

PORTFOLIO COMMITTEE NO. 6 - TRANSPORT AND THE ARTS

Thursday 28 August 2025

Examination of proposed expenditure for the portfolio areas

SPECIAL MINISTER OF STATE, TRANSPORT, THE ARTS, MUSIC AND THE NIGHT-TIME ECONOMY

CORRECTED

The Committee met at 9:15.

MEMBERS

Ms Cate Faehrmann (Chair)
The Hon. Mark Banasiak (Deputy Chair)
Ms Abigail Boyd
The Hon. Anthony D'Adam
The Hon. Dr Sarah Kaine
The Hon. Tania Mihailuk
The Hon. Jacqui Munro
The Hon. Bob Nanva
The Hon. Chris Rath
The Hon. John Ruddick
The Hon. Natalie Ward

PRESENT

The Hon. John Graham, *Special Minister of State, Minister for Transport, Minister for the Arts, and Minister for Music and the Night-time Economy*

CORRECTIONS TO TRANSCRIPT OF COMMITTEE PROCEEDINGS

Corrections should be marked on a photocopy of the proof and forwarded to:

**Budget Estimates secretariat
Room 812
Parliament House
Macquarie Street
SYDNEY NSW 2000**

CORRECTED

The CHAIR: Welcome to the second hearing of Portfolio Committee No. 6 - Transport and the Arts for the inquiry into budget estimates 2025-2026. I acknowledge the Gadigal people of the Eora nation, the traditional custodians of the lands on which we are meeting today. I pay my respects to Elders past and present, and celebrate the diversity of Aboriginal peoples and their ongoing cultures and connections to the lands and waters of New South Wales. I also acknowledge and pay my respects to any Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people joining us today. My name is Cate Faehrmann, and I am Chair of the Committee. I welcome Minister Graham and accompanying officials to this hearing. Today the Committee will examine the proposed expenditure for the portfolios of Special Minister of State, Transport, the Arts, and Music and the Night-time Economy.

I ask everyone in the room to please turn their mobile phones to silent. Parliamentary privilege applies to witnesses in relation to the evidence they give today. However, it does not apply to what witnesses say outside the hearing. I urge witnesses to be careful about making comments to the media or to others after completing their evidence. In addition, the Legislative Council has adopted rules to provide procedural fairness for inquiry participants. I encourage Committee members and witnesses to be mindful of these procedures. All witnesses will be sworn prior to giving evidence. Minister, I remind you that you do not need to be sworn as you have already sworn an oath to your office as a member of Parliament. I remind Mr Murray, Ms Mares, Ms Rubalcaba, Ms Webb and Mr Collins that you have already been sworn before this Committee during this inquiry and therefore do not need to be sworn again.

CORRECTED

Mr JOSH MURRAY, Secretary, Transport for NSW, on former affirmation

Ms TRUDI MARES, Deputy Secretary, Planning, Integration and Passenger, Transport for NSW, on former affirmation

Ms RAQUEL RUBALCABA, Acting Deputy Secretary, Infrastructure, Projects and Engineering, Transport for NSW, on former oath

Ms BRENDA HOANG, Deputy Secretary, Finance, Technology and Commercial, Transport for NSW, affirmed and examined

Ms TRACEY TAYLOR, Deputy Secretary, People, Communication and Workplaces, and Chief People Officer, Transport for NSW, affirmed and examined

Ms SALLY WEBB, Deputy Secretary, Safety, Policy, Environment and Regulation, Transport for NSW, on former affirmation

Ms CAMILLA DROVER, Acting Chief Executive, NSW Motorways, Transport for NSW, affirmed and examined

Mr HOWARD COLLINS, Coordinator-General, Transport for NSW, on former oath

Mr PETER REGAN, Chief Executive, Sydney Metro, affirmed and examined

Mr MATT LONGLAND, Chief Executive, Sydney Trains, sworn and examined

Mr ANTHONY WING, Commissioner, NSW Point to Point Commission, sworn and examined

Ms KATE BOYD, PSM, Secretary, The Cabinet Office, affirmed and examined

Ms ELIZABETH MILDWATER, Secretary, Department of Creative Industries, Tourism, Hospitality and Sport, affirmed and examined

Mr TAREK BARAKAT, Deputy Secretary, Hospitality and Racing, Department of Creative Industries, Tourism, Hospitality and Sport, affirmed and examined

Mr MICHAEL RODRIGUES, 24-Hour Economy Commissioner and Acting Deputy Secretary, 24-Hour, Screen and Sound, Department of Creative Industries, Tourism, Hospitality and Sport, sworn and examined

Ms KERRI GLASSCOCK, Executive Director, Create NSW, Department of Creative Industries, Tourism, Hospitality and Sport, affirmed and examined

Ms MAUD PAGE, Director, Art Gallery of NSW, affirmed and examined

Ms LOUISE HERRON, Chief Executive Officer, Sydney Opera House, affirmed and examined

Ms LISA HAVILAH, Chief Executive Officer, Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences, affirmed and examined

Ms EMILY COLLINS, Head of Sound NSW, Sound NSW, affirmed and examined

The CHAIR: Welcome and thanks for making the time to give evidence. Today's hearing will be conducted from 9.15 a.m. to 5.30 p.m. We are joined by the Minister for the morning session from 9.15 a.m. to 1.00 p.m., with a 15-minute break at 11.00 a.m. In the afternoon we will hear from departmental witnesses from 2.00 p.m. to 5.30 p.m., with a 15-minute break at 3.30 p.m. During these sessions there will be questions from the Opposition and crossbench members only, with 15 minutes allocated for Government questions at 10.45 a.m., 12.45 p.m. and 5.15 p.m. We will begin with questions from the Opposition.

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: Good morning, Minister. Thanks for being here, and thanks to all the witnesses as well. Minister, when are you planning to deliver a regional arts, culture and creative industries strategy?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: The work is well underway on the regional strategy. We've been delivering a range of these. Obviously, the regional strategy covers much of New South Wales. In order to make sure that the consultation is thorough, it is still ongoing. My goal would really be to have that land by the end of the year. Obviously, I will be guided by the committee that is dealing with it—by the group of people who are really leading that work.

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: You originally said this would be delivered in 2024. Could you explain why that wasn't achieved?

CORRECTED

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Really, it's the size of the task. Also, we are ahead of progress on some of the other strategies. The philosophy of these strategies—we have launched the policy that sets out the Government's aim, but then we are working with either individual creative sectors, for example the literature sector or the screen sector, or Western Sydney or regional New South Wales. The whole philosophy here is that we proceed at the pace that the sector is ready for. Really, this is not a plan about what government is going to do; it's a plan about what we're going to do together, either with that industry sector or with that part of the State.

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: It sounds like you are deprioritising regional arts.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I categorically reject that assertion.

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: If other industries and areas are getting priority and the regional arts strategy has been delayed from the original announced date, it sounds like regional arts are coming last.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I think that's definitely not true, from a government point of view. It's also a bit of a misunderstanding about how we're trying to work with these strategies. My view is it's no use rushing a sector. While this is true of regional New South Wales, it is also true of Western Sydney. We went backwards and forwards quite a lot with that regional strategy. They've got to be ready when they are ready, and you can understand that the consultation process across regional New South Wales is quite extensive.

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: How are you making funding decisions without a strategy?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: It is largely being guided by the Artform Boards—the process which has been in place since the previous Government. We have made some tweaks to the process, to the boards and to the ACFP funding, which is probably the key mechanism.

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: Regional arts organisations, in particular, were dismayed when they weren't included in the four-year funding round. I note that today you've released a media release, just in time for budget estimates. Some regional arts organisations are relieved, I think is the best word, to find out that they've got at least two-year funding to, hopefully, get them to the next funding round. But they feel like they have been forgotten. They feel like they have been de-prioritised, and without a regional strategy they don't feel like they have certainty that this Government is serious about supporting them. When you say that there will be a regional strategy at the end of the year, can we believe that there will be a strategy by the end of 2025?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: That's my aspiration, but I'll be guided by the group working on this as well. If they ask for more time, I'm highly likely to give it. But I'll be encouraging them to deliver it by the end of the year, for the reasons you're outlining. It's true, we have made clear what the two-year funding is, and that's great news for regional New South Wales. Half of those organisations that have received funding in the two-year allocation are from regional New South Wales—so, big, big winners in regional arts across New South Wales.

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: When you say half—

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I just want to deal with the funding uncertainty. In fact, this whole system is now more certain. Many of these organisations were on annual funding; we've now moved them to two-year funding. Many of these organisations had no funding certainty at all, not even annual funding. They now have two-year funding. Some of them have four-year funding.

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: When you say that half of the grant recipients are from the regions, how is that broken down by funding quantum, rather than just the arts organisations?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: There are 62 organisations that have received two-year funding—31 of them are regional arts organisations. I think you're asking about the quantum of investment.

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: Yes.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: That's \$7.5 million for those. I might give you the amount going to the 10 regional art galleries as well that have been funded in this round. That's \$1.8 million.

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: I'm just asking for the number of dollars that have been allocated to the 31 organisations out of that total \$7.5 million.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: It's \$7.5 million of \$15.4 million, I think is what you're looking for.

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: That's what I'm looking for. Minister, Treasury has claimed that the Art Gallery of New South Wales is overstaffed. I don't know if you have said that directly. Does that include the Sydney Modern?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Just to finish that last round of questioning, I do understand the view you're putting about some of the concerns of those organisations that they've had up until the two-year round.

CORRECTED

I hope that now they can see the detail of that two-year round they'll be much more reassured, given the numbers we've just talked about.

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: They've had to wait another six months after the original four-year funding round was announced, so they've been left in the dark for most of this year. Luckily, the media release comes out on the day of budget estimates, when we don't have time to talk to our stakeholders to actually understand what they have received. But you've been able to give us some high-level information, so that's something.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I'm certainly happy to go into much more detail over the course of the estimates—or perhaps this afternoon might be more appropriate.

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: I think so.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Turning to the Art Gallery, though, yes, it's true that Treasury and the Art Gallery have done close work on what the ongoing funding for the Art Gallery should be. Essentially, that's because the business case that was done quite a number of years ago was really based on a number of assumptions that didn't become true in the real world at all. It was well off the mark. That work has happened. There's also been, as a result of that, additional government funding provided last year.

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: I'm just asking about the modelling that Treasury has done that claims that the Art Gallery of New South Wales is overstaffed. I'm curious as to whether that includes staffing for the Sydney Modern.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Yes. Feel free to quiz in more detail with the officials but, yes, my understanding is it's an analysis of both the galleries.

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: Which institutions were being compared with in that analysis?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: The work was quite extensive, so it did look at a range of other galleries. We could certainly take it on notice and get you that information.

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: That would be helpful, thank you.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I think that'd be useful to do.

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: Did you find the modelling and comparisons with other institutions convincing that the Art Gallery of New South Wales is overstaffed?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I think the analysis was certainly helpful, to look at the benchmarking against other institutions—what is their staffing; what are their ticketed exhibitions, what are their free exhibitions, what is that balance. So, yes, I think that was really worthwhile work. It's also led to us boosting the base funding for the gallery. That's, again, helpful. Of course, there are funding pressures at the moment, and I want to recognise that at the moment there is the restructure going on and there is some uncertainty for staff as that unfolds.

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: Would you be comfortable if the Art Gallery of New South Wales has to reduce its opening days because of the potentially severe reduction in staff that's been reported?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Two details on that. Firstly, no, I wouldn't be comfortable, and I understand that's not under discussion. I know you've raised that fear publicly. It's not under consideration—

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: I've raised that fear on behalf of staff who have raised that fear.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Yes. As I'm making clear, my understanding is that's not under consideration as part of these changes. But again, you're free to ask over the course of the day in relation to that.

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: Do you guarantee that the opening hours for the Art Gallery will remain the same?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: It's not under consideration. We're going through a consultation phase. I might also make the point that the Opposition has raised these sorts of fears about mass job losses at the Art Gallery previously, in relation to a previous restructure. The net change from last time was four positions. This is a consultation phase. I'm certain there'll be changes to the plan, as there should be when any of these organisations have a genuine discussion with their workforce about "We've got a new model. How do we make sure that the workforce fits the new model?" The Government will also be there to work with the gallery very closely, and if there are changes required, that's something I'll be open minded about.

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: Who is being consulted about these changes?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: My understanding is the workforce will be consulted.

CORRECTED

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: We've heard this kind of language before. Consultation is a tick-a-box exercise; it doesn't actually change the decision-making of the organisation, so what is the point?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I reject that assertion. Number one, my expectation is organisations will consult with their unions and their workforce and do it genuinely. If they don't, I want to hear about it. That's a point I've made to the organisations but also to their representatives and some of their key delegates. Secondly, you've raised these fears before, and last time you raised them there was a net change of four positions. So let's go through the consultation and actually work out what the right fit is, greatly informed by that agency work that's been done. But in the end, we've got to work through the detail of that and I strongly support the gallery doing that.

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: I think four positions would be very different to what is being estimated at the moment, which is potentially 30 to 50 staff.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Yes, but I'm just comparing that to what you claimed—and to be fair, Ms Munro, it was probably not you making the claims last time. It was one of your colleagues. But we heard the same wild claims, with some changes.

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: You think that 30 to 50 staff being reduced is a wild claim?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Let's work through the consultation phase. I'm making the point that last time, after similar claims that you are making now were made, there was a net change of four staff. Those are the facts. At the moment, we're in the consultation phase.

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: Minister, speaking about job cuts, it was said that there was a 25 per cent estimated cut to staff in Create NSW. Does that reflect the actual number of positions in the Create NSW organisational chart that were deleted?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I would encourage you to probably ask the secretary for some of those details. You're welcome to do that now or this afternoon. I can make a couple of views about the Create restructure. It's more advanced. Number one, what was the problem? Well, Create was left on a funding cliff by the former Government, so at each ERC we had to choose whether to invest in the sector or in bumping up the budget of Create.

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: Minister, you have a budget and, as Minister, you get to decide how you want to spend it.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Yes.

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: This is not about what decisions former governments made. You're in government now.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I think that's very fair, Ms Munro. I'm just making that point before I make the second point, which is that Government did decide and I, as a Minister, decided to put that money into the sector rather than boost the budget of Create. That's had some impact on the organisation.

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: Can I just ask about that? You've said, "We're refocusing Create NSW." You've acknowledged that the former Government made some great investment in infrastructure, but in the budget papers there is a specific measure:

Funding for critical capital maintenance, including a backlog of capital works for the cultural institutions and museums, and improvement of creative infrastructure and activation of creative spaces.

How will that material measure in the budget paper be undertaken without Create infrastructure?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Create will still have skills in relation to infrastructure. They'll still perform some of the key functions that they have in the past, but the truth is this Government is asking them to do very different things to what the former Government asked. The former Government asked Create to do much more building and assisting other cultural organisations with building. This Government's focus is on activation. It's a very different skills set. It's very different funding models. That's the change we're asking Create to make.

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: Can I take you then to the Powerhouse Museum?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I just want to put one important fact on the table. After some of the concerns were raised about the large-scale impact of the Create restructure, the net change to employees is expected to be seven people. Again, that's after consultation, after changes and after that close work—

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: My question was specifically about job descriptions.

CORRECTED

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Yes. You'll need to talk to the secretary about that, so feel free to drill down. But I'm making the legitimate point that the net change will be seven.

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: The Powerhouse Ultimo revitalisation in the budget has \$300 million as an estimated total cost. That is \$50 million more than in the 2023-24 budget, which was \$250 million. Could you explain the \$50 million increase, please?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: It's essentially capturing the portion which will be dealt with by philanthropy, which was always the case.

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: Why wasn't philanthropy included in the original budget estimates?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: The Powerhouse accounting is complex when it comes to how it's represented in the budget papers.

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: Do you know where philanthropy is represented in this budget?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I'll refer you to the secretary on where that is. We've been clear right from day one that there was a much smaller government contribution than was previously proposed, but there was always a philanthropic contribution as well. That makes up the difference. That has been the plan from day one, since we announced—

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: Sorry, \$50 million in philanthropic contribution is quite large. Is that on track? Are you aware of that?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: You should get an update from Lisa Havilah on that.

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: That is a significant portion of the Powerhouse Ultimo so-called revitalisation. Are you up to date with where that funding is at?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: You'll have to ask Lisa for a precise number.

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: So you don't know.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: What I can tell you is, in relation to Powerhouse Parramatta, the more developed project—

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: Minister, this is your budget and you're relying on taxpayers to foot the bill for \$50 million, and you're not sure either where that is represented in the budget, or where that is up to in this very significant part of your portfolio.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: What I was saying, Ms Munro, is that Powerhouse Parramatta is well on track with that fundraising for that scheme. Lisa's got an excellent record of fundraising.

The Hon. BOB NANVA: Point of order: It is not courteous under the procedural fairness resolution to not allow the Minister to answer the question completely.

The CHAIR: I do not uphold the point of order at this time of the day. I think the member was being respectful and was trying to get an answer. I remind her to allow the Minister to at least get his answer out.

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: I will ask a different question. Could you tell me where the construction capex is housed in the budget? Where does that lie? Where is that expenditure? Is that under the Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: We'll get to the specific reference, but there have been some changes with the way the Powerhouse finances have been represented in the budget over time. I can understand why you might ask about that. The budget for the overall project has not changed. It's consistently been \$250 million as a government contribution and \$50 million from philanthropy.

