attending those information sessions? Were they the highly engaged groups or were they your general run of the mill sort of people who had just dropped in?

Mr GAINSFORD: I can probably only speak generically about community information sessions. Community information sessions traditionally are held to engage pretty much one on one with people who either have issues or want to get more information about a project. They tend to be a good forum to do that sort of one on one discussions with people. Where there are well organised groups or perhaps other sorts of stakeholders, often there are other forms of engagement—direct engagement—that happens with those.

Mr SCOT MacDONALD: With Infrastructure?

Mr GAINSFORD: In this case, that is right—with Infrastructure NSW.

The Hon. TAYLOR MARTIN: Would you be able to clarify some of the planning exemptions in the Sydney Cricket and Sports Ground Trust Act specifically around the consent authority?

Mr GAINSFORD: I would not profess to be an expert in that piece of legislation, but I am aware that legislation allows for proponents to effectively do some form of self-assessment within that legislation, and that has been used for development that has occurred on both the Sydney Cricket Ground [SCG] and football stadium in the past.

The Hon. TAYLOR MARTIN: How recently or how distantly in the past?

Mr GAINSFORD: I would have to take that on notice.

The Hon. TAYLOR MARTIN: What about in regards to the Minister's powers over the land there?

Mr GAINSFORD: The Minister for Planning do you mean?

The Hon. TAYLOR MARTIN: Yes.

Mr GAINSFORD: In this case Infrastructure NSW, on behalf of the Sydney Cricket and Sports Ground Trust, as I understand it, has decided not to use those powers within that legislation to which you referred before and has agreed to assess the project under the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act. Because of that process and because the project itself becomes a State significant development, under our legislation that then means that the Minister for Planning becomes the consent authority.

The Hon. TAYLOR MARTIN: Okay. What about the Minister for Sport? Does he have any power over the area there?

Mr GAINSFORD: Not for this application.

The CHAIR: Mr Field has indicated he has no questions, so I will allocate five minutes each.

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: During the responses from the community, which were more than 700—

Mr GAINSFORD: Yes.

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: Were any concerns raised in those submissions regarding the consultation process?

Mr GAINSFORD: Yes. I am aware there was.

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: What was the nature of those concerns?

Mr GAINSFORD: I have not read all of the submissions in detail, but I am aware that there were some concerns about the consultation process both pre-EIS exhibition and also during the EIS.

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: Did some of the concerns include that the information sessions did not provide much information and there was no ability to respond to the information provided at those sessions?

Mr GAINSFORD: I would have to take that on notice.

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: Given that there were more than 700 community submissions, do you really think that having three community consultations where 100 people attended is a well-attended process?

Mr GAINSFORD: I really could not offer an opinion on that.

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: I am sorry. I will take it back to your statement. You said that they were well attended and that there were 100 people.

Mr GAINSFORD: I am not sure I said they were well attended. I said that there were 100 people.

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: Given that there were more than 700, would they have been poorly attended?

Mr GAINSFORD: I would not offer an opinion on whether it was well attended or not.

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: Were those three community consultations held over a period of a month so that they were spread out, or were they all held within one week?

Mr GAINSFORD: I would have to take that on notice. Again, these were Infrastructure NSW's community information sessions. I cannot speak with authority.

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: Were they all held at the Sydney Football Stadium or on Sydney Cricket and Sports Ground Trust lands?

Mr GAINSFORD: I believe they were held at the Sydney Football Stadium, that is correct.

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: So there were none that were embedded in the communities around them?

Mr GAINSFORD: Of those community information sessions not that I am aware of, no.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I just want you to confirm the figures you gave us: 672 objections out of 726. That is, 93 per cent of the submissions were opposed?

Mr GAINSFORD: Yes.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Can I just return to this question about timing? It is very important. The reason I wanted to ask about the site establishment process is we have been told in that demolition report, which is sitting there in the EIS as attachment E, that prior to demolition the site establishment has got to take place and that will take three or four weeks. The Committee has been told that will start in January 2019, but we are also told that demolition of the Sydney Football Stadium roof will start in January 2019. That contradicts what is in front of us in that demolition plan, which says naturally you have got to establish the site first; that takes three or four weeks, so we are now into mid February before that has taken place. Can you shed any light on that contradiction in front of us?

Mr GAINSFORD: I really cannot. It is really a matter for Infrastructure NSW.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: We will return to that. But that makes sense, does it not, that if we start in January 2019 for three or four weeks that site establishment process would have to occur first?

Mr GAINSFORD: It would really be a matter for Infrastructure NSW; they would be the ones that would be expert in that.

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: You said that the stakeholder would be responding to the concerns that have been raised in the submissions. Which stakeholder will be responding?

Mr GAINSFORD: I meant to say Infrastructure NSW would have to respond to all the submissions that have been made.

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: And where would Infrastructure NSW seek the ongoing information to respond? Will they make an assessment of, say, the transport studies and respond to those or will they seek a response from the applicant—or they are the applicant?

Mr GAINSFORD: They are the applicant in this instance, so they are acting on behalf of the Sydney Cricket and Sports Ground Trust. But yes, they are the applicant so they would be responsible for making sure that they respond to all those submissions.

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: You were asked earlier about the development application process and who had the right for planning approval. The Act allows, does it not, the Minister to approve improvements on the Sydney Cricket and Sports Ground Trust lands? A new stadium would not be considered an improvement, would it, under the ministerial authority?

Mr GAINSFORD: Are you again talking to the legislation that covers the Sydney Cricket Ground?

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: That is right.

Mr GAINSFORD: Again, I am not expert in how that legislation applies. What I can say is that this application is being assessed under the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act.

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: But in regards to the questions that were asked of you, in reality it is probably irrelevant, is it not? It is being assessed by your department because that is the appropriate place for it to be assessed?

Mr GAINSFORD: That is correct, yes.

The CHAIR: I will now move to the Government for some final questions. Mr MacDonald?

Mr SCOT MacDONALD: Just getting back to the numbers of submissions, the eastern suburbs of Sydney is one of the most densely populated parts of New South Wales and Australia. I just looked it up, about 267,000 people live there, according to the last census. So when 700 people out of 267,000 people put in a submission, what is your feeling on that? Is that a normal response rate? Is it a reflection of their interest? Is that pretty standard?

Mr GAINSFORD: It is hard for me to make a judgement in terms of those numbers. Obviously, there are a number of projects that we assess that we go through this process. The number of applications that we receive range from zero right up to 15,000 for various applications.

Mr SCOT MacDONALD: But, to me, this strikes me as the lower end—700 out of a quarter of a million people. Does that give to you a level of comfort of what people feel about the redevelopment?

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: Point of order: What Mr MacDonald feels is, I would think, argumentative, and whether it gives someone from the Department of Planning comfort on the level of community submissions I think is probably seeking an opinion.

The CHAIR: I agree. I uphold the point of order; it is seeking an opinion. You are not required to answer that question, Mr Gainsford. Would you like to reframe your question, Mr MacDonald?

Mr SCOT MacDONALD: No, that is fine. Can I just go on to what you are obliged to do—as you say, this is State infrastructure? Just to confirm in our mind, there is not an obligation to do a widespread consultation but obviously you are undertaking that with the stakeholders, whether they be community groups or council. Just to be clear, can you explain that?

Mr GAINSFORD: Sure. As part of the environmental impact statement exhibition for the State signification development application we put letters out to landowners and occupiers of properties around the proposal—37,000 letters we sent out. We also put lots of information on our social media, on our website. We identified multiple ways of encouraging people to engage in the process. That is something that we do fairly standard for State significant development applications nowadays. As I mentioned before, we also encourage the community and we will continue to engage with the community and some of the key government agencies.

Mr SCOT MacDONALD: To be clear for us, you are going well beyond your statutory requirements in terms of engagement?

Mr GAINSFORD: No, it is fairly typical. The 37,000 letters that we sent out was certainly one of the larger mail outs that we have done.

The Hon. TAYLOR MARTIN: Could I please ask for an explanation on the planning process that was undertaken for the existing stadium that is currently at Moore Park? I believe it was built in the late eighties.

Mr GAINSFORD: Yes, 1988 is my understanding. Again, I am unfortunately not an expert in that assessment. I know that assessment was not done through the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act.

The Hon. TAYLOR MARTIN: What would be the large differences undertaking it through the environmental Act?

Mr GAINSFORD: There are heads of consideration in the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act that require social, economic and biophysical issues to be covered off. It is a comprehensive bit of legislation that requires all of those environmental impacts to be thoroughly assessed. I could not give you a view on the alternate legislation.

The Hon. TAYLOR MARTIN: But it is safe to say that this is far more stringent?

Mr GAINSFORD: We certainly believe it is a stringent piece of legislation, yes.

The CHAIR: Does the Opposition have one final question they would like to ask?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Just one. Given 93 per cent of people who put in submissions are opposed, why have you not conducted a public hearing? Why will you not conduct a public hearing on this process? This is pretty contentious.

Mr GAINSFORD: Public hearings are not part of the State significant development process where government is an applicant for these types of developments. That is not a process.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: So if a private development went ahead it would go to a public hearing potentially under these circumstances, but because the Government is pushing this through it will go through, even though all these people are opposed, without any public hearing?

Mr SCOT MacDONALD: Seven hundred out of a quarter of a million.

The Hon. WES FANG: Point of order: I think there was a bit of argument there about the Government pushing it through while—

The CHAIR: The point of order is not upheld. We are running out of time. You may answer the question if you feel you can.

Mr GAINSFORD: With a private application, if there were more than 25 objections it would go to the Independent Planning Commission and the Independent Planning Commission then quite often holds an inquiry as part of their process.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: So 672 objections here but no public hearing because it is a government proposal?

Mr GAINSFORD: That is correct, yes.

The CHAIR: We are just about out of time. Thank you for agreeing to come and give us your evidence today. There will obviously be questions on notice. We would like answers to those questions on notice within 21 days of you receiving the questions. The secretariat will put the questions in writing.

(The witness withdrew)

NICHOLAS WEEKS, Chief Operating Officer, National Rugby League, sworn and examined

The CHAIR: We have you for half an hour. Do you have an opening state, and how long is it?

Mr WEEKS: I do. It is quite short. It will be a minute or two.

The CHAIR: Please proceed.

Mr WEEKS: Thank you for your time, chairman and members of the Committee. The National Rugby League [NRL] operates the best and largest rugby league competition in the world. Each year we have about 200 matches. They include 25 rounds of the Telstra Premiership, the NRL series, the grand final and the State of Origin series. We play All Stars matches, international test matches and Pacific test matches. More than half of this content is played in Sydney and we deliver major economic and social benefits to the State and the city. Given the amount of content the NRL provides, we have a keen interest in the New South Wales Government stadia strategy.

Unfortunately, decades of underinvestment and a scattergun approach driven by political interests, rather than coherent policy, has resulted in a network of stadia in Sydney that is dilapidated and does not provide the world-class experience our fans, members and players deserve. The decades of underinvestment means that Sydney has fallen behind all other mainland states and the network of venues that we play out of are not befitting a city that prides itself on being the country's global city. The NRL has long argued for investment in Sydney's stadia network with a focus on delivering a network of stadia that are purpose-built for rectangular sport—we do not currently have those—well connected to the transport network and part of a vibrant precinct that includes multiple entertainment options.

We are very pleased that the New South Wales Government's investment will see three top-class rectangular stadia in Sydney. These will bring our fans closer to the action than ever before. When you combine the new transport infrastructure to Parramatta, Moore Park and Sydney Olympic Park, we believe the package will deliver a great outcome for all sports fans. The NRL has committed to playing State of Origin and the grand final in Sydney for the next 25 years in return for the investment in the Sydney stadia network. The New South Wales Government's stadia strategy will be the biggest infrastructure investment into purpose-built rugby league facilities our code has ever seen. Naturally, we are supportive of the Government's plans and look forward to seeing the network delivered.

The CHAIR: Thank you.

The Hon. LYNDIA VOLTZ: Mr Weeks, the business case identifies Manly Warringah and St George Dragons as the games that can be moved from suburban grounds. Has the NRL given any commitment to the Government to move games from suburban grounds?

Mr WEEKS: We have not given any commitments of that nature. Where our clubs play their matches will be a matter for clubs to determine. We expect that they will play them in a range of facilities and venues as they currently do, including their traditional suburban grounds, including the new stadia and regional venues as well.

The Hon. LYNDIA VOLTZ: Have you raised with the Government your concerns over NRL games being moved away from suburban grounds?

Mr WEEKS: We have not had those discussions with the Government.

The Hon. LYNDIA VOLTZ: Why have you not had those discussions, given that that is what underpins its business case?

Mr WEEKS: We made a contribution of information to the business case, but the business case is a matter for the Government and we are confident that it has constructed that in an effective manner.

The Hon. LYNDIA VOLTZ: Let us go to the Parramatta Stadium business case. It identifies three NRL teams playing at that venue and 30 games per year. Have you discussed that element of the business case with the Government?

Mr WEEKS: We have not.

The Hon. LYNDIA VOLTZ: You did not ask why it included three NRL teams?

Mr WEEKS: We have nine teams in Sydney that play in the NRL competition. We believe that a number of those teams will take matches to the new stadia network, including the new Western Sydney Stadium at Parramatta, but we have not got into detailed commitments in relation to the exact number of matches that we will play there or the teams that will play there.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: You have just said that there have been no discussions, not just commitment. The evidence is that you have had no discussions with the Government.

Mr WEEKS: We provided the information to KPMG that was doing the business case, I believe, on behalf of the Government.

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: What did you provide to KPMG?

Mr WEEKS: We provided the information principally in relation to our major events, the NRL grand final, State of Origin, our expectations and preferences into the design of the new facilities.

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: You just said that you expect that some NRL teams will move to the new stadiums. Which teams do you expect to move?

Mr WEEKS: We have not had investment in rectangular stadiums in Sydney for 30 years.

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: That is not my question. Which teams do you expect to move?

The CHAIR: Order! Allow the witness to answer your question.

Mr WEEKS: I am answering your question. We have not had investment in Sydney for 30 years in rectangular stadiums. The fans, tourists and other people who will attend NRL matches have not experienced what a modern rectangular stadium looks like. We believe when they get a taste of that when Parramatta Stadium opens next year they will find the experience fantastic. We believe some clubs will want to play there in addition to the Parramatta club that is based out of that ground, but that will be a matter for clubs.

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: You have had no discussions at all with the Government about any NRL games moving there?

Mr WEEKS: I will repeat the answer I gave you before. We provided the information to KPMG that did the business case on behalf of the Government.

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: There is no information to the Government that underpins the business case at Parramatta Stadium that says that there will be three NRL teams and 30 games played there. Is that correct?

Mr WEEKS: What information underlies the business case is a case for KPMG and the Government, not the NRL.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: You are saying it might happen or it might not happen.

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: What I am getting to, the Government has presented a business case, which it gives a benefit-cost ratio on. What underpins our business case is this number of games and events. The Government has said there will be 30 NRL games and three teams. You are saying that information has not come from the NRL?

Mr WEEKS: What I am saying, we have not provided any guarantees of the number of matches that will be played at the stadium, but we are confident that the new stadium will be such that additional matches will be played. They include not only NRL matches, but representative matches. For example, we are in discussions at the moment with a range of parties about having a World Cup of nine, so that might be at Parramatta, for example. We might play the Pacific test matches that are currently at Campbelltown at Parramatta, for example. We might play additional test matches at Parramatta.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: That is not what the business case says.

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: You say you are confident that will happen. Which three NRL teams are you confident will play there?

Mr WEEKS: We have nine teams in Sydney that play in the NRL competition. We are confident that teams will take matches into the new stadia network—whether that is Parramatta, Homebush or Moore Park—in addition to taking matches to suburban grounds and regional centres.

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: But if you are going to have three teams playing 30 games they can only come from suburban grounds.

Mr WEEKS: We have not made a commitment as to the number of games that will be played there.

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: You have not made a commitment, yet the Government has included it to underpin its business case. Is the Government just making these figures up, being overoptimistic? Why is the Government including what NRL games are going to shift to those stadiums if it has not discussed that with the NRL?

Mr WEEKS: With the greatest of respect, I think if you have got questions about the Government's business case you should address them to the Government.

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: Don't worry, we have tried that.

Mr WEEKS: Okay.

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: Let us go to the Sydney Football Stadium. It actually has a reduction in the number of games that are currently played there as its base case. Have you looked at those figures?

Mr WEEKS: No.

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: The NRL signed a memorandum of understanding [MOU] with the Government. Was that memorandum of understanding signed by the Australian Rugby League Commission [ARLC]?

Mr WEEKS: It was, I believe, yes.

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: Can you provide the date on which it was signed? You can take that on notice.

Mr WEEKS: I will take that on notice.

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: Who owns State of Origin?

Mr WEEKS: The Australian Rugby League Commission owns State of Origin.

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: When you signed the MOU did you have discussions with New South Wales Rugby League?

Mr WEEKS: I would have to take that on notice.

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: Do you know if they saw the memorandum of understanding before it was signed?

Mr WEEKS: I would have to take that on notice.

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: Do they have an interest in State of Origin?

Mr WEEKS: They have an interest in State of Origin in that New South Wales Rugby League selects the New South Wales team. The ARLC owns the State of Origin competition. It is the ARLC that is responsible for selecting the venues at which State of Origin matches are played, for staging the event and for commercialising the State of Origin competition. New South Wales Rugby League and Queensland Rugby League are responsible for selecting the teams and participating. Those decisions around venues and locations of State of Origin competitions are ones for the ARLC.

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: Does New South Wales Rugby League get income out of State of Origin?

Mr WEEKS: New South Wales Rugby League and Queensland Rugby League, together with a range of other members and affiliates of the Australian Rugby League Commission, receive funding from the Australian Rugby League Commission to undertake their objects and responsibilities.

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: Does that funding come from the State of Origin series?

Mr WEEKS: The funding comes from a range of things: principally our broadcast revenue from the NRL competition, broadcast revenue from State of Origin, sponsorship revenue and all the other revenue streams that we have.

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: Why was the cost of rebuilding Rugby League Central if it needed to be moved included in the MOU?

Mr WEEKS: When you say the cost of it, what exactly do you mean?

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: If Rugby League Central was to be demolished as part of the rebuild, why was that included in the MOU?

Mr WEEKS: Our head office is at Moore Park adjacent to Allianz Stadium. If the footprint of the new stadium was such that our building was required to be demolished then clearly we needed a place to conduct business and for our employees to work from and it was important that we would be relocated if that was to occur.

Mr JUSTIN FIELD: I wanted to go back to the final business case for the redevelopment of the Sydney Football Stadium. I appreciate your answers to Ms Voltz, but, just so we are clear, in the business case it estimates that an additional five games over what is currently played there will be played at the new stadium.

Mr WEEKS: Which new stadium is that one?

Mr JUSTIN FIELD: This is the redeveloped Sydney Football Stadium. Can you give us an indication of what games they would be likely to be?

Mr WEEKS: There is a range of possible games, as I mentioned before. We expect that some of our teams—with the new stadium and the fact that they have not played out of a purpose-built new rectangular stadium for 30 years in the city—will take the opportunity to play some of their matches there. But that is a matter for the clubs. In addition to that, we have other content through the NRL, whether it is All Stars, Pacific test matches or nines competitions, that we will look to play at the best venues available and that is going to be one of the best venues—in fact, probably the best venue—in the country when it is built.

Mr JUSTIN FIELD: The business case does not give any indication of those additional types of games that you mentioned. Either you did not provide that information to KPMG or they considered that it was unlikely to result in additional games being played there. What they do specify is an increase in NRL club matches and an increase potentially in NRL final series matches. What would they be basing that on? Was there a letter from you that went to KPMG?

Mr WEEKS: I think in fairness that is really a question you should direct to KPMG. It is their business case, not the NRL's.

Mr JUSTIN FIELD: How likely do you think it is that there will be those additional five games played there?

Mr WEEKS: I have touched on this a couple of times already.

Mr JUSTIN FIELD: I am talking about a different stadium now though.

Mr WEEKS: The concept here that we need to bear in mind that is Sydney and New South Wales by some measure have the worst and poorest stadium infrastructure in mainland Australia. Perth has new stadia. Adelaide has new stadia. Melbourne has new stadia. Townsville has stadia on line. Brisbane has the best rugby league venue for big events in the country. New South Wales and Sydney have the worst infrastructure available for rectangular sports in the country. Our expectation is once the quality of that stadia is improved clubs and the NRL will look to play more content at those venues.

Mr JUSTIN FIELD: Given that the Government is using these business cases as a public justification for the expenditure of billions of dollars of public money, you would think that we would have to have a degree of confidence that the figures stood up. Keep in mind that NRL matches are a significant portion of the total number of games or events that are expected to be hosted at the stadium—probably a quarter to a third of all those games. Do you have confidence that those extra games will be played there?

Mr WEEKS: Our State of Origin and the grand final, just those two events, bring in hundreds of millions of dollars to the New South Wales economy over the years. We estimate that about \$1.7 billion of economic value to New South Wales is generated over the 25-year commitment that we have made to play the State of Origin and grand final in Sydney every year. If you add in addition to that the benefits that this city derives from nine NRL teams that play out of Sydney every week, the economic return to the city is very substantial indeed. If you have questions about the business case and about aspects of the business case I really think you ought to direct those questions to KPMG that built that business case. From our perspective, we think the investment will be returned to this city and the people of New South Wales.

Mr JUSTIN FIELD: I think if you read the transcript you would see questions to KPMG, questions to Infrastructure NSW and questions to you. We get a circular loop of reference to other people and other submissions. That is why we are labouring this point. I will ask a question about how these new and redeveloped stadiums might improve revenue opportunities for the NRL. Would you expect that you would be able to increase how much you charge for broadcast rights for the games as a result of these investments?

Mr WEEKS: What the data proves across Australia is that new stadia when they are built improve attendances. We have seen it at Adelaide with the Adelaide Oval redevelopment. The crowds for the two AFL teams there have gone up materially. We have seen it in Perth this year. We have seen it with the Melbourne

Storm. We have seen it with the Swans and the Sydney Cricket Ground development. We are absolutely confident that new stadia will lead to growth in crowds. As for revenue for the NRL and its clubs, a principal source of the revenue of our clubs is match day attendance and commercialising that, so we expect that our clubs will be in a better position with better stadia. We expect that the value of our competition generally will be enhanced by improved stadia. As to what exactly that might mean financially it is difficult to say.

Mr JUSTIN FIELD: Given that you would expect higher attendance and higher turnover through the gate, and given that has come about through substantial public investment, would you think it would be reasonable for the venues to charge the sports a higher amount of the ticket price in order to recoup those costs for the public?

Mr WEEKS: The game and the clubs currently spend a very significant amount on venue hire. We will continue to pay venue hire fees—whether it is the NRL or clubs—to venues. We do not expect that to change. One thing about sport which is important for everyone to bear in mind is that we are a not-for-profit business so that everything we earn goes back into the sport; it goes back into grassroots. We are going to spend close to \$1 million a year on non-elite rugby league in the coming five years. It goes into our clubs, it goes into employment opportunities for players and for people to work at clubs. It goes into recreation and health benefits for everyone who plays non-elite rugby league. The benefits for the State out of a healthy, prosperous sporting environment—rugby league and other sports—are very substantial.

Mr JUSTIN FIELD: I think we all know that a lot of that revenue also goes into the elite sport. A lot of sports encourage participation but do not enjoy the same government largess. If you are paying a significant amount to the venues how would it be that the Sydney Football Stadium has been allowed to fall into a state of disrepair? That has been the evidence put before us from the trust itself and the arguments made in the business case. If it is the case that the revenue being received from matches is not able to maintain it, you are going to require substantial ongoing government investment to maintain the sport. How is that reasonable to the public of New South Wales?

Mr WEEKS: If your question goes to the economics for the trust of maintaining the stadium, I think that question is best directed to the trust.

Mr JUSTIN FIELD: The economics of your business model generally require substantial ongoing investment and the public needs to understand that.

Mr WEEKS: We get very modest amounts of money from government actually. Our sport generates sufficient income to put back into participation. Activities from our sport are close to \$100 million a year that we invest across the country. It goes into funding an elite rugby league competition. Our financial model does not rely on government investment at all.

Mr JUSTIN FIELD: Given the number of matches that will be played at Parramatta and the Sydney Football Stadium in fact you are the major beneficiary of this investment, would you not agree? That is certainly what your letter, I think, to the Committee has said.

Mr WEEKS: No. I think the people of Sydney and New South Wales are the major beneficiaries of this investment. [*Time expired.*]

Mr SCOT MacDONALD: I want to go to your statement and submission about underinvestment over the last couple of decades. It strikes me like a boiling frog scenario. What is in your mind if this stadia investment across the three does not proceed? Where does that leave your code, where does that leave other codes and where do you see that in years to come?

Mr WEEKS: It has been unfortunate from our perspective that the stadia investment strategy has become as controversial as it has. No doubt there has been a real contest of ideas around where the money should go and how it should be best invested. A significant part of that is a consequence of the failure of significant governments to invest in stadium infrastructure for 30 years. We have not seen that in Western Australia, South Australia, Victoria or Queensland. We are very pleased that this Government has taken the opportunity, when the State is in strong financial health, to catch up with an underinvestment in rectangular stadia that has occurred in this State for many years, so we are absolutely supportive.

If some of that investment had occurred at some point over the last 30 years perhaps the amount of money that was to be invested and the controversy around what is proposed would not be as great. Our content—the grand final and the State of Origin matches—are the most popular sporting events in the country. Year in year out the three State of Origin matches and the NRL grand final are four of the top five or six television programs in the country, sport and otherwise. What that means is that there is a very strong level of interest from other States in that content.

Sydney and New South Wales, together with Queensland, are the heartland of rugby league. We want to play our games here and we want to provide our fans with the opportunity to watch our elite games. What this investment allows us to do is to be satisfied that we are playing those games, our grand finals and our origins, in the best venues available. But for this investment we might find more of those matches occurring outside of New South Wales and Sydney.

Mr SCOT MacDONALD: Just to be clear on that: there was a very real risk of losing some or all of that content, the State of Origin and the grand final; some of those most popular events? That was on the table?

Mr WEEKS: The grand final in particular and the State of Origin in particular. This year we took the State of Origin to Melbourne and we had 90,000 people there. Next year we will take it to Perth and we will sell that stadium out. The year after that we will go to Adelaide and we will sell that stadium out. The grand final has always been in Sydney but there is a very strong level of interest by the other States in hosting that grand final. It is one of the iconic sporting events on the Australian calendar. It is watched by close to four million people. There will be visitors coming from all over the country. With this investment we have agreed to commit to continue to play the grand final in Sydney for 25 years. That is an outstanding outcome for the people of New South Wales.

The Hon. WES FANG: When you are looking to place major events like the grand final and the State of Origin what are you looking for in terms of infrastructure?

Mr WEEKS: We want to play our events in the best stadia that are available. We want those events to be connected to transport to enable fans to get in and out of the venue well. We want them to be integrated with entertainment precincts so people can go along and have a meal, have a drink or meet with their friends before or after the match. We want them to be in world-class stadia. For those people who have not been to some of these modern stadia, they should go and have a look at them because it is chalk and cheese compared to going to Allianz or ANZ at the moment. The technology and development in stadia infrastructure has changed dramatically. We will see that next April or May when Parramatta is open. A lot of the discussion around this investment, once people see what Parramatta looks like, will dissipate.

The Hon. TAYLOR MARTIN: Does the NRL have any data or research on the benefits that New South Wales could expect to see from that long-term commitment to the grand final or State of Origin?

Mr WEEKS: Yes, we do. Part of what we do when we take an event like the State of Origin to another city is we need to prove up the benefits to that city and State. We routinely do research into the number of visitors coming to watch the match and what that means in economic terms to the State. Our assessment is that an NRL grand final over the 25-year commitment that we have made in Sydney, together with the State of Origin in Sydney for the next 25 years, will return close to \$1.7 billion in economic benefit to the State and city. That is people working in restaurants and bars; it is taxidivers; it is hotels, shopping and the other tourism opportunities that will benefit from that. Our events are very significant indeed.

The Hon. TAYLOR MARTIN: The stadia strategy centred around the network in Sydney. Can you explain more about why revitalising all three in the network is important?

Mr WEEKS: We have nine teams in the city and the geography of Sydney is unique. It is different to other cities in Australia. We think that to have a stadium in the middle of town at Moore Park, particularly with the infrastructure that is being built in terms of light rail and potentially heavy rail, is really critical. Parramatta, with the plans that the Government has made and some of the investment in transport infrastructure in that CBD or commercial precinct generally, will be vitally important to the people of Western Sydney. Then the Homebush stadium, or ANZ Stadium as it is currently called, is going to be increasingly a busy part of town with commercial and residential development, well serviced by transport. Those three stadia, together with our suburban grounds, which will continue to be used and have a real place to play in rugby league, we think will create an outstanding network of stadia for the city.

Mr SCOT MacDONALD: We have been hearing about consultation and planning for the Sydney Football Stadium and your presence there. Are you satisfied with the dialogue and consultation from Infrastructure NSW?

Mr WEEKS: Yes, we are. There is going to be a construction site right around our office for a couple of years. We are keen to make sure that the disruption to our business and our people coming and going is minimised but so far the level of consultation we have had with the Government and various departments has been good. We are very keen to continue to work to make sure that the design of the new stadia is as good as it can be.

Mr SCOT MacDONALD: What is the feedback coming from your membership?

Mr WEEKS: People are very excited. I think that level of excitement will increase dramatically next year in seven or eight months when Parramatta comes on line. A lot of people in Sydney have not experienced what a great, modern rectangular stadium looks like, and they will when Parramatta opens next year.

The CHAIR: Thank you for giving evidence today. The Committee may have some questions on notice. Those questions will be sent to you by the secretariat. Once you have received them we would appreciate replies within 21 days.

(The witness withdrew)

MARK FALVO, Chief Operating Officer, Football Federation Australia, sworn and examined

The CHAIR: Before we proceed to questions, do you have an opening statement, and if so how long is it?

Mr FALVO: I do not have an opening statement. All I have is the submission that was delivered by Football Federation Australia [FFA]. Other than repeating what has already been submitted I am happy to proceed.

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: On 28 August 2017 David Gallop wrote to the Premier re-emphasising a strong preference for a permanent rectangular stadium at ANZ. Football Federation Australia probably has the most investment in ANZ Stadium being reconfigured into a rectangular stadium, is that correct? Your biggest games would be played there?

Mr FALVO: That is correct. When it comes to the national team, World Cup qualifiers related to the Socceroos, they have tended to be played at Homebush.

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: We would be the only State in Australia, would we not, where our largest stadium is not configured as a rectangular stadium for our most popular games?

Mr FALVO: I suppose it really is dependent on the State and the sport in question. Perhaps if you could restate the question?

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: In New South Wales our major sports are essentially rectangular based. We would be the only State in Australia where our largest stadium, our major events stadium, is not configured to cater for the major sports in the State?

Mr FALVO: I think it is a question of what is the ideal configuration. Certainly, there is the capacity for ANZ Stadium to be rectangularised, and that is the mode that we have tended to use the venue in whenever there has been a major football event played or hosted at that venue or when there has been a major World Cup qualifier, for example. It does become a question of the quality of the experience from the perspective of the spectator, and that is where and why the initial preference of Football Federation Australia was to rebuild ANZ Stadium. However, our understanding is that the proposed redevelopment will still place the experience of spectators within the venue as a very high order and naturally we look forward to understanding more about what that will look like. We remain hopeful that the quality of the viewing experience for fans in the venue will still be first class.

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: In May 2015 David Gallop wrote to the then Premier, Mike Baird, stating that, "Whilst Allianz Stadium may be outdated from a look perspective, the capacity is not a concern for football in relation to both current and future playing and attendance strategies. It is understood that new technology upgrades have already commenced at the venue which will ensure it remains relevant and ideal to the needs of both club and international football matches." Football Federation Australia had no concerns with Allianz Stadium and how it was operating, is that correct?

Mr FALVO: The view of FFA has always been that the three key stadia in the network within New South Wales required redevelopment or enhancement. I think it was a debate as to in what order that redevelopment should occur. Certainly, our view has been that Moore Park as well as Western Sydney and ANZ Stadium would benefit from redevelopment or improvements. Obviously, there is a discussion around what is the ideal capacity of Allianz Stadium. But from our point of view, as I said, all three venues would have benefited from redevelopment and enhancement.

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: That is not consistent with the letter written by David Gallop to the then Premier, Mike Baird, and what I just read out though, is it?

Mr FALVO: I do not find that as inconsistent. I am not familiar specifically with the details of that letter, apart from what has just been read, but certainly the services that are provided within that venue to spectators could be improved. As I say, obviously there is a debate around what is the ideal capacity. But in principle, as we see Sydney FC tends to sell out the stadium whenever there is a derby. It is one of the highest drawing tenants. We feel it is important that the venue is able to cater for the future needs of Sydney FC fans.

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: Yes, but in May 2015 FFA wrote to Mike Baird and did not raise any safety and security concerns, you did not have any concerns with how it was operating, you understood that the new technology upgrades that had already commenced made the venue relevant and ideal to the needs of both club and international football matches. Would you like to have a look at that letter?

Mr FALVO: Yes. I am not familiar with that letter. I would need to read that letter.

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: I show you that letter.

Mr FALVO: I go back to my earlier comments in relation to the ordering of the stadium investment that was being put forward by FFA. This letter serves to confirm my earlier comment and that is that FFA has always seen that a new Western Sydney Stadium, a redeveloped or rebuilt Parramatta Stadium was the top priority, which is what this letter suggests. ANZ Stadium also in our view ideally would have been rebuilt and reconfigured as a rectangular venue.

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: That would be consistent with the announcement that Mike Baird made and he would have been possibly weighed by the letter that you provided at the time, that ANZ Stadium would be the priority.

Mr FALVO: Yes. Obviously from our point of view as a tenant and as an occasional hirer, it is difficult for us to talk to the specifics as to what operational needs the venue has and what sort of investments are required in order to address those concerns over the course of time.

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: But you raised no concerns at the time. Your priority was ANZ Stadium. That is probably the most important stadium to Football Federation Australia in the Sydney market, would that be correct?

Mr FALVO: That would certainly be correct at the time, yes.

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: You were very happy with the announcement that was made by Mike Baird, would that be correct?

Mr FALVO: Of course, we were supportive of the announcement that was made at the time. It was consistent with what our position on the matter was. As I say; however, we remain hopeful that a redeveloped ANZ Stadium, even if it is to occur, even if Moore Park is to be rebuilt in its entirety, we would remain hopeful that ANZ Stadium will still deliver an excellent rectangular experience for fans of our game.

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: Could I please have that letter back? In evidence John Brogden stated that he put forward the proposal to build a 55,000-seat stadium on Moore parklands based on a request by Football Australia. Are you aware of any request by Football Australia for a 55,000-seat new stadium somewhere in the Sydney market?

Mr FALVO: I am not familiar with that. I should say that perhaps some of these discussions occurred before I assumed my current role with Football Federation Australia [FFA]. I would need to take that on notice, I am afraid.

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: Yes. Take that on notice, and if you have any documentation that supports that, could you provide it? This correspondent actually states, "As outlined in previous correspondence to you and through our presentation to Mr John Brogden ...". One would assume that what is contained in this letter is actually what was presented to Mr John Brogden. If you could identify whether there was any other correspondence, that would be appreciated.

Mr FALVO: Sure.

Mr JUSTIN FIELD: Would you expect any additional football matches to be played at a redeveloped Allianz Stadium as a result of that redevelopment?

Mr FALVO: It is possible. As I say, the international football calendar is subject to change over the course of time. But, obviously, the preference is always to play our content at excellent football venues that provide for an excellent experience for our fans. Any venue that is able to meet those higher standards, particularly as other States and Territories are competing for that same content and where other States have made significant investments in the quality of their venues, I would say that it stands New South Wales in far better stead to be able to host football matches.

Mr JUSTIN FIELD: Were you asked by Infrastructure NSW, or KPMG who developed the business case for the Sydney Football Stadium redevelopment, for any input into that process?

Mr FALVO: I know that I have attended a number of meetings with Infrastructure NSW in relation to Moore Park. As to the KPMG process, I just need to double check on that.

Mr JUSTIN FIELD: If you could take that on notice, I would appreciate that. In the business case they do indicate under the options that they have considered that it would be likely that at least one additional international FFA match might be played at a redeveloped stadium. Would you know on what basis they would be able to make that claim in the business case?

Mr FALVO: As I say, I would need to take on notice what discussions occurred through Infrastructure NSW and KPMG consultation at the time. However, I go back perhaps to my earlier comments, which are that a venue that is better suited and meets those higher standards of spectator amenities and also requirements from the point of view of the Asian Football Confederation and the Fédération Internationale de Football Association [FIFA] would increase the likelihood of that venue being able to stage football events.

Mr JUSTIN FIELD: But you do not have any agreements, formal or informal, with the venue to play additional matches there as a result of a redevelopment, or contingent on a redevelopment?

Mr FALVO: No. We do not have any specific agreements with Allianz.

Mr JUSTIN FIELD: What about with Destination NSW?

Mr FALVO: We do have an agreement with Destination NSW presently which takes us through to 2020 to play matches, not specifically in any venue but obviously within the borders of New South Wales, in particular, geographic areas of the State.

Mr JUSTIN FIELD: Sorry, within the network. So there is an agreement that you will provide content—matches – and through agreement with Destination NSW you will decide on whether those matches will be played. Is that right?

Mr FALVO: Correct. There was the discussion, which I think was referenced in the media statements I was given at the time when the former Premier announced the stadium outcome at ANZ Stadium, that we would be looking to recommit and extend our agreement with Destination NSW on account of the investment that was being made in the stadium network.

Mr JUSTIN FIELD: That would not relate to a redeveloped Sydney Football Stadium, would it? That is not really in their network in that way.

Mr FALVO: No. Could you restate that question, I am sorry?

Mr JUSTIN FIELD: Destination NSW is not going to suggest a place to hold a football match in a redeveloped Sydney Football Stadium.

Mr FALVO: No. Generally, there has not been specific reference to individual venues within the agreement. That is not to say, sorry, that is part of an extension to that agreement. That may be part of an extended agreement.

Mr JUSTIN FIELD: The redeveloped stadiums—the new stadium at Parramatta and what happens at ANZ in the end—there will be new infrastructure and new facilities and the like. Would you expect that you would be able to attract additional revenue—either the clubs or the code as a whole—as a result of this investments, either through broadcast rights or advertising rights, or ticket sales? Have you done any analysis on expected revenue uptick as a result of this Government investment?

Mr FALVO: That I am aware of? I would need to take on notice what work internally may have been around that. But, generally, there would be an expectation of increased attendance at a redeveloped network of stadia. That has certainly been the experience in other newly redeveloped stadium infrastructure in other parts of the country and in other parts of the world. We would expect to benefit from an uptick in attendance.

Mr JUSTIN FIELD: When would your broadcast rights be up for renegotiation?

Mr FALVO: We only recently concluded a new rights deal in relation to national team, A-League and W-League. The first year of that agreement has just passed so there are another five years under the current term.

Mr JUSTIN FIELD: If you can tell us, is there anything in that agreement that is in any way contingent or related to stadium redevelopment?

Mr FALVO: To my knowledge, there is not anything specific to stadium redevelopment.

The CHAIR: I ask this question just as a casual observer. I am not a football aficionado. I do other things. It seems to me that one of the biggest growths, certainly in broadcast of any of the football codes, seems to be in the various women's leagues—astronomical growth. Has your federation—and if not already, will it?—had any input into the design of these stadia to cater for what could be expected to be a greater proportion of spectators being female?

Mr FALVO: Certainly as far as the design of the venues is concerned, we have given input that has considered the hosting of both men's and female football content: For example, the inclusion of multiple dressing rooms to allow for doubleheaders to be staged and the changeover to happen from one match to the other. That is an issue that we have had to confront in other parts of the country and other venues before. Obviously, it is far

from ideal and not really acceptable. As far as amenities for female spectators are concerned, to my knowledge we have not provided input specific to gender, male or female, as far as spectators are concerned. Our submissions have always been in relation to providing the appropriate amenities for spectators and patrons at venues, regardless of their gender. Naturally, access to toilets, access to concessions in the form of food and beverage outlets and so forth, needs to cater for all who are in attendance on a match day.

The CHAIR: When you are considering, for example, let us say the women's league and the growth in it, when you are selecting venues, are you able to comment on whether other States seem to have been able to provide facilities that would better suit women's league games? Or is it not a big deal?

Mr FALVO: As I say, it really relates more to the allocation of spaces within the venue.

The CHAIR: For the players and officials.

Mr FALVO: Correct. Then it is a question of catering for families and the mix of spectators that tend to frequent venues for particular matches. When the Matildas play, for example, there is a far higher proportion of attendees that are female. When the Socceroos play, it is generally a higher proportion of male attendees. There does need to be flexibility within the venue in terms of how we configure the venue, what sort of activations we might be able to bring to the venue, either ourselves or our sponsors and partners, in order to cater for that expected group of attendees.

Mr SCOT MacDONALD: My question is much along the same lines as the Chair's. We have heard a number of times today that Western Australia, South Australia, Victoria and Queensland are investing, they are upgrading facilities, they are putting up better rectangular sporting venues. Can you give me what you think would be the trajectory of football in New South Wales, business as usual versus the investment that we are talking about across the network?

Mr FALVO: I think the investment in the stadia network across the State is one that has been very much welcomed by Football Federation Australia and our stakeholders in the form of our A-League clubs and W-League clubs. Obviously, Western Sydney Wanderers, since its inception, has been a tremendous success and I think has really contributed to the business case for the development of a new venue out at Western Sydney. I expect that fans of Western Sydney Wanderers will be very enthusiastic once the new venue is up and running—a properly configured rectangular venue with steep inclined stands and a proper football stadium—I think by every measure.

Sydney FC is a foundation club of the Hyundai A-League and also plays W-League matches at Moore Park and has generally, I think, in recent times also delivered the highest average attendance in the year. So certainly the response we expect from fans and members of Sydney FC will be a very positive one once we have a redeveloped and rebuilt Allianz Stadium. From FFA's point of view, ANZ Stadium tends to be used for those blockbuster national team matches, generally for the Socceroos, but we would hope over the lifetime of the venue, the Matildas as well.

We hosted the AFC Asian Cup in 2015. We were able to do so across the country, but in particular, with New South Wales hosting the cream of the content, we were able to realise significant benefits in economic terms from hosting the final and semifinal, and those occurred at ANZ Stadium. The feedback that we often get from fans is that they are too far from the action at ANZ Stadium; so by rectangularising the seating bowl within the venue we expect that the response from fans and supporters of our game will be very positive. It also allows us to pitch with greater confidence for other major events in the future, and we have been quite public about our intention to bid for the FIFA Women's World Cup in 2023.

Mr SCOT MacDONALD: With that new infrastructure in mind?

Mr FALVO: Absolutely. It is important from FIFA's point of view that quality stadia are put forward by host nations so that they are able to cater for not just fans but also the needs of their sponsors and the significant broadcastings and international media that will travel for an event of that type.

The CHAIR: Can I just ask for a point of clarification there? Running an event of that size and of that status, does it require multiple stadia or can you do it in just one stadium?

Mr FALVO: It can require multiple venues. In the case of the Asian Cup in 2015, which was played across five host cities, Newcastle hosted matches as well as Stadium Australia.

Mr SCOT MacDONALD: We are seeing more and more of these European clubs, Liverpool et cetera, coming out. They seem very popular, incredibly popular. Does this new infrastructure give you greater capacity to be a better magnet for those sorts of European clubs coming over?

Mr FALVO: Absolutely. European clubs are looking to build their brands abroad. Generally speaking, we welcome their visits to Australia because it also helps to grow interest and the appeal of football; it also helps

to connect fans of the European game to fans supporting the A-League. Just last week we saw Chelsea play at the new Perth Stadium and attract 55,000 fans when they played against Perth Glory. In recent years we have had Chelsea here in Sydney, as well as Arsenal, Liverpool, Tottenham. So certainly these big European clubs look for a quality venue; they also, obviously, look for the supporting infrastructure in terms of training sites and so forth because this is generally part of their pre-season experience. But they clearly want a major stadium, and more often than not a high-capacity venue is required in order to make those types of match fixtures work, because it takes a lot of money to attract an opponent of that standing, and in order to make it work for both the promoter and other supporters of the event, the ability to drive a high ticket yield is quite important.

The Hon. WES FANG: You spoke before about the FIFA Women's World Cup. What is the status of the bid? How important do you think the stadia plan for New South Wales is to attracting that bid and what sort of economic benefit do you think the State would see if we were to succeed in winning the bid?

Mr FALVO: The bid is progressing. With the support of the Commonwealth Government, who have contributed \$5 million to support FFA's bid for a World Cup, we have been preparing our mix of stadia that could be put forward and have been working with State and Territory government working groups across the country to ensure that the hosting requirements and obligations are understood, to start to cost up what the event may take to deliver. The formal process is yet to commence from FIFA's point of view but we expect that it will commence in the coming months and we expect that a decision around the successful host will be taken somewhere around the middle of next year.

Part of the process we expect will be that we will need to submit a big book, which will outline the venues, the stadia, as well as training sites and other necessary infrastructure to host the event, and part of the evaluation, as we have just seen from the 2026 Men's World Cup process, will be to evaluate the quality of those venues because a venue is of the highest order of importance for FIFA when it comes to awarding these events because it is obviously the stage for their product, their sponsors, players and fans alike. So we see it certainly as helping our cause to be able to put forward in our bid to FIFA, and when we are competing against likely other big nations around the world that covet hosting such a big event, to be able to suggest that we can put forward newly developed, world-class stadia of varying sizes we think helps our standing as far as the bid is concerned. The last Women's World Cup in Canada averaged crowds of 27,000 per match. I think there were something like seven matches that attracted greater than 40,000 fans.

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: It was 1.3 million in attendance.

Mr FALVO: We obviously hope to be able to win the bid. Nothing can be assured but certainly we think that better stadia help our cause.

The Hon. WES FANG: You spoke before about how the improvement in Western Sydney sites would help Western Sydney Wanderers. But for Sydney FC, do you think a redeveloped Allianz Stadium would help the team to grow and increase their base—it would be a catalyst for growth of the club?

Mr FALVO: That is certainly the hope. I would expect from Sydney FC's point of view as a football club the ability to provide better amenities and a better experience on match day is something that contributes to the attraction of members and also the retention of members year in, year out. The access to the venue, the amenities that are delivered on match day, things like waiting lines and queues, they are the kinds of things that determine and decide whether or not a family chooses to return next time. These are certainly important considerations from the club's future growth perspectives.

The Hon. WES FANG: In terms of matches for the Socceroos and the Matildas, can you explain to us what the level of competition between other States attracting the national team games is?

Mr FALVO: There is a high level of competition. During the last World Cup qualification cycle we saw matches staged in Canberra, Adelaide, Perth, Sydney and Melbourne. There is always a high demand certainly for the Socceroos and now an increasingly high demand for the Matildas' matches as well. Obviously, New South Wales is an important market for us; it is where our highest participation numbers are—there is quite a sizeable football community in this State. So from our point of view it is important that the State is able to compete with other States. Naturally, from our point of view as a national governing body hosting national team matches, we seek to take the national team around the country. But, as I say, there is a strategic importance to New South Wales, and Sydney in particular, and it is important for us that quality stadia are able to host matches.

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: Following on from the success of the men's Asian Cup in Australia, particularly in Newcastle, you asked the New South Wales Government to bid for the women's Asian Cup. Do you know if the New South Wales Government did that?

Mr FALVO: No, in the end we did not proceed with a bid for the women's Asian Cup.

The CHAIR: We are out of time. Mr Falvo, thank you very much for agreeing to give us your evidence today. There will be some questions on notice. We would appreciate answers to those questions from the date you receive them within 21 days. The secretariat will send those to you.

(The witness withdrew)

(Short adjournment)

ANDREW CLAYTON JONES, Chief Executive Officer, Cricket NSW, affirmed and examined

The CHAIR: Do you have a brief opening statement?

Mr JONES: Yes, I do.

The CHAIR: How long is it?

Mr JONES: A couple of minutes.

The CHAIR: Please proceed.

Mr JONES: First, thank you for the opportunity to be here this morning. I am the chief executive officer of Cricket NSW. As the name suggests, we are the peak body for cricket in this State and we oversee everything from grassroots cricket through the emerging player pathways to professional cricket. In that capacity, we run six professional teams: the NSW Blues, which is our men's team, which has competed in the Sheffield Shield and played at the Sydney Cricket Ground [SCG] since 1878; and the NSW Breakers, which is our women's team, which has competed in the women's national cricket competition since 1931; and the two Sydney-based Big Bash League and Women's Big Bash League, which is the Sydney Sixers and the Sydney Thunder. Each of those teams has a men's team and women's team. We have six professional teams in total.

The state of play for cricket in New South Wales is very healthy. We are experiencing strong growth. This year we achieved 400,000 grassroots participants for the first time, driven by significant activity in schools, increasing direct support by Cricket NSW for grassroots cricket associations and, very pleasingly, through a rapid growth in girls' participation, driven by the success of the Women's Big Bash League. We were proud to be the first sports organisation in Australia to professionalise its women domestic players, which we did in 2016, which has led to professionalisation across cricket.

At the fan level, we are also experiencing terrific growth. The Big Bash League is the most watched or highest rating sports league in Australia. About one million Australians watch it every night of the summer and the Women's Big Bash League is also the highest rating women's sports league in Australia, which is watched by one-quarter million viewers per game, and we expect that to increase significantly in the next 12 months. The state of play for the game is very healthy. I have a slight bias, but we produce the best cricketers in Australia and many of the best cricketers in the world. The best six male cricketers in Australia are from New South Wales and probably four of the best five female cricketers in Australia are from New South Wales, including the world's number one player, Ellyse Perry. Cricket is in a good shape.

In relation to the stadium redevelopment, it is obviously a rectangular stadium so there is no direct benefit to cricket from the redevelopment. It has some consequences for our training and administration headquarters, which is at the SCG just behind the members' stand and outside the current Allianz Stadium. Essentially our main administration building and our indoor centre, which includes our gymnasium, are being demolished. We are in active discussions with the SCG trust to relocate those. As a matter of principle, it is important to state on record the position of Cricket NSW on investment in sports infrastructure. We support investment in world-class fan-facing sports infrastructure for the benefit of the people and sports fans in New South Wales, regardless of the sport. Obviously we do not believe that that should be at the expense of cricket. In this particular case, the challenge for us is to make sure that we have at least what we have now at the SCG elsewhere in the precinct. As I said, those discussions are going. I am happy to take any questions.

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: Good morning. You forgot to mention the bowling team from New South Wales. Every bowler was from New South Wales at one stage.

Mr JONES: Yes, I think we got every wicket in the Ashes except a late run out. Maybe Mitchell Marsh snuck one in at the last test.

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: Have you met Matt Miller from the Office of Sport or the Minister for Sport since the announcement that the Cricket NSW facilities would be demolished as part of the redevelopment of the Sydney Football Stadium [SFS]?

Mr JONES: Yes, I have.