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: Talking about the Parramatta rebuild, is that under MAAS, or is that under the department?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: We'll get to those specifics and where they appear in the budget paper on notice.

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: Do you think it's important that we have clarity on where those figures lie?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Yes. I think that's a very reasonable request, but we also have to work within the framework that Treasury established for the budget papers. You'd understand I'm not Minister and we're not the agencies that set the way those figures are reported in the budget.

CORRECTED

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: Have you spoken to the Treasurer about how these projects are represented in the budget?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I won't go into all the details of my extensive discussions with my colleague.

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: I didn't ask for every detail.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I was just making that point.

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: I am after this particular information.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: There's certainly been dialogue between Treasury and the agencies and between the offices about making sure that these are accurately represented in the budget papers, but I acknowledge that's changed over the course of the life of the Government.

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: It seems to me that the capital expenditure and opex are now divided differently throughout the budget and this is making it very difficult to understand how the spending occurs. Given that is the case, are you committed to ensuring in future budgets that there is greater clarity around the distinction between the Ultimo Powerhouse and the Parramatta Powerhouse in the capex and opex?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I think that's not an unreasonable request, but we've got to work within the framework Treasury sets. I think we should take on notice your request about the current state and we can get you some details. Fundamentally, this is budget estimates and you have a right to ask about those issues. I can assure you the budget hasn't changed. I can assure you that fundraising under Lisa Havilah is going very strongly.

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: Could you please explain why there is a \$10 million increase in staffing for the MAAS this year, given that Powerhouse Parramatta is not even open, nor is Powerhouse Ultimo?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: The elements of the staffing are related to the five major exhibitions which will unfold very soon at the Parramatta Powerhouse. In relation to some aspects of the build, all those involve the staffing stepping up. It's then expected to be lower, but I encourage you to speak to Lisa this afternoon to get some more specific details, if you would like them.

The CHAIR: I'll continue that line of questioning. The figures I have in front of me are that the MAAS annual report shows the Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences was handed an additional \$67.6 million in funding for the financial year 2023-24, which was not shown in the State budget papers? Are you aware of that figure?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I'd have to take on notice those specifics. I'd want to check those before confirming them, but I'm happy to answer any questions.

The CHAIR: Let's get the specific figure out of the way. It doesn't have to be whether it was \$67.6 million or \$55 million, or whatever. What's the reason for what appears to be that amount of money—in the tens of millions of dollars—handed to the Powerhouse at that point in time and it doesn't seem to be in the budget papers?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I can't confirm the way that's represented in the budget papers. Obviously the Powerhouse is going through some extensive changes at the moment. Castle Hill is now open. Ultimo is being redeveloped in a heritage revitalisation.

The CHAIR: It was given additional funding because it wasn't meeting budget, or expenses were running over?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: There's certainly been funding for those elements but also for Parramatta, including the fact that the staff have to develop major exhibitions. Five of them will be opening very early as Parramatta Powerhouse is expected to open. Obviously there's also got to be some work done supervising the build.

The CHAIR: Minister, did you approve a funding request at a certain point in time for the MAAS to have an emergency funding injection? What's the story?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I wouldn't mind checking with the secretary on this, but my recollection is that this just went through the ordinary budget process on an annual basis. It is true that we've worked with a range of the cultural institutions, including the Art Gallery, for example, to make sure they have the funds they need over the course of the year. Sometimes that's meant changes during the course of the year. I don't believe that was true for the powerhouse, but I'd be happy to be corrected by the secretary.

CORRECTED

ELIZABETH MILDWATER: I have only got some of the detail in front of me. I know some of the earlier questions did relate to the transfer of capex spend from Create to the powerhouse, but I could get you the full—

The CHAIR: How much was that?

ELIZABETH MILDWATER: It was quite significant. I could get you the detail and bring it back after morning tea or lunch, if you'd like.

The CHAIR: Yes, please.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: That was an accounting change.

ELIZABETH MILDWATER: Yes. It also related to the fact that Create will no longer have a role in overseeing some of the infrastructure build, further to what the Minister said earlier. But I can get you the specific numbers as to what was transferred, and Ms Havilah will have more as well. We'll get you those details.

The CHAIR: That would be useful, particularly as we're seeing budget cuts across a range of the arts elsewhere—staffing cuts and cuts to Create NSW and the Arts and Cultural Funding Program. Minister, has it come from there? Is this where the money has come from?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: No, I don't think that would be fair. I will make the point that operational funding and capital funding across arts and culture is up in the budget. Of course the Government has had different priorities. We have had to make choices. We can't fund everything, particularly as institutions are affected by rising costs after COVID and the rising cost of living impacting on the number of people that come through ticketed shows. I acknowledge there are pressures. I particularly acknowledge that there are some restructures going on at the moment. I do make the point that, overall, this budget has delivered increased funding both on the operational side and the capital side for arts and culture. In fact, it's up by 9.8 per cent.

The CHAIR: I just wanted to turn to your ministerial diaries. On 31 July last year you had a meeting with Listen Out Sydney. Who was at that meeting?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I would have to take on notice the details of precisely who was there, but I can confirm—if that's my diary recollection, I'm certain that's correct.

The CHAIR: What was discussed at that meeting?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I'd be cautious about recalling the meeting exactly, but obviously I've met with a range of the festivals about the pressures that they've been experiencing. They've made no secret of the fact that they are under financial pressure. I've met with a range of the festivals, large and small, about the state of regulation and the state of their finances.

The CHAIR: At the 31 July meeting with Listen Out Sydney, I assume that would have had the head of Fuzzy Operations, who is also the chair of AFA—I assume Adelle Robinson was at that meeting?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Yes. The head of Fuzzy Operations—I'm not sure if that's an accurate description or not. I do believe Adelle Robinson was at that meeting, but I'd want to take that on notice just to confirm it for you.

The CHAIR: Was the CEO of the Australian Festival Association there as well?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I don't recall.

The CHAIR: The meeting on 3 September with Australian Festival Association, who was at that meeting?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I don't recall who was at particular meetings. You've got my diary there, Ms Faehrmann, and all these things have been disclosed.

The CHAIR: It would have been Olly Arkins at that meeting, who is the CEO of the Australian Festival Association.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I would say that's highly likely, yes.

The CHAIR: I assume the discussion was around the music festivals reform, which included the Contemporary Music Festival Viability Fund package?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I can't confirm that that was specifically what was discussed at that meeting, but I've had extensive discussions with the Festival Association and with a range of individual festivals right across the board both about the viability fund and about the state of regulation in the festival sector.

CORRECTED

The CHAIR: That announcement came—I think it was 18 or 17 September that it was made. It was public when the music festivals reform bill was second read in the lower House. That viability package was announced. Who did you meet with before that viability fund was announced to discuss the fund and agree to the fund?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I've met very extensively with the music sector, including the music festival sector. Certainly in the course of my interactions as Minister, I've engaged very directly with the sector about it, including on the financial pressures that festivals have been under, some of which are driven by cost and some of which are driven by regulation.

The CHAIR: Do you list all of those meetings in your diary?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I comply with the diary disclosures very directly and meet those requirements. Obviously I may well run into people who put views to me as I'm attending music events, but my engagement with the sector is quite extensive on this.

The CHAIR: The music festivals package was announced and, at that time, as it was before the Parliament, the music festival viability fund was established. I just want to get clear, did you sign off on the fund or was that just a departmental sign-off?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I was certainly consulted on the fund. We'd have to get you some information about who the decision-maker was but, yes, I was involved in being briefed on the fund by the agency.

The CHAIR: The eligibility criteria, did you see those and sign off on those?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Yes.

The CHAIR: Why did the eligibility criteria have—firstly, why did it have 15,000 patrons and above?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: There is extensive support for festivals going on. The purpose of this specific fund was to deal with the fact that some of the biggest festivals, some of the best-known festivals and some of the most popular festivals in the State could have stopped. They were at risk of not going ahead. That is well known; that's well publicised. It's a worldwide phenomenon, but it's been worse here in New South Wales because of some of the history of regulation. It was an attempt to deal with those.

The CHAIR: This was put to you by the Australian Festival Association lobbying for that fund?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: This was put to me extensively by the sector. I think it's also accurate—

The CHAIR: The sector via the AFA?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: No, I don't accept that. You are correct, of course, that it was put to me by the AFA. This was put to me in the course of discussions with many of these festivals over a number of years.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: I might just go to the Kiama-Bomaderry line. Kiama is in the media a bit, for some unknown reason. You've allocated approximately \$1.5 million for track resilience improvements and emergency repairs, but electrification from Kiama to Bomaderry remains off the priority list. Why is that?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I think you're referring to the work for the Illawarra Rail Resilience Plan, which the Government announced and it's now rolling out. You are referring to the budget allocation correctly, which has been there. The work is quite extensive. That electrification question that you are referring to is one of the questions that the agency is certainly looking at. It will be far more expensive than the allocation for the Rail Resilience Plan, so it would be a bigger decision for government.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: Of course, but the electrification was a feature of the Regional NSW Services and Infrastructure Plan that was devised in 2018, which is a 40-year plan. That is also part of the Future Transport 2056 plan as well. In that plan it says that there's going to be a 10- to 20-year investigation on the electrification of this section of the line. How far down that 10- to 20-year navel-gazing exercise are we?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Firstly, the Illawarra Rail Resilience Plan is a serious look at what we can do to really strengthen some of the challenges we've had on that line. You'd know well some of the geological challenges to rail resilience there. From a government point of view, the focus has very much been on more immediate action to improve rail reliability, and it's rolling out those big programs to fix the rail line that were rolled out under Minister Haylen. Secondly, landing the rail dispute has been crucial to allow that work to go on, and we're now looking at what else we can do.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: Have we actually started the 10- to 20-year investigation as to whether we should or shouldn't electrify Kiama to Bomaderry?

CORRECTED

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: The rail resilience plan is really the forum for a range of that work. It's not the only question being examined—

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: I'm not interested at the moment about the resilience plan. I'm interested about whether your department's started the investigation that was part of the Regional NSW Service and Infrastructure Plan to investigate the electrification. It's foreshadowed to take 10 to 20 years to investigate. I think that's a bit obscene—and I think the average person would think it's obscene to look at something for 10 to 20 years—but where are we at with that 10- to 20-year investigation? Have we started it?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I accept your point that the population down there doesn't want to wait 20 years to have this investigated. That's why the work's underway. I can confirm the plan is looking at potential upgrades, including the electrification of the South Coast line south of Kiama. It's also looking at other issues: capacity improvements between Wollongong and Bomaderry, a realignment of the South Coast line between Wollongong and Waterfall and, of course, the feasibility of that new connection between south-west Sydney, which has been talked about for a very long time—the Maldon-Dombarton corridor.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: That's another one.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: They're some of the things that are under examination. No, exactly right; these are questions you've referred to previously. But all those things are in scope for this discussion.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: Is the Toolijooa Passing Loop part of that investigation? And full duplication from Gerringong to Bomaderry as well, is that part of—

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I've certainly had some discussions about it. I might refer that specific question to the agency.

TRUDI MARES: Yes, it is included.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: Do we have any preliminary costings around those segments or not?

TRUDI MARES: No, but I will take those questions and see if I can bring you back some details this afternoon.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: But we're doing that assessment at the moment. This is the work to do that assessment so we can take it through the Infrastructure NSW gate process.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: Are you aware that 80 per cent of locals say they're unhappy with the current service, Minister? How long are those 80 per cent of people supposed to sit there and suffer through that dissatisfaction?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Yes, I'm very clear on that. The Government has got the message about rail reliability, including on the South Coast line. There are some unique challenges. That's why this rail resilience plan is part of the long-term answer, but we're very focused on short-term improvements to the network. They will roll out more in the centre of the network, where the risks are the biggest, but the benefits of that potentially spread right across the network, so it will mean less disruption to people on the South Coast line as we're able to deal with some of the maintenance backlog as we're able to make those reliability improvements. That reliability investment is only really possible now that the rail dispute's landed.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: When should the people that use that section of that line start to see improvements in the service?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: We are seeing improvements to reliability as the backlog's cleared post the rail dispute. That's the good news. It is early days.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: Have you got any metrics that you can potentially table that would put that into some sort of context?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Yes. I'll ask Matt Longland to table some for you shortly, but I think we'd be very happy to get you that information. I do indicate it's early days as we're building back after the rail dispute. But that maintenance backlog is coming down quite dramatically. It had really peaked, now down to 34 orders still outstanding from hundreds and hundreds. That is a benefit right across the network, but including on the South Coast line.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: Mr Longland, do you have any of those figures now or should I ask you this afternoon?

MATT LONGLAND: I'm happy to pick those up this afternoon if you want to go into the detail.

CORRECTED

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: Sure. Minister, I might just switch over to the Sydney Fish Market ferry service. When this was first announced in January it was set to run from Circular Quay, but the Government's June release also mentions a link to Barangaroo. Is that still the case?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: This was good news for the fish market. We've made a range of improvements, both to the light rail approach—there's been extensive discussions about the active transport arrangements nearby and then the fact there'll now be a ferry approach as well really makes this one of the more connected sites in the city. You can understand why that'll be important.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: I'm also interested in what are the other stops going to be on this service because the fish market is not the only potential destination that this ferry service could stop at. There are art and cultural facilities that it could potentially drop people off at, and I would see that as a bit of a waste if we didn't include that in the plan for the ferry service.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: That's an excellent point that you're making. At the moment the focus is on getting the wharf built up and running in a form where it can sustain the sort of popularity that one would expect for this area. Some of those ferry route decisions I know there's additional work still yet to go on, but I might refer you to Howard Collins on those matters just to drill down into the detail of that. But at the moment the Government focus is very much on the budget decisions around the wharf, and that was a big step forward in this budget on both the light rail and the wharf. But I agree with your proposition.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: I might come back to Howard in the afternoon. But do you commit to actually consulting with the community on the ferry route itself?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Yes, absolutely, and that goes for some of those dragon boat users and some of the community groups that really rely on the harbour around that area. I know that that's been a real concern to the agency and to Howard. I've personally spoken to some of those groups. We have to get the consultation right to balance everyone's needs there. But I think it's no question it's great news that this will be a very connected site in Sydney.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: Just one other question. Pier 2/3 at Walsh Bay Arts Precinct—that was recently refurbished. So what's our logic by spending \$30 million on another wharf at Blackwattle Bay while there's perfectly serviceable infrastructure pretty close next door?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: The fish market is such a destination. You'll literally have people doing what they do now: landing at the airport and heading to the fish market, from a tourism point of view.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: It's that direct route you want?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: They're much more likely to have a good time there after the refurbishment compared to before. It's going to be a substantial upgrade. Landing directly—giving the option to arrive by ferry will make it an incredible way to arrive. I think that is best served by having that right at the fish market rather than too far away.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Thank you all for coming today. Ms Mares, just a quick question for you following up on my colleague's question: Can you come back to the Committee today with that costing that you have on the electrification of the Bomaderry to Kiama—

TRUDI MARES: Yes, I'll confirm what work has been done to date. I don't think we would have costings yet, but I'll certainly give an update on work done to date.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Could you see if you do have a costing or a range available? Obviously, as part of that work there would be some estimate in there.

TRUDI MARES: Sure.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: That would be helpful. Thank you. Minister, at the previous estimates I raised with you concerns regarding SafeWork investigations into staff conduct and bullying at the point to point commission, which you said you had no knowledge of. Earlier this month Secretary Murray received the report from SafeWork, which included findings against the point to point commission and Transport for NSW. On what date were you made aware of those findings, and what steps have you taken as Minister responsible to improve the treatment of staff in the agency that you're responsible for?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I don't accept the premise of your question.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Why not?

CORRECTED

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: It's different to the facts I've been briefed on by the agency. I have been briefed by the agency on these matters.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: When?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: We've discussed it on a range of occasions, but I've been briefed again—

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: When were you briefed?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I've been briefed on a range of occasions. I couldn't tell you exactly all of those.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: And what have you done?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: But I have been briefed again very recently on it. The facts that you're asserting are not the case in the briefing to me. I refer you to the secretary, who's dealing with this.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: I can speak to the secretary this afternoon but I'm interested in your responsibility as the Minister of this entity. So there are no complaints—no issues at all.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Your assertions about the nature of the—

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Well, correct me. What is the wash-up of the review?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Your assertions about the nature of the investigation, as you put it, are incorrect.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Alright, so what are they?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I invite you to go into more detail with the secretary.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: You may do so, but I'm asking you while you're here. I appreciate you being here; it's obviously your agency. I'm keen to understand when did Mr Murray brief you that he received the report?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I've been briefed on the nature of the discussions.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: When?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: On a range of occasions, including recently.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: In the past week?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Including in recent days.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: In the past week?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Including in recent days, yes.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Recent days would be in the last week.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I agree with that categorisation.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Right, we got there eventually. In September 2024 Minister Haylen said in a media release regarding Sydney Metro Southwest, "The conversion of the line to metro is scheduled for a 12-month delivery program". Did she mislead the public when she put that in the media release?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: First I want to thank Minister Haylen for all the work she did backing metro to get this project up and running. I've always found her to be very direct with the public.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Twelve months?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I'm certain that she was giving the best information she had at the time in a frank discussion with the public. I've attempted to do the same in my time as transport Minister.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: It's clearly not a 12-month delivery. That's obvious. What has changed in the project delivery?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: This is a very complex conversion of the Southwest line. The program's rolling out well, but obviously it involves changes to the station infrastructure, it involves the testing—the low-speed and the high-speed testing.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: So have they changed?