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: At those meetings, were there any discussions that Cricket NSW would be provided assistance to relocate to a new home and would receive financial assistance to rebuild its facilities?

Mr JONES: We are in ongoing discussions about that. Our expectation is that we will have alternative facilities elsewhere in the SCG trust precinct, which will roughly replicate what we have now.

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: What about financial assistance? Who will pay for those new facilities?

Mr JONES: That is a matter of ongoing discussions. It is a little bit unclear to us, but our best guess is that any investment will be by the trust and the trust will own the facilities that it invests in. It is important to understand that we do not own the facilities we are currently in. We have a licence agreement to use them and we then rent those from the SCG trust and it is very similar to all the other sports in the precinct. We expect that arrangement would continue. Any money invested by the trust would be invested in assets that it owns, that is, that the people of New South Wales own, and then we rent from them.

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: On 2 February, Cricket NSW wrote to the Minister and the chair of the Sydney Cricket Ground trust, confirming that they would not be demolished. I will put that aside for the moment, but in the longer term, it is looking to the Brewongle and Churchill stands if it is redeveloped or a new building on the side. Which of those two options is being considered?

Mr JONES: There is a range of options being considered. We have probably gone through half a dozen different scenarios. Our feeling at the moment is that further development of the SCG, which is necessary, is still some years away, given the current investment in rectangular codes. We do not think the Brewongle-Churchill option will happen in the short term. For that reason, we are focusing on facilities that are elsewhere in the precinct.

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: Will that be a standalone facility?

Mr JONES: It is unclear. Probably not. The option we are exploring at the moment is working in partnership with the other stakeholders in the precinct, including a couple of the other sports, to see if we can share some facilities and I guess create the most efficient facility possible for everybody involved.

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: That would be Sports House, would it?

Mr JONES: Possibly, a version of Sports House. Probably not what I understand the current version to be, but, again, that is a matter of ongoing discussion.

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: I will read this statement from your letter:

Noting that Cricket NSW's preferred position is not to be in Sports House, which will house AFL, Roosters, Sydney Cricket Trust, Sydney FC—

I assume that means in UTS. Do you still expect all those current tenants to be in Sports House and you will be in a separate facility with another or will you be with some of those sports organisations?

Mr JONES: Ultimately it is a matter for the trust to make its decision. My best guess is that we are likely to be in a shared facility of some kind. Exactly who is in there will be up to the trust. I guess what we are looking at is to make sure that whatever facility is there will meet cricket's needs and, from a taxpayers' point of view, we think it will be efficient to share facilities as best we can with one or more of the other sports and clubs that are in the precinct.

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: Mr Jones, have you seen a document entitled "National Football Stadium. A new home for Sydney FC", which was produced by the Sydney Cricket Ground trust?

Mr JONES: I do not recall seeing it.

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: This was a 2016 document? You may not have seen it.

Mr JONES: I am happy to have a look at it. I do not recall. There have been quite a few iterations over my five years in the job and I cannot quite remember one from the other.

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: That document, which argues against rebuilding on the existing site, puts as the number one reason not to rebuild on the site that it requires the demolition of the Sydney FC, Roosters, Waratahs, NRL and indoor cricket centre venues. In 2016 the Sydney Cricket Ground Trust argued against rebuilding on the site because they would need to demolish your facilities. On 2 February 2018 you say that you met with the Minister on 7 December and the chairman of the Sydney Cricket Ground Trust and they gave you a commitment that they would not be demolishing your site. Is that correct?

Mr JONES: That sounds correct, yes.

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: You then received a letter from Cricket NSW later that week, on 7 February.

Mr JONES: From Infrastructure NSW?

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: The Sydney Cricket Ground Trust. Sorry, it was not you, it was to Mr Warn, the chairman of Cricket NSW, notifying you that your facilities would be demolished. Did that come as a surprise to you?

Mr JONES: It did, yes.

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: Did you ask for an explanation of why you had been given that commitment, given there is a 2016 document that already identified that a rebuild on site would need to demolish your facilities?

Mr JONES: The priority for us at that stage became how can we ensure that we have appropriate training and administration facilities moving forward. As I said at the top, we support investing in world-class fan facing facilities fundamentally for fans in New South Wales and we think New South Wales has probably lagged some other States in that area in the last five or 10 years. The issue for us is less about the stadium redevelopment as just making sure that it is not at the expense of cricket.

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: You are being offered a new facility on site for which you will have a lease arrangement or that you will maybe rent or there will be some kind of licensing agreement. Have you been offered any other financial consideration given the disruption that will happen to Cricket NSW?

Mr JONES: Those discussions are ongoing. There is nothing locked in in the long term.

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: But you are certainly seeking financial consideration?

Mr JONES: We are seeking a facility first and foremost and then the financial arrangements will be discussed after the facility is confirmed.

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: You could not put a figure on that because you have no idea at this point.

Mr JONES: In terms of a long-term facility, no. But we would expect to have a similar type of arrangement to what we have now, hopefully with slightly improved facilities and roughly the same cost to us.

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: But you have a facility that is being demolished that you were told was not being demolished. You now have no idea where you are going to be housed. The likely outcome is that you will be housed in your least preferable option, which is with other sporting organisations. You obviously will be seeking some sort of financial consideration for the business disruption that it is going to cause.

Mr JONES: As I say, on the long-term picture that is a matter of ongoing discussion. Nothing is locked in but, as I mentioned, we want to end up with no less than we have now on around about the same terms. We are happy to do that for the broader benefit of sport and particularly fans in New South Wales. In terms of the interim facility, we will be disrupted for at least a couple of seasons and we are expecting and in fact have had confirmed that there will be some compensation for that period which reflects the four years to run on our licence agreement.

Mr JUSTIN FIELD: You mentioned in your opening statement that the Government's focus on rectangular stadiums has probably put back any consideration of upgrades for cricket stadiums. Have you been in discussions with Infrastructure NSW or the Minister's office about time lines for any future investment in cricket stadiums in New South Wales?

Mr JONES: No. We have floated the possibility or the desire to do two things. The first is to complete the redevelopment of the SCG at some stage. The Brewongle-Churchill stand is pretty old and pretty tired. The O'Reilly stand is also pretty old and pretty tired and—if I am brutally honest—pretty ugly underneath from a health and safety point of view when the ground is full. But no time line has been discussed or signalled by the Government. I am sure that will be done in due course over a five- to 10-year period. The other development that we have expressed a desire for is the completion of Sydney Showground, or Spotless Stadium, which is where the Sydney Thunder plays its Big Bash games. That is slightly more complicated because that is not a government-owned facility. Well, it is owned by the government but leased to the Royal Agricultural Society. Again, no time frame has been put on that.

From our point of view, this is about fans fundamentally. You would have the numbers, but a couple of million people come to sport every year at the SCG and the football stadium. In cricket's case, the Sydney test match is the biggest annual sporting event in New South Wales. It is basically a five-day advertisement for New South Wales to the world. When India tours this year it will be watched by tens of millions of people overseas and attended by a couple of hundred thousand people. Our view on investment in stadia generally is investment in stadia is a good thing because it provides a great experience for fans who fundamentally are the men, women, boys and girls who either do, have or will pay taxes in New South Wales.

Mr JUSTIN FIELD: What conversations would you have had with the Sydney Cricket Ground Trust with regard to redevelopment at the Sydney Cricket Ground? Have you started conversations around the process and the early planning and have any dollar amounts been put on the redevelopment costs?

Mr JONES: We have had very high level discussions over a number of years about what the grand plan for the SCG is. Essentially, it is along the lines I have described, which is to redevelop the Brewongle-Churchill stand and the O'Reilly stand along the lines of the Noble-Bradman. But time lines have never been discussed with any great seriousness. I think the Government has made the call to prioritise rectangular sports, having made its previous major investment in the Noble-Bradman stand, which is a terrific facility. For that reason those discussions have been—desultory would be understating it, but we have never really had the sense that it was a short-term option.

Mr JUSTIN FIELD: The trust has raised concerns about security, amenity and access at the Sydney Football Stadium. They went to the extent of arranging for an occupation certificate to be prepared for that stadium to outline works that may need to be done to bring it up to standard. Has the trust raised with you or have you raised with the trust any similar concerns at the cricket ground?

Mr JONES: I am not an expert on health and safety of stadia. I would think that the issues would be quite similar at the Brewongle-Churchill stand and the O'Reilly stand in particular. Hopefully they get dealt with in due course.

Mr JUSTIN FIELD: You are not aware of the trust having gone through the process to engage a consultant to prepare an occupancy certificate for that ground?

Mr JONES: No. You would have to ask them that.

The Hon. TAYLOR MARTIN: Can I ask what is the vision of Cricket NSW for community and high performance facilities in New South Wales in the medium term and long term?

Mr JONES: Certainly. As I said, we are experiencing rapid growth. At the professional level we have gone from one professional team, our men's team, to six professional teams—three men's and three women's teams across State cricket plus the Big Bash League and the Women's Big Bash League. We have also got rapid growth in participation at grassroots levels. Our vision for facilities straddles each area of our operations. There are fan facing facilities, which is stadia, and I have spoken to Mr Field's question about that. We believe New South Wales sports fans deserve world-class facilities.

As to community facilities, we are in discussions with councils around New South Wales about upgrading cricket grounds and also building a network of what we call cricket in the community centres, which are essentially indoor multipurpose training facilities. We must have a dozen of those discussions on the go, maybe more. Then those facilities also double as pathway training facilities. We get cricketers from all over New South Wales, every corner of New South Wales, and our desire is to make sure that any cricketer who is good enough to play for New South Wales, the Sixers, the Thunder or Australia, has access to reasonable training facilities to be able to realise their dreams.

The Hon. TAYLOR MARTIN: On that point, how do the facilities throughout New South Wales compare with other States?

Mr JONES: I cannot speak to how they compare to other States but you can always do more. We are blessed with a number of fantastic facilities in New South Wales but there are also some gaps in the network, in particular, access to these cricket in the community centres, which are really all-year training facilities that we are in discussions about across New South Wales, mainly with councils but supported by the availability of community infrastructure funding from the Government in one form or another, whether it be the World T20 Legacy Fund or the Regional Sports Infrastructure Fund or the metropolitan equivalent. There is a tremendous amount of opportunity to upgrade community sporting facilities and we are working very actively on that.

The Hon. TAYLOR MARTIN: Can I ask what feedback you have received on the Noble and Bradman stands since they have been redeveloped?

Mr JONES: Anecdotally, outstanding. They are the best fan facilities in New South Wales, I would say. I am thinking across the current Allianz, across ANZ Stadium, Leichhardt Oval—no contest, and various other venues. They are excellent and that is the level Sydney should be aiming for as a global city. We should be aiming for world-class facilities. If you look around Australia, you have got Adelaide Oval, which has totally transformed Adelaide. You cannot find a person in Adelaide who is against Adelaide Oval anymore. The new stadium in Perth likewise and obviously Victoria has had a very deliberate strategy of investing in sports stadia for a long time. They are mainly in the oval stuff down there but that has been a very deliberate strategy of their State government and Victorians are overwhelmingly in favour of it. From our point of view, as I said earlier,

New South Wales deserves world-class, fan-facing facilities and we are not going to criticise any government for investing in them.

The Hon. TAYLOR MARTIN: What about the economic benefit of the redevelopment of those stands? Do you have any facts or figures that you can provide?

Mr JONES: No, I do not. The trust would have those, but at an anecdotal level if you look at the effect that Adelaide Oval redevelopment has had on Adelaide, which was a very controversial development in its time, it has totally changed the city, it has changed the mood of South Australia, and I think on any certainly social measure and probably economic measure it would be considered a smashing success. As I said, we believe world-class sporting facilities for fans are a good investment.

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: You said the cost of the new facility when you move into it was being underfunded by the Sydney Cricket Ground Trust. Are the discussions around financial compensation being had with the Sydney Cricket Ground Trust or the New South Wales Government or both?

Mr JONES: Both and they are ongoing. We have confirmation of some transition/disruption funding and as to the funding for a longer term facility, our understanding is that will come via the trust.

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: You also spoke about the contribution of the Ashes, that cricket game?

Mr JONES: Yes.

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: As to major events in New South Wales, the World Cup Cricket and the Ashes are probably the two big ones?

Mr JONES: Yes. Certainly the Test is the biggest annual event in Sydney from an attendance point of view and I would imagine visitation and certainly a global profile point of view. I think the Big Bash is heading in that direction from a global marketing point of view but of course there are big events in winter with State of Origin and so forth as well but, yes, cricket is a huge driver of economic activity in New South Wales. We are a not-for-profit so we focus less on the economics and more on the social benefits. Like all sports it brings people together, inspires them and allows them to spend time with their family and friends over many generations, which is one of the things that gets me out of bed in the morning, along with getting kids to play the game and also helping young athletes be their best.

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: We are going to have furious agreement about the benefits of community sport.

Mr JONES: Yes.

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: You and I both.

Mr JONES: Yes.

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: In terms of the Government's argument around a business case and the big economic drivers of economic events, which is really what we are talking about here rather than participation, we have the cricket, which as discussed is the Ashes, the World Cup and State of Origin, the grand final, maybe a British-Lions tour and the Bledisloe Cup. They are held at ANZ and the Sydney Cricket Ground, that would be correct, would it not, the big drivers of the events market?

Mr JONES: Look, I could not speak to the events market. I just do not have that data available. From memory, the attendance of the SCG precinct is cricket one, probably the Swans two and then the footy codes would be three, four and five but not too far behind, so it is relatively evenly split across the two stadia, from memory, but again you would have to check with the trust.

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: They would possibly have more events in the Sydney Football Stadium than the Sydney Cricket Ground; it is all right. We will get that off the Sydney Cricket Ground Trust.

Mr JONES: Yes.

Mr SCOT MacDONALD: From what I understand, some of the biggest objection to spending on the stadia is that it is all going towards elite sport and there is no connection to or it comes at the expense of community cricket, football or whatever. There is petition going around where that is basically the theme. Can you give us your attitude to that?

Mr JONES: Yes. There are two parts to my answer to that question. I think looking at investment in stadia as an investment for elite sport is not the right way to look at it. I think the investment in stadia is an investment for the benefit of fans and fans are men, women, boys and girls from all walks of life, all backgrounds, and sport is the thing that brings them together the most. So investing in stadia is an investment for the benefit of

fans who attend. The ground is the same size and shape and has the same grass no matter the quality of the stadium around it, so investing in stadia is actually for the benefit of the people who attend, which is fundamentally ordinary people, including people from all backgrounds and walks of life.

As to investment in community sport, that is really important too, so we invest across the professional game but also grassroots cricket and there is a very, very significant amount of government investment in community sports facilities as well. I think there are probably four or five different funds open now that we can tap for co-investment in community cricket facilities across New South Wales, in partnership of course with local government, which is generally speaking the asset holder and the major investor. So our view is that more is more. Investing in community sports is good and investing in fan-facing infrastructure is good. Then obviously in a professional environment you need decent training and administration facilities so you can put on a good show for the fans.

Mr SCOT MacDONALD: So you say that they are complementary?

Mr JONES: Absolutely, 100 per cent.

The CHAIR: Mr Jones, I would like to thank you for appearing here today and for reminding me about Leichhardt Stadium. There will be some questions on notice. The replies to those questions are to be given 21 days from the date on which you receive them in writing.

Mr JONES: Certainly. Thank you very much for your time, everyone.

The CHAIR: Thank you for attending.

**(The witness withdrew
(Luncheon adjournment)**

SUZETTE MEADE, Secretary of the North Parramatta Residents Action Group, affirmed and examined

The CHAIR: Do you have an opening statement you would like to make on behalf of your organisation?

Ms MEADE: I do, thank you.

The CHAIR: How many pages long is it?

Ms MEADE: I have not timed myself. It is three or four pages.

The CHAIR: If you could precis that for about two minutes, then we will table it and put it into the *Hansard* record.

Ms MEADE: If you could give me a mark halfway through because there is a set of recommendations I would like to specifically address to the Committee verbally.

The CHAIR: That makes our job even easier. Proceed and we will see how we go for time.

Ms MEADE: Thank you for the opportunity to appear here today. Before reading our opening statement I would like to apologise for Dr Stephen Brancatisano, who is unable to appear today due to work commitments at the Children's Hospital at Westmead. For those not familiar with our group the North Parramatta Residents Action Group was formed in 2015 in response to the Government's plans for the Parramatta North Urban Renewal. This precinct is largely public land from Parramatta Gaol to the Parramatta Stadium on O'Connell Street. It includes the Fleet Street Cumberland Hospital precinct as well as the now demolished Parramatta and District War Memorial Swimming Pool. NP RAG, as we are known, is committed to promoting the preservation of Parramatta's publicly owned parklands and public landscapes in order to enhance the historical, cultural, economic and social capital of our city whilst showcasing it to the world.

Our vision is for the historic Fleet Street precinct to become an international tourist destination of world standing, showcasing Australia's Indigenous and colonial past and achieving a world heritage listing status. However, today we are concerned with the opportunity to achieve this world heritage listing as it may be in jeopardy as a result of the introduction of a much bigger and new Western Sydney Stadium. We have also lost the historic Parramatta and District War Memorial Swimming Pool. To this end the statement will highlight the key challenges we see in terms of the stadium strategy and make three recommendations to the inquiry Committee.

The key challenges are first; the divestment of public assets, for example Parramatta Park as a result of the Western Sydney Stadium. In 1857 Parramatta Park was gazetted as the people's park with 240 acres set aside. Since then public land has been divested over successive governments, for example Parramatta High School, the heavy rail line from Parramatta to Westmead, the RSL, the Parramatta Eels football club and adjoining car park, Parramatta Stadium, the golf course and the war memorial pool. While these resources are all welcome the loss of parklands and passive recreational space is now wearing thin on a community that faces a 65 per cent population growth by 2036. Critically, while we recognise land swaps were included in the Western Sydney Stadium deal, this included small parcels of land that were already accessible public assets, such as bridges over the river and Parramatta Park. To this end it is pertinent that public land not only be protected and preserved but the opportunity to acquire parklands form an inherent part of the current and any government strategy for the region.

Secondly; the loss of community assets. The new Western Sydney Stadium saw the demolition and loss of the historic Parramatta and District War Memorial Swimming Pool. The pool facility included a 10-lane Olympic standard pool, a dive tower, water slides, water polo pool, a children's pool, paddle pool and other facilities as you would expect for a population of 230,000 people. However, the decision not only saw the loss of the pool but associated lands. This directly impacted a community. For example, 35 swimming carnivals, 14 primary school learn to swim programs, five high school learn to swim programs, home to the Parramatta Water Polo Club, Parramatta Memorial Swimming Club and 3,300 learn to swim enrolments. In total 160,000 visitations a year. Yet, a year later the City of Parramatta remains without a pool and with a potential community debt to fund the State Government's folly.

Perhaps the most telling part of the Government's decision to demolish the war memorial pool and build the new Western Sydney Stadium is the commercialisation of the precinct. This was identified in the Department of Planning and Environment's assessment report which stated that the new expanded stadium will provide sporting franchisees with the ability to generate greater commercial returns. Yet, the social impact assessment stated that the temporary loss of aquatic facilities would have a negative impact on the local community.

Thirdly; community consultation. One of the key challenges today is the public discontent by the failure for communities to properly consult on projects planned before the announcement of infrastructure projects. In other words, there was an absence of genuine and authentic consultation prior to announcements, as was highlighted by the case for the war memorial pool, which announcement was a foregone conclusion. Here, despite the need to meet the department secretary's environmental assessment requirements which specifically required consultation with community groups during the course of the preparation of the environment impact statement, that is before the application is lodged, the proponent only consulted with fan groups of the National Rugby League [NRL] teams, Canterbury-Bankstown Bulldogs, Wests Tigers, Parramatta Eels and the Western Sydney Wanderers FC, leaving the community in the dark. To highlight in this case the Environmental Impact Statement [EIS] went on exhibition on 21 July 2016. In response we immediately contacted the Department of Planning and Environment secretary and the Minister for Planning at the time. We raised our concerns. Whilst they were acknowledged, there was no action taken to address the core issue, that is consult with the public prior to the EIS being finalised.

I am going to jump forward as I understand you are short on time. In response to being ignored by the Government in consultation we raised funds to commission the pool's original award-winning architectural firm to review plans and identify if there are opportunities for alternatives to the Government's plans whereby the existing pool and new stadium could coexist in an inclusive sports precinct. The plans were presented and well received by the community and experts alike. Yet, despite the plans being delivered to the Minister, there was no response. In other words, the decision was a foregone conclusion. A further challenge was the State Government appointed administrator who took key decisions in relation to the future plans for Parramatta. This saw the council without community representation and left with a decision-making body of one.

In response to these challenges we urge the Committee to consider to make the following recommendations in its report. First, invest in parklands, specifically Parramatta Park. Currently, the Cumberland Hospital East Campus, which is public land, is set to become a high density precinct. Instead, it should be acquired by Parramatta Park Trust and consequently remain in public hands. Secondly, the State Government fully fund the replacement of the Parramatta and District War Memorial Swimming Pool and the build costs of Parramatta aquatic leisure centre. Eighteen months after the loss of our Olympic standard pool and facilities we are yet to have a commitment to fully fund the replacement of the war memorial pool and necessary infrastructure that is like for like. This must be a priority.

Thirdly, community representation. All park trusts in New South Wales should have equal representation of community on the trustees' boards with full voting power to ensure better governance and the protection of public and Crown land. In the case of Parramatta Park Trust, in addition to the community representation we wish one position to be permanently available for a representative of the National Trust NSW. Thank you for the opportunity to appear today and I am happy to take questions.

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: When was the community first informed that the swimming pool was going to close?

Ms MEADE: Informed it was officially going to be closed?

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: Yes.

Ms MEADE: That would have been when the demolition for the pool and the new Western Sydney Stadium was made public.

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: That is the EIS process?

Ms MEADE: The EIS process, yes; although, we had had concern since 2015.

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: Had you asked the local member or the Minister for Sport's office whether there was any proposal to close the pool?

Ms MEADE: We did ask the member for Parramatta and his response was, "There are no talks about getting rid of the pool. Our pool is a great pool and well-established, and it would cost too much." That was a quote in the local *Parramatta Advertiser* in January 2015.

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: And when was the EIS?

Ms MEADE: The EIS exhibition was 21 July 2016.

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: Up until July 2016 there was no notification to the public that the pool would be closed?

Ms MEADE: Other than speculation and media from documentation that we had seen from Government urban renewal plans. The urban renewal plan from UrbanGrowth had shown the Parramatta pools had to be rezoned for unit towers in 2015. We were told that was a typo by the member for Parramatta. Then, of course, the expansion of the Parramatta Stadium came into discussion again. We showed our concern that the pool would be jeopardised but we were told that that was scaremongering and that would not happen.

The Hon. LYNDIA VOLTZ: When the pool was closed, what was the State Government's commitment to rebuilding the pool that it was demolishing?

Ms MEADE: Well, at the time, the sports Minister, Stuart Ayres, said the State Government was under no obligation to fund a replacement pool and that it was up to the Parramatta City Council.

The Hon. LYNDIA VOLTZ: For how long has the pool been closed now?

Ms MEADE: It closed on 31 March 2017.

The Hon. LYNDIA VOLTZ: The Government then said it would make alternative arrangements?

Ms MEADE: Yes. We were told to use pools in adjoining areas about 10 to 12 kilometres away. The administrator at the time, Amanda Chadwick, promised at \$1 million towards works to the Macarthur Girls High School for lessons for learn to swim. I believe it ended up being \$1.5 million of Parramatta City Council money, and I believe that was opened on Friday. That is just for learn to swim classes, not for public recreational swimming. That is a 25-metre pool inside the school grounds.

The Hon. LYNDIA VOLTZ: The Government has announced a \$30 million expenditure for a new pool?

Ms MEADE: Yes. That was the day of the pool closure. Minister Ayres came out and pledged up to \$30 million towards the replacement pool.

The Hon. LYNDIA VOLTZ: Then there was a public exhibition of plans for a new pool. Was that held while the council was still in administration?

Ms MEADE: Yes. That process started while they still were under administration. There have been further costings done now while the council has returned. I believe that the land which is part of Parramatta Park is looking like it will need \$25 million just for the preparation works of the site before the pool is even commenced to be built, due to the topography. It has no services there. There is a huge chunk of money to prepare this land before council can even start building a pool.

The Hon. LYNDIA VOLTZ: Is there any indication from the council what the cost of a new pool will be?

Ms MEADE: The last calculation of estimates I believe were \$75 million, but I saw some media over the weekend that was saying it was looking like it was going to be \$100 million.

The Hon. LYNDIA VOLTZ: But only \$30 million has been committed by the State Government so far to replace the pool.

Ms MEADE: That is correct, and I believe the council has approached the Minister for Sport for further funding, and that has been a negative response to more funding.

The Hon. LYNDIA VOLTZ: Will the new pool include the diving pools and water polo pools?

Ms MEADE: Based on the plans that have been made publicly available, there is no water polo pool and no diving pool, which Diving NSW and the water polo groups have contacted the North Parramatta Residents Action Group and are quite upset about. They have got this loss of the facilities now, and it is not a like-for-like, which was promised when Amanda Chadwick, the administrator, was in control of the council.

The Hon. LYNDIA VOLTZ: How many public pools are there now in the Parramatta City Council area?

Ms MEADE: In the Parramatta local government area [LGA] there is the Epping pool—Dence Park, I think it is called—which came into the Parramatta LGA in the new boundary line.

The Hon. LYNDIA VOLTZ: That is the only public pool available in the Parramatta City Council area at the moment.

Ms MEADE: That is correct.

Mr JUSTIN FIELD: Are you aware whether the council was given any forewarning of the intent to close the pool before that announcement was made—by the council staff or the administrator?

Ms MEADE: I am not aware of any meetings that the formerly democratically elected council had prior. There were a few final meetings before amalgamation where the Lord Mayor, who was Councillor Paul Garrard, made it known that they would prefer the pool to stay in that area.

Mr JUSTIN FIELD: As a residents group, you might have been taking notice of trust meetings and minutes and things like that. Was there any discussion within the trust about the closure and the likelihood of a new pool going on Parramatta Park trust land?

Ms MEADE: I believe the trust was in discussion with the Government about arrangements of the pools being removed and land swaps, yes.

Mr JUSTIN FIELD: This was before the ultimate decision was made?

Ms MEADE: Yes.

Mr JUSTIN FIELD: Do you know what has happened to the school carnivals and the various other uses, other than learn to swim? Are they happening at other pools in the district, or did school swimming and school carnivals just stop for the time being?

Ms MEADE: We did have the St Patrick's Primary School come and appear at a public forum that we held just a few months prior to the demolition of the pools. They demonstrated that it would be at a great cost for them to now seek other pools because a lot of the schools in the area actually walked to the pool. Our Lady of Mercy College is actually across the road from the pool and they almost considered it is part of their campus. The vice-principal did alert us to the fact that it would be of greater cost to the schools to now hire buses and travel to try to get to alternative arrangements. Also, the Parramatta pool was quite an affordable pool with its entry cost, in comparison with, say, the Sydney Olympic pool, whose costs for parking and entry would be close to double what the Parramatta pool was.

The CHAIR: I will not ask any questions because I have an interest in this. I am a resident of that local government area and my son played water polo in that pool.

The Hon. TAYLOR MARTIN: Can I ask you if your group is politically aligned at all?

Ms MEADE: No. We are not politically aligned. We are a community group made up of probably varying political opinions, which probably makes us a very good cross-section of Parramatta community in my opinion.

The Hon. TAYLOR MARTIN: Good to hear. Thank you.

The CHAIR: There are probably even a couple of the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party members.

The Hon. TAYLOR MARTIN: Who knows?

Ms MEADE: I could not say. We do not ask people about their political affiliation when they join. They are purely residents.

The CHAIR: Hear, hear!

The Hon. TAYLOR MARTIN: What contact have you had with any other member of Parliament? You mentioned that Geoff Lee has been interacting with your group.

Ms MEADE: As our local member, yes. He has spoken to us. We have written to Rob Stokes, who was the Minister for Planning at the time. We have written to Andrew Constance and Gladys Berejiklian.

The Hon. TAYLOR MARTIN: I want to move on to the alternative proposal that your group has put forward. Are you aware that in the alternative design that that alternative stadium would be located within a heritage buffer zone and that sensitive heritage view corridors would be impacted, and it would not be compliant with the Parramatta conservation agreement? Is that something that has been brought to the group's attention?

Ms MEADE: Is that with the Old Government House United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization [UNESCO] world to listing you are referring to?

The Hon. TAYLOR MARTIN: Yes.

Ms MEADE: I am not aware of that. But, in saying that, I was out there just yesterday standing in front of Old Government House and I could see the entire stadium from the ground to the very top of the 42 metres. It was fully in view, as it is now, of Old Government House, and it is UNESCO views.

The Hon. TAYLOR MARTIN: But on your proposal? We are talking about the alternative here.

Ms MEADE: I am not aware of that, no.

The Hon. TAYLOR MARTIN: The architectural firm that was engaged to undertake the work on your alternative proposal, are you aware if they have ever designed a stadium before?

Ms MEADE: No, I am not aware of that. They were contracted because they have got experience in the pool design.

The Hon. TAYLOR MARTIN: Are you aware if the alternative design is consistent with the *Guide to Safety at Sports Grounds*, which is known as the *Green Guide*?

Ms MEADE: I am not aware of that. I would have to ask the architectural firm.

The Hon. TAYLOR MARTIN: Would you mind taking that on notice?

Ms MEADE: Absolutely I will take that on notice. What was the name of that—

The Hon. TAYLOR MARTIN: The secretariat will liaise with you afterwards. Are you aware that in the alternative design you have put forward there is no perimeter circulation zone for emergency vehicles which needs to be provided for?

Mr JUSTIN FIELD: Point of order: While I appreciate that the residents action group include details of an alternative plan that they put forward, we are not here to question alternative proposals that community groups may have put up. It is pretty clear that the inquiry is about the Government's strategy. I think these questions are out of order.

The CHAIR: I rule against the point of order. Item (j) of the inquiry's terms of reference says "any other related matter". I think this is within the purview of the public interest. You may continue with your questions. Ms Meade, do not feel obliged if you do not know the answer—

Ms MEADE: I do not know the answer. I will have to take it on notice. I think the point of us going was to demonstrate that we were not asked in the first place to engage in consultation about the future of the park and the pool lands. We were trying to show that the community's point of view had not been heard.

The Hon. TAYLOR MARTIN: Are you aware that in your alternative design the stadium impacts on trees that are on the Significant Tree Register, particularly in the Old Kings Oval?

Ms MEADE: No. I will have to take that on notice.

The CHAIR: I advise members not to keep on when a witness clearly does not have the information.

Mr SCOT MacDONALD: I will just ask a question about the Parramatta pool and its state of repair. It was built, as your papers say, in the late fifties and was finished in the early sixties. So it is getting up to 60 years old. Just looking at some of the figures, \$9.5 million was spent on it in 2008.

Ms MEADE: Yes, by the council.

Mr SCOT MacDONALD: There was a lot of concrete work. The report says there were ongoing problems with it in terms of leaking and the plumbing and, in my reading of the council's report, the \$9.5 million was really just to keep it going, basically. Is your group thinking that at some stage it would need a substantial overhaul, not just the sort of ongoing catch-up maintenance? A 60-year-old pool is an old pool by any stretch of the imagination.

Ms MEADE: I use the pool regularly for swimming for laps and with my children and I did not feel like it was a dangerous or leaking pool, in my opinion as a user, and I know in a lot of other users' opinions. In saying that, with our population set to expand by another 154,000 people in 18 years, I would expect our pool to perhaps add to its facilities, to what we already had.

Mr SCOT MacDONALD: That seems to be the thrust of the report, \$9.5 million 10 years ago and, given the age, it was going to need that sort of work ongoing. At some stage it would have needed a pretty substantial revitalisation.

Ms MEADE: I think that would be a wise decision for any local government to continue to build on its community assets that are very well used and I think council are probably a little bit concerned; obviously they have put in that \$9 million just recently to a pool and now they are about to spend another huge amount of ratepayers' money on another pool on State Government-owned land with, I believe a 50-year lease. I would imagine that there is trepidation that they are going to put all that money in again and have the fear of it possibly being moved again by the State Government.

The CHAIR: One more question for the Opposition and one more for Mr Field.

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: Have you looked at the Sydney Football Stadium development plans at all that have been provided?

Ms MEADE: Not as in-depth as I have Parramatta.

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: Do they have the green guides for compliance included in those?

Ms MEADE: I have not heard of those before.

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: You have not seen a picture of the stadium and what it looks like and its actual design?

Ms MEADE: No.

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: It does not have which trees are being removed?

Ms MEADE: I do not believe so, no.

Mr JUSTIN FIELD: Have you got a sense of when a new pool will likely be ready for you to go and do laps in?

Ms MEADE: I think we would be lucky if we have one five years after the demolition of the Parramatta War Memorial Pool.

Mr JUSTIN FIELD: Five years without a pool and schools unable to, even potentially, hold swimming carnivals is the situation we have got at the moment.

Ms MEADE: I think beyond schools you have to look at the social impact not having a pool will have. When you look at the demographic that go to a pool during the school holidays in the summer, these young boys that are there and families and mothers, it is for mental health as well as physical health to have this community asset and I think that we are yet to see the effects of Parramatta's loss of its pool.

The Hon. TAYLOR MARTIN: What has the council said about that? What is the council's response to that?

Ms MEADE: Response to what, sorry?

The Hon. TAYLOR MARTIN: You said there is a five-year wait for the council to build a pool. Why is that?

Ms MEADE: They keep pressing the Minister for Sport for more money. I think just two weeks ago they asked for the State Government to put in more funding.

The Hon. TAYLOR MARTIN: My understanding is the Government has committed \$30 million to replace what was there.

Ms MEADE: Yes.

The Hon. TAYLOR MARTIN: It is council's role to come in—

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: Point of order—

Ms MEADE: I cannot speak on behalf of the council.

The Hon. TAYLOR MARTIN: You have not put it to council?

The CHAIR: We are just about out of time. Ms Voltz, do you have a valid point of order?

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: Ms Meade has already raised the \$30 million and the \$25 million remediation costs. I think he is now badgering the witness over the amounts of money.

The CHAIR: Your point of order is that the member is badgering the witness?

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: Yes.

The Hon. TAYLOR MARTIN: To the point of order: I am simply asking the group here today what council has said on this matter.

The CHAIR: I think we have heard the answer to that one. Do you know if the council owns Ryde-Parramatta Golf Club?

Ms MEADE: I can take that on notice.

The CHAIR: We are just about out of time. Thank you very much for coming along. You did a valiant job—you are obviously very well versed in the matter—and we wish you and your group good luck in the future with your representation. There may be some questions on notice. Once you receive them in writing from the secretariat we would like answers to those questions within 21 days. Would that be acceptable to you?

Ms MEADE: Yes, that is fine. Thank you for the opportunity.

(The witnesses withdrew)

DEBORAH KELLY, General Manager, Strategy and Projects, Sydney Cricket and Sportsground Trust on former oath

ANTHONY FRANCIS SHEPHERD, Chairman of Trustees, Sydney Cricket and Sportsground Trust, sworn and examined

The CHAIR: Would either of you like to make an opening statement. If so, how long do you think it will take?

Mr SHEPHERD: I will make the opening statement, chairman, and it will take a few minutes.

The CHAIR: Please proceed.

Mr SHEPHERD: Thank you for the opportunity to appear before your Committee today and to say a few words of introduction. I was appointed to the Sydney Cricket and Sportsground Trust in 2004 and was appointed the chairman of the trust in 2014, replacing Rodney Cavalier, the great long-term chairman of the trust.

The CHAIR: He is a schoolboy friend of mine; we went to the same school.

Mr SHEPHERD: We keep a lot of contact. My business background has largely been in construction and infrastructure, things like the Sydney Harbour Tunnel, the Melbourne City Link or more recently WestConnex, where I met you. I am also chairman of the Greater Western Sydney Giants, the football team from Western Sydney and a director of Racing NSW. I have been involved in all of the major developments of the trust since I have been a member, including the Trumper Stand in 2007 and Noble, Bradman and Messenger stands in 2014. These stands were jointly funded by the State and Federal governments and the trust. The role of the trust, as laid down by our legislation, is to act as trustees on behalf of the people of New South Wales in operating the facilities on land and to promote sport in New South Wales. We are not-for-profit organisation. We cover all of our operating costs, including depreciation, interest, and repayment of debt out of our annual revenues and any small surplus we put back into the facilities.

The Sydney Cricket Ground [SCG] and the Sydney Football Stadium [SFS], the business case shows, brings about \$900 million per annum in direct and indirect economic benefits to the State of New South Wales in respect of jobs, tourism and flow-on. Unfortunately, we cannot compete against the other States and consumer demand and expectations in respect of building major public sporting infrastructure. This is why we have sought funding from the State for a new stadium or for a major rejigging of Allianz. As we know, Perth is celebrating a new \$1.6 billion stadium. South Australia has a new \$800 million one and Melbourne is about to knock down its southern stand, which was built in 1996, and rebuild the Etihad, which was built in the early 2000s. That is what the consumer demands. We funded the original Sydney Football Stadium in the mid eighties. It was totally funded by our members. We have not received recurrent funding for the SFS from the public purse. Its upkeep has been on our account and we have done that through our revenues. Our members are drawn from all over New South Wales and over one-quarter of them are from regional New South Wales. Our membership is open to anyone who wants to put their name on the list.

We believe the logical economic decision is to rebuild the Sydney Football Stadium and that has been canvassed at these hearings. From the trust point of view, the fundamental reason for a complete rebuild is safety and security. The stadium was designed to an outdated code and falls far short of modern requirements in respect of safety and security. The recognised international code for stadiums is the British Green Guide, which has been developed over time, learning from catastrophic events like the Hillsborough incident, which killed 96 people. The problem with the Sydney Football Stadium is not maintenance, although the rising cost of maintenance, I admit, is an issue as the stadium ages; it is 30 years old. The core problem is the fundamental design which cannot be fixed, other than by a complete rebuild. It is the structure itself.

The recent global security alerts regarding the vulnerability of stadiums plus alerts from our ever-vigilant NSW Police Force figured largely in the considerations of the trust in respect of its recommendations to government. I cannot go into specific details, but it is quite obvious that stadia are a good target for people trying to make terrible mischief. We spent millions of dollars on the best security system in Australia, but that alone cannot fix the endemic problems with the stadium itself. I give the Committee one key statistic. It was estimated by an independent expert that it would take 24 minutes to safely empty a capacity crowd at the Sydney Football Stadium. Under the globally recognised Green Guide, that should take no more than eight minutes. By way of side bar, it was rumoured the Roman Colosseum took 3½ minutes to empty when it had 70,000 people in it, so we have gone backwards.

The CHAIR: There were heaps of centurions with sharp spears.

Mr JUSTIN FIELD: With lions chasing them.

Mr SHEPHERD: Motivation! It is not possible at the Sydney Football Stadium because of the design. The aisles are too narrow, the concourses are far too narrow. There is limited space between the rows and the stairways are too narrow. Once you are outside the immediate structure, the spill areas are too narrow and constrained. The exit doors are not enough, and they have fire services located next to them. You could have a squabble between the fires and the exiting patrons in an emergency. It is just not designed properly. This is not a lick-of-paint issue. This is a fundamental design and structure issue. As I said, the external concourses are far too narrow. At the northern end, we are right up against Moore Park Road. I go to most of the events there. I walk through there when a major crowd is exiting and it is wall to wall with people. There is no room—mum, dad, kids, what have you, are compressed into a narrow space.

We all know the security implications of that sort of crowd. He could spend a lot of money on refurbishing it but, fundamentally, we would not be changing those fundamental design deficiencies. We have been advised by a series of experts that the potential consequences are frightening. I think they are too frightening to ignore. In emergencies, patrons face a real prospect of serious injury or worse in the rush for the exits. I have been there on event days over and again. You see the crowds milling on the concourse just to get a beer or go to the toilets. It is incredibly compressed. God alone knows what would happen in an emergency. We try our best, within the constraints we have, to make it as safe as possible. We have extra security, extra staff, strict operational protocols, fire brigades on site, those sorts of things, but they are unsustainable stopgaps in the long term, in our view. We believe the lessons learnt in the past from stadium disasters must be addressed and cannot be ignored. We see that the SFS is deficient against every standard of measure or discipline in the Green Guide.

Some examples on the customer comfort side is that it has 48 female toilets and it should have 335. The attendance of females at Allianz Stadium for major events is at 30 percent of the total crowd. At the SCG it is close to 50 per cent. The reason is that the facilities are just atrocious. That is why we cannot attract as many women and girls as we would like to events at the stadium.

The CHAIR: Point of clarification. For the last statistic, did you say 50 per cent or 15 per cent?

Mr SHEPHERD: It is 50:50, male:female, at the SCG and 30:70 at Allianz for most games. We have 28 wheelchair accessible places; it should be 400. For heaven's sake, this is 2018. We have 28 and we should have 400. That is just not acceptable in a modern environment. There are no facilities for female sporting participants. Women's elite sport, rightly so, is on the burst in Australia now. We do not have any facilities for elite sportswomen in the Sydney Football Stadium. The facilities available for men are about the smallest in the country, anyway. We probably host as much women sport as any other stadium. We regularly host rugby union, rugby league and football and the facilities are just inadequate. The queues for bathrooms, food and drink block the spectator concourse and the aisles between seats are too narrow for safe and efficient movement. To put simply, the issues faced at the SFS, in our view, present a high risk for the SCG trust, for the Government but, most importantly, for the people of New South Wales and our patrons. As Lord Taylor said in his review of the Hillsborough disaster, the enemy of safety is complacency. The SCG Trust will never be complacent when it comes to the safety of our patrons. It is our number one priority.

The CHAIR: I am not shining the pole here but there is probably no-one in the State—maybe in the nation—that has had as much experience with spending so much money over such short periods of time as you have had in your recent career. This State is bursting at the seams with construction and as a project manager supremo you have had experience in all of that. This inquiry is not just going to look at whether each of these stadia should or should not be built but the entirety of the Government's stadia strategy—that is, building roughly four stadia in a compressed period of time. One of them is already half built. It may well be that before this inquiry has its responses from the Government somebody might have started pulling things out of the second one and started the demolition on it. In your professional experience with so much going on in the State—light rail, northwest rail, tunnels left, right and centre—what is the construction capacity to finish Parramatta, start Moore Park and then straightaway go into the work at Homebush as a resource question for you perhaps?

Mr SHEPHERD: As you know, INSW is delivering the stadium. They are the project managers and I have got a lot of confidence in them. They have got a very experienced team and they have done a detailed assessment of the resource availability and they have consulted extensively with the industry. I believe their procurement plan is deliverable given those pressures you have talked about. Of course, there is a distinction between building a stadium which is more of a building contract and civil construction which you might use in roads and railways and things like that, so that skill mix is okay. As the property market pull falls back, which we all know it is, that is releasing a lot more in the building side of the construction industry. I think that will be the offset which will provide sufficient resources.

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: I do not know if you heard the evidence earlier today but a Cricket NSW representative was here. Originally they were told that their facilities would not be demolished and subsequently they have been told they will be demolished. They informed us that the Sydney Cricket Ground Trust would be paying for a new building for them on site. What is the cost of that building?

Mr SHEPHERD: I agree with Cricket NSW that is true. We were hoping originally that their site would not be touched. When INSW finalised the plan—and we support it absolutely—for the stadium move to the south and a bit to the west that took out the cricket facility, which was a great regret for us and we regretted that. We are in the process of consulting with them and any other impacted code on site. We are working with them now. We have a budget to help them as much as we can and the idea would be to ensure that none of the sports that are dislocated or disrupted are disadvantaged out of this. We have not got a number yet but we are working towards that. But as a trust it is the Sydney Cricket and Sports Ground Trust, so cricket it absolutely vital to us and we want to retain them on our site. We are going to move every mountain we can to make sure we keep cricket there.

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: Cricket NSW also informed us that they were in discussions with yourself and the Government regarding monetary compensation. Is that correct?

Mr SHEPHERD: That is correct.

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: Have you had similar discussions with the Roosters and the Waratahs?

Mr SHEPHERD: Absolutely.

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: Have you had any discussions with the Waratahs regarding investment in a new facility for them?

Mr SHEPHERD: They have raised that issue with us. They have left our site, as you know, and their building is being knocked down as part of the movement of the Allianz Stadium south and west. We have not discussed with them about a centre of excellence at Moore Park but we have with the others. Certainly with Sydney FC, the Roosters, cricket.

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: Have you discussed with the Waratahs financial compensation?

Mr SHEPHERD: We have discussed that but those discussions are ongoing.

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: Have you discussed with the Minister for Sport investment in a new facility for the Waratahs?

Mr SHEPHERD: No, I have not. That is really a matter for the sport to do.

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: Have you had discussions with the Roosters regarding financial compensation?

Mr SHEPHERD: We have.

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: You will be aware of a document that was put together by the Sydney Cricket Ground Trust called "National Football Stadium. A new home for Sydney FC". In that document, which was a response to the Brogden inquiry, you stated that a rebuild on the existing site would have an estimated \$315 million in business disruption costs. Is that still your opinion?

Mr SHEPHERD: It is probably a little bit less than that now. We will be borrowing money from the Government to build a new sports central building or something equivalent to that to replace the offices and those centres of excellence that have been displaced.

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: But it is in the area of \$315 million?

Mr SHEPHERD: It is significantly less than that.

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: Could you give us a figure?

Mr SHEPHERD: Not yet. We have not finalised the numbers and we are still in negotiation.

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: But there are significant business disruption costs?

Mr SHEPHERD: Of course there are. This is a major development. We have had to pull down all of the buildings on the western side of the Sydney Football Stadium to give it the room that it needs to meet modern compliance standards.

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: Those significant business costs are not included in the stadium costs?

Mr SHEPHERD: They are on the trust. That is part of the deal. We are going to have to fund those out of our own resources. We will borrow money to do it and we will repay it out of commercial rents and out of the increased revenue we get from a new stadium.

The Hon. LYNDIA VOLTZ: I do not know if you heard Mr Blackett's evidence before the Committee regarding a certificate of occupancy, but he said that the certificate of occupancy is "merely an instrument that we use and introduced for the trust to demonstrate how it can continue operation". Is that correct?

Mr SHEPHERD: It was a requirement of the trust that we assured ourselves once we had obtained detailed reports from a variety of independent expert consultants about the safety and security and compliance issues of the trust. We had to satisfy ourselves in a legal way that it was safe to continue operations. That was the genesis of the certificate of occupancy or the conditional certificate of occupancy.

The Hon. LYNDIA VOLTZ: But it is not a legal document, is it?

Mr SHEPHERD: It is a legal document inasmuch as we have to operate within that document and we have to comply with its requirements if we are to have the benefit of such a certificate.

The Hon. LYNDIA VOLTZ: Where in law does it tell you that you need a certificate of occupancy?

Mr SHEPHERD: It does not tell you anything in law, it is just common sense and it is good business practice.

The Hon. LYNDIA VOLTZ: I just asked you if it was a legal document and you said it is. You are now saying it is not, it is just common sense.

Mr SHEPHERD: It is a legal document inasmuch as it is a document from a qualified certifier saying that you can occupy and use this stadium for the purposes you have said provided you conform with the requirements and conditions of that certificate.

The Hon. LYNDIA VOLTZ: It is not a statutory document that is required of government to continue, is it?

Mr SHEPHERD: No, it is not.

The Hon. LYNDIA VOLTZ: Here is a quote from the Minister in the *Sydney Morning Herald* on 18 October 2017:

If we can't meet those ... requirements it is highly unlikely a certifier would give us an occupancy certificate.

Mr SHEPHERD: Correct. So?

The Hon. LYNDIA VOLTZ: Why would you need an occupancy certificate to continue to operate? There is no legal requirement for you to have one. Why would you need one?

Mr SHEPHERD: We have a legal requirement—under all of the Acts of New South Wales we are responsible for the safety of our patrons. That is an absolute requirement under the law. Our most sacred duty is the patrons' safety. We are confronted with detailed reports this high saying, "These are the things that you don't comply with. These are the things which threaten the safety and security of your patrons." So we go to an expert and say, "How can we safely continue to operate this stadium?" He advised us, "The best way forward for you would be to obtain a conditional certificate of occupancy. Provided you are operating within those conditions you then have a reasonable cover that you are operating in a way that is compliant with the law in general." That is the path we chose.

The Hon. LYNDIA VOLTZ: Except Mr Blackett told us that it was only a document that he created for the Sydney Cricket Ground Trust; it is not a legal document that they use in any other scenario. It was simply a document that they created for the Sydney Cricket Ground Trust?

Mr SHEPHERD: The certificates of occupancy are issued to universities, schools, hospitals, whatever, throughout Australia. They are not uncommon.

The Hon. LYNDIA VOLTZ: No. Mr Blackett was very clear that an occupation certificate is different to the certificate of occupancy that he issued?

Mr SHEPHERD: My information is different. I am happy to come back to you on that.

The Hon. LYNDIA VOLTZ: Could you inform us then who informed the Minister that it was a requirement that they had to have one and that the Sydney Cricket Ground Trust would be shut down by 2019 without one?

Mr SHEPHERD: Well, we did; I did.

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: But it is simply not true, is it?

Mr SHEPHERD: Ms Voltz, can I just say again. We are confronted with a list of reports saying, "These are the things that you are not compliant and these are the serious safety and security issues." We go to an expert and say, "Under what conditions can we open the stadium and continue to operate it in the short term?" The expert gives us those conditions and we operate within those conditions. It is not complicated; it is not devious.

The CHAIR: I will not take a point of order but I will say, Ms Voltz, that I think Mr Shepherd has answered the question to the best of his ability. If there is anything further that you require, could you ask him to put it on notice?

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: Certainly. Perhaps I could move to another matter. Mr Miller informed the Committee that you had had private conversations with the Minister for Sport regarding stadiums. Could you tell us how often you met with the Minister for Sport in private without the department being in attendance?

Mr SHEPHERD: No, I cannot recall. I have had discussions with the Minister over time regarding the stadiums and stadium issues but frankly I just could not recall how many or when but it was not very regularly, that is for sure.

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: Could you perhaps take it on notice and come back to us?

Mr SHEPHERD: Sure, absolutely.

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: What is your view on the rebuilding of ANZ Stadium into a rectangular stadium?

Mr SHEPHERD: That is entirely a matter for government. It is something I was not consulted on. It is just a matter for government. We support the whole stadium approach.

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: Can I show you a letter from the AFL to the Premier for you to have a look at?

Mr SHEPHERD: Certainly.

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: I would like to know if you have seen this letter before. I understand it was also sent to the GWS Giants.

Mr SHEPHERD: Yes, I am aware of this letter. I have seen it before.

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: Do you support the views put forward by the AFL in that letter?

Mr SHEPHERD: I support the New South Wales Government in its new stadium strategy.

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: So you do not support the AFL's views in that letter?

Mr SHEPHERD: Not necessarily. The AFL does not talk to me.

The CHAIR: We have used that allocation of time. Mr Field?