CORRECTED

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: It involves significant interaction with the safety regulators as well. They've all got to be satisfied in order for these to—

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: I understand that, but my question is what has changed to delay the project delivery. We were told it was 12 months. It's now not. What has changed to impact that delivery?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: The complexity of the project has meant it has proceeded more slowly. I will say that Minister Haylen also indicated that was the Government's hope at the time, but this was very complex and it could take longer, and we've indicated we'd be engaged in a discussion with the public.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: With respect, they were not the words used at the time. The words at the time were not "It's a complex project." They were, "The conversion of the line is scheduled for a 12-month delivery program". I'm interested now, as you stand here as the transport Minister, what has changed to delay that project delivery?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I think it'd would be wrong to categorise it as changes. The complexities of the project have weighed heavily. Obviously we've had a period of industrial action during that period as well. The Government has been up-front that that has had some impact on the project. That relates particularly to the electrical work on the program. This corridor has to be handed backwards and forwards between metro and Sydney Trains in order to complete this work.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Has work regarding the conversion had to be re-completed during the conversion?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: That's a very general question. I'll ask you to be more specific.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: I'm being very specific. Has work that has been completed on the conversion had to be re-completed?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: It's a very big project, Ms Ward. I might ask you to be more specific. What sort of work are you talking about?

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: I'm asking you.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Just be a little bit more specific.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Has work that has been done had to be redone or re-completed during the conversion? Is there any work?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: It wouldn't be surprising if that was the case.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Are you aware—to your knowledge?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: It isn't an issue that has been specifically raised with me as one of the top-level issues with the project.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: So you can categorically rule out work that has been redone?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: No, I can categorically say it's highly likely that that's the case, as it would be with most of these major projects. But if you'd like to be more specific, I'd be—

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: I will, then. Construction work—has that been re-completed?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Entirely possible.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Yes or no, to your knowledge as Minister? We can ask anybody whether it's entirely possible. I'm asking you, as you sit here today in budget estimates about a multibillion-dollar project, about your knowledge as to whether construction work has to be re-completed?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: What I'm indicating to you is that it isn't one of the top-level issues that has been briefed to me as one of the causes of the complexity along the way. I'm certain that has been the case, given the complexity of the project, though.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: So you don't know. That's fine.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I'm not saying I don't know, Ms Ward.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Do you know when it will open?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Yes.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: When?

CORRECTED

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I've indicated publicly the line will open in 2026.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: What's the forecast total cost of the project?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: For the budget? The budget is unchanged for this. We're allocating \$797 million this year.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: So it will open in 2026. When in 2026? There are 365 days in 2026. When will it open?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: What I've said is, as soon as we've got more details about that opening—and the Premier has indicated this as well—we'll let the public know.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Do you know? You said that you knew the date. Do you know?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Really, as we move to the high-speed testing phase, we'll have a lot more confidence about what the opening date is. That's the crucial step that allows us to firm up that date.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: I understand that you don't need to inform the public if you choose not to inform the public, but do you know the opening date?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Yes, I do. It's 2026.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: One of the 365 days in 2026. You said that you knew the date. It doesn't seem that you're able to share that with anyone.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Yes, 2026. I'm telling you what the date is.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: The first half? The second half?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: As soon as we move into that high-speed testing, we'll have greater certainty. We'll then be able to engage the public in that discussion.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Does it have a target date?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Yes, 2026 is the date we're—

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: That's not a target date; that's a target year. Does it have a target date, Minister?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Ms Ward, I think it's a little unfair to criticise the former Minister for giving a specific date—and then the complexity of the project slows it down—and also criticise the Government for giving the best information we've got at the moment and an indication of when we'll be able to firm it up.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: I'm sorry to criticise the Government, Minister, but that would be my job when you are spending billions of dollars of taxpayer money on a metro project and it seems no-one can tell us when it will be delivered, how much it will cost in extra time or delay, and it's all perfectly fine. We should just shush and not criticise anybody.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: No, I'd just prefer you picked one line of attack.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: That's a matter for me. That's a very technical term. Does Sydney Metro Southwest have a target date for delivery?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Yes.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: And you're aware of that target date but you can't tell anybody if it's in the first half or what quarter it's in—when that will be.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Not, it's not that the Government is hiding information. We are clear that it will open in 2026. That's the best information we've got at the moment. And, as we move to high-speed testing, we'll be really clear with those communities. The Premier has been up-front. We don't want to disappoint those communities.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: I'm not asking about the Premier. I'm not asking about Minister Haylen. I'm asking about you. Mr Regan, does Sydney Metro Southwest have a target date as part of the program delivery schedule?

PETER REGAN: As the Minister has just indicated, the Government has announced that it will open in 2026. We don't have a precise target date within 2026 because of where we are in the process. Certainly as we get further through the testing and the works—

CORRECTED

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Is there a secret target date?

PETER REGAN: No.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: It's not a secret; it just doesn't exist.

PETER REGAN: Of course, we don't have a specific target in terms of an actual date because we—

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: I was just told by the Minister that there is a target date, so who's wrong?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: It's 2026. I told you what it was.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: That's not a date; that's a year.

PETER REGAN: We are looking to open in 2026.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: So in the project delivery schedule, you have no target date. You're seriously telling this Committee that?

PETER REGAN: As you say, there are a number of dates within 2026. We're looking to open it as soon as we can.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: It's a \$20 billion project and nobody here knows. Is it a game of cat and mouse? I'm supposed to chase the \$20,500,000,000 down? You hide it and I'm supposed to find out where it is? What is happening with this project?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Ms Ward, this is entirely consistent with the answers that were given by former transport Ministers, I think you'll find.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: I'm not interested—I'm asking you, Minister, as you sit here today in charge of this project that taxpayers are paying \$20 billion for, when it might open. And all you can say is a year.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Yes.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Are you seriously saying there's not even a target date in the project delivery?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: You are dramatically simplifying the proposition I'm putting forward, Ms Ward.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: I'm really not.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: We've told you it will open next year, and we've told you that date will firm up as we move to high-speed testing. We've moved to the second stage of low-speed testing. That's good news. As we have that further information, we'll be updating the public and those communities.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Mr Graham, I put it to you that that's just not a credible answer. You don't know when the target date is. "It's a secret date. We're not going to tell anybody and we're not prepared to"—

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: It's not a secret. We're out talking to those communities very regularly. I've been up and down this line, along with the other metro lines, with the Premier, talking to those communities about exactly these issues.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: That wasn't my question.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: It's a rolling discussion with those communities, Ms Ward.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: It's a rolling date, apparently. Minister, when will the Sydney Metro Western Sydney Airport open?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: We're working through that process with the contractors. There has been, as you would have seen publicly, some dispute with the contractors, so we're working through that. I haven't been given a firm date by Metro, but you're welcome to speak to Mr Regan about it.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Is it a secret opening date as well?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: No. There's clearly been a dispute with a contractor in relation to that.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: You don't know when that one will open?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Yes, I'm—well, we haven't shifted the public date so far. We have indicated it's under time pressure as a result of that dispute.

CORRECTED

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: So when will it open?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I'll refer you to Mr Regan.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: I'm asking you, as the Minister for Transport, when Sydney Metro Western Sydney Airport will open.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: We haven't shifted—

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: So what's the date?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: —the public date for that.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: And what is that?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: At the moment I'll refer you to Mr Regan.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: No, I'm referring to you, Minister.

The Hon. BOB NANVA: Point of order—

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: I can speak with Mr Regan this afternoon. I have limited time.

The CHAIR: A point of order has been taken again. Mr Nanva?

The Hon. BOB NANVA: Chair, it's perfectly in order for the Minister to refer to a public servant to elucidate on an answer that's been given. The Minister has now done that on a couple of occasions.

The CHAIR: Of course, and it's perfectly—I won't uphold the point of order, because of course we then can ask the officials that in the afternoon, and go back to the Minister, which is standard practice. The Hon. Natalie Ward can continue.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Just to clarify, on both metro projects, the New South Wales transport Minister doesn't know when they'll open?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: No, I don't accept that proposition.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Is it correct the line could be delayed until December 2027?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: That is not what we've confirmed, because that's not the advice to me. You're able to quiz Peter in much more detail, because it is related—

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: What's the advice you've received?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: —to these two things: some of the industrial action which has unfolded, but also, principally, this dispute with the contractor.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Minister, I'm asking you about—

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: You can understand, Ms Ward—

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: —multi-billion dollar projects—

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I'll let you ask, but then I do want to make this point.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: I would like to understand, on behalf of taxpayers, on multi-billion dollar projects, if anyone here can give a target date for the opening of metro.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I would have thought, Ms Ward, you'd understand, as a former infrastructure Minister, we're in dispute—

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: I would have thought that you'd be clear with this Committee.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: —over the nature of the work, the cost of that work, and time is a factor in that. One of the reasons why the Government doesn't want to concede changes here is we want to get the best deal for taxpayers. We will update publicly as soon as there are changes. I haven't been briefed on concrete changes in the way you're asking, about a new date, but there's clearly a dispute.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Have you been briefed on any date?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: There clearly are issues relating to this contract dispute, and we're working through those.

CORRECTED

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: You've said that. I accept that. Thank you. But my question is this: Minister, as you sit here as the transport Minister, I would expect that you would have a target date, or a date in mind, for multi-billion dollar metro projects—two of them—to open. Do you have those dates?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I've given you the best answer I can on the specifics. You're welcome to quiz Mr Regan in more detail. The other thing that I have indicated is the Government is quite concerned about the costs that might accrue to the taxpayer here.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: So are we.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: My guidance is we shouldn't be accepting those costs to the taxpayer if they're unreasonable. If that means we've got to work through this project in the right order, then that's the approach that Sydney Metro should take.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: I would have thought a transport Minister would know when a project opens, and wouldn't be so proud to not know anything about it and be so out of the loop, Minister—but I'll move on. Tolling, what's the status of the tolling direct deal? Will that be complete before the end of this year?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: The tolling direct deal is underway. Those discussions have been established and are ongoing. The Premier has indicated what we'd like to do is provide an update to the public about that by the end of the year. I think we need to tell people where toll reform is going. That toll cap is in place, toll relief, but toll reform we need to update the public by the end of the year. That doesn't necessarily mean all the loose ends will be tied, or that—

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Certainly. Will that be an update by the end of the year, or a deal by the end of the year?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: We need to let the public know where this discussion is heading on toll reform. We need to point a direction forward.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Will the direct deal be done by the end of the year, or will the update be a general update on progress?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I'm not guaranteeing that all the loose ends are tied by Christmas. I think that would be unreasonable. These are very complex matters. What we have said is that we need to let the public know where this is heading. I think one of the things that's on the mind of both myself, as Minister, and the Premier is that the toll cap is publicly scheduled to end at the end of the year.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: I'll get to that shortly. That wasn't my question. Are you going to sell off the roads to pay for your election promise?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: No.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: No?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Still no.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Are you going to privatise roads to fund your toll reform?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: The Government has been clear that it expects to keep toll roads such as the Western Harbour Tunnel or the M6 in public hands.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Thank you. Are you going to extend toll road concessions to fund toll reform?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I'm not going to go into all the details of the toll negotiations.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Why not?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Because this is a negotiation, a highly complex commercial negotiation, after the contracts you signed. I don't think it's in taxpayers' interest to go through all of the options.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Minister, are you going to extend toll road concessions to fund toll reform?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I think the best description of these options is really contained in the work that's been publicly released: the independent toll report. I've got some great guidance on this matter about tolling extensions, including saying that by themselves—

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Sure, but that's not the question. Are you going to extend those toll concessions?

CORRECTED

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Including saying that, by themselves, that move alone would not be reform.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Are toll concession extensions privatisation, in your view?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I think that's an interesting theoretical question. That isn't the view of the—

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: It's a very serious question for the future of New South Wales, something that you were happy to talk about for years—

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Yes.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: —and suddenly it's all mum and you're not prepared to say. It's a very simple question. It doesn't need the detail.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Well, that isn't the view—

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Are toll concession extensions privatisation?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: That isn't a view that the *Independent Toll Review* put to the Government.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: I'm asking your view, Minister.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I'd say when it comes to any of the options, we're really working to undo the tight legal contracts that your Government signed, that—

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Your previous Government also signed them.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: —extend until 2060. It's really the length of those concessions—

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Minister, I have one minute left. I'm asking a very specific question. Will drivers pay tolls longer for toll reform?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: The whole purpose of toll reform is actually to give drivers some relief of the high and rising cost of tolls. The principle here is we want to get a better deal for drivers. I believe that's possible under toll reform.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: And in doing so, will drivers pay tolls for longer for that toll reform?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: It's certainly been possible under toll relief. That \$60 toll cap has really made a huge difference, but we need to move into the reform space, if we're really going to make a—

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Certainly. And in that reform space, why in this budget is the Government expecting toll revenue from the M6 stage one if it doesn't know when it will open?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Those budget figures are based on the best budget assumptions at the time of the budget. I can confirm they were accurate, but those assumptions are obviously made at—

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: How many cars are going through the M6 stage one to generate those tolls?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: That's why there's zero revenue assumed for the current financial year from the M6 stage one.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: In the budget it has revenue that's stated—

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Not in this current financial year.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: —to expected to be coming from the M6 stage one, when no-one knows when it'll open.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Not in this financial year. That's totally incorrect.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: What about future years?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Yes, there are assumptions in the budget about future revenue from the M6 stage one in the outer years of the budget, based on the best information we had at the time.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Toll administration fees—is not removing toll administration fees a broken promise?

CORRECTED

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I can confirm the Government is still doing extensive work in this area about tolling administration fees. It is very complex, given the—

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: On how many occasions have you met with the lead negotiator, Christopher John Saxon?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I can confirm—look, I'd have to take on notice the number of times that I've met extensively with the negotiator and the large number of agency teams who are dealing with this.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Could you get that answer to us today, how many times you've met with him?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I'll take it on notice.

The CHAIR: Minister, I just want to hand you a document, if I can. This is in relation to the Contemporary Music Festival Viability Fund. This is an Instagram post by the Australian Festival Association on 19 September, celebrating the win:

... celebrating years of hard work that led to major reforms in the festival industry.

It says:

Managing Director Mitch Wilson and Chair Adelle Robinson outside NSW Parliament ...

Huge thanks to—

you. Do you know those two people in that photo? Obviously.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Yes, I certainly do.

The CHAIR: Yes, you do. How much was the crucial package?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: The festivals viability package? We've obviously made some internal budget provisions for it. We've allocated that to five festivals. We can get to that number. I'll just look for it now.

The CHAIR: It was \$3 million that you announced, and \$2.25 million went to festivals.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Although we haven't had to spend all that amount.

The CHAIR: That's right.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Exactly right.

The CHAIR: That's what I'm telling you to save time. Those two people, the chair of the Australian Festival Association, who I understand is now chair of the Sound NSW advisory board—

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Correct.

The CHAIR: Two of their festivals received funding under that crucial package for New South Wales festivals. They're celebrating there after years of lobbying.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Yes, correct.

The CHAIR: How much money did they receive?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: We'll get you that detail, but it would have been in line with the funds.

The CHAIR: It was \$500,000 for one festival, Listen Out.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Up to \$500,000.

The CHAIR: And \$500,000 for another festival, Field Day. Do you see any problems with the fact that the chair of the Australian Festival Association is here celebrating the crucial package delivered to save New South Wales music festivals, which they had lobbied for for many years, and \$1 million of that money goes to her festivals. Firstly, do you see any problem with that?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I don't, unless there is some suggestion that you're making that the individuals have been involved in the decision-making. These are independent decisions. They're correctly made in accordance with the grants guidelines. I don't think it's a surprise that the festival sector or individual festivals are celebrating the fact that there is festival support. There would be many instances where industry groups have recognised that there is funding being allocated by the Government, including when some of them benefit.

CORRECTED

The CHAIR: Sure. One of those festivals was Listen Out, which occurred just two-and-a-bit weeks after that crucial reform package to save New South Wales music festivals was dropped. That was on 6 October, so that's a pretty tight turnaround as well. Would you agree?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Yes, although the timing was much more driven by the imminent summer festival season and also the fact that we were making changes to the law—something that you had pressed us to do, Ms Faehrmann. You repeatedly asked us how quickly we could do this. That was much more of a factor in the timing.

The CHAIR: Why did Fuzzy receive the \$1 million when they are majority owned by the international mega company that invests in music festivals and holds a portfolio of over 85 festivals around the world, Superstruct? Why did Fuzzy get \$1 million of public taxpayers' money when they're majority owned by an international company?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Because they met the guidelines. They met the goal of the fund, which was festivals that were under significant financial pressure and, in fact, made a loss. It needed some assistance at that time. These are very popular festivals, including both Listen Out and Field Day. They are well loved by young music patrons. I'm not quite clear why you're attacking them.

The CHAIR: I am looking at the integrity of this fund, Minister, because many music festivals that are Australian owned and are smaller missed out on that funding. The eligibility criteria, to be honest, when you look at it, seems to have been shaped around, potentially, particular festivals. We've got \$1 million of funding that goes to two festivals. One was held two weeks after the funding was announced, and it was majority owned by an international company. The eligibility criteria says "part Australian owned" or "part ownership". What does that definition mean to you?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: You've covered a range of things there, so I'll come to that. I just want to make this point: This is not the only festival assistance going out. The Government is providing significant assistance to smaller festivals. Just to give you some taste of what is being provided, DNSW funding is rolling out to Bluesfest, Mundi Mundi Bash, Deni Ute Muster, Great Southern Nights, Laneway, Parkes Elvis Festival, Strummingbird, the country music festival, ValleyWays, Wanderer, Yours and Owls and a range of other, much smaller festivals—Zest Fest, Backroads Fest, Land of Milk and Honey, and Milton Folk Jazz and Blues Festival. There are many others here. That doesn't include the Create funding that goes to those smaller—

The CHAIR: The question is around the eligibility criteria. If you look at, for example, the Federal Government grant which goes to music festivals—that's the Revive Live program—it says that organisations must be majority Australian owned. The definition of "part Australian owned"—in terms of legal terms, just to be clear—is what to you?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Your assertion that these should not have received funding because they are not majority owned is not correct. These are in compliance with the guidelines. What is the goal here? What's the Government trying to do? I am concerned about the international operators in the music system buying up Australian festivals. That's why we've ruled out—if you're 100 per cent international owned, we're not providing that support. I think that's appropriate. If they've got an Australian partner—these are some of the biggest, most popular festivals for young people. Festivals like Field Day, festivals like Listen Out and festivals like Laneway—a range of them have international relationships given the way the industry is organising. That's what we're trying to do here. There is a balance to be struck.

The CHAIR: Minister, \$1 million of this fund went to Fuzzy. They're not running the music festival Listen Out Listen Out. That isn't happening. Are you aware of that?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Correct.

The CHAIR: So, \$500,000 went to it last year, two weeks after the fund was announced to save music festivals, but not this year.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: They lost a significant amount of money. This viability fund is in place to assist festivals at risk of losing money.

The CHAIR: You're aware that Listen Out has, in fact, transformed into another company called Listen Out Presents. It's now doing "one-off, carefully curated parties in killer locations," including over the October long weekend, which traditionally has been Listen Out the music festival and is now being for one artist, Mochakk, a Brazilian DJ. They haven't folded, Minister. They're still making money. They're still doing events, but they're not doing music festivals. Half a million dollars goes to this company that's majority international owned. To me, that doesn't seem like a very good spend of your Contemporary Music Festival Viability Fund. It doesn't seem to have saved music festivals as such.

CORRECTED

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I will say, an excellent Brazilian DJ too. I would recommend the specifics to you, Ms Faehrmann.

The CHAIR: In terms of music festivals?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I don't accept where you're heading on this. The fact that Listen Out happened in the year it was funded is good news for music fans. It's good news for the 1,600 people who were employed as a result of that. It's good news for the music ecosystem. The fact that they won't be proceeding with the festival and the fact that they won't be receiving viability funding is exactly how the system should work. It goes alongside a whole lot of other support for smaller festivals that the Government is providing.

The CHAIR: In terms of the discussions that you had with—just to confirm, you did have discussions over many years with both the Australian Festival Association, Adelle Robinson and now Olly Arkins in relation to that rescue package.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Along with many other festivals, including a range of the others who received this funding—Yours and Owls, down in the Illawarra; Bluesfest; Lost Paradise—

The CHAIR: They're Australian owned.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I've discussed this with all these festivals and many more who are deeply concerned about the future of the festival sector in Australia. If we lose these festivals over the next couple of years, we may not get them back.

The CHAIR: We've lost Listen Out.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: That is spot on. The Government is concerned about that.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: Minister, I might jump to ports. You had a 10 June press release about delivering an economic boost for the New South Wales freight industry to grow to \$130 billion, and there's a whole series of actions you plan to take. What's the estimated cost to taxpayers of implementing this reform road map in the short term, in the next four years?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Firstly, I want to recognise that this was work commissioned by Minister Haylen. It's really excellent work because often what happens with freight decisions is they're made piece by piece. We're talking about a particular port or rail line. We haven't done that whole-of-freight chain analysis. This work, led by Kerry Schott with some able assistance, has really done that. It's excellent work. You're correct: It sets out some phasing recommendations to the Government about what we should do in the short term. It provides a great way to work through this problem. On the specifics about the cost, I'd probably need to take that on notice. We're working through exactly how to implement that. That will impact on the cost assumptions, but we've been given great guidance by the report in the way they've structured it.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: What guarantees do we have in place to ensure that we actually do reach this \$131.5 billion economic benefit and 235,000 jobs? It's stretching out to 2061. It is pretty nebulous. Neither of us will be here in 2061—hopefully I won't be here. What accountability measures are in place so that it remains on track past your and my time here?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: It's a really good question. The one guarantee is we will miss the mark if we don't do this. We won't reach those goals unless we undertake some of the actions that are outlined there.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: How are we going to reach our goals when one of the proposals in the reform in the road map is government stepping back from determining the timing and location of any new container terminals? We've got Port Botany operating at over capacity and it has for many, many years. You're giving the strategic oversight of freight to a private port operator and saying, "Government's not going to talk about other new container terminals anymore. We're going to recognise Port Botany as the main container terminal."

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I don't agree with that characterisation.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: How would you characterise that point in your press release where it says:

adopting a new port policy regarding container terminals in which the Government should not determine the timing or location of any future container terminals but recognise Port Botany remains the key container port for NSW.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: The key concept I took out of that port discussion in the freight review was really about port neutrality and the Government not picking and choosing in the way that the former Government did and constraining the future of one port in return for a short-term financial boost but a long-term

CORRECTED

economic hit to the entire north-west of the State. Those issues have been well canvassed. This recommendation to the Government—and the Government accepts it—is we should take a more neutral approach.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: Do you accept, though, that there's only so much more efficiency you can wring out of Port Botany and eventually you are going to have to look at new container terminals to reach this goal of 2061?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Yes, I think that's fair. If your advocacy is to make sure the Government doesn't take an entirely hands-off point of view, I'm very open to that. But it really is a reaction to the circumstances that had unfolded. I think that's how you should read that.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: It also talks about appointing a facilitator for the Port Botany Landside Improvement Strategy. Has a budget been allocated for that facilitator?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: That's a good question. I might refer you to the agency on that but, yes, we have moved to have a facilitator. There have been some real conflicts between various bits of the industry about what's fair and appropriate on the port side and the land side. The Government has accepted the recommendation of the review, but I want to really carefully make sure this rolls out in the way that the review intends. That's why we're asking for this to be facilitated some more. I don't want unexpected impacts on the freight industry, particularly the trucking industry, driven by unfair market power.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: Is the decision still going to come back to Transport for NSW, though, in terms of whatever the facilitator facilitates? They're not the ultimate decision-maker in this; the decisions are still coming back to Transport for NSW?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: It's facilitation, but this is one of the areas that, as a Minister, I'll be watching closely.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: I might come back to the specific figures in the afternoon, in terms of costing that facilitator. To go to a specific issue at the port, you're aware that Transport for NSW and NSW Ports banned parking for any vehicles, especially those carrying dangerous goods? Are you aware of that decision?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I've had a range of the parking issues around the port raised with me, including that one.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: How have we come to this point where there's a blanket ban on parking inside Port Botany? I know it's a reaction to gridlock, but this obviously creates other significant safety and compliance issues, particularly around heavy vehicle drivers having a safe place to park, pull up and actually rest, which is a legal requirement. How have we got to this point?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Those issues are significant in a range of places across Sydney, including Western Sydney, but they're particularly acute at the port, given the land use conflicts that are there. I am concerned about that. I'd refer you to the agency on some of the way this is rolling out. I think you should ask some more questions about it, but it is one of the issues I'd like looked at as part of this facilitation. We're really concerned about where trucks are able to actually rest and park, and we're doing a range of work, both in regional areas and Western Sydney.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: I might direct this to Mr Murray. What consultation actually took place with driver unions, the National Heavy Vehicle Regulator and anything to do with Fire and Rescue around this blanket parking ban at the port?

JOSH MURRAY: Mr Banasiak, I'll take that on notice and we'll come back to you on the consultation that was in place.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: You acknowledge, though, that port security waking up drivers during their regulated rest breaks and basically trying to turf them out is actually breaching the national heavy vehicle regulation? Do you accept that?

JOSH MURRAY: I would be concerned about that but, again, I just have to check the jurisdiction there in terms of how that has been implemented. We can certainly look at any concerns.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: Do we know who actually inserted the "no dangerous goods" clause in the original DA that has caused some of this mess?

JOSH MURRAY: Again, I will take that on notice and we'll get the detail back to you today.

CORRECTED

The CHAIR: Minister, in terms of the job cuts across Transport for NSW—the 950, as I understand, before Christmas—how are you ensuring, firstly, that the skills are retained, and are you looking at senior executives to make up some of that 950 headcount?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Firstly, it is a significant restructure. I have greatly enjoyed working with the Transport officials I'm working with. It will obviously cause some uncertainty, and I want to recognise that. Yes, the focus in the restructure, as it has rolled out over some time, has been both on executives as well as the other layers of the organisation. Transport is well on the way—two-thirds on the way—to meeting its government-required cuts to the executive level of the agency.

The CHAIR: In terms of the two-thirds, is that voluntary or have you identified those? Is it two-thirds of the entire 950, or two-thirds of the senior exec—

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: No. The Government set its target for reducing the number of senior executives, given that those had grown over COVID. That's particularly the case in Transport. There has been real Transport growth.

The CHAIR: So that's entirely separate to the 950 job cuts?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Correct.

The CHAIR: The question I was asking was about the 950 job cuts.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Understood. But it is important, because there has been a real focus, early on, on those executive changes. We had seen growth of more than 3,000 employees in Transport over that period—and this is excluding Sydney Metro and the rail agencies—since financial year 2022. There has been very significant growth. Some of that is paring back now.

The CHAIR: There is time for a quick question from the Opposition, if you've got one.

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: Minister, have you been briefed about the extension to trade that the Croatian Club has requested?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Have I been briefed? I have received—no, I haven't been briefed specifically, but I'm aware of the public issue.

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: Do you support the club's DA to extend their trading hours?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I'm glad they're asking to trade later. I think turning off the music at 10.00 p.m., which I understand is the position, is unwelcome in a city like Sydney. But in the end I think it's helpful if local councils are the ones really working out where this works in their neighbourhood. That's why we are backing the entertainment precinct model, so that communities and councils can work out which areas they want to be vibrant and which areas they want to be a little bit quieter.

The CHAIR: As there are no questions from Government members, we will go to morning tea now and come back at 11.15 a.m.

(Short adjournment)

The CHAIR: Welcome back. We will go to questions from the Opposition.

The Hon. CHRIS RATH: Good morning, Minister. You would have seen the reporting this morning that the member for Wollondilly played a role in deciding projects to be funded under the LSCA. To be abundantly clear, I'm not referring to parks and playgrounds. I'm asking about specific projects allocated as election commitments. I have a document here, provided to the Parliament, that puts Philip Donato as the contact for the Orange electorate. By leave, I table that document, and I have copies for everyone.

Document tabled.

The Hon. CHRIS RATH: Minister, why were lower House Independent MPs involved in the process for allocating projects as Labor election commitments after the election?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I don't accept that any of the information, on the briefing I've had, shows that's the case, with one exception that I'll come to. I have seen some of the reporting this morning. The most direct issue there was about the timing of the grants, not about the nature of the grants themselves. But I invite you to put any additional material. The obvious exception to that is in relation to the electorate of Sydney, where, I've been clear over quite some time, I became aware there was a question mark over whether there had been consultation and changes to that electorate, and that's why I took steps to make sure that that was corrected.

CORRECTED

The Hon. CHRIS RATH: But this document, that we have only now received through multiple SO 52 requests by the upper House, has Philip Donato as the contact person, from the June list, for the Orange grants. If this is supposed to be a scheme where Labor candidates are putting forward projects, why is Philip Donato listed as the contact person on this document?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I can't answer that. I haven't seen this document before. I have been briefed—

The Hon. CHRIS RATH: It was provided to the Parliament.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Yes, well, documents have been provided to the Parliament by the agencies in the ordinary course of business, and you are able to question those agencies directly, as you know. I have been briefed by the program office on these matters, and they have made it clear they are operating off the list of 28 July in order to administer the program. That's the direction they have been given, and that is the basis on which the program is being administered.

The Hon. CHRIS RATH: These projects went through the process. You signed off on all of them as Labor election commitments and as complying with the guidelines; this was clearly neither. Do you now accept that this was wrong?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I don't accept the proposition of your question that this was clearly neither. You haven't made out that proposition. That is clear in relation to tranche 7, a brief that you're now clear never came to me directly. It came to my office and was then corrected after I asked some questions about it. So, with that exception, I don't think you have made out the case. That's certainly not the briefing to me from the program office, that changes have occurred. They're operating off administering this list from 28 July—

The Hon. CHRIS RATH: But this is the evidence, Minister, that I've just given you, that was provided to the Parliament, that shows that what you're saying is incorrect—that, in fact, Independent lower House MPs had a role in determining the projects, even though the scheme—

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: That's not clear at all from this list.

The Hon. CHRIS RATH: It says, "Contact person: Philip Donato". So it's not just Sydney; it's also Orange and other examples as well, isn't it?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: No, I don't accept that there is evidence to that effect. But feel free to bring it forward. The Premier's office has been clear they were contacting a range of people, asking for assistance, getting contact details for organisations. It may well relate to that. I should be clear, Mr Rath, I'm speculating. This was not the briefing to me. I haven't viewed this document before. I've acted on the briefs that were in front of me. They were recommended to me for approval and I approved them.

The Hon. CHRIS RATH: Under the guidelines for LSCA, what role do Federal MPs play in the process for allocating projects as Labor election commitments? I have a document here I would like to show you as well. By leave, I table that document.

Document tabled.

The Hon. CHRIS RATH: What role do Federal MPs have under the LSCA program?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: They wouldn't be recommending election commitments, if that's the question you're asking.

The Hon. CHRIS RATH: The document that you're being provided with now shows that for the seat of Epping the contact person is listed as "Jerome". Who is Jerome, Minister?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I don't know who Jerome is. I would assume it's a reference to Jerome Laxale, the Federal member.

The Hon. CHRIS RATH: The Federal Labor member for Bennelong is the contact person for determining what projects should be funded in the State electorate of Epping?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: No, I don't accept that. There is no evidence to say that's the case.

The Hon. CHRIS RATH: Why is he listed as the contact person?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: In a similar instance, this may be about getting the contact details for these organisations, as the Premier's office has been indicating. However, that is speculation on my behalf. This is the first time I've seen this document. I suggest you raise those issues elsewhere, as you have done. You've questioned everyone you can think of, and you've turned up no evidence.

CORRECTED

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: This is evidence.

The Hon. CHRIS RATH: But the projects changed, Minister.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: That's not clear.

The Hon. CHRIS RATH: There were Labor election commitments and then, after the election, those commitments changed. The documents that we have from June 2023, that have now been provided to the Parliament, name contact people for each of the electorates, and for the electorate of Epping the contact person listed is "Jerome".

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Mr Rath, how do you know that's not about getting the contact details for these organisations?

The Hon. CHRIS RATH: Because the project that has been put forward for funding wasn't an election commitment made during the 2023 State election. It only became a commitment after the State election—

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: That's not correct.

The Hon. CHRIS RATH: —and the contact person listed is Jerome Laxale, the Jerome Laxale who was at the ribbon cutting of the exact project to be funded that he is listed as the contact person for. Is that just a coincidence?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I don't think you've made the case that these were changed. It's certainly not the briefing to me, Mr Rath, is what I can tell you. You are welcome to question the agency yourself directly, as I'm sure you will do. You have done that extensively, and you haven't provided evidence to show that's the case, other than in the electorate of Sydney. I did become aware of that issue, which is why I did ask questions about it and why I'm now confident that those were the original commitments.

The Hon. CHRIS RATH: You signed off, as an election commitment, the projects in Epping. They then changed after the election. Will you now concede that you were wrong to sign off on that?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: It's not clear to me that they changed. I haven't seen evidence to date. That's not the briefing to me from the program office. It's not the basis of the brief that was put in front of me that recommended approval, that had gone through probity advice, that I signed in accordance with that recommendation. That was the basis for my decision-making. And that information is publicly available because I made it publicly available.

The Hon. CHRIS RATH: What you signed off on is this document—which I can provide to you as well—not the one I just gave you. The document you signed off on is different to the document that we have now been provided that has Jerome as the contact person.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Are you tabling that document?

The Hon. CHRIS RATH: I'm happy to. By leave, I table the document.

Document tabled.

The Hon. CHRIS RATH: Which one is it? It's clearly that—

The Hon. BOB NANVA: Point of order: If Mr Rath is relying on a document in this line of questioning, I ask that it be tabled—

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: He's just tabled it.

The Hon. BOB NANVA: —and the Minister be given an opportunity to review it before the questioning proceeds.

The Hon. Dr SARAH KAINE: Give him a chance to see it. He needs to be able to see it.

The CHAIR: It doesn't seem to be too complicated, the documents that are being handed out. The member has explained it.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: It's a government document. It was produced by the Government.

The Hon. CHRIS RATH: It's also a public document.

The CHAIR: I do not uphold the point of order. Continue, Mr Rath.