Mr JUSTIN FIELD: Mr Shepherd and Ms Kelly, thank you for being here today. Mr Shepherd, is the Sydney Cricket Ground compliant with the green code?

Mr SHEPHERD: Let us just make a distinction between the SCG and Allianz. Allianz is a single integrated stadium and so our priority was in fact to work on Allianz first—

Mr JUSTIN FIELD: With respect, that was not my question.

Mr SHEPHERD: I know. Let me just give you the background to the answer, Mr Field. I am sorry. The SCG is a series of separate standalone stands so we have been dealing with them on a case-by-case basis so we did the priorities first for the Trumper, then the Noble, Bradman and we are still left, I guess, with the Churchill, Brewongle and the O'Reilly. We believe they are operating safely. Again we have conditions associated with operating those and we will in due course get certificates of occupancy for those as well.

Mr JUSTIN FIELD: That was my next question. So there is not a certificate of occupancy?

Mr SHEPHERD: Currently there is not but it is in process.

Mr JUSTIN FIELD: You said before that it was commonsense.

Mr SHEPHERD: It is and that is why we are going in through—

Mr JUSTIN FIELD: These are old stadiums, correct?

Mr SHEPHERD: Yes, and that is why we are going through the process but I do stress that the pressure there is nowhere near as bad as it is at Allianz because it has standalone stands and we can control how many people sit there and how many people use it.

Mr JUSTIN FIELD: For example, does it have all of the spaces for wheelchairs that would be required?

Mr SHEPHERD: We have overall at the SCG now sufficient spaces for wheelchairs to comply with the code because of the two new stands.

Mr JUSTIN FIELD: Overall but not in certain stands?

Mr SHEPHERD: There are certain stands that are definitely deficient.

Mr JUSTIN FIELD: What about female bathrooms?

Ms KELLY: In the two new stands we comply.

Mr JUSTIN FIELD: But not in the other stands?

Ms KELLY: Correct.

Mr JUSTIN FIELD: So it is fair to say that there are stands at the Sydney Cricket Ground—

Mr SHEPHERD: That do not.

Mr JUSTIN FIELD: —that do not meet the green code and you do not have a certificate of occupancy for those stands at the moment?

Mr SHEPHERD: But we are seeking certificates of occupancy.

Mr JUSTIN FIELD: You have made a great deal today and certainly in the media about the security and particularly terrorism risks. Would you consider that the Sydney Cricket Ground would have different security and terrorism risks than Allianz Stadium?

Mr SHEPHERD: No, it would not, but it has one fundamental difference. Being a series of standalone stands, the ingress and egress issues are different for each stand, so unlike Allianz, where you are altogether and there is no way to disaggregate, I would say the pressure on Allianz is higher than on the SCG.

Mr JUSTIN FIELD: So you think there are different risks?

Mr SHEPHERD: There are differences, yes.

Mr JUSTIN FIELD: You have not got a certificate of occupancy to spell out the safety or security risks—

Mr SHEPHERD: No, we are in the process of obtaining those.

Mr JUSTIN FIELD: When did that process start?

Ms KELLY: Some time ago.

Mr JUSTIN FIELD: Could you take that on notice and provide us with that information?

Mr SHEPHERD: Yes.

Mr JUSTIN FIELD: In particular when it was commissioned or when discussions first started with the trust about that. Your annual report, which I think was tabled only last week, for the Parliament, in your chairman's report you made clear that the trust has spent, it says \$80 million maintaining and upgrading Sydney Football Stadium since it opened, is that correct?

Mr SHEPHERD: That is approximately correct, I believe.

Mr JUSTIN FIELD: So it has been over 30 years. That means you have spent \$2.5 million a year on maintaining and upgrading a very significant piece of sporting infrastructure?

Mr SHEPHERD: Yes, but you also have to recognise that in the first 10 years of any new facility that the maintenance cost is very minimal and it is really as the stadium ages that the cost goes up. We have a total asset management plan in accordance with the requirements of the New South Wales Government, which are quite detailed and we maintain the stadium in accordance with that plan. Unfortunately now as the stadium gets really old in a purely maintenance sense, putting aside the compliance issues, it has become very difficult financially to maintain that and this is another reason for the rebuild.

Mr JUSTIN FIELD: Even still, and I appreciate what you say, that seems like a very small amount of money to spend on maintaining a piece of infrastructure that you now say, and your certificate of occupancy gives a suggestion, has significant safety, security and serviceability risks?

Mr SHEPHERD: As I have said, the biggest problem with it is the safety and security, which is intrinsic to the design and the structure of the building itself. We have in fact got other issues there that we need to deal with but obviously building a new stadium means that that cost will not have to be expended.

Mr JUSTIN FIELD: Fair enough. Have you got any agreements with the NRL with regards to any games that will be hosted at a rebuilt stadium?

Mr SHEPHERD: No. That has been a matter for the Government to sort out with the NRL. We have existing contracts with the Roosters, with Sydney FC, with the NRL for the Anzac game, with Rugby Union for internationals, with the Swans and what have you and cricket at the other stadium. We have existing long-term agreements for those, so we have about 100 events a year already contracted. Our expectation would be that with the new stadium, with good facilities and better transport through the light rail, we will be able to attract clubs to move events there. And of course it is up to the clubs. The clubs decide where they want to play at the end of the day.

Mr JUSTIN FIELD: You said at the start that it is up to the Government. Why would it be up to the Government? They would not have anything to do with any agreements that you have with various clubs or the code for your stadium?

Mr SHEPHERD: Yes, but in terms of any formal agreements, I think they have signed agreements with them as part of the memorandum of operation [MOU] regarding how many events would be played.

Mr JUSTIN FIELD: But that is not to play at your stadium?

Mr SHEPHERD: No, it is not specific to any particular stadium.

Mr JUSTIN FIELD: You are aware, of course, that the business case is predicated on a pretty substantial increase in the number of NRL games at a new Sydney Football Stadium?

Mr SHEPHERD: Yes, that is true. We contributed to that business case but it is not our business case.

Mr JUSTIN FIELD: But you are not aware of what that assumption will be based on; we are talking about a 50 per cent increase in the number of games. It is the majority—

Mr SHEPHERD: Fifty per cent increase in the number of games? I was not—no.

Mr JUSTIN FIELD: The number of NRL games, yes?

Mr SHEPHERD: At the Sydney Football Stadium?

Mr JUSTIN FIELD: Yes?

Mr SHEPHERD: Yes, well, look, we contributed to that business case study. It was not our business case. We may have a different view on it. For example, we had much heavier reliance on the increase in the number of elite women's games at the Sydney Football Stadium and they allowed nothing for it.

Mr JUSTIN FIELD: How does all that check? The business case is what the Government is predicating its case to the public on for very significant public expenditure.

Mr SHEPHERD: The Government commissioned independent experts to do it and that is their decision. We give them our best advice. Business cases and assumptions are just business cases and assumptions. What it is going to be in the end is another matter, I guess.

Mr JUSTIN FIELD: You would refute some of the assumptions in that business case then?

Mr SHEPHERD: No, I would say that is their view. We might have an alternative view but that is not the end of the world, in my view. We are quite convinced that the new stadium will more than fund itself, it will be successful, that it will attract events mainly through the quality of the facilities and mainly because the customer experience will be substantially improved.

Mr JUSTIN FIELD: What are your assumptions about the number of additional NRL games that might be played at a new stadium?

Ms KELLY: Currently we have 12 Roosters games in season each year, and I note that the business case for option one, which was the 45,000 seat stadium, took it from 12 to 16.

Mr JUSTIN FIELD: I was comparing that to the base case, which if you did not take any further action assumed you would lose games.

Ms KELLY: Yes.

Mr JUSTIN FIELD: What was that assumption based on, do you know?

Ms KELLY: Amenity.

Mr SHEPHERD: Amenity.

Ms KELLY: For patrons coming to the venue.

Mr JUSTIN FIELD: I appreciate the amenity concern but that runs a little bit counter to your chairman's report, which talks up the increase in number of patrons to certain games and number of major events at the Sydney Football Stadium in the last twelve months. It appears things were on the up and up.

Mr SHEPHERD: Despite the poor quality of the facilities and the safety concerns, the numbers for major events have increased, but as I said at the start, we do not believe that is sustainable, over the medium term even. If we had to go past 2019 I think we would be right up against the wall in terms of our certificate of occupancy and whether we could continue to operate like we are operating now.

Mr JUSTIN FIELD: Coming back to the certificate of occupancy, when do you expect you will have that for the Sydney Cricket Ground?

Ms KELLY: Imminently.

Mr JUSTIN FIELD: Can you take that on notice?

Mr SHEPHERD: We will take that on notice, and we will come back to you and provide you with a copy when we get it.

Mr JUSTIN FIELD: I assume that should the certificate of occupancy show substantial works you will be coming cap in hand to the Government for more money?

Mr SHEPHERD: Hopefully not.

Mr JUSTIN FIELD: How else would you—

Mr SHEPHERD: Operational overlay, as we do at the Sydney Football Stadium now. And, again, I stress that each of the grandstands at the SCG is independent of each other and it is a lot simpler to control the issues than it is in an integrated modern stadium.

Mr JUSTIN FIELD: But if you get a conditional certificate of occupancy you will hit the same barrier at some point, correct? Something will have to be done or you will have to consider shutting down the stadium or a stand.

Mr SHEPHERD: Every stadium plan in New South Wales for the last 20 years has always said in the end the SCG has to be completed, and it does have to be completed at some time. The question is what is the priority. The Government does not have unlimited money, it has to prioritise where its money is spent. It has demands from schools and hospitals, roads and drains and what have you. It is a question of priorities.

Mr JUSTIN FIELD: Exactly, and that is the point many people have been making about this entire business.

Mr SCOT MacDONALD: Thank you for the visit the other day.

The CHAIR: Do you have something you want to disclose?

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: What visit was that?

Mr SCOT MacDONALD: I toured on my own volition, had a look around.

Mr SHEPHERD: The tour is open for any member of this Committee. Any member of this Committee is more than welcome.

Mr SCOT MacDONALD: You made the statement that there are 28 disability spots in the Sydney Football Stadium. What should it be?

Mr SHEPHERD: Four hundred.

Mr SCOT MacDONALD: When it was built in the late 1980s were there any disability spots at all? It looked to me like they had been bolted on afterwards.

Mr SHEPHERD: They are bolt-ons because we did not worry about disability then. It is tragic, is it not, 30 years ago that was not a feature in building stadiums? We have progressed significantly.

Mr SCOT MacDONALD: Even looking at that 28, it looked to me like they were difficult to access.

Mr SHEPHERD: They are at the worst end of the stadium. They are perpetually in the wind and rain, which is another big problem with Allianz. Only about 30 per cent of the public are covered at any time from sun and wind and rain.

Mr SCOT MacDONALD: We are substantially disenfranchising a part of our community.

Mr SHEPHERD: I agree, yes, substantially, and I think this is something that is just not acceptable in 2018.

Mr SCOT MacDONALD: There is no way you could bolt on another 372.

Mr SHEPHERD: There is no way you could do that efficiently or effectively and give them reasonable access.

Mr SCOT MacDONALD: The plans for the new SFS?

Mr SHEPHERD: Will be fully compliant with ease of access, priority, as they are in all modern stadiums, such as the ANZ.

Mr SCOT MacDONALD: Disability toilets?

Mr SHEPHERD: Disability toilets. All will be built into the new stadium. It will be as easy as we can practically make it for them to visit and attend games.

Mr SCOT MacDONALD: I noticed looking at the Invictus Games coming up, there are no events at the Sydney Football Stadium.

Mr SHEPHERD: I think that is in terms of crowding of events, but also I think we are probably worst placed of all stadiums to service the Invictus Games.

The Hon. WES FANG: I note the line of questioning from the Hon. Lynda Voltz, but with the occupancy certificate for Allianz, would you agree that it is probably best practice to ensure that safety and security concerns are raised and addressed, regardless of whether they are a requirement of government or not?

Mr SHEPHERD: Yes, Mr Fang, I agree. It is just best practice that as an independent authority you go and get somebody independent to advise you as to whether it is safe to continue occupation and operate, and if so under what conditions. I think it is just best practice. It is what I would regard as normal.

The Hon. WES FANG: Would you consider that you may have been in line for criticism had you not done that?

Mr SHEPHERD: I think so. I think we could leave ourselves wide open for criticism.

The Hon. WES FANG: What you have done is help protect not only the patrons but also the trust from any future issues that may have been raised.

Mr SHEPHERD: Yes, we want to show that we are taking this seriously and we will take the best of independent advice to ensure the safety of our patrons.

Ms KELLY: Mr Fang, may I add that the trust has obligations under its enabling act and work health and safety legislation in Australia to ensure a safe operating environment for patrons, staff and players at all times.

The Hon. TAYLOR MARTIN: Is it true that Allianz Stadium has just 48 female toilet cubicles and it is in need of over 350?

Ms KELLY: In the lower bolt, that is correct.

The Hon. TAYLOR MARTIN: It appears from the numbers I have in front of me that there are currently 28 wheelchair places and there are over 400 that are needed.

Mr SHEPHERD: That is correct.

The Hon. TAYLOR MARTIN: Is it true that the structure of the roof is wood and we cannot ascertain how strong that structure is?

Mr SHEPHERD: No, it is a steel structure. It is in need of maintenance and if it was not being pulled down the roof, the soffit at least, which is the under bit, would have to be replaced but it is a steel structure.

The Hon. TAYLOR MARTIN: Because it is rusted?

Mr SHEPHERD: Yes, rusted. It is 30 years old. That is just what happens.

The Hon. TAYLOR MARTIN: Is it true that there are no fire sprinklers.

Mr SHEPHERD: No, there are no fire sprinklers. Again, if we had to do an emergency investment that would probably be one of the first things we would put in.

The Hon. TAYLOR MARTIN: Are the seats truly flammable?

Mr SHEPHERD: Yes, they are flammable. All the seats are flammable and of course we have a real problem with flares in the stadium because they burn at 1,400 degrees centigrade.

The Hon. TAYLOR MARTIN: Is it true that fire and rescue vehicles have to be on the ground?

Mr SHEPHERD: We have two fire brigade trucks there for major events at the Sydney Football Stadium. That is not done in any other stadium in Australia.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: The Office of Sport has confirmed to the Committee that after spending more than \$700 million at the Sydney Football Stadium there will be less general admission seating for the public. Do you agree with that assessment?

Mr SHEPHERD: My understanding is that it will be about the same. We have the same breakup between members, corporate and general public at the new stadium. I will come back and confirm that. What are the percentages now?

Ms KELLY: Over three-quarters will be general.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: So there will be an increase.

Mr SHEPHERD: We understand that it will be around three-quarters and a little bit more. Perhaps 78 per cent will be general public admission, and we think that balance is about right.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Yes. But there will actually be less general admission seating after all this money is spent.

Mr SHEPHERD: I am not sure there will be.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: The Office of Sport confirmed that.

Mr SHEPHERD: Did they? Okay. There might be slightly less.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Feel free to disagree with them.

Mr SHEPHERD: Yes. We will come back to you on that. I just stress that our members are what actually keeps the stadium open. They are over a quarter of our annual revenue. Because it is guaranteed every year—we can rely on it, so it is very important revenue to us—their contribution keeps both the Sydney Football Stadium and the Sydney Cricket Ground [SCG] open. On the corporate side, over half of the corporate of course is taken by our sporting clubs and codes who use that for the sponsors, and what have you.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I am happy for you to take that on notice. I want to ask you about the attendances. In answers to questions on notice from the trust, you indicated that the attendances that you are counting include all people "within the stadium so turnstile counts include contra or complimentary tickets, officials, performers, accredited media and staff." So we are counting a lot of people who are not necessarily patrons turning up. For contra or complimentary tickets, are you counting those people who turn up, or just tickets that are potentially issued?

Mr SHEPHERD: I will have to take notice, Mr Graham.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Fundamental to the business case is the 16 extra events that are to be held in a redeveloped Sydney Football Stadium. The business case talks about 16 extra events, and they have each got to be more than 28,000 people turning up.

Mr SHEPHERD: Sure.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: The information you have provided shows that there were only six such events in 2015, eight such events in 2016 and nine such events in 2017. How realistic is it that we will now get 16 new events on top of what you are already doing?

Mr SHEPHERD: Experience with all of the new stadiums throughout Australia is that new events have come because of the increased quality and flexibility of the stadium. If you look at Allianz, for example—

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Which you are more than doubling.

Mr SHEPHERD: Yes. If you look at Allianz, a modern stadium has an underground road all the way around the stadium for bump in and bump out. Allianz does not have it. To go from concert mode to football code takes three or four days—it can be longer—because of that problem of bump in and bump out. The new stadium, of course, will be designed with all of that in view so it will be a lot more flexible and a lot quicker in the turnaround. We have not decided yet on the turf but we will be looking at modern, more flexible turf surfaces so that we can in fact change from one mode to another. It will be available for more, shall we say, different sorts of sports. Earlier I stressed that women's sport is on the burst: There is no doubt about that. We have the women's World Cup coming up.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I accept there will be more events.

Mr SHEPHERD: Yes.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: But we are talking about more large events—more than 28,000.

Mr SHEPHERD: Yes. Well, I would think, like, World Cups.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: There were only six in 2015 on your figures. I have some questions about your figures, including these extra people in them. You are then saying 16 on top.

Mr SHEPHERD: Yes. We are confident that we will attract more events in a modern, flexible stadium. That has been the experience elsewhere in Australia.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Lastly, I think you said you have been on the trust since 2004.

Mr SHEPHERD: Yes.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: When were you first aware of the very serious safety issues you have outlined to the Committee today?

Mr SHEPHERD: We probably started to become aware of that in 2012 when the Government commenced its review of stadiums and we started to have a really serious look at what the future might hold for each of our facilities. But we have been aware, I think, right from the get-go that some of our older facilities were struggling.

The Hon. LYNDIA VOLTZ: Can I take you back to the document that you did in regard to the Brogden inquiry. In regards to a rebuild on the existing site you said, "It does not produce a stadium that complies with modern global spectator circulation or safety security standards." The Government then announced funding for ANZ Stadium. You have now reverted on that position. Is that correct?

Mr SHEPHERD: The new stadium, as I said earlier, is moving to the south and to the west in accordance, I guess, with the Brogden view that it was too constrained on the northern section and on the eastern section in terms of egress. In fact, the Infrastructure NSW [INSW] final design has dealt with the issue quite effectively by moving the new stadium further to the south, giving more room to Moore Park Road, and to the west, giving more room from Fox Studios and the Entertainment Quarter [EQ].

Ms KELLY: Ms Voltz, may I just clarify that the NFS proposal was a 55,000-seat stadium. We are talking about up to 45,000 seats today. It was a different scheme.

The CHAIR: We are out of time for this session. I thank you both for agreeing to come and give evidence. Mr Shepherd, thank you very much for your attendance. I would say there will be a plethora of questions on notice.

Mr SCOT MacDONALD: I thought he answered them all.

The CHAIR: I know—very well. If we could have answers to those questions back in 21 days, we would be most appreciative. Thank you for showing up.

Mr SHEPHERD: Thank you, Chair.

(The witnesses withdrew)

(Short adjournment)

DAVID RICHES, Head of Project NSW, Infrastructure NSW, on former oath

JAMES BETTS, Chief Executive Officer, Infrastructure NSW, on former oath

JANETT MILLIGAN, Adviser, Infrastructure NSW, on former oath

The CHAIR: Mr Betts, would you or any of your colleagues like to make any opening statements?

Mr BETTS: Just a very short one please. I would like to provide first of all a quick update to the Committee, some of which you will be familiar with in terms of the events that have transpired since we last gave evidence in early June, and also just to recap for the Committee's benefit the role that Infrastructure NSW has played and continues to play in issues relevant to the Committee's inquiry in regard to stadia. In terms of Western Sydney Stadium first of all, very good progress is being made with the construction of that facility, and we can provide more detail to the Committee, but we are on course to complete construction in March 2019 as planned and then it will be for the venue operator, VenuesLive, and the owner, Venues NSW, to program the content that goes from there. But our job, we hope, will be done in March 2019 and we are continuing to support the City of Parramatta as it completes the business case for a new aquatic centre and resolves the preferred scope and therefore the budget for that.

The CHAIR: Just a point of clarification. When you say March 2019, do you mean fit for use, ready to go?

Mr BETTS: From our point of view our job will be done. It is then up to the venue operator to determine exactly what events occur when and what testing they want to do and commissioning and so on.

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: The aquatic centre you were talking about there, could you restate that?

Mr BETTS: The development of a business case for the aquatic centre and the determination of the scope and budget for that is a matter for the City of Parramatta, but to the extent that we can help them we have a very good relationship with officers at the City of Parramatta, so we are providing them with any support we can as they complete those tasks.

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: Were you providing us an update of that? Can you just clarify that statement?

Mr BETTS: We are continuing to work with officers from the City of Parramatta as they do the work necessary to progress the provision of a new aquatic centre. Does that make sense?

The CHAIR: Yes, please proceed.

Mr BETTS: That is Western Sydney Stadium in summary. Sydney Football Stadium from a procurement point of view, expressions of interest were sought for the design and construction of the new stadium on 12 June and more recently, just in the last week or so, we have shortlisted respondents to that—we have a shortlist of two, which is Multiplex and Lend Lease for that facility and we have issued them with a request for proposal; that was on 31 July. As the Committee knows, in terms of the planning process, the stage one planning application was on exhibition from 14 June and submissions have come in—over 700 submissions—and we are currently going through the process of preparing our response to those submissions for the Department of Planning and Environment and that is a process which is defined by statute. We will give a considered response to all of the issues raised in those submissions and we will have that completed, we expect, within this month.

The CHAIR: In regard to expressions of interest, how is that described or constrained or scoped? Was there a scope provided to the expressees?

Mr BETTS: Yes, absolutely. We have progressively developed the scope of the stadium, and Mr Riches can provide more detail on this in due course, but initially there are two stages to the procurement, as there generally is: expressions of interest from qualified parties and then on the basis of those we shortlist and issue them with full tender documentation.

The CHAIR: So with the scope or the constraints that were supplied to the potential bidders, are you confident that it is so constrained that the bids will be comparable? In other words, how have you described it, just briefly? By the required number of seats or the physical size or what?

Mr BETTS: I might ask Mr Riches to talk in detail to that.

Mr RICHES: The documentation available includes a comprehensive specification and project brief in excess of 700 pages—it is very detailed—and a full reference design that we have prepared.

Mr BETTS: Last Monday the request for proposal was issued and we can describe to you the process that flows from there, but clearly the culmination of that process in terms of our capacity to award a contract, there is a precondition for that, which is to receive stage one planning approval, and you would have heard from Mr Gainsford from the Department of Planning and Environment this morning the process that DPE intends to follow in support of that. Finally, on Stadium Australia our task is to coordinate the production of a final business case for consideration by government in the second quarter of 2019.

Just to recap Infrastructure NSW's role, and we will come back to any questions that the Committee might have, obviously, in terms of the Sydney Football Stadium our responsibility has been to coordinate the production of a final business case, which we did shortly before Easter. We are the planning proponent, as you know, with the EIS having been on exhibition with over 1,500 pages of documentation out there to support that, and we are actively procuring the contractor that will undertake the demolition and construction of the facility.

In terms of Western Sydney Stadium, we had a more tightly circumscribed role in that we were simply the procurer; we were not the planning proponent and we did not produce the original business case—that was Venues NSW. For Stadium Australia at the moment an investment decision has not yet been finally taken on Stadium Australia; that will be subject to a final business case, which, as I say, will be delivered in the second quarter of next year, and our focus in the next six months is to produce that business case for government. The overall coordination, as the Committee knows, of the stadium network, content and so on is a matter for the office of Sport and for the asset owners in terms of Venues NSW and the Sydney Cricket and Sports Ground Trust.

The CHAIR: In evidence from the guy from planning this morning we heard that the expectation obviously was that there would be no work done on the site until consent had been delivered. I think the questions were aimed at whether that "no work" included the site establishment, security and preliminaries. Is that your understanding, that there will be nothing done until such time as the consent is given?

Mr BETTS: The stage one planning application addresses those issues, and until such time as we have got planning approval none of those things will be happening. There will still be activity on the site and there may be things that the trust will do just in the normal course of business in terms of managing that facility and preparing for the work that will begin that we will be overseeing but we will not be awarding a contract or beginning substantive works until the planning approval has been granted.

The CHAIR: Once the planning approval has been given, if it is given—and I assume that it will be—that is when you will award the contract?

Mr BETTS: Correct. Do you want to add anything, Mr Riches?

Mr RICHES: No, that is correct.

The CHAIR: Does the scope that you prepared, Mr Riches, prefer an estimated construction period in it?

Mr RICHES: It nominates an estimated construction period, yes.

The CHAIR: And what is that construction period?

Mr RICHES: It is 12 months of the demolition, which I think I mentioned to the inquiry when we were last here and then, following that, 24 months of construction.

The CHAIR: We will now move on to questions. We will begin with the Opposition.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I will carry on from where the Chair left off. I just want to understand how this process steps out that you have just outlined. Given what you have described as actively procuring the contractor ahead of a final planning approval what do you estimate the gap will be between when that approval lands for the planning process and when you may be able to award the contract?

Mr BETTS: We would seek approval from the relevant Cabinet committee for the award of the contract. We do not expect that to be a greatly protracted approval process but it is outside our control. We certainly would not be seeking approval to execute the contract until such time as planning approval had been granted, but there might be a gap of two or three weeks typically, on the basis of past experience.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Really that planning department approval is the last one you need—obviously there is a range of approvals, but that is the crucial one from a time point of view?

Mr BETTS: That is the crucial precondition for us to award a contract. Obviously, there is a subsequent stage to the planning process, stage two, which is the detailed design.