The Hon. CHRIS RATH: It's a public document and a project that the Minister signed off on. Minister, what you signed off on is different to the election commitments made by the Labor candidate in Epping. Surely Jerome Laxale was behind that. He was the contact person. He was at the ribbon cutting.

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The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: That is the supposition you are making without enough evidence to make it, is my position. All I'm telling you is that is not the briefing from the program office about the way this is being administered. That's what I can tell you, Mr Rath. I take it this second document is from the 28 July list. That is the list from which the program is being administered. That was the direction to the program office. That is how they are proceeding. I have been briefed, after you put some of these concerns publicly. The briefing to me does not support the position you're taking, but you're welcome to make your own inquiries elsewhere.

The Hon. CHRIS RATH: You're the Minister responsible. I take the point that you took over the process in July, but you are now the Minister responsible. What are you going to do about those decisions that were made prior to July?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: The briefing to me suggests this is an iterative list as the details are being gathered. It's not clear to me that these contact people are involved in making those decisions. That's not the briefing to me. You are putting a supposition that builds speculation on speculation. I have to work with the official documents I'm provided, as the Minister who's operating as the decision-maker for this scheme, Mr Rath. Those documents are public. Read them for yourself, if you want to know the basis of my decision.

The Hon. CHRIS RATH: Minister, dodgy pork-barrelling happens when good men do nothing. Are you a good man that's doing nothing?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I won't be lectured by a—I know you weren't around when John Barilaro was Minister.

The Hon. CHRIS RATH: That's not my question, Minister.

The Hon. Dr SARAH KAINE: "Pork" Barilaro?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I know you weren't around when John Barilaro was sitting here.

The Hon. CHRIS RATH: My question is whether you're a good man doing nothing on Labor's dodgy pork-barrelling.

The Hon. Dr SARAH KAINE: He is a good man, and you know it, Chris.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I assure you I have administered this scheme carefully. I've read each of these briefs. I've made my decisions on the basis of the information that's been recommended to me. I have found the public servants who are working on this very professional. I thank them for their work.

The Hon. CHRIS RATH: Clearly, the pre-July process was handled by Cherie Burton. She lied to you as Minister, given the information she gave you. She lied to the public service.

The Hon. BOB NANVA: Point of order: Mr Rath is making a series of adverse reflections on an individual who is not here to be able to defend herself, nor is this inquiry able to meet in camera where these sorts of assertions can be made.

The Hon. CHRIS RATH: To the point of order: It's a well-established fact, already reported in *The Sydney Morning Herald* today, that Cherie Burton did in fact lie to a parliamentary inquiry.

The CHAIR: I do not uphold the point of order. It is in the public domain. I remind Mr Rath to be careful with language in terms of the allegations he is making.

The Hon. CHRIS RATH: I will rephrase. As reported in *The Sydney Morning Herald* today, Cherie Burton lied to a parliamentary inquiry. Will you now ask the Premier to sack Cherie Burton from her position?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I'm happy to be corrected, but that's not my reading of the precise terms of the reporting. I don't agree with your proposition. I suggest you work to find some more evidence if you want to make these allegations.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Minister, what happened on the T4 line this morning?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: We can turn to some of the specifics, but running this morning has been generally good—96.5 per cent reliability across the lines. Of course, there are always issues on a range of lines, but I will refer you to the agency—to Matt Longland, probably—on some of the real specifics about each of those lines.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: I don't think the passengers who sat on a train for over an hour with no updates and no information thought that it was running well. Is Sydney Trains' reliability acceptable to you?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I acknowledge there were 11 trains late this morning. We had two cancellations, but running overall was good running across the network, 96.5 per cent. It is rebounding now that

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we've got the rail dispute settled. That's good news if you're trying to catch a train, but we're really focused on catching up on the maintenance backlog that had developed.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: On 28 May you announced a second Sydney Trains review. Have you received the first report of that second review?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I have not received the final report of the review panel. I have been briefed by the panel as they're going. I've got a lot of faith in the work they'll be doing, but I'm yet to receive the final report.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: The first report—you haven't received that at all?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: They've briefed me on their work as they've gone along, but we're yet to receive the final report.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: But they were required to provide a first report. Are you telling this Committee they have not complied with that requirement to produce that report?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: No. I'm telling you I've been briefed on their early work and I'm yet to receive the final report.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: When will you make it public?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I want to receive it and talk to them about their advice on how we deal with it publicly. I have to indicate my view, though, Ms Ward: We have to be very up-front with the public about where the system is up to and about what it takes. I see this as a very public discussion.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Sorry, I have limited time. In terms of being up-front with the public, does a document exist concerning the first report?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I'll take that on notice, just the terms on which the advice is being provided, and I expect to receive the final report shortly.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Can your office answer before the lunch break? Is there a document in existence? Does a document exist concerning the first report?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I can confirm that I've taken it on notice.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Is your office able to provide the transparency you wanted to talk about—being up-front, as you also wanted to talk about and that you were also clear about earlier? Is your office able to provide that information today before the lunch break?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I've confirmed I've taken it on notice.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: That's a no. Commuters are waiting, Minister. They're sitting on platforms and on trains with no information. They're waiting. They can't wait for three weeks for you to take it on notice. Are you not able to provide an answer this afternoon about a report that was due from your trains review? You can't provide that today?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: We're not waiting.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Commuters are.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: We're getting on with the job with fixing the issues on the rail tracks. Many of those maintenance backlog issues are being dealt with.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Minister, this is the second review.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I was out literally on the tracks with Matt Longland yesterday, inspecting the wires and having a look at the teams who are doing this work out on the network.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Your inspection may well be so, but I'm not sure that progresses the maintenance backlog when passengers are sitting on trains.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: We made a little bit of progress.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: I don't know if you had your pliers out there. I know that you are not waiting, Minister, but commuters are waiting. This is the second review into trains and there's no report. Is that what you're telling us?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: No. There's been valuable work done. I also recognise that the Walsh review has really guided the work of the agency.

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The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Sure, but that's not my question, Minister. You're able to do that in your answer, if you'd like to, but it doesn't seem that there is—either there is not a document, or you're not aware of a document.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: What is your question, Ms Ward?

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Does a document exist? I'll move on. How did Transport for NSW cost the investment amount for the new Woollahra station?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Sorry, could you repeat that?

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: How did Transport for NSW cost the investment amount for the new Woollahra station?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: The usual Transport costing process, greatly assisted by the fact that there are about 50 years of planning for this station.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: So how did it cost it?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Through the usual Transport costing process.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: What's the usual Transport costing process for a ghost station? How many of those have you dealt with?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: How many? We're building a range of metro stations. We have built heavy rail stations. We have built heavy rail.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: It's not a metro station. I'm asking you about the Woollahra station, which you announced on the weekend. How did Transport cost that investment?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Using the normal Transport budgeting process, which is used for every capital project. We've also been public about what that estimation is—within a range, obviously.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: If I may, I'll move on because I have limited time, Minister. Is a business case complete?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I will indicate, firstly, there's been planning for 50 years for this station.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Sure. Is a business case complete?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: The next steps, though, are to do the work for a final business case—

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: So that's a no.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: —to work out the precise details of this work will—

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Minister, it's a really simple question. It's not a trick. Is there a completed business case?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: These are not simple issues, Ms Ward. You're glossing over—

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Businesses cases are pretty straightforward. Either one exists and is completed, or it's not. Which is it?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: We're doing that work now on the business case to finalise the details of this construction.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: What's the current length of the station at Woollahra?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I was out there to look at it on the weekend.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Yes. What's the length of the station?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I didn't measure it, in part because—

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: You were busy out with your pliers on the others, doing maintenance.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: —for safety reasons we weren't on the platform or on the tracks. Trains were running quite frequently. It's going to be a very good service.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Is it possible to get an answer to that today, Minister? You've said there's been 50 years of work. Does Sydney Trains know the distance?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Yes.

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The Hon. NATALIE WARD: You'll provide that today to the Committee?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I'll refer you to the agency. Yes, Sydney Trains does know the distance of the platform.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Good.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I'll refer you to the agency officials this afternoon. If they're unable to provide that information, I will take that on notice for you. But I expect they'll be able to tell you.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: You'll take on notice the length of the train station?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: No. I expect they'll be able to tell you this afternoon. I didn't personally get the chance to measure it, though I can tell you it will be an eight-minute trip to the CBD.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: I didn't ask that. Is this train station by media release, Minister?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: No, absolutely not. There's been significant planning.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: There is 50 years of work, and you can't tell us how long the station is.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: One of the reasons that this is actually going to be a big—

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: I would like Mr Longland to come back this afternoon, if we can progress on that. We have only got 12 seconds.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I'll leave you with your 12 seconds.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: What's the length of an eight-carriage Tangara train?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I can't confirm, off the top of my head, the length. But I can tell you, if you are standing on the tracks—

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: All right, can we get an answer today? Sydney Trains should know the answer.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: —they're much higher than they look when you're on the platform, as I was yesterday with the maintenance team.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: It is not a laughing matter. You have announced this train station and you don't know the length. Sydney Trains surely must know it. Can you provide that answer today?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: We'd be happy to get it to you on notice or this afternoon.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: You won't provide that answer today.

The CHAIR: Order! I think I have allowed a little bit of latitude here, with everybody loving those last few questions, clearly. We will go to the crossbench and Ms Abigail Boyd.

Ms ABIGAIL BOYD: Good morning, Minister. I want to turn back to the issues at the Art Gallery. I understand that the \$7.5 million budget shortfall for the Art Gallery really comes at a cost of 51 roles across the Art Gallery, with many of those in vital, front-facing, public interaction roles. Why would you allow 51 roles to be sacked, effectively?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Just a couple of details. Firstly, there were some similar suggestions about large-scale sackings last time. The net result of that was that four positions went. There is genuine consultation going on. There will be changes, would be my expectation. That has been the case elsewhere. I'm not necessarily accepting that will be the outcome. Secondly, the Government is in dialogue here. We'll want to see how this goes. We are providing additional funding to a range of the cultural institutions in this budget year, including—that's an option for further assistance for the Art Gallery, but we'll want to see how that unfolds.

Ms ABIGAIL BOYD: Am I taking from this that the Government is going to be stepping in to make sure that we don't lose 51 roles?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I am saying we are in the consultation phase at the moment. That's an important and genuine phase, and I expect it to be worked through genuinely.

Ms ABIGAIL BOYD: How long has the gallery known about the budget shortfall, and what accountability is there for those who saw it coming and haven't done anything about it?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: There has been extensive work between the gallery and Treasury. There was a business case that was, frankly, way off the mark back, I think, in 2017—feel free to correct me on the

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date—and that's why we have ended up in this situation. The gallery is working very closely on that at the moment. I'm keen to engage on that as it unfolds as well. I know this is having an impact on people.

Ms ABIGAIL BOYD: What are the other options to address that budget shortfall, and what sort of say does the Government have in ensuring that other parts of the budget are addressed instead of the staffing budget?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: If the question is could we do this without impacting on staff—deal with the budget gap that's been identified—I think that would be very hard, given the nature of the gallery's operations. I think, if that is closed up in the way that is proposed, there is no way to avoid some staff impact. The precise roles and the size of the change—that is exactly what is being consulted on.

Ms ABIGAIL BOYD: So there will be some losses of roles. There will be some staffing cuts because of this lack of funding.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Yes, I would accept that.

Ms ABIGAIL BOYD: Why are some roles being regraded to higher positions while other roles are being cut? I understand new roles have been created while some roles are being cut, and that's the proposal. Why is that happening?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I probably don't have that level of detail, Ms Boyd. You are welcome to ask the gallery today. I make the point that it isn't unusual in some of these restructures that you might be moving to something that fits now the modern purpose of the gallery, particularly now—recognising the work of the former Government—that the second gallery wing is open.

Ms ABIGAIL BOYD: The proposed structure doesn't comply with the New South Wales Government directive to reduce PSSE roles by 15 per cent. Why is that?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I think all the agencies have been asked to comply with that and, within the cluster, that does also include considerations of the cultural institutions. Perhaps the secretary—

ELIZABETH MILDWATER: Yes. The directive was that there's an overall target, which we're managing across the portfolio. We have a number of small agencies in our portfolio, like the gallery, and it is much harder for a small agency to meet the target by themselves, so we are measuring it overall, and different agencies are addressing it in different ways. But we are not expecting everyone to meet the same target.

Ms ABIGAIL BOYD: I understand, though, Minister, there is really a stripping of skills and capacity, with the loss of one curator position, transforming the senior curator position to a head, which results in the loss of a senior curator and also the transfer of the current head curator to a non-curatorial role. Do you and the Government hold any value for these roles and the fact that the greater the expertise, the better the cultural institution?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I want to recognise the role that the gallery has played, including its staff, over a long period of time. Ms Boyd, there was some discussion about this this morning. My point is this: The consultation is genuine on the Create restructure. That's ended up with a net seven positions being reduced. The speculation was much higher. Last time around, there was significant speculation about job cuts at the gallery. It was a net four positions reduced. I'm not saying this isn't significant. What I'm saying is that the consultation is genuine.

Ms ABIGAIL BOYD: Under your watch, though, how have we allowed this to get to this point? This is causing huge distress to people who work at the gallery. This seems like something that anyone could have seen coming. Why did your Government not intervene to prevent this happening in the first place?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: There has been significant intervention. There has been close work between the gallery and Treasury. There has been additional funding provided in each of the budgets to the gallery. There has been additional funding provided throughout the year last year, working closely with the agency. We will watch carefully to see how this unfolds before we make decisions about additional support.

Ms ABIGAIL BOYD: I'll turn to something different. Full Stop has been advocating for funding to roll out the Good Night Out pilot across the hospitality industry. We are all familiar with the problems that have been plaguing that industry. However, they weren't successful in this year's budget in getting a requested \$250,000 for specialist sexual violence prevention response training and accreditation. Why has the Government chosen not to fund that pilot?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Firstly, I want to recognise there is a real issue across hospitality, and our expectation is that the Government is supporting the hospitality sector. But we want them to do better. Operators have to lift their game so that patrons and staff have a safe experience as well as a great night out. That's actually

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really important. Secondly, we are making other changes, including changes to RSA, to really recognise those issues. In relation to the Full Stop proposal, they are doing amazing work. They have done great work in Melbourne.

The specific proposal they have put probably needs some work to apply to the Sydney hospitality sector. That's partly in relation to the fact that it's a very CBD-focused proposal. We're trying to decentralise some of that activity here. My hope and expectation would be that there is some close work with the agency. I recognise the importance of the work they have done in Melbourne and elsewhere. I don't think this is the end of the story there, but you are correct: This was not funded in the budget.

Ms ABIGAIL BOYD: It seems like a win-win in terms of business being able to say that it has got to the point where everyone is trained up and there are people in place to ensure safety across venues within a particular district. That's going to make it a place that women in particular would rather go out in. It seems like this is such a no-brainer, when you look at \$250,000 to run a pilot. The one that was run in Melbourne has been incredibly successful, in my understanding, and it's really not very expensive. So I can't understand the reticence in why we are not jumping in to doing something like this here.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I agree with many of your remarks there. I definitely wouldn't characterise it as reticence. This is really about getting the right model and the right interventions for Sydney and the hospitality sector here. My expectation is that there is more work done in this area, but I really want to recognise the work that's done. The agencies looked closely at the Melbourne study as part of those discussions, but there is more work to do here.

Ms ABIGAIL BOYD: Minister, we are still years and years behind meeting our basic accessible transport targets that were agreed to over two decades ago. I know you were in the Opposition when we used to sit on this Committee together and I would argue with the previous Coalition transport Minister about this point as well. It is something that is so overdue and, frankly, quite absurd, when you are a person with mobility needs who can't even catch a train in this State.

In March when I questioned Transport for NSW, we found that on our current trajectory it will take at least another 47 years until all New South Wales train stations are fully accessible for people with disability, with over 100 stations still not independently accessible. On top of that, we're seeing reports in the media of more and more people with disability being subject to discrimination and abuse when using taxis—horrific incidences of violent abuse. The disability community are having a really hard time when it comes to transport in New South Wales. Given all of that, what are you doing specifically as Minister to ensure a more accessible and disability-friendly transport system?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Having sat beside you as you press those issues, both in opposition and now in government, I want to recognise the advocacy on these issues in the transport sector that you've led. They are serious issues. Minister Haylen obviously made some commitments to bring forward more money for a range of these programs. The immediate focus for me has probably been on the taxi space, where I do believe we can take a step forward. The Government's keen to do that and really make sure that we continue in the point to point taxi and Uber space. We can do this better, including on a long-term sustainable footing. That is something that I've met with some of the groups about, and it's something that is the focus of work at the moment. There's a lot more to do here; I accept the point you're making.

Ms ABIGAIL BOYD: I'll raise it again this afternoon.

The Hon. TANIA MIHAILUK: Good morning, Minister. Have you got your head around the findings and some of the recommendations made by ICAC in Operation Hector? You've obviously read that report, given it was released last year?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I'm aware of Operation Hector, yes.

The Hon. TANIA MIHAILUK: But you've had a good read of the report and the recommendations?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I've read the recommendations and I've been briefed on a range of the issues that are particularly important as a result of that.

The Hon. TANIA MIHAILUK: Have you been briefed by the chief commissioner of ICAC?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I have met with the chief commissioner of ICAC. He's obviously written to me and to the Premier—including in relation to Hector, I believe—and I have met with the chief commissioner and we've canvassed a range of his views.

The Hon. TANIA MIHAILUK: When did he write to you, Minister?

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The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: He has written on a number of occasions and I have responded on a number of occasions.

The Hon. TANIA MIHAILUK: He's written on a number of occasions about Operation Hector specifically?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: No, it's been broader than that.

The Hon. TANIA MIHAILUK: When was the first time the commissioner wrote to you about Operation Hector?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: We're just going to grab those details for you. I believe the commissioner put some of this on the record the other day.

The Hon. TANIA MIHAILUK: You're welcome to take it on notice.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I might refer to the secretary to see what information she can give us regarding that.

KATE BOYD: I understand that the New South Wales Government has responded to all of the ICAC—

The Hon. TANIA MIHAILUK: That's not what I asked. I asked when did the commissioner first write to the Special Minister of State with respect to some of the shortcomings of the ICAC Act that became obvious in the recommendations and findings of Operation Hector?

KATE BOYD: We can get you the precise date on that.

The Hon. TANIA MIHAILUK: Okay. Minister, when did you say you responded to the commissioner?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: The commissioner's written on a range of occasions—

The Hon. TANIA MIHAILUK: Specifically about Operation Hector?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: The issues have been broader, but there has been backwards and forwards correspondence. I've responded to most of those matters, something the commissioner recognised in giving evidence the other day. What I might do is take it on notice because we can give you each of those dates.

The Hon. TANIA MIHAILUK: I'm happy for you to take it on notice, Minister. How many subcontracting arrangements within the Transport portfolio are currently in force? You may not know that, but you can take that on notice.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I don't. I will indicate that Transport is centralising procurement, given some of the issues that had come up in Transport, some of the ones that are very public now.

The Hon. TANIA MIHAILUK: So it's the issues that came about as a result of Operation Hector?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I'll refer to the secretary.

JOSH MURRAY: Thank you for the question. When you say subcontracting arrangements—

The Hon. TANIA MIHAILUK: I want to know how many subcontracting arrangements you would have within Transport. You can take that on notice; I can imagine you don't know the number. But the Minister just said that you've been reviewing some of those arrangements. Is that right? Have you reviewed any of the arrangements as a result of the findings from Operation Hector?

JOSH MURRAY: I would stipulate that of the nine recommendations into Operation Hector for Transport, all nine have been completed. In regard to subcontracting, I'd be happy to look further into that, whether you mean in regard to subcontracting of internal staff or the subcontractors that we bring on to deliver projects.

The Hon. TANIA MIHAILUK: It's more about the subcontractors. More in line with what came out in Operation Hector is what I'm referring to. I'll just go back to the Minister. I'll come back to you later in the day. Minister, did you say that you've met with the chief commissioner about this specifically or not?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I wouldn't say about this specifically. I'm aware of the commission's views. I've met with the chief commissioner about a range of issues in which the commission's interested, but the commission certainly had an interest in this area.

The Hon. TANIA MIHAILUK: Do you accept the commissioner's evidence that he provided? Obviously there was specific mention of section 8 (2A) of the ICAC Act within the Operation Hector report. I'm referring to page 33, where the commissioner specifically said that there was concerns about whether he had

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jurisdiction pursuant to that section in terms of being able to make corrupt findings with respect to those subcontractors. So that's the issue, right?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Yes.

The Hon. TANIA MIHAILUK: Have you specifically addressed that issue yet or made any attempt to address the issue?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I've indicated this to the commission, but it's under consideration by the Government at the moment. As I understand it, and the secretary should feel—

The Hon. TANIA MIHAILUK: Who specifically is having carriage of this, Minister?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Can I just finish this? I'll ask the secretary to contradict any of this, but the way I would describe the issue is it's similar to the "follow the dollar" provisions that were provided to the Auditor-General.

The Hon. TANIA MIHAILUK: You could say that, yes.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: The ICAC's raising a similar instance where they may not be able to extend all their powers as funding moves into subcontractors who are out of the public sector. I recognise the significance of the issue. It is under consideration by the Government; we haven't yet made a call.

The Hon. TANIA MIHAILUK: The difference is, Minister, it's an alteration to a definition within the ICAC Act. There's been a suggestion, essentially, by the commissioner on how you can address it.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Correct.

The Hon. TANIA MIHAILUK: And it's a much more simpler process than perhaps "follow the dollar", which had a bit of complexity around it.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I hope that's true.

The Hon. TANIA MIHAILUK: Why I want to ask you is because I've put the questions to the Premier about this in a response to the Operation Hector report. But also earlier in the year, in February in the annual review of the ICAC hearing, the commissioner has again raised this issue, formally and publicly, and the Premier has said to me it's a matter for you. In fact, I'll quote him exactly: "This is a question for the Special Minister of State." So you're the person in the hot seat, I guess. When do you think you will turn your mind to this issue?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I have been briefed on it. It is something that I'll be discussing with my colleagues. We're weighing the position carefully. It's also something where—when it comes to matters of the ICAC's jurisdiction extending beyond public officials, the Parliament's also had strong views in relation to this, so that's one of the things that's on my mind as we're assessing this—

The Hon. TANIA MIHAILUK: Well, I think the definition of public funds is specifically what we're referring to, not officials.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: But I do think there's some logic to the proposition that the commission's putting, but we're yet to make a final decision on that matter.

The Hon. TANIA MIHAILUK: How far along is this decision? Is it something that you've discussed with the Premier, or is it just something you've discussed in your office? This was a report that was finalised in April 2024.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Yes.

The Hon. TANIA MIHAILUK: It is a pretty significant operation and ICAC investigation into Transport for NSW and some of the shortcomings there. You've got another Transport inquiry before ICAC as well at the moment on an unrelated matter. But I would have thought it would be very pressing to address this. You've got the commissioner, who it appears—and I would like to take on notice how many times he's written to you and the Premier, or specifically you as Special Minister of State—has raised the matter now both in this report, raised it again in a public hearing in February of this year, and we're now end of August 2025. I'm just trying to ascertain at what point will you as a Minister address this?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: My most recent engagement on this issue was, I believe, just ahead of the letter being sent on 25 August, where we're consulting further on some specifics around this terrible range of matters about the ICAC's—

The Hon. TANIA MIHAILUK: That's a letter from you, is it?

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The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: It's a letter from the deputy secretary, but I was briefed prior to it being sent.

The Hon. TANIA MIHAILUK: Who's that letter to?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: To the commissioner.

The Hon. TANIA MIHAILUK: So that was just now, this month—August.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Yes. That gives you some sense that this is a very active briefing and discussion, but these are—

The Hon. TANIA MIHAILUK: Well, it depends. When did the commissioner first write to you? I suspect that the commissioner wrote to you last year, Minister, not this year.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: As you indicated—I'm not disputing that this has been a long-running recommendation.

The Hon. TANIA MIHAILUK: I just want to make it very clear that it's about the wording of section 8 (2) (a) of the Act, to ensure that the amendment can capture jurisdiction of subcontracting arrangements as public funds. It's not as complex as what you were referring to before about the "follow the dollar", and it's certainly not about public officials either, or extending that definition. That's not what is being recommended by the commissioner.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: We've taken on notice those dates. There has been backwards and forwards about a range of these jurisdictional issues. This is not the only jurisdictional issue that the ICAC is raising.

The Hon. TANIA MIHAILUK: Can you give a commitment when you think you will address it?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: It's really a matter for discussion with my colleagues. There will be mixed views in the Government. Because this is such a detailed area, there'll be views in the Parliament.

The Hon. TANIA MIHAILUK: Are you saying some people have concerns about this?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: No, I'm not saying that. I'm saying these are detailed and complex issues. But we'll get you the dates. We are in consultation on these matters actively at the moment. Can I tell you the length of Woollahra station?

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Please do.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: It is 166 metres. The length of a Tangara is 162 metres.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: That wasn't so hard, was it? We didn't need three weeks to find out the length of the train. In terms of the costing for Woollahra station, are you confident that it will cost no more than \$200 million?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: We're doing that business case work now but that is, as the Premier has indicated publicly, the nature of the range. The Premier gave a range, appropriately, because we don't want to—these will be commercial discussions at some point, but he has given a range and that was the top of the range that he gave.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: In terms of the \$193 million to \$200 million, is that a P50 or P90 costing?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I don't know the answer to that, but we're doing that business case work at the moment. I'm happy for you to ask the officials on the level of certainty around that costing.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Obviously the P50 or P90 refers, as I'm sure you know, to agency confidence in the project. Which one of those was it? You've done the press release. You've been out there. You've seen the site, as you told us. What's your confidence? Is it P50 or P90?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I'll refer that to the secretary.

JOSH MURRAY: Thank you, Ms Ward. At this point, that hasn't been determined. The Premier gave a range in terms of our initial feasibility and that work is underway now.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: When is the business case going to be complete?

JOSH MURRAY: The abridged business case is underway now.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: My questions are to the Minister. When will the business case be complete?

CORRECTED

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: This is urgent work.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: When will it be complete, if it's urgent?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I'd be hoping that we can really have this done by the end of next year. It may take a little bit longer, but that's the sort of time frame I'm hoping for.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: So did the Premier just come up with this figure out of nowhere?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: No, this is 50 years of work, prior planning by transport agencies—

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: It's 50 years of work, but you don't have a business case. You don't have a P50 or P90. Which is it?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: —and a great result for the community: housing and transport put together in a suburb—

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: But who comes up with the dollars?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: —where less people are living that they were 50 years ago.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Sure, no-one debates that at all, but we're talking about the dollar figures, and no-one can seem to tell us here today what it's based on. It's just a press release number in the air, isn't it?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: No, this is based on careful Transport planning.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: How can it be if there's no business case and you don't know what it's based on, and that's work until next year?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: It's not unusual to do the business case—we're being public with the information we have. We'll do the business case work on top of the 50 years of planning.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Has an operational plan been done on the introduction of the station?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Are you backing this plan?

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: I ask the questions here. I'm asking you, has an operational plan—

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Are you backing this plan?

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Are you dodging the question?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: No, I'm asking—

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Are you dodging the question?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: —why you're refusing—

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: You are dodging the question.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: —to back this plan.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Answer the question instead of dodging it.

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: It's your policy.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: It's your policy. I'm asking you about your policy.

The CHAIR: Order! There are about six people talking at once right now, which doesn't work.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: And you can tell when I'm hitting on something because they all jump up and start howling.

The Hon. Dr SARAH KAINE: It's hilarious that you won't answer.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: There we go again. Has an operational plan been done on introduction of the station—that is, the impact to the network? You're the transport Minister.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Yes. Obviously the business case will go into the next level of detail—as you say, the next level of confidence.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: So the operational plan has been done? Is that right?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: The plan to make sure this work unfolds—obviously it will have an impact on the T4 line. But that plan has been—

CORRECTED

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Has any planning—

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Yes.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: You've got that report?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: That work has been done and I've been briefed on that work, yes.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: So you got a report on the impact to the network before the Premier announced the project?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Yes.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Will the T4 line close during that construction?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: The T4 line, without this proposition, will close for track work—for maintenance—in the ordinary proposition.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: I'm asking about this project. Will it close during construction of the Woollahra train station?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Here's some great news about this project: We'll largely be able to do this work within those closure windows.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Why is it so hard to answer a really simple question on this?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: So within the work—

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: It's a very simple question: Will it close?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Why won't you accept this good news?

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: But why do you want to talk about anything other than the very simple question? What does "largely" mean? We don't understand what it is you're talking about.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: The answer is we'll be working within the current track possessions. Of course, the business case work will confirm that. That's the early advice to me.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: But that includes shutdowns, right?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: But we've got to shut the line anyway to maintain it, otherwise the T4 itself will become less reliable. One of the great benefits of the 50 years of work is we'll be able to do this largely within the windows that exist for track work.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: How many track possessions are there between now and 2029?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I'll refer that specific detail to the agency. I have been briefed.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: You just talked about it.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I've been briefed, but I think that's a level of detail that I'd prefer to—

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: You referred to it. You said it would be part of it. You seemed quite confident about it. You said you'd been briefed on it.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Yes, correct.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: So how many are planned?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I'll refer you to the agency just so they can take you through at the—

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: You don't know. Can you get that answer today?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Would you like me to take it on notice?

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: I'd prefer it today. I don't see that it needs weeks and weeks—three weeks—to return some information when we've got all the experts here.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I think your options are to ask the agency—

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Just on the level of shutdowns.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: —or I'm happy to take it on notice.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Does that include the shutdowns?

CORRECTED

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Does what include the shutdowns?

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: On the level of shutdowns that you referred to, how many?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Yes.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Thank you. Minister, in your view in relation to the freight industry and the wider transport portfolio, is Port Kembla a viable alternative to Glebe Island?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: For what purpose are you talking about here?

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Freight.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: For freight?

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: In relation to the freight industry and the wider transport portfolio—

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: It's a very broad question. You'll have to be slightly more specific.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: I'll say it again: In your view, in relation to the freight industry and the wider transport portfolio, is Port Kembla a viable alternative to Glebe Island, given there's a prospect of closure of Glebe Island?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: The answer to that would depend on the nature of the commodity you were talking about, the nature of the mitigations that were in place and the nature of industry over time.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: What's your view?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I will indicate clearly the Government's doing some work in this area to consider the future use. That is work that I'm engaged in that Transport's advising on. It's conducted by central government, but there are serious considerations here.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Given you are involved in that, I'm interested in what your view is. What level of modelling have you personally seen regarding the impacts to the freight industry concerning the removal of Glebe Island port?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I think it would be unreasonable to ask about a central government process that may involve Cabinet consideration at this point.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: I'm just asking what level of modelling you've personally seen.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I think I'm certainly not going to disclose any Cabinet considerations if they were—

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: I'm not asking you to; I'm just asking you what you have seen.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Thank you. I'm glad. I won't be.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: But the people who use Glebe Island port are not particularly glad. They are very concerned, and they would like to know what the prospects are. So I'm asking you, as transport Minister, does the traffic modelling exist?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Yes. I can confirm, of course, Transport's engaged. There is traffic modelling underway.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: So what have you seen?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: There's clearly central government consideration about these matters. There's a balance to be struck. As transport Minister, I want to make it clear that we shouldn't take lightly industrial uses close to the city. Often they're critical to how the city operates, but the Government's number one priority is housing. There is a real land use conflict set of issues to work through here. I'm confident that the Government's capable of stepping through those issues.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: What does the traffic modelling say?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: These are active discussions, Ms Ward. I think it would be inappropriate to be briefing at that level of detail, particularly where it's clear there is cross-government discussion—potentially Cabinet discussion at some point—on this matter.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: So there is traffic modelling. It exists. You've seen it, but you're not prepared to say what it says about the impact to the freight industry and transport.

CORRECTED

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: You're pressing me on something that may well be the subject of Cabinet discussion.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Is it?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I can't confirm that either, Ms Ward.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Traffic modelling is the subject of Cabinet in confidence?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: That's equally inappropriate.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Why? Is the traffic modelling the subject of Cabinet in confidence or not?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: The Government has been up-front about the fact that it is considering the future land use there. People make money off these land use decisions. It's one of the reasons why the Government doesn't spell out the details piece by piece as it's going. That's not just the practice of this Government; it was the practice of former governments as well. It's the appropriate practice, in my view.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Thank you, Minister. Does Transport have concerns about the closure of Glebe Island?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I've indicated my views, and the fact that I do have concerns about getting that balance right. You're welcome to ask Transport directly, rather than ask me to speculate on their views.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: I may do that, and I will do that, but has Transport provided advice to you about the impact of the closure of the road and rail network?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I've clearly been briefed by Transport in relation to these issues. I think there's no—

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: In relation to the impact of the closure of the road and rail network?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: We're not proposing to close the road and rail network between—

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: On the impact that the closure of the port will have on the road and rail network?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: The Government hasn't made a decision to close the port. There's clearly active consideration in this area of Sydney, but we haven't yet made a decision.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Minister, we're going around in circles. The Government is clearly considering closing the port. It's going to have some impact. I'm simply asking if you've seen traffic modelling and what the impact is. A five-year-old knows there will be impact.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I'm rejecting your assertion that the Government has made a decision to close the port. I'm confirming that there's a central government process—

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: I didn't say there was a decision. I said that there is consideration, which you've offered to this Committee, and there clearly is, so that's not in doubt. I don't know why we're dancing around it, wasting time. Mr Murray, what is Transport's view about the closure? Do you have concerns?

JOSH MURRAY: Ms Ward, as pointed out last week, we've been part of the multi-agency work that is ongoing. We feed into that process.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: That's not an answer, though. Do you have concerns?

JOSH MURRAY: We've put forward a range of inputs when asked by that process. That is still ongoing, and it is a Cabinet-led process.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Has Transport previously raised its concerns to that central agency?

JOSH MURRAY: I'd have to take that on notice, in terms of—

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: You're the head of Transport, Mr Murray. You don't know if you've raised concerns about impact to rail and roads as a result of a potential closure of Glebe Island port?

JOSH MURRAY: As I said last week, we feed into a whole-of-government process. We are one of the inputs into that process, and we would be providing a wide range of inputs.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Do you have any concerns? Does Transport have any concerns about the impact on the road and rail network as a result of the Glebe Island port closure, potentially?