The CHAIR: Given that the stage one planning approval may include conditions that were not foreseen to date, would you then need to go back to the tenderers, for want of a better word, to ask them to revise their tenders?

Mr BETTS: Potentially, yes.

Mr RICHES: We would issue an addenda to the tenderers.

The CHAIR: I suppose it probably would depend upon the scope of the conditions but, generally speaking, you would not expect that the conditions for a contract like this would be that onerous that a protracted addenda re-tender period would take place?

Mr RICHES: That is right.

The CHAIR: I am asking the question: Would it?

Mr RICHES: No.

Mr BETTS: My answer of two to three weeks is predicated on not having a bunch of unforeseen and significant planning conditions, but that is a matter for the planning Minister.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: In its time line, its indicative development program, the KPMG report refers to 9 November 2018 as the date when all approvals might be complete. Can you give us an update about when you expect those approvals to be complete?

Mr BETTS: Certainly from a procurement point of view that will not be on the critical path for the achievement of that time line. It is a matter of how long it takes for the planning department to do its job and to provide the relevant approval or relevant conditions.

Mr RICHES: I might flesh that out a little bit. We expect to lodge the response to submissions towards the end of August. Thereafter, the normal assessment duration is in the order of 75 days. The conclusion assessment period, the department provides the Minister for Planning with its recommendation and the Minister issues his determination some period after that.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: You are talking about the end of August, add 75 days, then plus the Minister deciding, we are heading slightly past 9 November. We are more mid-November.

Mr RICHES: The date I am looking at is more mid to late November.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: That is a slight update from what is in the KPMG report; it is slightly later. Planning representatives were careful to say when they turned up to present to the Committee that they are not bound in any way by what is in the KPMG report. They will take their own time, depending on the issues that they decide. You have indicated already that is a potential risk for further delay if they took a view about the complexity of the project?

Mr BETTS: It has to be right, yes.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Correct. I then want to step through the actual process. What does it mean? Contracts are signed. In questions on notice to the Committee, you have indicated that site establishment will take place in January 2019. Is that still correct?

Mr RICHES: The arrangement for site access commences after the Sydney test match for cricket, and it is not until after the test match is concluded that the builder will take possession of the site, erect the hoardings and establish its presence on site.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: That is one of the key reasons that that will take place. I am referring now to the demolition report, attachment E to the environmental impact statement [EIS], the concept proposing the stage one demolition. The estimation is that that will take three or four weeks. We have moved from January 2019. The suggestion in the KPMG report was 16 January. Add three or four weeks, we are in the middle of February. Demolition will start then. Is that correct?

Mr RICHES: Correct.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I want to step through the demolition process. I am referring to page 32 of the demolition report. First, the soft structures are stripped out. That is all done by hand. They are stripped out by hand with appropriate hand tools where required prior to mechanical strippings. This will be things like the seats, windows and frames. How long will that process take?

Mr RICHES: Three weeks. That can run concurrent with site establishment, however, because it is within the existing building. It does not require the hoarding around the building.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Three weeks, running at the same time as site establishment, so mid-February by the time both those processes are established, and then is the point when cranes are established at either end of the stadium and the roof structures start to come down?

Mr RICHES: The sequence of work is that we start on the eastern side first, the Shehadie stand, put up some support structures to commence the dismantling of the structural steel roof. Simultaneous with that, we start the demolition of the current Easts rugby league club building and the Waratah building because it provides access from the west through into the precinct of the stadium to remove material. Start on the roof on the eastern side of the stadium itself and, at the same time, knock down the Easts and Waratah buildings on the western side.

The CHAIR: Where is the egress then for the demolition materials?

Mr RICHES: Demolition materials would go out through the current car park to Driver Avenue, and then away.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: It is really mid-February when the cranes are coming in and taking off the roof of the stadium. I want to ask about Premier's Memorandum M2014-12, which you may be aware of, which relates to the caretaker conventions and other pre-election practices. It is still in force. It related to the 2015 State election, but it will be reissued in the lead-up to the next election. Are you aware of that memorandum?

Mr BETTS: I have not memorised the memorandum, but I am certainly aware of caretaking conventions.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I am relieved to hear the first and happy to hear the latter. The key principle outlines that the general rule is:

... no significant new decisions or initiatives, appointments, or contractual undertakings should be made during caretaker period.

Are you aware of that general principle?

Mr BETTS: Absolutely.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Are you also aware that the Premier's Memorandum indicates that that practice should extend for the pre-election period?

Mr BETTS: Is the pre-election period defined?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: It is defined in that memorandum. It states:

... all pre-election practices should generally be observed in the months leading up to the election—

and particularly once the Legislative Assembly has ceased sitting for the last time before the election, which would, for your information, occur at the end of November.

Mr BETTS: I have not taken detailed advice on how the caretaker conventions would apply in this case, other than to say, absolutely, we will be bound by whatever caretaker conventions are required and we would seek the advice of the Department of Premier and Cabinet on that.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Have you sought that advice to date?

Mr BETTS: No.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I quote again:

...the Government should generally be circumspect at any time in the lead-up to the election before making any significant decision that may be politically contentious and would bind a future Government.

You would agree that these decisions certainly fall in in that category?

Mr BETTS: I do not have the benefit of having that document in front of me and I have not had a chance to read it carefully in this context. I can simply give you an assurance that whatever the relevant memorandum is issued by the Premier relating to the 2019 election, Infrastructure NSW will concur with that.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: That assurance is of significant comfort to the Opposition, given the time line you are describing where planning approval may happen at the end of November at the same time that these conventions are kicking in under this Premier's Memorandum as Parliament ceases to operate. We may well be in a position where a contract is yet to be signed on the time line that you have just outlined to us. I do not know if you have any comment?

Mr BETTS: No. The time lines are what they are and the caretaking conventions are what they are. We would need to take advice nearer the time to make sure there was no conflict between the two.

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: Could you inform us when the scope was issued how much commercial space was included and whether that was included in the design scope?

Mr RICHES: There is space for the Sydney Cricket and Sports Ground Trust administration offices. That is the only component of office space in the stadium.

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: There is no other commercial space within the stadium precinct that has been put out to design?

Mr RICHES: If you define commercial space as space to be let to a third party, no.

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: What about the sports tenants?

Mr RICHES: No.

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: In your response to the EIS for Parramatta Stadium you stated that there would be 30 NRL games played at that stadium from three NRL teams. Who provided that information to Infrastructure NSW?

Mr BETTS: This is in our response to?

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: The Parramatta Stadium EIS.

Mr BETTS: We were not the proponent for the Parramatta Stadium EIS.

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: Infrastructure NSW provided a response to the EIS process. Is that correct?

Mr RICHES: Venues NSW was the proponent for Western Sydney Stadium.

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: I have seen an Infrastructure NSW response. You did not respond on behalf of Venues NSW?

Mr BETTS: Not on behalf of Venues NSW, no. I am not aware. Did we put in a response to the EIS?

Mr RICHES: I am not aware of that if we did.

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: Perhaps you can take it on notice and check where that information came from.

The CHAIR: Are you happy to take that on notice?

Mr BETTS: Absolutely.

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: You have seen that there have been significant criticisms of the way the transport studies were undertaken in the EIS process. Have you noted that in the submissions that have come back in?

Mr BETTS: Yes, I have seen the submission from Transport for NSW. As I say, we are in the process at the moment of preparing a response to all submissions. We will do that by the end of this month and that will absolutely address the issues which Transport for NSW identified.

The CHAIR: When Infrastructure NSW responds to a broad range of submissions from technical aspects to community opinion, et cetera, how physically does Infrastructure NSW handle it? Do you do it using internal staff to assess them or do you go out for expert opinion outside the organisation?

Mr BETTS: Both. I do not want to get drawn in to providing ad hoc or half-baked responses to submissions here.

The CHAIR: I was not asking that. I was just asking about if for example it was something technical such as transport.

Mr BETTS: As I say, I do not want to get drawn in to having to respond to 700 submissions on the hoof now because there is a proper, ordered statutory process for doing that and I think people who put in submissions are entitled to a considered response, not something improvised. An example would be Transport have suggested that we go back and undertake further traffic monitoring surveys in the area and so absolutely we will do that. The way in which we do that will be set out in our response to submissions. We hope that will provide the Department of Planning and Environment with comfort that we have addressed the substantive issue raised by Transport. This is a natural part of the process. My interpretation would be the fact that Transport is applying a robust lens to the work that we have done shows that the process has integrity.

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: When you were putting together the original EIS did Centennial and Moore Park Trust include information within the original EIS that went on display?

Mr BETTS: Did they include information in our EIS? Certainly they were consulted. There was an extensive consultation prior to the EIS being lodged. That would include with the park trust, yes.

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: Their submissions were included? It is just that when they appeared before the Committee they said that they were going to include information into the EIS process and had not.

Mr BETTS: Do you mean have they responded to the EIS in the last few weeks when it was on exhibition? Is that your question?

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: No, I am assuming you put together the EIS submission to go on display.

Mr BETTS: Yes.

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: Part of that would have to be traffic management and parking.

Mr BETTS: Yes.

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: That is covered by the Centennial and Moore Park Trust.

Mr BETTS: I see what you mean. There is extensive analysis in the EIS—I think it is appendix J from memory—about all the traffic impacts and parking impacts and so on associated with the new facility and associated with the construction of the new facility. That includes consideration of parking options. Obviously the park trust has a significant role in terms of the provision of parking at the moment.

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: That is right. Did that annex include information that was provided on behalf of Centennial and Moore Park Trust that covers significant parking for the stadium?

Mr BETTS: I would be surprised if it did not include some information provided by them but I would have to take that on notice, to be honest.

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: If you could, and when that information was included would also be useful.

Mr BETTS: Sure.

Mr JUSTIN FIELD: This morning a witness from the Department of Planning and Environment was talking a little bit about the response to the submissions process and some of the concerns that have been raised in the more than 700 submissions. He indicated that it is entirely up to the proponent—yourselves—to respond to the submissions and engage with any stakeholders who have raised concerns. Do you plan on meeting with any stakeholders who have made submissions?

Mr BETTS: Yes, I have no doubt we will be meeting with a large number of stakeholders that have made submissions, particularly government agencies who have provided technical feedback to us so that we can discuss with them how we best respond to their concerns.

Mr JUSTIN FIELD: Have those meetings been organised at this point?

Mr BETTS: No, I think we are in the process right now of organising the response to submissions and that is our principal focus.

Mr RICHES: Certainly meetings have been held with Transport already. In fact, we have agreed additional observing of events and traffic counts. In fact, there was some more work done on Saturday evening. It was a double header, which was very fortunate to be able to assess the traffic impacts of a double header last Saturday and to respond. We will be meeting with other agencies in the course of the next three or four weeks and other submitters.

Mr JUSTIN FIELD: Will you meet with any community groups that have raised concerns?

Mr RICHES: It is quite likely that we will.

Mr JUSTIN FIELD: But none have been organised at this point?

Mr RICHES: Not at this point.

Mr JUSTIN FIELD: You mentioned that you intend to do additional transport and traffic surveys. I assume what happened on Saturday night was part of that. Is that right?

Mr RICHES: Yes, it was.

Mr JUSTIN FIELD: Are there any more that will be planned?

Mr RICHES: We have agreed two events with transport. One was last Saturday and personally I am not quite certain of when the second is. There has been an agreement with Transport as to an appropriate and relevant event to monitor.

Mr JUSTIN FIELD: They will be done before the response to submissions is submitted?

Mr RICHES: Yes, they will.

Mr JUSTIN FIELD: I noted that Ms Voltz asked you about other commercial space as part of this development and you indicated that no other building other than the stadium and administrative space for the Sydney Cricket and Sports Ground Trust was part of it. Evidence before the inquiry today suggested that the trust would seek to build other space for the existing tenants. I guess it is fair to say that there will be a development application at some point for additional space on trust grounds for that infrastructure. Have there been any discussions with the trust about where that might be?

Mr BETTS: First of all, if that were to occur it would be as an entirely separate planning application quite discrete from anything that we are currently applying for.

Mr JUSTIN FIELD: Sure, but we are talking about a pretty substantial development to the precinct. These are not insignificant buildings that are being demolished to the west of the current site, which is the buildings and tenants we are talking about. We are talking about a Sydney stadiums strategy and all of the associated development that goes with it. As part of this whole process, would it not have been better to do that in a coordinated way?

Mr BETTS: Your point is a fair one and it has been done in a coordinated way. We have been very clear about what the footprint will be for the new stadium and that is made very clear in the EIS. As a result, the Sydney Cricket Ground Trust is very clear about the land which is available for any potential future developments. The two are not in any way in conflict with each other.

Mr JUSTIN FIELD: The tenants are directly related to the use of the stadium and a lot of people attend those buildings for a range of reasons. I just would have thought it would have been part of a precinct-wide plan. That is all. That is not the case? The Sydney Cricket Ground Trust has not given you a sense of where it might be? I would imagine it may conflict with the specific design considerations for stage two.

Mr BETTS: I think that is unlikely given that stage one will define the spatial envelope for the stadium.

Mr JUSTIN FIELD: For the stadium, but not this additional building space.

Mr BETTS: Which, as we have said, will be subject to a completely separate planning application.

Mr JUSTIN FIELD: I do not want to labour the point, but they are not insubstantial buildings. If we are talking about making sure egress is safe and available for a large number of patrons, where a big building servicing the same people will go seems to be a valid consideration. We are not talk about an area of land with a lot of vacant space available for a large new building.

Mr BETTS: Yes, so the Sydney Cricket Ground Trust is responsible for the management of that precinct and no doubt you would have asked them these questions earlier on when they gave evidence since they are responsible as the precinct manager. Our job is to procure a new stadium on that site and to satisfy ourselves that we have satisfactorily addressed the spatial envelope for that stadium in the stage 1 planning application, which we have done, in part to satisfy ourselves that it will not conflict with any future development on that site.

Mr JUSTIN FIELD: Without having to defend myself here, we would have asked that question of them if we had have assumed that this was a building that would need to go somewhere outside of the new envelope because at the moment those tenants sit within that same envelope. I will certainly ask that question on notice but I think it is not unreasonable to have thought that might have been something that has already been considered, certainly as part of the specific details of the development for stage 2.

The CHAIR: Mr Field, a member never has to defend their question, okay?

Mr JUSTIN FIELD: Fair enough, Chair. It is a good point.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Except from the Chair.

The CHAIR: Exactly.

Mr JUSTIN FIELD: We have laboured a little bit in the last few hearings about the business case and in particular the assumptions made around the number of NRL matches that will occur at the new redeveloped stadium. It seems like there is a bit of buck-passing here about exactly what information was provided to underpin the assumptions by the KPMG business case. I do not think I am putting words in the mouth of Mr Shepherd but

it seemed that he had the view that the trust may have different assumptions about the number of games that would occur there. Can you provide any specific detail to the Committee about how the business case arrived at a total of 16 NRL games at the new stadium?

Mr BETTS: I will ask Ms Milligan to answer that question for you?

Ms MILLIGAN: As you say, the business case does assume there will be 16 club matches at the new Sydney Football Stadium [SFS]. Where that came from is as follows. The SFS currently has three NRL clubs that play there. It is the home for the Roosters, and they play the majority of their games there. There are two other tenants who play some games there and that is the Rabbitohs and the Dragons. In building the business case the discussion is: What is a reasonable assumption going forward? I say couple of things. The business case is looking at a period of 30 years and it needs to make assumptions about what will be the average event calendar for 30 years; we are not talking about the next two or three.

The assumptions were as follows: That the Roosters would continue to use the new stadium as the home base and they would play the majority of their games there. That was quantified as 11, so the business case assumes there will be 11 games played by that club. It then makes an assumption that there would be another five. Over the last four years on average there have been 13 club games played at the stadium. The business case takes that to 16. So if we go right back to the Roosters we think we have an assumption that is very solid around 11 and there are five additional games. What the business case says is that they could come from those existing tenants who occasionally play there, one or both of those might play additional games or they may not, and then there would be some capacity for one other club, two other clubs, whatever, to bring games there.

It does not specify where those additional five games would come from but it would seem to be quite a solid assumption that 16 is not an outlandish number, particularly when you consider that for the last four years on average there have been 13. In 2014 there were 13 club matches, in 2015 there were 14 club matches, in 2016 there were 13 and in 2017 there were 12, so an average of 13 over those four years. When you are building a business case you are very much in the business of looking at averages, thinking about what is reasonable and what might occur and if I can say again: We are looking at a 30-year projection.

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: I raised earlier the Parramatta Stadium. Could you look at this one-page document and see if it is one that has been created by Infrastructure NSW?

Mr BETTS: We would have to take it on notice, to be honest. We have been given a single piece of paper.

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: You do not recognise that concept plan for Western Sydney Stadium?

Mr BETTS: Personally I do not.

Ms MILLIGAN: No.

Mr BETTS: That is why I am taking it on notice.

Ms MILLIGAN: Perhaps if you go on to your subsequent question we might be able to help.

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: I was just wondering if you had seen those figures in regards to the business case for Western Sydney Stadium, the 30 NRL games?

Ms MILLIGAN: Well yes, because in the business cases that we are currently dealing with for Sydney Football Stadium and for Stadium Australia one of the really important things that the Office of Sport did was take a consolidated view across the network. They were very keen to ensure that people were not all counting the same content, that there was not cannibalisation or double counting. I think I am right in saying that in these business cases that we are dealing with there is perhaps a consolidated schedule that includes what is expected of Western Sydney Stadium, so while I am not sure I have seen this exact document, I am certainly familiar with the assumptions that there would be 30 NRL games at Western Sydney Stadium, if that is your question.

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: And where is it presumed those 30 games would come from?

Ms MILLIGAN: I am not sure I can talk from Infrastructure NSW in any detail about that but again it would be normal for a business case not to name clubs. I am not sure that the Western Sydney Stadium business case would identify where those games would come from but again it would build a series of assumptions that would describe why that figure was seen to be reasonable.

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: Could I put it to this way: Who would have provided those figures?

Ms MILLIGAN: Again they would have been developed in the course of the business case so they would have come probably from discussions with the venue owner and operator and with KPMG, who delivered the business case.

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: So that would be Venues NSW?

Ms MILLIGAN: Correct.

Mr BETTS: But just to supplement what Ms Milligan said and to reinforce it, in the preparation of the final business case for Sydney Football Stadium and the strategic business case for Stadium Australia we specifically asked the Office of Sport to provide us with a network-wide set of assumptions about content, which they did, to make sure that it was entirely internally consistent and that there was no duplication or double counting.

Ms MILLIGAN: And maybe if I just add one last comment, if I may? Again, the business cases all examine a period of 30 years so again we are looking at an event schedule for Western Sydney over a period of 30 years.

Mr JUSTIN FIELD: I return to my earlier point, which fits in with what Ms Voltz has just been talking about. I may be wrong—I will have to go back and check—but I am pretty sure that the Office of Sport sort of threw its hands up in the air on this question and suggested that it was a question for Infrastructure NSW and KPMG when it came to assumptions around the number of events and different venues. Just after lunch Mr Shepherd certainly gave us the indication that he did not necessarily agree with assumptions in the business case. Your explanation makes a degree of sense but can I just confirm that there is no agreement or anything that has been provided by the NRL to give a sense that they have made a commitment to play extra games at the Sydney Football Stadium nor with any of the clubs or the Sydney Cricket and Sports Ground Trust?

Ms MILLIGAN: I would be surprised if the NRL had made those commitments because the placement of club games are matters for the individual clubs rather than for the code. I cannot really talk for the operators and who they are talking with. I would say at Sydney Football Stadium it is my understanding that some of that content is already contracted.

Mr JUSTIN FIELD: That is certainly not the evidence before the Committee?

Ms MILLIGAN: Okay. Well, the operators would be the source of information on their contracts with individual clubs so of course I should leave that to them to answer.

Mr JUSTIN FIELD: After all of this and a number of hearing days I think we have exhausted this line of questioning. It is not unfair to say that there are just assumptions that are not grounded in any contract, in any statement of agreement, in any commercial arrangements or even necessarily with the concurrence of the venue operator when it comes to the Sydney Football Stadium with regards to additional NRL games to be played as a result of the redevelopment of the stadium, would that be fair?

Ms MILLIGAN: No, I do not agree with that. The assumptions in the business case are historically based, so they look over the event schedule for the last number of years. It takes a very measured view on what has happened at venues over those years and what is likely to happen into the future. You maybe correct, that not all of that content is currently contracted. But I think it is a big step to say that if it is not contracted you cannot consider it. I think there has been a great deal of thought, a great deal of analysis about what has happened in the past, what is happening in the code, in the sports and what is likely to happen in terms of the placement of games.

Not all of those assumptions may be correct, but I think that there is very strong evidence to underpin every one of those assumptions. In fact, if I can give you a little more, perhaps reassurance. The event calendar in the business case makes no assumptions about the growth in the competitions. Today in the press there was a bit of an update on the Football Federation of Australia's [FFA] current activity to expand the A-League by another two teams. That would bring their competition to 12 teams. The FFA have been on the record that it is their intent to pursue an A-League that may be 14 to 16 teams.

Mr JUSTIN FIELD: Which is why I found it interesting that there are no assumptions for increases in football at the Sydney Football Stadium.

Ms MILLIGAN: You are exactly right. My point here is that these assumptions are considered by many to be very conservative. So they are evidence based. At the moment there are 10 teams in the competition. We have looked at what has happened at the SFS with the existing competition. We know that there is planned expansion of that competition but we do not have enough evidence to have said in this business case that we are quite confident that an assumption could be made around that. My point is, it makes no predictions about the expansion of competitions, which are inevitable. It does not include in the event calendar the burgeoning women's

competitions. Again, because they are not really in a position where they could be considered as core, foundation content in the stadia. They clearly will be. They clearly will. Again, the FFA has made it clear that they plan to expand the W-League. The event calendar does not include any of those events, which will happen.

Mr JUSTIN FIELD: Time will tell, I guess is the case.

Ms MILLIGAN: Time will tell, and my point is that is why we have not, I guess boldly, put them in as assumptions in the business case.

Mr JUSTIN FIELD: You have not even put them in as potential considerations to demonstrate the conservatism.

Ms MILLIGAN: They are mentioned and we have said that we have not included them for those reasons. They are certainly called out in the business case, but they are not included in the statistical analysis.

Mr BETTS: If your criticism is that we have been too conservative in terms of the growth in content, then perhaps that is a criticism that we are prepared to accept.

Mr JUSTIN FIELD: I do not mean that. My criticism is how much it has taken to try to get to the bottom of these assumptions.

Ms MILLIGAN: If there is anything else I can provide for you, I am happy to do that.

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: Given that you only had the one page and you wanted to see the full document, perhaps if you look at the front page of this document you will understand why people are assuming it is an Infrastructure NSW document.

Ms MILLIGAN: Okay.

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: Is that an Infrastructure NSW document?

Mr BETTS: Yes, it is. It has got our logo on it.

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: That is the document that contains the 30 NRL games and the three NRL teams at Parramatta Stadium.

Mr BETTS: Thank you. You could have shown us that.

Ms MILLIGAN: The current business cases also make that point.

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: I am still trying to get to the bottom of who provided those figures?

Ms MILLIGAN: Who provided the figures in the original business case?

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: Of 30 NRL games and three NRL teams at Western Sydney Stadium?

Ms MILLIGAN: Those figures would have been in the initial business case for the new stadium.

Mr BETTS: Which was developed by Venues NSW.

Ms MILLIGAN: They would have gone through the same process as the one I have described for the Sydney Football Stadium and Stadium Australia.

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: You have included them in your report because you have made the assumption they are correct.

Ms MILLIGAN: Yes.

Mr BETTS: Yes. If your question is, have we used consistent assumptions across the various business cases, and have we relied in doing so on the agency within government which is responsible for making assumptions and forecasts around the distribution of content, the answer to those questions is yes.

Mr JUSTIN FIELD: You are saying the Office of Sport provided the basis of the assumptions for the Sydney Football Stadium?

Mr BETTS: Yes.

Ms MILLIGAN: Yes.

Mr JUSTIN FIELD: That is not what they said to us.

Ms MILLIGAN: No, the event calendar, as I have explained, is an analysis of what has happened at that venue and what is likely to happen at that venue.

Mr JUSTIN FIELD: Mr Betts just said that it was the same organisation that provided all of the assumptions for all the different venues that was consistent. The reason we are asking these questions is the Office of Sport put it back to Infrastructure NSW because you did the business case. The venues say talk to you, they do not necessarily agree with the assumptions. You are now saying the Office of Sport did them. It is absolutely unclear where these figures came from.

Ms MILLIGAN: I am not sure I said the Office of Sport did them.

Mr JUSTIN FIELD: I think that is what was said by Infrastructure NSW at the first hearings. We asked these questions then.

Ms MILLIGAN: The Office of Sport did a look across the network. So individual venues were thinking about their event calendars and individual business cases were making assumptions about events. Office of Sport has a network wide view and so they mapped it all out and we have included that in these business cases, just so there is clarity about which venues in the network are assuming which content. That was the role that Office of Sport played.

Mr JUSTIN FIELD: Have you got the document from the Office of Sport that maps that out across all these venues?

Ms MILLIGAN: It is included in the business cases. I could give you a page reference.

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: It is not included in the business cases.

The CHAIR: Perhaps you could take that on notice.

The Hon. TAYLOR MARTIN: In the view of Infrastructure NSW is the Western Sydney Stadium on time and on budget?

Mr BETTS: It is. As I said in my opening remarks, we are very satisfied with the progress that has been made. I might ask Mr Riches to give the Committee a little more detail.