CORRECTED

JOSH MURRAY: Through that process, Transport has been asked a range of questions, but we are not the lead agency on that work.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: I didn't ask if you're the lead agency; I asked if you, as the transport agency, had raised concerns about the transport impacts to the central agency?

JOSH MURRAY: As I say, we don't raise concerns; we answer questions in regard to what are the logistics required, and that would have been fed into that process. I can't comment on the detail.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Sorry, can I just clarify: You say you don't raise concerns?

JOSH MURRAY: We provide information in regard to a wider government process.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: I think earlier you said, did you not—and I'll ask Hansard to repeat it back if we need—that your role is not to raise concerns, or you don't raise concerns?

JOSH MURRAY: I misspoke. We clearly raise concerns when we are involved in processes like this, but—

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: You're involved in this process. Have you raised concerns?

JOSH MURRAY: I said I'd take that on notice. This is a collaborative, whole-of-government process of which we are just one party. As I said last week, we have fed in scenarios to that work.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: We'll come back to that.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Ms Ward, can I just also indicate on behalf of the agencies that the agencies are also bound by those Cabinet conventions.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Can I move on to busses. Your media release today, Minister, talked about 961 busses bought by Labor—is that correct, since March '23?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: That wasn't my understanding about the number.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: What's your understanding about the number on the media release that you put out today about the number of busses bought by Labor?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I thought it was 921.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: You thought? You think? You know? You don't? How many busses have you bought since March '23?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: It's 921, well on the way to 1,000.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Of the 151 mentioned today, how many of those are from Custom Denning?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: We'll just get you those details at the moment, but essentially half this order is coming from Custom Denning, and half of it is coming from the other supplier—from Volgren.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Two suppliers of these 151 busses. Half is Custom Denning, and approximately half is Volgren.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Approximately half. Correct.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Can we get that number today? The media release was put out today, just in time for estimates. I'm sure somebody is very close to it and has looked at those numbers and could potentially get that for us today, could they not?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Exactly.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Do you agree with that, Minister?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: You'll have to put the question again.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Can you get those numbers for us today, given that you put out the press release this morning?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: To each of those suppliers? Absolutely. I think that's very appropriate.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Where are the Volgren busses being built?

CORRECTED

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: They will be built largely in Victoria. The Custom Denning ones will largely be built in New South Wales. Each of those orders will meet the Government's aspirations for local content—which is great news—ahead of that target. These are good results. There'll also be a fantastic service increase here, as we're rolling out a new bus fleet across—

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Of those 921 busses, how many are being built in New South Wales?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Clearly, the Custom Denning ones will be built in New South Wales. We'll get you the precise number between those two operations.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: You don't have that to hand?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: We have it very nearby.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Could we get a list today of those 921 busses, each of those companies and the amount of busses that they are providing? So Custom Denning and Volgren, how many of each of those, you'll provide today to us?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: You'll have to be more specific. For the 921 busses, what information do you want?

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: How many Volgren are providing, how many Custom Denning are providing and, of those, how many are built in New South Wales.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: We'll provide some information on notice on that.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: On notice, or today?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: On notice. In relation to the split, I'm advised that Custom Denning has 56 of the 151 busses, and Volgren has 95 of the 151.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: So 95 from Victoria and 56 partially in New South Wales.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: All meeting the local content requirements.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: It's a third, not a half.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: All meeting the local content requirements.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Yes, but I think you'd given evidence to this Committee today that it was half. It's not half, is it? It's a third.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Those are the precise numbers.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: It's a third, not a half. That's correct, isn't it? I'm not being unreasonable here.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I've given you the precise numbers. I'll let you do the mathematics.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: I think earlier to this Committee you said it's about half. It's not, is it? It's a third.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: No, Ms Ward, I think that's fair, and I've given you the precise numbers. But, yes, I agree with your observation.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Can I just confirm that the local content requirement you just referred to includes being built in Australia, not being built in New South Wales. That's correct, isn't it?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: That's the standard local content definition. I will say it's dramatically different to the approach your Government took, where it was buying willy-nilly from around the world with no goals.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: You've sent ferries to Tasmania—literally overseas. You're buying busses from Victoria and potentially New Zealand. See, I'm hitting a bone now; I'm getting somewhere because they're reacting. Clearly "made in New South Wales" and "local manufacturing" could be anywhere in Australia, including overseas in Tasmania. That's right, isn't it?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: You only bought from overseas. Your former Government insisted all transport will be privatised, and you're opposed to having drivers.

CORRECTED

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: No, Minister, you put out a local manufacturing content policy, which you now blatantly are not complying with. That's correct, isn't it? Local manufacturing can be in Victoria. You're spending a ton of money in Tasmania. It's your policy. That's correct, isn't it?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: It's incredible that you're taking this position.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: And busses are from China.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Well, I reject that.

The Hon. BOB NANVA: Point of order—

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Busses are not from China?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Why are you attacking South Coast manufacturing?

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Are you saying busses are not from China?

The CHAIR: Order! Let's just hear the point of order, which we can predict.

The Hon. BOB NANVA: It is about procedural fairness resolution No. 19, with respect to courtesy. Ms Ward has asked a very good question. I anticipate the Minister has a very good answer, if he's given the opportunity to provide it.

The CHAIR: I will uphold that point of order. Ms Ward knows what I'm about to say. Just at least hear some of the answer. Let's try and go with that.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: To be fair, I was, I think, responding to the Minister's incitement, but we'll both move on, I'm sure.

The CHAIR: Yes, it was banter.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I'm happy to agree with that.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: As usual, with estimates, Minister, you can *Never Tear Us Apart*.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: We've found *Common Ground*.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Can I ask about the Nowra facility. When did Transport for NSW become aware that the facility in Nowra would not be completing any manufacturing, as stated in the development application?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: That's just not true. There are live people employed down in Nowra who you are opposing. There are 16 people—

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Where?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Fourteen already in roles, 16 people who will have jobs.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Where?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I can't believe you're opposing this plant.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Where?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: In Nowra.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: No-one's opposing it. I've stood outside it. It's a paddock. I saw plenty of kangaroos, birds and trees—there wasn't a single employee standing there on the site.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: No, you did not attend the place where the people are working on these buses—

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Where is the place that—

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: —manufacturing at the moment as a part of the plan to build this up. These are jobs the locals love and the community supports. The Opposition is the only group opposing this South Coast manufacturing—the only group.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: When Foton and associated companies entered into bus panel 4, was Transport for NSW aware that the 126 buses ordered by the Government would be predominantly built in China?

CORRECTED

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Foton is working to a plan to build up manufacturing capacity on the South Coast. This is hugely welcomed by locals. It could employ more than 100 people. It has to build up over time. I can't believe you're opposing this. This is so popular down there, and you're trying to shut it down.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: I've been out there. It's an IKEA assembly factory. It is not manufacturing.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: You went to the wrong site, Ms Ward.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: It is a tiny little site.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: You went to the wrong site.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: It is an IKEA "click it together". That is not local manufacturing. That is literally "get the allen key and screw it together". My nanna could do it.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: You went to the wrong site.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: No, I didn't, Minister.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I don't think you should be so dismissive—

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: No, I did not. Were you with me? You weren't with me.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I don't think you should be so dismissive of these manufacturing workers. I think that's a real mistake.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: When Foton and those associated companies entered into that, were they aware and were they ordered by the Government—did they know, and was Transport aware, that those 126 buses would be built predominantly in China?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I hope you're going to tell the 100 locals who hope they might have a job here that you want to shut this down.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: I ask the questions here, Minister. Why are you not answering the question about buses built in China? Because you don't want to.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Because I am genuinely shocked that you want to kill these jobs on the South Coast. I can't believe it.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: You're sending the jobs to China, Minister. You're trying to convince everybody, "Look over here; it's not really so."

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: We are building this up over time.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: We've got an IKEA factory with four people in it putting things together with an allen key.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I have been down to have a look myself.

The Hon. BOB NANVA: Point of order—

The CHAIR: A point of order has been taken. I wonder what it will be?

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: It's 14 seconds.

The Hon. BOB NANVA: It's again the courtesy requirements under the procedural fairness resolution—

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: When will the facility be built?

The Hon. BOB NANVA: —but also fair and orderly conduct of the inquiry for Hansard, I think.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: When will it be built? When will the facility be built in Nowra?

The Hon. Dr SARAH KAINE: Let's offer Nanna Ward a job.

The CHAIR: I uphold the point of order—

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: If you care about the jobs, you'd commit to that right now.

The CHAIR: —recognising the time. Honestly, if the Minister and the member continue to talk over each other, they will continue to call points of order. Minister, can I refer you to the budget papers, specifically in relation to the Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences budget. They have this year an increase—

CORRECTED

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Are you referring to somewhere specific in the budget papers?

The CHAIR: Yes, *Budget Paper No. 04*, chapter 4, page 23.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Page 4-23?

The CHAIR: Yes. It essentially shows—this is the operating fund—an enormous increase for the Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences, considering the cuts to many of our other cultural institutions: a 275 per cent increase from last year to this year. That is 98.8 million to 279 million. What is the reason for that?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: My experience of dealing with cultural institution budgets is you need to be really careful. There are a number of inflows and outflows. I really caution you from jumping to that conclusion. I encourage you to question the officials in detail. There have been a number of transfers relating to the way the Powerhouse has been accounted for, including the changing role of Create here. I don't want to waste your time, Ms Faehrmann. I'd encourage you to go through it in more detail with the agencies. There has not been a change of the percentage order that you're suggesting. It's really about how this is reflected in the accounts.

The CHAIR: Yes, I will go to the agencies later today to get the detail. It's a political decision though, Minister, as well.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: If the question is, "Is the Government favouring the Powerhouse and directing a lot more funds to the Powerhouse?", no, that's definitely not the case. We're working through the ordinary budget process. There are some accounting things rolling over the top that make your question sensible, but the answer is very detailed.

The CHAIR: With, for example, the cuts that the Art Gallery has seen recently, and that Create NSW has seen, you're suggesting that those cuts have not been—in terms of funding, that isn't because funding is going towards the Powerhouse instead?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: No. I think that would be an unfair interpretation. I have been clear that funds that we didn't allocate to Create—that are causing the restructure—are being allocated to the sector. They have gone in to back the Western Sydney art strategy, to the tune of \$5 million, and also to a strategic initiatives fund that will support other strategies. This is money going back into the sector. There are other investments as well. It would be unfair to characterise that as going across to the Powerhouse.

The CHAIR: I do want to get into the detail, but I don't have long with you.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I'd encourage you to do that.

The CHAIR: This is also in relation to funding cuts. This is about the Australian Design Centre, who lost \$200,000 in Federal funding in January. Then on Easter Thursday this year they received an email from Create NSW with the devastating news that they had also missed out on four-year State operational funding. This is despite being recommended by peer assessors. That was in the same round where more than a dozen regional galleries also lost State funding. Minister, are you comfortable with that situation for the Australian Design Centre, which was founded 50 years ago?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I can understand why they were concerned. I'm certainly sympathetic to them and the views of the galleries. They're doing fantastic work. The good news is the two-year funding round has funded many of those regional museums and galleries. It has also funded the Australian Design Centre. They've had their funding now confirmed for two years. They've got that certainty, and that's good news.

The CHAIR: Is that the same level as they were funded previously under the 4-Year Multi-year grant?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I might take that on notice, but we can confirm the number. I believe it's \$150,000, but we might confirm the details to you on notice so you've got those specifics.

The CHAIR: We can come back. What progress is being made on finding a site for an Indigenous cultural centre?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: These issues have got some history to it. The Government has moved away from the former Government's proposition about the Museum of Sydney. They're going to do some amazing Indigenous programming, but it's unfair to ask them to be the sole place where this takes place. We are looking at some other sites where we can build up Indigenous programming capacity, including—

The CHAIR: Not a standalone site though? There has been a question in these estimates for some time, including with the previous Government, about a standalone First Nations cultural centre for visitors to Sydney. That's not happening?

CORRECTED

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: No, not in the very short term. You'll note in the Government's 10-year cultural policy, it does indicate that that is one of the Government's aspirations. We're looking to make some initial moves which will allow that aspiration to be met within the 10 years. They will be significant. We're not in a position to announce the specifics today. I've got more discussions to have with my colleagues. It is clear that is where the Government wants to go, and we're building a path to take some initial steps sooner rather than later.

The CHAIR: You said you're not in a position to announce any specifics and said something about it being in a 10-year cultural plan. Does that mean that something will be announced by your Government in this term?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Yes. We will need to announce how we're going to meet that goal within this term.

The CHAIR: That sounds reasonably vague.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I apologise for that.

The CHAIR: Has Transport for NSW considered privatising the operations for any part of the existing rail network since Labor took office?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: That is a question Transport could answer. Certainly the Government's position is that we were clear with the public: We don't favour privatisation. That's the opposite position that the former Minister took, where he thought all transport should be privatised—all of it.

The CHAIR: Your Government, Minister.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Under our Government, we'd like to reverse that tide, of course. We can't buy everything back that the former governments privatised, but our direction is really clear.

The CHAIR: Your direction is really clear that you will not privatise any of the operations of the existing rail networks then?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Yes. We're not looking to privatise transport services, including the rail network.

The CHAIR: Mr Murray, are there plans by Sydney Trains—I'll ask you to begin with—to look at engaging private outside contractors, and potentially a firm, to fill signal electrician positions in the network maintenance teams on the rail network?

JOSH MURRAY: Thank you for the question, Ms Faehrmann. We have a number of private providers that do provide maintenance work and upgrade works across the network. We also have a significant self-delivery capability. The discussions that we've been involved in is how we maximise that self-delivery capability over the long term.

The CHAIR: I think part of that delivery capability is to ensure that there are enough signal electrician roles filled within Sydney Trains. That's correct, isn't it?

JOSH MURRAY: Yes. I can ask Mr Longland to comment but, as a point worth noting, we did bring 400 roles into the organisation that were contracted out to UGL through their facility in Western Sydney, and we took that on as a self-delivery operation.

The CHAIR: I understand that quite a few of these positions are leaving to be hired by the private sector because they can be paid more. Is that happening at the moment?

JOSH MURRAY: That is one of the elements that the unions have raised with us, particularly the ETU, in regard to a long-term sustainable workforce but one that is available for the 24/7 works that we often rely on subcontracted companies to assist with. But that is always a blend of skill sets across both internal and external.

The CHAIR: Mr Murray, and also Minister, considering you're here, can you guarantee that a contract won't be offered to a private consortium—such as John Holland, for example—to cover the Sydney Trains maintenance division or any part of it under your Government? I'll go to you first, Minister.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I would need to get briefed on some of the specific details, but the direction of travel here is, as the secretary says, insourcing not outsourcing. That's the nature of briefings to me from Transport. That's what we're looking at in these areas. I don't know the details that you're specifically talking about, so that's my only hesitation. I'd want to get briefed before providing clear information about that specific matter.

CORRECTED

JOSH MURRAY: I would just add that we do have significant contracts in place with third-party providers across the rail network to meet the 24/7 requirements of the maintenance work, but that discussion, particularly with the ETU and the AMWU, about the future of those roles and how we could continue to build discussions is very much a live discussion.

The Hon. JOHN RUDDICK: Good afternoon, Minister. I have a couple of questions for you in your capacity as the night-time economy Minister. Public street busking is an ancient cultural practice. Performers bring colour, fun and vibrancy to the city's night-life. We recently had the visit in Australia of the British singer-songwriter Myles Smith, who played at the Hordern Pavilion—packed out. I'm not very familiar with him, but *Time* magazine last year called him one of the 100 most influential people of year.

He was just down in Pitt Street Mall, and he thought he would perform an impromptu busking act. Then the fun police—City of Sydney council—came in and prohibited him from doing it and told him he has to go through all these hoops, regulations, licences and everything else, and he just gave up. I think you then stepped in and said that he could use the Sydney Opera House, which worked out to be good. But he then went to Melbourne, and he praised Melbourne. He said the city of Melbourne was welcoming of impromptu street acts. What can you do as Minister to let performers perform in public without having to jump through hoops, and do we really need any licensing or regulatory hoops for street buskers?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Mr Ruddick, I thank you for your interest in this issue. It's a very astute set of questions. I was so disappointed to see this incredible performer turned down, faced with a whole lot of paperwork early in the morning. That is just not going to work for the city. We did make the Opera House available. I want to thank the Opera House team for arranging that. It was incredible publicity for Sydney.

The Hon. JOHN RUDDICK: There was a lot of negative publicity. He has huge social media following.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Yes. Both those are true.

The Hon. JOHN RUDDICK: He said Sydney's night-life is a disgrace, even though he said Sydney is beautiful.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Both those things are true. It was good news that it happened, but he was critical too of what had happened to him, and I can understand why. Firstly, I like where you're heading. Secondly, we're open to doing that, particularly in entertainment precincts. Thirdly, I want to recognise that Burwood Council in particular has some great suggestions about how to implement exactly what you're suggesting. Lastly, these are complex issues, though. It is the cause of a factional falling-out in the Labor Loves Live Music entity where we broke into pro-busking and anti-busking factions. There was some dispute. There are multiple views here, but I'm in the pro-busking faction.