Mr RICHES: In terms of time, the contractual completion date with Lend Lease is 29 March. We have been monitoring that weekly for the last over 18 months now and we have been achieving all the critical milestones and critical path activities. We are forecasting completion and handover to the venue operator on 29 March 2019. Thereafter it is a matter for the venue operator to determine when they will host the first fixture, of course. Budget: the original approved budget was \$360 million. That included project origination costs, design fees, costs associated with the planning approval, construction, operational readiness. So, more than just construction. We let a construction contract to Lend Lease in December 2016 for \$275 million. It was a very competitive price. We put that number up on the tender website so it is publicly available. We are currently forecasting a final cost inclusive of design, origination and operational readiness slightly under \$330 million, as opposed to \$360 million original approved budget.

The Hon. TAYLOR MARTIN: Under budget?

Mr RICHES: Under budget.

The CHAIR: I may get the answer that this is commercial in confidence but we found a way to dig out commercial in confidence. Does the contract with Lend Lease include liquidated damages, on one side? And does it include a performance bonus—or a share of savings Lend Lease used to call it—on the other side?

Mr RICHES: It does include liquidated damages. It does not include any performance incentives.

The CHAIR: No incentive for early completion?

Mr RICHES: No. There is one other point, if I may clarify. You mentioned a share of savings formula. It is a fixed price, fixed time contract. There is no share of savings.

The CHAIR: Hard dollar tender contract.

Mr RICHES: It is hard dollar.

Mr BETTS: Early completion for a firm such as Lend Lease is its own reward in the current market because it frees up their team to go and build other projects elsewhere.

The Hon. TAYLOR MARTIN: Are there any lessons learnt from the Western Sydney Stadium that can be applied to the redevelopment of the Sydney Football Stadium?

Mr RICHES: I suppose that most of the lessons learnt evolve around the design process. We undertook a lot of stakeholder engagement with the user groups at the initiation phase of the project to ensure that the design

represented contemporary best practice. Now, towards the end of the project, we are taking those same groups back out to the stadium. As recently as last Friday I had the National Rugby League [NRL] representatives with the Chief Minister of the Australian Capital Territory [ACT] out there. For example, we have had the Waratahs, and our new organisations and the other clubs that use the facility. They are all very impressed with the fact that the roof has 100 per cent drip line coverage, point one; that all of the seats are very, very close to the field of play, which is the second; the sight lines are great. They particularly like the open concourse so patrons can buy a beer, stand in a queue, and still be able to turn around and see the field of play to connect back to the field of play.

Having four change rooms, two on each side, of equal dimension means that we can play simultaneous male and female doubleheaders, which is critical. We also have male and female officials' facilities. For example, if there is a female referee or assistant referee, they have their own ability to use facilities pre and post match. Media groups have been very encouraged by the participation we have had with them and the setting of the camera positions, for example, and the location of broadcasters. Generally speaking, the lesson learnt was to engage early, benchmark ourselves against the current industry best practice, particularly Adelaide Oval and Perth, and the Bradman and Noble stand at the Sydney Cricket Ground [SCG], and implement those design options in the new project going forward.

The CHAIR: I miss that stuff, you know.

The Hon. TAYLOR MARTIN: It is interesting that you manage engagement. My colleague Mr Scot MacDonald had some questions earlier around engaging the submission process.

Mr SCOT MacDONALD: Earlier on we talked to Planning. In response to some of his statements I guess there was insinuation that the three meetings in May had 100 people and that was not a lot. I think the other insinuation was that it was not a great opportunity for the community to have their say. Can I just get some background? I think 37,000 letters went out. Again, it strikes me with 267,000 people living in the area and you are getting approximately 600 negatives in the submission process, is that what you would expect? Are you satisfied that the reach out to the community was enough and they had enough chance to have their say, give their feedback, be consulted, and all those things?

Mr BETTS: We certainly feel that we did a solid effort in terms of engaging with the community. The critical question is whether the planning Minister and the planning department feel that that is the case. My understanding is that Mr Gainsford gave us a pretty positive wrap this morning. That is kind of understandable when you think about it. We distributed 23,000 flyers to residents and businesses in the area. We wrote to 83 stakeholders from 25 different organisations offering briefings, held 12 stakeholder briefings, four pop-up stalls, and three community information sessions spread out over a two-week period in May. Those sessions were advertised four times, each twice in the *Wentworth Courier* and twice in the *Southern Courier*. We held information sessions for the Sydney Cricket Ground Trust members and we established a website which had almost 700 visitors.

I think we have done everything that we can to engage with the community in forums, whether they are online, direct, or face to face. I think 700—that is a lot of submissions. It is good that the community is providing us with that feedback. We take very seriously our obligation to respond. I would just note in passing that that is not unprecedented. In fact, on some of the major transport projects I have received many thousands of submissions. There is nothing exceptional about our project, but we do take it seriously.

Mr SCOT MacDONALD: You would have to be living under a rock in the eastern suburbs not to know that this consultation process was happening and you could have a chance to have your say.

Mr BETTS: Whatever your view is on the Government's policy of our stadia, you cannot say that it has not received publicity.

Mr SCOT MacDONALD: Of those 600-odd, can you give us just some idea of our many of them were form letters?

Mr BETTS: I am not sure I have got that information in front of me, actually.

Mr SCOT MacDONALD: You can take that on notice.

Mr BETTS: I would be a bit reticent characterising things as form letters. If people have written in because they feel strongly about an issue, I do not want to in any way devalue that feedback just because it might be in the form of a template letter.

The CHAIR: I will ask the question again: Can you provide us with that documentation on notice?

Mr BETTS: I imagine so.

The CHAIR: I understand your reticence.

Mr BETTS: My reticence is about the privacy of the individuals concerned.

The CHAIR: We do not want to know who they are. All we want to know are the numbers.

Mr BETTS: I can guarantee you that the numbers will be set out in the response to submissions, which will be published in a few weeks time.

The CHAIR: We would prefer them earlier than that.

Mr BETTS: Okay. We will see what we can do.

The CHAIR: I would like you to take it on notice that you have been asked a question.

Mr BETTS: Okay. Can we be very clear about what the question is?

The CHAIR: It is the numbers, only, of what you would consider to be what we will call form letters, for want of a better term.

Mr SCOT MacDONALD: Template letters.

The CHAIR: Yes, template letters.

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: Can I seek clarification? Having looked at the submissions, the problem may be that some have come through portals and they are not exactly form letters. They are people's own comments, but they have come through in a similar format because they have come through a portal. That would be part of the problem, I suspect. Is it?

The CHAIR: So defined. What your answer will be is to break that down, please.

Mr BETTS: Okay.

The CHAIR: Does that satisfy you, Ms Voltz?

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: Yes.

Mr SCOT MacDONALD: You say that now the next step is responding to those 700-odd submissions. The Planning representative, Mr Gainsford, said that contact, communication and consultation are ongoing. Can you give us a little bit of insight into that from your perspective?

Mr BETTS: David Riches already has provided some detail in terms of engagement we have already undertaken and will be undertaking with agencies that provided substantive responses. David, is there anything you wanted to add to that?

Mr SCOT MacDONALD: If I am a member of the community and I have thought of something extra—something late, so to speak—I can still pick up the phone or email you guys?

Mr BETTS: Absolutely, yes.

Mr SCOT MacDONALD: The door is not closed on people's opinions?

Mr BETTS: No. The website is still available, but there was an exhibition period. Obviously, it had a formal status to it and that is what we will be responding to in our documentation that we provide to the planning department.

Mr RICHES: Also, the appropriate agency to contact would be Planning rather than Infrastructure NSW.

The Hon. WES FANG: I note your earlier testimony about stage one of the redevelopment of the Sydney Football Stadium and then a further stage two development, which may include other buildings that have to be relocated because of the stage one works. I also note the line of questioning by Mr Justin Field about the concurrence of those activities. Have you been consulting with the Sydney Football Stadium stakeholders? If so, how, with stakeholders like Cricket NSW.

Mr RICHES: I attend a group called AMPS—I know Hansard does not like acronyms—which is the Association of Moore Park Sports Groups chair by Cricket NSW. Andrew Jones chairs that. I attend that meeting every month to give an update on the project. They provide feedback on the status of their relocations. In those forums, I have always had discussions with Cricket NSW separately because they have unique requirements to satisfy T20 World Cup criteria. We are working with them to delay the demolition of their premises at the moment at the indoor cricket centre and to ensure that an alternative arrangement is made for indoor cricket practice nets

and outdoor nets in time for the 2020 World Cup. We are having detailed conversations with Cricket NSW in particular.

With the other groups, the SCG Trust is specifically dealing with them over the decanting arrangements. My understanding is that most of those tenants are moving into the Entertainment Quarter at Fox Studios. The Waratahs have moved down to the University of New South Wales facilities. To clarify one point—a stage one planning application does not include any other buildings other than the stadium. The stage two application has to follow on from the stage one, so it will not include any other buildings other than the stadium.

The Hon. WES FANG: You outlined in one of the previous answers you gave about the Western Sydney stadium and the Sydney Football Stadium and the differences. Today we had testimony about how we can accommodate women's sport. You just outlined that the new Western Sydney stadium has those additional features. What other specific designs have been implemented to assist women's sport in Western Sydney and also potentially for the new Sydney Football Stadium?

Mr RICHES: Expected crowd numbers and disposition between male and female I suppose is one of the big issues. The number of female toilets throughout is far, far higher than you would normally expect to see, and if you are hosting a female fixture you expect a higher proportion of females than you may otherwise achieve at a male match. So they have certainly over-provided for female facilities, which you would expect in the modern era. Change rooms I have mentioned, referees facilities I have mentioned. The field of play is really the same, now the conditions are pretty much the same. It is really around those core structural requirements—change rooms, toilets et cetera.

The Hon. TAYLOR MARTIN: From the perspective of Infrastructure NSW, would you be able to let us know a bit more about the redevelopment of Allianz and if it is overly exceptional or if it is just business as usual for Infrastructure NSW? As you said, Mr Betts, there is a lot of publicity around the redevelopment. Has that changed the process, from your perspective?

Mr BETTS: The process of what, sorry?

The Hon. TAYLOR MARTIN: How you go about the redevelopment compared to business as usual with other projects?

Mr BETTS: Infrastructure NSW is delivering a portfolio of projects at the moment ranging from the new correctional facility at Grafton, Western Sydney Stadium, which you have heard about, which has been very successful, the Anzac memorial in Hyde Park, which is very, very close to completion right now. Mr Riches was responsible for overseeing the International Convention Centre at Darling Harbour and we prospectively have other major projects—for instance, the extension of the Art Gallery, and Stadium Australia for that matter. So we have a broad and diverse portfolio of different projects; each one of those has its own characteristics and its own challenges.

I think clearly we are very conscious of the fact that this is a project which has been the subject of a lot of public debate and so, as we have described, we have put a lot of effort into making sure that the community engagement, which has led through into the planning process and which will support statutory planning decisions, has been as rigorous and intense as it needs to be to reflect the level of community concern and community interest in the projects. But at the end of the day this is a construction project that somebody like Mr Riches is very familiar with delivering and he has very strong track record in that field, as does his team.

Mr SCOT MacDONALD: You are talking about the public debate. A lot of the criticism is that this is all just being done for elite sport, at the top end, the big earners, that sort of thing. Can you tell me with both ANZ and Allianz how you address that? How do you get the community access and engagement driving community sports? How do you imprint that in these stadiums?

Mr BETTS: To be honest, that is not my area of expertise. I understand you put similar questions to Andrew Jones earlier and he made the very good point that this is not about elite sport; this is about people going to sporting events, the community coming together, people of all ages and backgrounds and so on and enjoying those events together. So it is a big part of what it means to be in the community in New South Wales and it is a big part of what potentially attracts people to come and live in our State and live in our city. International global talent will come to cities which are vibrant and have successful sporting and cultural facilities. So I do not see this as being something which is narrow or elitist; this is something which is available to a very wide section of the community.

Mr SCOT MacDONALD: I will ask in the same vein as I asked before about disability facilities. At Sydney Football Stadium I think we have got 28 when there should be 400. Disability access, disability participation, can you give us some sort of insights into that?

Mr BETTS: I think you would have heard from the Sydney Cricket and Sports Ground Trust earlier some of the significant deficiencies in terms of accessibility for people with a disability and the fact that those deficiencies could not be rectified without basically the comprehensive redevelopment of the stadium. So that is one of those qualitative factors that is very hard to capture in a benefit-cost ratio for a project, but ensuring that the facility is DDA compliant goes to your previous question about making sure that it is genuinely accessible for a broad section of the community.

The CHAIR: Can you please explain DDA?

Mr BETTS: Disability Discrimination Act, which is the bible, if you like, which describes the standards to which new facilities need to be built. That was a piece of legislation that was introduced in the early 1990s by the Federal Government after the current Sydney Football Stadium had been constructed, and the current Sydney Football Stadium fails to comply with those standards in very material respects.

Mr SCOT MacDONALD: I went and visited it, of my own volition, a couple of weeks ago. The seating is pretty limited in the Sydney Football Stadium but it also seemed to me the toilets and even just literally getting into the stadium from the car park or from public transport. Is that, in your mind, going to be well addressed both at ANZ and Allianz?

Mr BETTS: I will ask Mr Riches to respond to that.

Mr RICHES: Yes. Obviously, patron access in and around the stadium is critical to ensure its success, and connectivity back to transport and parking likewise.

Mr SCOT MacDONALD: Of all mobility levels?

Mr RICHES: All mobility levels. An interesting point—just an observation really—is with the changing demographic of the population, the emphasis on disability access and ramps and lift access in particular becomes even more important as a higher proportion of people attending stadiums are more elderly. They are lessons learnt, I suppose, from Darling Harbour, that the demographic change really puts a lot of emphasis on that DDA access.

Mr SCOT MacDONALD: So you did that through the new convention centre? That was top of mind?

Mr RICHES: Top of mind.

The CHAIR: Could I just ask, more as a broad question, if you could provide the Committee with a rough estimate of how much of your current portfolio, or even going over two to three years if you like, is based in the Sydney metropolitan area and how much in regional New South Wales?

Mr BETTS: We have about five or six projects which we are delivering or developing at the moment and a number of those are in the Greater Sydney region. I would say that the Grafton correctional facility is our flagship regional project. That will be the largest correctional facility in Australia.

The CHAIR: How big is that dollarwise?

Mr BETTS: \$700 million.

The CHAIR: That has satisfied my curiosity. We will move to the Opposition.

The Hon. LYNDIA VOLTZ: You raised community events in bringing the community together, and particularly women's toilets in stadiums. Can you explain to me how those women's toilet facilities marry up against the 40 per cent of sporting fields that do not have any women's change rooms and the 33 per cent of sporting fields across New South Wales that have no toilet facilities at all?

Mr BETTS: That is not something I can comment on; it is outside my area of responsibility. My area of responsibility is to build a stadium at Moore Park which has adequate facilities in terms of female toilets, changing rooms and all the other things Mr Riches has described, and complies with relevant legislation.

The Hon. LYNDIA VOLTZ: So you deal with one standalone project.

Mr BETTS: That is my job.

The Hon. LYNDIA VOLTZ: You would not have a view on how many open spaces, swimming pools, sports fields do not have any disabled access ramps, hoists, ramps into swimming pools?

Mr BETTS: I do not have any information on that.

The Hon. LYNDIA VOLTZ: And you would not have a view about how many female toilets are in other stadiums such as Leichhardt Oval or Campbelltown?

Mr BETTS: As I explained right at the outset, the responsibility of Infrastructure NSW and the reason we are presenting evidence to the Committee today was to produce a business case for Sydney Football Stadium and to procure the implementation of Western Sydney Stadium and the new Sydney Football Stadium. That is the limit of our responsibilities. The issues you raise are very important issues but they are probably not best directed to us.

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: I was just interested because there has been a lot of discussion around women's toilets and I have been to a lot of facilities and I never noticed that Sydney Football Stadium was the worst performer, so I was just wondering if there had been any consideration to comparing it to what happened elsewhere in the community.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I noted your answer previously about not wanting to respond to the many community submissions which were in for the EIS process, which sounds sensible. You should move through those. I wanted to raise one of the agency submissions, about which we have had some discussion earlier. That is in the Environment Protection Authority comments at 2.1, the recommendations about asbestos. The first recommendation is that the proponent be required to undertake a hazardous material survey prior to commencing any work on the development site. That is obviously an important recommendation. Can you give us your view about whether you are likely to adopt that?

Mr RICHES: That is completed.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: That is all I need to know. I would like some assistance on the attendances. I will hand this document up to the witness. We are looking for 16 more events, an extra 28,000 people, to make this business case for the SFS to stack up. There has been some earlier discussion about the major event profiles for the stadium. First, I want to ask about the answer to the question on notice that talks about how attendances have been calculated. It states:

Attendances include all people within the stadium.

Therefore, turnstile counts include contra or complimentary tickets, officials, performers, accredited media and staff. That is obviously counting quite a few people. Do you know whether we are counting contra or complimentary tickets as they are issued or how many people use those tickets? They obviously might be quite different.

Ms MILLIGAN: The answer to the question on notice that you refer to, I think, is probably one that was answered by the Sydney Cricket and Sportsground Trust. Is that correct?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I cannot tell you the answer to that.

Ms MILLIGAN: What I can do is tell you the basis of the attendance assumptions in the business case because they are a little different. I think the figures that you are talking about—the turnstile count is an operational count. If you run a venue, you absolutely need to know—

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Why not take that on notice because I think you are coming to the subsequent question I am about to ask you. I would like to ask about the gap between what is in this business case in front of you, the major event profiles, and the figures that have been provided. When we received information about the questions on notice, there were more events—bigger events—than what had previously been provided. For example, in 2016 the A League game that is referred to there is listed as 40,382. If you look in front of you, in February 2016, you can see that there is a smaller number there.

Ms MILLIGAN: That is right.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: That is listed at 37,000, so obviously quite a bit smaller.

Ms MILLIGAN: These are business case figures. Without wanting to answer a Sydney Cricket Ground trust question, I think they have given you operational counts because you said they were turnstile counts. If you are running a venue, you absolutely need to know how many people you have in your property at any point in time. I think that is what they have done. Let me talk about the business case. Again, the business case went back and took a rigorous look at the attendance and different types of tickets at events. It also stripped out from the base foundation, as I have explained, some events that are not core.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Understood.

Ms MILLIGAN: As the starting point, a few of those events were—

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Understood.

Ms MILLIGAN: The trust probably has a slightly different perspective on events. Let me talk about the business case. Yes, we had a different starting point in that we did not capture every event that was held last year or the year before. In respect of attendances, we looked at five-year average attendances per type of event. In forecasting how many people are likely to come to the Roosters club matches, there is a vigorous history of how many people. For the additional five club matches, unnamed, we took NRL Sydney club averages.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I am familiar with the general background and I accept what you are saying. On this specific question what I want to know is: Why is the SCG trust saying 4,000 more people turned up to this event? Is that because they are counting contra tickets they may have issued that may or may not have been used, officials, performers, accredited media and staff, and you are just counting patrons? Why are their figures higher because they are significantly higher?

Ms MILLIGAN: I am not sure I can answer it all that clearly for you. You read out to me something that said it was a turnstile count. Everybody goes through the turnstiles, so I would expect their figure would be higher.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Whereas you have tried to count patrons?

Ms MILLIGAN: We have done an analysis of the different types of tickets. We would have included complimentary tickets for the very reason that those people are in the venue and they are buying food and drink. They also have to be accounted for in various other ways. We would have captured a whole range of people. I am not surprised if the venue operator has put through the turnstiles some people that we have stripped out in this analysis. The business case does set out a pretty rigorous approach, given that we are using assumptions.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Can I summarise your position. You have said you have included events that will continue.

Ms MILLIGAN: Yes.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: You have looked at the tickets and included those, whereas these other figures may not have done either of those. You are more confident of your figures. What concerned me when I looked at those major event profiles, we are looking for 16 more events, each with 28,000 people. On these figures, there is only one of those in 2015 and one in 2017. It seems a big leap to go from one hitting that benchmark up to 16 extra new events.

Ms MILLIGAN: Take me through your 16 at 28.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I might have to take that on notice. Sixteen extra events is the difference between the base case and option one. You agree that is the case?

Ms MILLIGAN: Yes, about that.

The CHAIR: Can I suggest that perhaps what you do is put your rationale behind your question in the question on notice so that the witness can understand what you are asking.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: That would be quite helpful.

Ms MILLIGAN: Okay.

Mr JUSTIN FIELD: Will the redeveloped Sydney Football Stadium be compliant with what is known as the Green Guide for safety at sports stadiums?

Mr RICHES: Yes. A reference design is being reviewed in the UK at the moment.

Mr JUSTIN FIELD: The concept design is being reviewed against the Green Guide, is that the case?

Mr RICHES: Yes, it is.

Mr JUSTIN FIELD: But stage one, the concept design, would not include the level of detail to enable it to be assessed against that, would it?

Mr RICHES: We have prepared a reference design that informed the concept design, which is an envelope. That reference design is now at a level of design resolution sufficient to get a preliminary report back from the UK from the sportsground association.

Mr JUSTIN FIELD: The intent is that ultimately the building will comply?

Mr RICHES: Yes.

Mr JUSTIN FIELD: Is there a legal necessity to comply with that guide, or is that something that has become the standard and the norm for development of stadiums?

Mr RICHES: There is no legal requirement that I am aware of. It certainly is the standard. For Western Sydney Stadium, it was a designer-constructor bid. We sent all three submissions for that project to the authority in the UK for an assessment for compliance with the Green Guide. There is certainly an expectation, if you are to host international events, that it be Green Guide compliant.

Mr JUSTIN FIELD: Is there no-one in Australia who can do that assessment?

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: I assume you charge them for it.

Mr JUSTIN FIELD: Is that how it works, you had to pay for that?

Mr RICHES: It is a modest fee.

Mr JUSTIN FIELD: There would be a range of stadiums, including, I believe, the Sydney Cricket Ground that would not be compliant with that guide at the moment. Would that be fair?

Mr RICHES: I could not comment.

Mr JUSTIN FIELD: Have you had any discussions in the design, either for the new Western Sydney Stadium or for Sydney Football Stadium, with the broadcasters and the media who use the event about what they need to be able to maximise broadcast opportunities and potential at the stadiums?

Mr RICHES: Yes, we have, quite extensive discussions.

Mr JUSTIN FIELD: What has that involved?

Mr RICHES: Meetings with the major television broadcasters, Fox Sport, Nine; meetings with the radio broadcasters, 2GB, ABC; and the print media. That started on Western Sydney Stadium prior to the design process getting underway. Then we had a review of the design probably halfway through documentation when they looked at their hard facilities—the broadcast booths—outside broadcast van positions, et cetera. They also located all their permanent locations for fixed camera positions around the field. It was interesting because the coverage requirements across codes vary quite significantly. Obviously for soccer behind the goal is a prime shot. That was done for Western Sydney Stadium and we are currently going through the same process at the moment for Sydney Football Stadium.

Mr JUSTIN FIELD: Would it be fair to say that the sports will probably be in a position next time they negotiate broadcast rights to negotiate higher broadcast fees as a result of the improved facilities at the venues that they use?

Mr RICHES: That is a commercial arrangement that obviously I am not in a position to reasonably comment upon.

Mr JUSTIN FIELD: I would suggest that it would be fair to assume that the sports are getting a significant leg-up in negotiations with broadcasters over broadcast rights and it is a significant portion of their revenue stream. I ask the question because I think underpinning all of this is a real question in the community about why major professional sports that draw significant revenue from broadcasting and advertising space—all of which is essentially being facilitated and provided through the use of public money—are not contributing more to the cost of these facilities when they are going to be able to draw additional revenue as a result. Has that been a factor? Has there been a discussion about increasing the amount that goes back to the venues for future upkeep and investment in facilities? Is that part of the discussion at all?

Mr BETTS: Not part of the discussion that we have been part of because we are simply the builder of the facilities. If those discussions have taken place they have taken place with other organisations, not ourselves.

Mr JUSTIN FIELD: Is it costing more to build these facilities to ensure that those world-class broadcasting bits of infrastructure for camera positions and the like are available? Is that costing us more as taxpayers?

Mr RICHES: No, it is not. It is a matter of ensuring that those requirements are built into the initial design so that it is part of the general fabric of the building and not retrofitted at a later date. It is quite an efficient process.

Mr JUSTIN FIELD: But obviously there is more cabling and there are more positions. More detailed design will go into the development of the stadiums as a result.

Mr RICHES: No more than you would otherwise expect for any other building service.

The Hon. WES FANG: Just a point of clarification, would it be best practice to build a stadium such as Western Sydney Stadium or Sydney Football Stadium and not have this level of consultation?

Mr JUSTIN FIELD: With respect, that has nothing to do with what I am asking. You can ask your questions in a minute.

The CHAIR: Order! If you have a question that is not attempting to verbal the witness, please ask it.

Mr JUSTIN FIELD: Thank you, Chair. You have been involved in no discussions that might come to the question of whether or not the sports can draw potentially more revenue from broadcast or advertising rights through access to these new facilities?

Mr BETTS: No. Our job is to oversee the procurement and construction of a new stadium. It is not to negotiate rights or revenue streams with broadcasters or anybody else.

Mr JUSTIN FIELD: But, as you say, you have had significant engagement with broadcast and media outlets to ensure that their needs are being met through this process?

Mr BETTS: Yes.

Mr RICHES: We have.

Mr SCOT MacDONALD: Mr Graham was talking about caretaker mode and delays. What are we running at now in construction inflation rates?

Mr RICHES: It depends upon the trade but across the board most quantity surveyors would advise 4 to 5 per cent per annum as a price index escalation looking forward for the next two years.

Mr SCOT MacDONALD: I did some back of envelope figures for \$1.5 billion at 3 per cent and 6 per cent. At 6 per cent I got that translating to \$7.7 million a month. We could expect that sort of inflation if we were to put this on hold?

Mr BETTS: More generally the Government is investing about \$87 billion in infrastructure over the next four years. If we were to arrive at a situation where it was prohibited for the Government to enter into a contract for three months or six months that is a very material curb on its ability to—

Mr SCOT MacDONALD: Can you say that figure again?

Mr BETTS: I said \$87 billion from memory is the level of investment in infrastructure over the period of the forward estimates. To put it in that context, if it became a political convention that contracts could not be awarded for a three-month period or a six-month period prior to an election that would put a very significant—

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Not if it became, if it were.

Mr BETTS: If it were, yes. I did not have access to the memorandum that you had in front of you but I understood your interpretation of that was that no contracts should be entered into for a period of four months from the end of November through to the end of March. That is a third of a year in which construction activity is on hold.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: For significant politically contentious issues.

Mr SCOT MacDONALD: I thought Mr Betts was the witness, not Mr Graham.

The CHAIR: I will call you to order, Mr MacDonald. You do not direct how the inquiry runs. If you want to take a point of order then do so. I understand that you have asked the witness a question. The witness must be allowed to answer the question.

Mr SCOT MacDONALD: You have put it better than I did.

The CHAIR: Please proceed, Mr Betts.

Mr BETTS: I come back to the point that I made earlier in response to Mr Graham, which is that the caretaker rules which I do not have in front of me are what they are.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Which I might just supply, if that is helpful.

The CHAIR: That is not helpful.

Mr BETTS: In my experience, there is a defined caretaker period and the normal business of government occurs until that caretaker period kicks in. It is not for me to make or interpret those rules. That will be done by higher powers.

Mr SCOT MacDONALD: Developing on what you were saying, \$21 billion a year with an inflation rate of 5 per cent is about \$90 million a month extra the taxpayer would be looking to pay.

Mr BETTS: It would be a significant impost in terms of cost escalation which, as Mr Riches said, is running at 4 to 5 per cent and possibly higher than that. Plus there is also a period of time in which government would be unable to award contracts and that has implications.

Mr SCOT MacDONALD: You would get to an election, you would have a few weeks of finding out who has won the election or whatever it is and then there would be a delay before you start again. It would be more than the caretaker period. It would be another month or two on top of that.

Mr BETTS: Based on my experience, yes, that is right.

The CHAIR: Mr MacDonald, are you asking a hypothetical? That is outside the standing orders.

Mr SCOT MacDONALD: But there is a significant risk there, if you like?

Mr BETTS: The caretaker conventions are what they are. They are established for a very good reason, which is we do not want decisions taken absolutely at the last minute or during an election campaign. Governments all around the world have caretaker conventions. The longer the caretaker period is deemed to be the greater the level of disruption, however, in terms of the ability to place contracts in the market and potentially puts a curb on infrastructure development which is in itself a big source of jobs. I do not think that is a controversial statement. That is just a legitimate trade-off that needs to be made.

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: You stated that the final business case for Stadium Australia is not yet completed. Given that the letter to KPMG was issued in March 2017, why has it taken so long to complete the Stadium Australia final business case?

Mr BETTS: We are due to complete the final business case in the second quarter of next year. The 2018 budget has now been handed down. The earliest point that any government would take an investment decision in favour of Stadium Australia is therefore the 2019 budget and therefore there is no requirement to produce a business case ahead of Q2 next year. It would also enable the election to take place and whatever the outcome of the election is, any re-elected or newly elected government would have the benefit of that business case available to it and it could take an investment decision on the back of it.

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: The letter to KPMG was issued in March 2017. That is significantly earlier than it was issued for Allianz Stadium, which they managed to turn around in three or four months. The Government has made a decision to proceed that they say was based on the business cases. Now we know that the Stadium Australia business case is not completed and will not be completed for another two quarters. Why is it taking so long to complete?

Mr BETTS: Because that is the time frame that the Government has asked us to complete the final business case in, recognising that it could not take an investment decision in favour of that project any sooner than mid-2019.

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: Essentially the Government has not made a decision to invest in ANZ Stadium?

Mr BETTS: On the back of the strategic business case that we prepared and we did submit before Easter the Government announced its intention, subject to a final business case, to invest \$810 million in a refurbished Stadium Australia. As is always the case with these things, that is subject to a final business case being completed so the Government can be satisfied that the scope is appropriately defined, the costings are robust and stress tested against potential risk factors and that it has a final benefit-cost ratio based on a rigorous assessment of the benefits.

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: Except the Government stated that it was not making its decision on whether to invest in Allianz or ANZ Stadium until it had the final business cases. Now it did not have both of them. It has made its decision to invest in Allianz—

Mr BETTS: Yes.

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: Sans the Stadium Australia business case, is that correct?

Mr BETTS: It was the strategic business case for Stadium Australia, which contains reasonably robust costings for the various options available for Stadium Australia. The Government has decided that its preferred option is the refurbishment. It asked us to complete a strategic business case in March, alongside and in the same time frame as the final business case for Moore Park for Sydney Football Stadium so that it could take the investment decision on Sydney Football Stadium cognisant of the emerging price tag associated with Stadium Australia.

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: But why not just finish the Stadium Australia— [*Time expired.*]

Mr BETTS: You have to ask Ministers that.

The CHAIR: Mr Betts and your team, thank you very much for agreeing to come and give evidence. I felt it was very clear and concise evidence. Questions on notice will be sent to you. We would like the answers to those questions within 21 days. Any documentation that defines a question will be sent with the question. Thank you.

(The witnesses withdrew)

RAELENE CASTLE, Chief Executive Officer, Rugby Australia, affirmed and examined

ANTHONY PETER FRENCH, Head of Professional Rugby, Rugby Australia Ltd, affirmed and examine

The CHAIR: Do either of you have a brief opening statement?

Ms CASTLE: I do, please.

The CHAIR: Please proceed.

Ms CASTLE: Thank you very much. On behalf of Rugby Australia, we would like to thank the Committee for the opportunity to attend. I would firstly like to point out to the Committee that Rugby Australia is a not-for-profit organisation that exists "to inspire all Australians to enjoy our great global game". We are currently three years into our 2016-2020 five-year plan, with our objectives to make rugby a game for all, which is our community focus; ignite Australia's passion for the game, which is our fans focus; build sustainable success in the professional game, our elite teams; and create excellence in how the game is run, which is our administration. Stadiums are the vehicle through which we showcase our business. That is why Rugby Australia is supportive of the stadia plan, which is a once-in-a-multi-generation opportunity for New South Wales. Investment in stadia will be pivotal to helping us achieve our objectives, as outlined. Key to this point is that revenue generated through stadiums, both through game day and television rights, is re-invested in the game at all levels. Australian Rugby teams, of course, compete in some of the world's best stadiums. Unfortunately, New South Wales does not currently have a world-class dedicated rectangular stadium that satisfies our requirements in terms of capacity, fan engagement and quality of facility.

As Australia's only global city, Rugby Australia believes that Sydney needs world-class dedicated rectangular stadia that will attract fans and the corporate market that will satisfy their expectations and demands in terms accessibility so our fans and corporate base can easily reach the venue from home or work either by public transport or a private vehicle or amenity in terms of spectator facilities and corporate hospitality options—the stadium must have better options for food and beverage, more and improved toilet facilities for men and most importantly women, more and improved merchandise concessions and better access and spaces for our patrons with a disability—viewing experience, being close to the action in a seat that is protected from the elements; technology so fans can stay connected and have a second screen experience which allows for engagement throughout the match-day; and an established precinct both at the stadium and surrounds which provides for hirer and sponsor activations, pre- and post-match entertainment and food and beverage options. Building a world-class stadium has a wider community impact beyond sport. I quote the following from the website of the redeveloped Adelaide Oval:

Adelaide Oval has had a noticeable positive impact on the psyche of South Australia. We believe the Oval is a symbol of pride for Adelaide and South Australia. In much the same vein as Eiffel Tower in Paris or Sydney's Opera House, the Adelaide Oval can be our beacon to the world. Adelaide Oval is not just a venue, it's an active participant on the civic and cultural life of the city of Adelaide. We are constantly engaged with other stakeholders in the hospitality, tourism, conference, charity and sporting sectors to ensure that the Oval becomes and remains a part of the fabric of life in South Australia.

World-class stadiums build civic pride. They are a gathering place for fans to cheer on their teams, which builds social capital and contributes to civic connectivity and combats isolation. People want to live in cities they feel proud of. Just like Adelaide Oval has had a positive impact on their psyche so too can world-class stadiums contribute to the Sydney psyche. However, rugby must have world-class facilities in order to bid for the major events including the men's and women's Rugby World Cups and to host Test Matches including the Lions tour, the Sydney Sevens and the New South Wales Waratahs. In their current condition no Sydney stadia could be the centrepiece or only option for a semi-final or a final of a Rugby World Cup. These events drive economic activity and employment and have grown significantly over time.

A report written by EY on behalf of the Japan Rugby World Cup 2019 organising committee, estimates the 44-day tournament will generate a record total output of around \$5.47 billion for the Japanese economy, attract up to 400,000 international visitors and support up to 25,000 jobs. Compare that to the last time Australia hosted the Rugby World Cup in 2003. The event created 4,476 full-time and part-time jobs and contributed \$289 million in gross domestic product [GDP] to the Australian economy. More recently the 2013 Lions Tour generated \$150 million for the nation's economy as 30,000 British tourists visited for the 11 sold-out matches. The 2016 Sydney Sevens delivered a \$7 million boost to the New South Wales economy. Since then the event has become a world-first fully-integrated men's and women's event over three days, which will no doubt boost its economic impact. I return to the Adelaide Oval website, which states:

New STR Global Accommodation data for Adelaide shows football in the city has generated significant increases in revenue for the hotel industry. The 2014 AFL season resulted in a 26% increase in hotel revenue on the night of AFL games compared to the previous season. The growing vibrancy of the city has also seen strong investment interest in Adelaide with four hotels built in the

CBD since 2013—Ibis Adelaide, Mayfair Hotel, Quest King William South, Quest on Franklin and the Watson Art Series Hotel in Walkerville, with a total room number of 787.

We know that in order to attract fans to our games, new and old, we need our stadiums to be world-class, which matches their expectations and demands in terms of accessibility, amenity, technology, comfort and overall experience. Thank you.

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: Kia ora.

Ms CASTLE: Kia ora.

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: I will go to the elephant in the room. Perth built a new stadium and the Australian Rugby Union [ARU] axed the Western Force. It is hardly an advertisement, is it?

Ms CASTLE: No, but we are talking a Bledisloe Cup test match there next year. We have just put our corporate hospitality tickets on sale and we have sold out within four days. It is an opportunity for our national team to engage in the Western Australian economy.

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: I am not sure if they will be happy with one game, will they? In fact, I think the Premier of Perth scrapped a \$4 million payment to the ARU, didn't he?

Ms CASTLE: No, they did not. We continue to look at that venue as a world-class venue and a place that we want to take international teams and invest in the Perth economy.

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: How much was the ARU provided to move its headquarters to the Sydney Cricket Ground by the New South Wales Government?

Mr FRENCH: \$10 million.

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: The Waratahs are no longer housed on Sydney Cricket and Sports Ground Trust land?

Ms CASTLE: We had extensive discussions with the Waratahs, whether that was the right place for them to remain co-located with us at Rugby Australia House. The decision was made by the Waratahs that they wanted to become more community focused and by going to Daceyville they can have the opportunity to engage with the community on a regular basis.

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: Does it concern you that the Waratahs—whose home ground has always been the Sydney Football Stadium and it is probably their most iconic—are no longer housed there?

Ms CASTLE: They continue to use Allianz Stadium and want the new stadium built in a way that is world-class where they can have their fans and their games and grow their fan base because they have had challenges with continuing to attract a consistent crowd because of the quality of the stadium.

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: You are saying that they were happy to move from the Sydney Cricket and Sports Ground Trust lands?

Ms CASTLE: That for them was the capability to be able to have a high performance facility that integrated their training facilities with their field right next door and that was not able to be delivered for them at the trust grounds.

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: It was not because the Sydney Cricket and Sports Ground Trust told them that they had to co-locate with the ARU and they would lose \$500,000 in signage payments?

Ms CASTLE: No, that was not.

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: That was not the case?

Ms CASTLE: That was not the case.

Mr SCOT MacDONALD: Another conspiracy.

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: It is not a conspiracy I think you will find.

The CHAIR: Order!

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: The Federal Government has offered \$5 million to support securing the women's soccer World Cup. What financial assistance is the New South Wales Government giving to securing the women's rugby World Cup?

Ms CASTLE: We have had a commitment for \$5 million.

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: Is that for the entire event?

Ms CASTLE: Correct.

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: That will be held at Newcastle International Sports Centre?

Ms CASTLE: Yet to be publicly announced but we are looking to have it in the Hunter region.

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: How many tickets have been sold to the upcoming Bledisloe Cup?

Ms CASTLE: We have sold about 45,000 tickets to date.

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: When is the first Bledisloe Cup game?

Ms CASTLE: Two weeks time.

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: That would be low for a Bledisloe Cup game?

Ms CASTLE: We would expect that to lift in the lead up in the next two weeks.

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: What other internationals are coming in this year?

Ms CASTLE: In New South Wales?

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: Yes. We have had Ireland.

Ms CASTLE: We have had Ireland and we have had Bledisloe and we do not have anything else this year.

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: And the Bledisloe Cup next year?

Ms CASTLE: It is in Perth.

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: There is only one in Australia next year? Two in New Zealand?

Ms CASTLE: No, because of the Rugby World Cup in Japan. We are a truncated international season next year.

Mr SCOT MacDONALD: Have you war gamed where you might go if it is business as usual? In other words, if we do not invest in Sydney Football Stadium or ANZ? Where do you see content going, business as usual?

Ms CASTLE: The reality is that we have other options. If I talk about our normal test matches first, the reality is that the offering of other world-class stadia would mean for that fan experience that we would consider taking content away from New South Wales on a regular basis. Certainly Suncorp Stadium is a world-class rectangular stadium. Now with the options of Adelaide and Perth being world-class stadia we have an option to take the Bledisloe Cup to an environment that we would like to see our international team, being the Wallabies, play. From a World Cup perspective—and we will be bidding for the 2027 men's World Cup—as the stadia are stated at the moment, they would not be capable of hosting a semifinal or a final, which would mean we would have to take it elsewhere. That would be a multimillion dollar, if not billion dollar loss.

Mr SCOT MacDONALD: A loss to Australia because New South Wales cannot anchor it, for want of a better word, and Australia is then not in the running?

Ms CASTLE: That would be the first thing that we would have to consider. We still believe we would be in the running but we would have to take semifinals and finals outside of New South Wales to give the world-class experience that world rugby would be looking for.

Mr SCOT MacDONALD: It is probably hard to estimate but if you are looking at the Bledisloe Cup in Perth and other matches around Australia, how many New South Wales people jump on a plane and go to Brisbane or Perth or wherever? Do you have any sort of handle on that?

Ms CASTLE: We certainly have visitor target numbers that we would be looking to, to target at Perth.

Mr FRENCH: We have those but they are part of the agreements we make with the State bodies which are part of the commercial in confidence agreement.

Mr SCOT MacDONALD: It would be a substantial number of people and therefore loss from this State going to another State?

Mr FRENCH: Correct. Usually those targets are in the tens of thousands.

Mr SCOT MacDONALD: In the tens of thousands?

Mr FRENCH: Yes. From 10,000 to 20,000 would be a good bandwidth in terms of visitation which you would want to get from international test matches.

Mr SCOT MacDONALD: For a Bledisloe?

Ms CASTLE: For a Bledisloe.

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: Even higher for The Lions.

Ms CASTLE: Maybe a quarter of those coming from New South Wales.

Mr SCOT MacDONALD: But still several thousand people from this State?

Ms CASTLE: Correct.

Mr SCOT MacDONALD: Can you describe the discussions you have had with Infrastructure NSW about the design of new stadiums?

Ms CASTLE: They have consulted us on the important elements of design for us and what is specific to rugby and we have been engaged in those processes.

Mr SCOT MacDONALD: Are you satisfied it is moving the right way? You are going to end up with infrastructure that will deliver world-class facilities?

Ms CASTLE: Absolutely.

Mr SCOT MacDONALD: Is that women's and men's? We had a description before of male and female on each side, plus male and female for the officials for possible double-headers.

Ms CASTLE: The reality of us, we have just moved to a format where double-headers are going to be very important. Our women's Wallaroos team and our Wallabies team playing particularly in Bledisloe Cup against our counterparts there and to be able to have those double-headers and deliver Allianz Stadium is almost impossible because there is not enough change room flexibility. That is a very big requirement for us. When we have the Sydney 7s we have to use the cricket ground facilities and transport teams back and forward because we do not have the facilities to rotate them through. The facilities at Allianz are, both from a back of house, player, high performance perspective, not even world-class. In fact they are unacceptable and I have spent time in both those dressing rooms on a number of occasions and they are really not delivering what you would expect, and to explain to a visiting team that that is the environment that they have to work in when they come from world-class stadia overseas is actually quite frankly embarrassing.

Mr SCOT MacDONALD: The Sydney Football Stadium is embarrassing at that international level. I have had some exchanges with both Infrastructure NSW and Planning about the numbers and access for disabled people. Is that something that your code is talking to Infrastructure NSW about?

Ms CASTLE: It is and it has been very challenging, particularly in the sold out series that we just had. It makes it really challenging for those people with disabilities to get in and out. There are not enough spots for disabled people and they are certainly not at a level of safety that we feel comfortable with.

Mr SCOT MacDONALD: You have a good following across our community including from disabled people.

Ms CASTLE: In wheelchair rugby as well. We also have a large number of those people who like to come and watch their counterparts play.

The Hon. WES FANG: I am a big fan of rugby and I think it is quite an inclusive sport, certainly the fan base is very inclusive. You have a great mix of males, females, old and young. We have heard from a number of people today that the fan experience at stadiums such as Allianz is suboptimal, in particular things such as the female toilets. In rugby's experience do you think the fan experience for female patrons attending your matches is suboptimal because of those facilities? What is your opinion of the facilities that will be rolled out with the new Sydney Football Stadium?

Ms CASTLE: They are suboptimal at the moment. I have experienced queuing well past half-time to try to get back into the seat to watch the second half start. If you are looking to host international events the expectation is that you have quality facilities, not just back of house to deal with men and women but also front of house so that your patrons can have a great experience and get to the toilet and back again and not miss the game.

Mr FRENCH: I think that is an important point to back up. Essentially, we are in the entertainment business, right? A part of that is getting repeat custom and stadiums can have push and pull factors. In order to be

able to attract fans, stadiums need to be world class in terms of amenities and actually be an inducement for people to come to the game and become part of their consumer decision-making rather than that being a push factor away and have them saying, "Well, it's too hard to go to the football tonight because I can't buy a beer and a pie, I can't go to the bathroom—the setting experience isn't any good." We need stadiums to be part of that entertainment package and actually be an experience for the consumer.

The Hon. WES FANG: You are confident with the consultation process you have had with the new football stadium or the replacement stadium for Allianz that that fan experience will be built into that new stadium?

Mr FRENCH: Based on our engagement, yes. We have been very clear, as Ms Raelene Castle's opening statement suggested, around the key criteria for us in what should be included in the new stadium.

Mr JUSTIN FIELD: Notwithstanding the fact that we all know that the Sydney Football Stadium is not a modern stadium and there are issues with it, you are not having trouble with getting people to your events, are you? You have had some sellouts in the last period and actually there has been growth in attendance at events.

Ms CASTLE: I will answer that in two parts. Certainly we did, in the most recent Test series, sell out Allianz Stadium, but the safety element in the customer experience was a very long way away from what you would expect to be world class. Yes, we managed to get the people there, but they left thinking—we actually lost that particular Test match—

The CHAIR: Buzzer!

Mr JUSTIN FIELD: No new stadium is going to fix that.

Ms CASTLE: —so there were a few frowns. But on top of that, there was also very concerns in feedback we got through our customer service station of safety issues; concerns around feeling crushed and squashed and thinking they are not going to be able to get out and leave. Then the time that it actually takes to exit the environment is really not what you would term world class. That is from the Wallabies.

Mr JUSTIN FIELD: You got feedback on that? Is there a report that you are able to provide to the Committee on that feedback?

Ms CASTLE: We could certainly look at providing some feedback for you, absolutely.

Mr FRENCH: I think Andrew Webster wrote an article on 29 June which is a pretty good summary of the experience.

The Hon. WES FANG: Convenient timing.

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: We have already been through those photos.

Mr FRENCH: That is quite a good summary of the experience, and the feedback that we receive is consistent with that.

Mr JUSTIN FIELD: I think when you look at any stadium that is at capacity, it looks very much the same. But notwithstanding, we know the pie lines are long. That has been well established through this inquiry. I do not doubt that it benefits the big sports to have all the States and all the countries competing with each other to build the fanciest stadium, but that is not really an effective use of taxpayer money because there are only so many international events that can be attracted to Australia. Sydney has some natural advantages, given the population base and particularly the fan base for certain sports. Potentially, your sport is slightly different. It is not so grounded in one particular State. My question is: Do you really expect that all the States should go into competition with each other to build the fanciest stadium? Because there are just going to be really new stadiums really sitting empty in different parts of the country at different times.

Ms CASTLE: Yes. I think the Adelaide example that I used in my opening statement is a really important way States need to make sure that they provide opportunities for the people living in the environments to feel that they want to come out and engage with society. That is what we have seen with the Adelaide stadium. We have seen the same with the Perth stadium. It is actually their teams. It is not just at an international level. But certainly at the Waratahs we would expect to see crowds increase in the same way that they have seen for the two Australian Football League [AFL] teams in both Adelaide and in Perth.

What you are creating is this goodwill among your community and environment so that there is a real positive move on impact—not just from what Rugby Australia does to generate the revenue that we invest back into our grassroots sports, which is how we generate our money to make sure rugby survives and make sure we have a healthy sport at a grassroots level. But we fundamentally believe in the positivity that it creates within the New South Wales environment.

Mr JUSTIN FIELD: Sure. Lots of public spaces provide that opportunity, though—not just stadiums, I think you would agree. You mentioned in your opening statement broadcast rights. I have been asking questions of different stakeholders that are at different stages of their current broadcast agreements. I am not sure where you are at with yours. Would you envisage that new modern stadiums with improved broadcasting capacity would give you greater bargaining power the next time you negotiate broadcast rights for your games?

Ms CASTLE: I think a better stadium creates great opportunity for us. What broadcasters like is full stadiums with positive people in the background. We think it is a positive opportunity all round for our sport.

Mr JUSTIN FIELD: Would you be able to give us any idea about whether or not you think you would be in a stronger position to negotiate broadcast rights?

Ms CASTLE: The nature of our sport suggests that, because we play our sport all over the place and right across Australia, that that one factor is not the only factor. But certainly having a better stadium in New South Wales, we know for the Waratahs and the engagement with Super Rugby certainly will give us a better opportunity to negotiate broadcast rights.

Mr JUSTIN FIELD: Have you been specifically consulted with regards to broadcasting at this new venue? I am not sure if you intend to play games out at the Western Sydney stadium, or have your broadcasts been consulted about what their needs are?

Ms CASTLE: Yes, I believe they have, as part of the process.

The Hon. LYNDIA VOLTZ: In regards to the Perth Stadium, the Perth Stadium has only 6,000 general admission seats on sale. All the rest is membership. Is that right?

Mr FRENCH: What for, sorry?

The Hon. LYNDIA VOLTZ: The Perth Stadium has only 6,000 general admission seats. All the rest of its seats are sold as membership.

Ms CASTLE: Not in relation to when you sell a Wallaby Test match.

The Hon. LYNDIA VOLTZ: Not a Wallaby Test match, but generally for their teams for the new Perth Stadium.

Ms CASTLE: I am not sure.

The Hon. LYNDIA VOLTZ: Two AFL teams are actually getting \$7 million compensation a year for the next 10 years. You are not aware of that?

Mr FRENCH: It is a matter for them.

The Hon. LYNDIA VOLTZ: I was just interested to know if you knew that when you were talking about the uptake of the Perth Stadium, which you were using as a base line.

Ms CASTLE: No.

Mr SCOT MacDONALD: I wish to explore that question about elite sport. How significant or important is successful elite sport, as you were saying, to your grassroots development? Can you expand on that point a bit, please?

Ms CASTLE: The reality for us is that the shop window needs to perform, and that is when the Wallabies and our Super Rugby team play. For us, having a Super Rugby team and four States means that we have four opportunities to really grow the engagement with rugby at a community and grassroots level. That is not just great for rugby but also great because it creates healthy communities. We need to make sure that we have teams that are performing well, which is the shop window. But when those teams are performing well, that is also when they generate the revenue that ultimately allows us to invest back into the programs. That continues to grow the experiences that our people in grassroots—both boys and girls.

If you take the women's success at Rio, for example, the growth in our women's product means that we now have 20 per cent of our playing base here in New South Wales is female. They need to have facilities and change rooms that are appropriate for a woman to mix in and use, unlike what we have got at the moment. It is a circular discussion: We need the success; they need to be playing in a good stadium. That allows us to invest back into community rugby.

The Hon. LYNDIA VOLTZ: And we need to beat the All Blacks.

The CHAIR: The hearing will conclude. Ms Castle and Mr French, thank you for agreeing to give evidence today. There may be some questions on notice. The secretariat will put those questions in writing to you. We would like answers to those questions within 21 days, if you can manage that.

Ms CASTLE: No problem. Thanks for having us.

(The witnesses withdrew)

The Committee adjourned at 16.58.