The Hon. JOHN RUDDICK: That's good to hear, but why do we need any regulation around this? This has been happening for thousands of years in a big city. It's a good thing, and it's very free market. If someone puts on a street act and it's not very good, then they don't make any money. If it's good, they make money and everyone's happy. Why do we need licensing? Why does the government need to be involved in this in any way?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Particularly in entertainment precincts, I'd love to make this a whole lot easier. One of the ways this works well overseas, and the case for some government intervention, is to make sure that people are there at the right time and that they're able to book ahead, so there are advantages for the performers. But, particularly in entertainment precincts, I want to give councils more powers so that they can actively allow busking much more easily than is currently the case.

The Hon. JOHN RUDDICK: I encourage you to do that. I have another question. I'm sure you're following this issue with Woollahra council—not the train station but about Camp Cove. Just on Monday, Woollahra council voted to have a liberalisation trial of alcohol consumption in public, down on the beach. It's a much-loved niche beach. There were 77 submissions to the council—48 of them were in favour and 28 were opposed. There have been some high-profile people who have said that they don't want it, but it is going ahead, which I think is a good thing. Will you be keeping an eye on this trial and, if it is a success, is it something that would make the Government reconsider its opposition to liberalising public drinking?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I'm certainly happy to keep an eye on this, and I'm open to any updates you want to provide, here or to the House. I want to recognise that you've pursued this issue. One of the reasons the Government has it at the front of its vibrancy agenda is we're concerned about making those changes all about alcohol when, in fact, it's about having a more diverse set of experiences and people out after dark. That's one of the reasons we haven't lent in behind some of those changes early on. It's the opportunity cost of engaging in that debate. But we're open to further representations you want to put.

CORRECTED

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: Minister, through you to Mr Murray, to close a loop on the Bomaderry to Kiama electrification, can you confirm you have started the 10- to 20-year investigation?

JOSH MURRAY: Yes, we have started the work on the Illawarra Rail Resilience Plan, which will set out the priority order of the next pieces of work in that area, including the part of the line that you were talking about and the question around electrification.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: How far down that 10- to 20-year process are we?

JOSH MURRAY: The first part of this work, which will be about \$1.5 million worth of feasibility work, will be to order what comes next in terms of developing that plan. That will be a quick piece of work.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: Minister, regarding taxis, on 6 August you put out a press release around a \$15 million emergency package for wheelchair accessible taxis. Doing the maths—you talked about \$2 million in grants and \$5 million in loans. If we subtract that, we're still missing \$8 million in terms of part of the announcement. What is that remainder of \$8 million going towards?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I might have to direct you to the agency on that. This was the emergency funding package. Obviously, it leaves this without a long-term solution. That is something that we're quite concerned about and actively looking at. But I might refer you to the agency on the exact break-up of that funding.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: I might come back to them. What advice or data were you presented with to support \$5 million of that going to loans? I'm particularly concerned about taxi drivers' ability to service those loans. I raised that with Minister Aitchison, and she kindly encouraged me to pursue it with you. When taxi drivers are coming home from a shift and not earning any money, how do they service a loan for what may be \$60,000 to retrofit their vehicle for wheelchair accessible taxis?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: These are obviously loans on very favourable terms—that is, they are no-interest loans.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: If you still can't pay the principal because you're not even making any money in terms of a nightly wage, how do you service that loan? That's without factoring in the cost of green slips and everything else they've got going on. How do they service that loan, even if it is just the principal?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I think that's a fair point. I'm just making the point that they are on favourable terms, but I'm not dismissing the point you're making. If you haven't got any money coming in, how do you deal with this? I think that is the structure of the package that has been set up to date. It is based on consultation, but there is more work to do here, including as we look to how we get this on a regular footing. I'm open to views that you or the industry want to put in relation to this.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: So what happens when they can't service the loan?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: That's obviously a problem to take—

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: Do you repossess the wheelchair accessible taxi and take it off the road?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I might refer you, to see if we have had issues along those lines, to the agency.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: Mr Murray?

JOSH MURRAY: The comment I was going to make is that obviously they are just part of the package. They won't be suitable to everyone, and we would work with the proponents to determine their level of comfort around servicing the loans. As the Minister has said, they are entered into under very flexible conditions because we want to be able to facilitate and make them work, but we do accept that if people are very concerned about taking on that level of engagement, that that may not be a solution in that case. But we are looking to bring forward any other reforms that can help more get into the industry.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: Do you have any targets in mind in terms of increasing the number of wheelchair accessible taxis over the next 12 months, and whether there are specific targets for regional and rural areas versus metro?

JOSH MURRAY: I will take that on notice. We might be able to answer that today. Certainly, we accept that the low-interest loans have been tried before, and they have had some success, but it has only been a limited number of take-ups.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: Minister, do you have an update on the statutory review of the point to point Act? Have we started that process yet?

CORRECTED

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Can I just give you some details on that funding? Is that useful now, or do you want to take that later?

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: I'll just take that later—that's fine. I've only got 40 seconds.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Tell us again, what was the question?

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: The statutory review of the point to point Act. My understanding is it is due to start. Have we actually started it yet?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I can't confirm whether we've started that, but we will deal with that in the ordinary course of business.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: Have you received any data on the changes to regulations that allow Uber to operate at the airport essentially as a rank-and-hail arrangement? That was a trial. I think it is due to finish.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: That trial is due to conclude next month. We are obviously coming close to a decision point. I have committed—

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: Have you received any assessment data as to its success or otherwise?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I'm not certain if the office has. What I have confirmed to both the taxi industry and to some of the key point to point operators is that I would like to meet with them to discuss it before the Government makes a decision about that trial. That's where we're up to in the process. I will be briefed ahead of those meetings, and I'll take those meetings very seriously.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Minister, back to our buses. How many workers for Foton are currently inmates at the South Coast correctional facility?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Foton have been employing some inmates as a part of their build. I welcome that, as I think it's great that people get a second chance.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Is it cheap labour? It's cheap labour, isn't it?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I particularly do that as the son of a probation and parole officer. I think it's fantastic that actually people get a chance to—

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Certainly. But what local jobs does that create?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: This is a good program. It's a very small number of employees. It was up as high as four at one point. We can get the current figures for you. But this will employ many, many locals as this program develops, if it goes well.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: The inmates being employed—will employ locals?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I hope they employ additional people both through this scheme but many additional locals as well. I think that would be the right balance there. But I support—

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Certainly. Are those inmates paid—

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I just want to make it clear, Ms Ward. I support that program, but I also support this manufacturing down there—something you appear to oppose.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: I have two minutes, Minister. You can do that by press release.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Sure. I may take you up on that offer.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Are those inmates paid the full labour rate?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I will take that on notice. The initial advice to me was that they are receiving payment.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Payment or full payment? Are they cheap labour?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I want to take the details on notice for that.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: All right. But the local—

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: They are being paid award rates, I'm advised.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: But the local jobs are local by choice, aren't they, not by custodial order?

CORRECTED

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I think it's terrible to dismiss this program. This is actually giving people a second chance. We should take it seriously.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: No-one is dismissing it, Minister. We're just asking if those local jobs are being filled by cheap labour from inmates who don't choose to be in that correctional facility and are being paid under rate.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: They are being paid award rates.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: It's cheap labour under Labor.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I support the program. You're entitled to oppose it, but I actually think this program is a very important way to give people a second chance.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: My question is to you about the actual jobs in this area and the reality compared to your press release, and the fact that your press release didn't say that you would be employing—as cheap labour—correctional facility inmates locally in the South Coast Correctional Centre. But I will move on.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: This has been absolutely public.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Minister, is Transport aware—

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: In fact, the former member congratulated us for this program earlier in the year.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Thank you. Is Transport aware—

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: This has been entirely public.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Is Transport aware of rust being on the Foton buses due to them coming via boat?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: If you'd like to know—

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: I would.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: —if Transport is aware of something, I encourage you to ask Transport about it.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: I would like to know is Transport aware of rust being on these Foton buses because they've come from China?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I'll refer you to the agency.

JOSH MURRAY: I will take that on notice. It's not something that has been advised to me.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: You haven't received that advice?

JOSH MURRAY: I'm aware that the 31 buses currently produced through the Nowra facility are going through their registration at the moment.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: But are you aware of the rust on these buses?

JOSH MURRAY: I am not aware of that, but I will take the question on notice and come back.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Minister, will the new Tangara fleet be built in New South Wales?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: There are two programs in relation to the Tangaras. One, we've made the decision your Government didn't make and we've allocated \$450 million to extend the life of the current Tangaras.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Minister, just the new fleet.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I was getting to that.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Will the new Tangara fleet be built in New South Wales?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: In relation to the future fleet program, this will be subject to the Government's goals of having local manufacturing. That planning—

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: So it will be built in New South Wales?

The CHAIR: Order!

CORRECTED

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: That planning is well underway and it will mean a big boost to New South Wales jobs.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: That's not an answer.

The CHAIR: Minister, how is it going in terms of reducing government costs for music festivals in New South Wales?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Firstly, the financial support has been important, both to small festivals and the larger ones. The appeal processes are up and running. We're in the early stages of those, so I think this summer festival season will really tell us how they're working in full effect. But there have been some early appeals, both internal and to that central panel that's now up and running.

The CHAIR: It's been a year. At the time, I think you were wanting that passed for last summer, actually. So we still don't know whether music festivals have been able to appeal excessive charges, such as user-pays policing charges, and had them reduced or revoked?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: No, they have been able to appeal. That channel is open. I can confirm festivals have taken advantage of those appeals. You're welcome to ask about some of the specifics. It's also why we had to get that festival viability fund in place—because some of this will be slow, that appeal process. That's why we needed that funding process that you've been asking questions about this morning.

The CHAIR: Yes, but that didn't go to a lot of the festivals that, obviously, didn't meet the eligibility criteria.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Yes, but it went to many festivals—

The CHAIR: Five.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: —and there's other funding rolling out to some of those other festivals. That's the Government's view; you're entitled to take a different view.

The CHAIR: One of the biggest objectives of those reforms, you said, was to make it easier and cheaper for festivals to reduce what was an exorbitant cost charged by many government agencies—but really, by the police. Just to be clear, at this point, one year in, you don't know whether those costs have been reduced? Or are you saying maybe they haven't yet?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: No, I definitely disagree with that. That's not the feedback to me. Those extensive plans that have to be required are being required of less festivals. The new plans that are required are being layered over festivals much more appropriately by authorities. That's reducing costs across the sector. The feedback to me, very directly from the sector, is there is cooperation from agencies, the paperwork has dropped, they still believe patrons are being kept safe, and the appeal processes are being used. One appeal has been lodged to that central panel. It was received on 13 August this year. It's currently under consideration. But you may want to ask some details about the other appeals.

The CHAIR: Minister, what role did you play, if any, in requesting the police Minister to not have police drug dogs present during the drug-checking trials at music festivals? The first one was at the Yours and Owls Festival. Did you speak with the police Minister about not having drug dogs there—which, of course, is a recommendation of the Drug Summit?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I won't go into all the details of discussions with my Cabinet colleagues, but I did go down to the festival to see the operation in action. I met with the festival industry, the Yours and Owls team, and the agencies. I want to thank the agencies for being there. The feedback was very direct. On regulation and on drug checking and on cooperation between the agencies, the industry was very pleased with the initial rollout. Of course, there's more work to do.

The CHAIR: Thank you, Minister. Our time is up. Are there any questions from Government members?

The Hon. Dr SARAH KAINE: No, thank you. I would like more info on the length of trains, but we can talk about that later.

The CHAIR: Thanks, Minister, for appearing. Your time with us is done for today. We'll break for lunch. We will be back at two o'clock for the afternoon session with the officials.

(The Minister withdrew.)

(Luncheon adjournment)

CORRECTED

Ms RACHEL SIMPSON, Executive Director, Tolling, Transport for NSW, affirmed and examined

The CHAIR: Welcome back. We will now go straight to questions from the Opposition.

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: My first question is about an answer the Minister gave regarding the regional arts organisations that are being funded, as announced this morning, versus the total funding pool. The Minister seemed to indicate that the total funding pool was somewhere in the order of \$15 million for the grants this morning and that half of that, \$7.5 million or so, had gone to regional arts organisations. I want to clarify that is right because the Excel spreadsheet that's available on the website indicates that the total pool of funding is somewhere just over \$7 million.

ELIZABETH MILDWATER: If you like, I could get Ms Glasscock to talk through the individual grants, which might give you the total and the percentage.

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: That would be helpful to clarify whether the Minister had found an additional \$7.5 million from somewhere.

KERRI GLASSCOCK: The two-year and multi-year funding announcement this morning invested just over \$3.7 million annually into 31 regional organisations. The \$7.4 million is in reference to the two-year commitment.

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: When he referenced a \$15 million figure, do you know where that came from?

KERRI GLASSCOCK: That is the two-year commitment.

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: The spreadsheet released today is the one-year total. Is that right?

KERRI GLASSCOCK: Yes. That's correct.

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: The intention is that the spreadsheet from today, which represents one year, will just be replicated this time next year.

KERRI GLASSCOCK: Yes. We've committed to the two-year funding period.

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: On that spreadsheet, column A is a date and it's the date of 22 August. What does that date refer to?

KERRI GLASSCOCK: I would have to take that on notice for 22 August. I don't have that spreadsheet in front of me. Sorry.

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: When did you advise the Minister of the funding grants you thought he should approve?

KERRI GLASSCOCK: The current round that's just been announced, which was a joint announcement of project and multi-year funding, is assessed via the Artform Boards. They make recommendations to the Minister and he confirms the funding. I believe this went up to the Minister—I will have to get the exact date. It was very recently.

ELIZABETH MILDWATER: The last couple of weeks.

KERRI GLASSCOCK: It was in the last couple of weeks.

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: Do you know when it came back for announcement? Did it go back to Create NSW to be announced?

KERRI GLASSCOCK: Correct. It got approved very recently.

ELIZABETH MILDWATER: In the last couple of days.

KERRI GLASSCOCK: A couple of days ago.

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: It was approved by the Minister a couple of days ago and then sent back to Create?

KERRI GLASSCOCK: That's correct.

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: This week?

KERRI GLASSCOCK: That's correct.

CORRECTED

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: You received his grants on Monday or Tuesday?

ELIZABETH MILDWATER: His decision? We could get you the exact dates, but it's very recent.

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: The recommendations were with his office for a couple of weeks?

ELIZABETH MILDWATER: No.

KERRI GLASSCOCK: No, they weren't.

ELIZABETH MILDWATER: We'd have to get you the exact date, but Wednesday is not "weeks".

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: It would be great if I could please have the dates of when the recommendations were sent to the Minister and when he sent them back to Create, or to whoever he needed to send them back to.

KERRI GLASSCOCK: Yes, sure.

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: This may still be for you, Ms Glasscock, around engagement with the Federal Government relating to spirits excise and public liability insurance, or it might be with Mr Rodrigues.

KERRI GLASSCOCK: It's not with me.

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: Is anyone engaging with the Federal Government around spirits excise and public liability insurance?

TAREK BARAKAT: We'd have it in Hospitality and Racing that I'm aware of.

ELIZABETH MILDWATER: That would be the part of the portfolio that you—it's not a matter that the department's dealt with.

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: That hasn't been undertaken?

ELIZABETH MILDWATER: No.

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: I have a question about the definition of live music venues. The Minister is making statements that the number of live music venues in New South Wales tripled in the last two years, but there have been some questions around the definition. Could somebody please tell me the number of live music venues that were operating in New South Wales in 2022 versus 2024?

ELIZABETH MILDWATER: I think Ms Collins can help you. She's answered questions on this in previous estimates.

EMILY COLLINS: There are two different numbers that you might be referring to. At the start of 2024, Sound NSW released a report looking at the live music industry in New South Wales that included a count of New South Wales music venues, which was 795 in total. This included varying types of live music venues, from dedicated music venues to venues that very occasionally and inconsistently, potentially, offer live music. There are 795 venues across the State that do offer live music. There's also a figure that you may be aware of that is managed by Hospitality and Racing, which is the venues taking up the live music incentive, which at the moment is at 453 venues.

TAREK BARAKAT: I've got some comparative figures across 2023 to 2025, if that's helpful.

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: Yes, that's helpful. To your point, Ms Collins, venues like the Sydney Theatre Company or the Griffin Theatre Company are being included in the live music figure that Minister Graham is referring to when he talks about live music venues. Do you know if that's accurate?

EMILY COLLINS: I'm not sure of the exact context in which he's referred to them, so I can't confirm if that aligns with what my understanding is.

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: Those figures you've just given me, the 725, that's in the report from 2022?

EMILY COLLINS: In 2024, 795.

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: Right. I think that is number he's referring to, which includes venues that are very occasionally engaging in live music. Mr Barakat, absolutely, provide some extra information, if you would like to.

TAREK BARAKAT: Sure. The number of licensed music venues in New South Wales that accessed incentives—that's extended trading, fee reductions and things—in March 2023 was 133. As Ms Collins said, in

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July this year it's 453. There are 197 of those in regional New South Wales compared to 53 in regional New South Wales in March 2023.

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: I am keen to get deep into the budget. I'm not sure who is best to talk about this. It's referring to *Budget Paper No. 03* and *Budget Paper No. 04* and understanding exactly where money is recorded. In *Budget Paper No. 03*, relating to the Department of Creative Industries, the Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences has the project of the Ultimo revitalisation. Presumably that project is housed in that entity's budget, but the new Powerhouse Museum is listed under the department's major works. Could you please explain why that is?

ELIZABETH MILDWATER: Yes. This is part of the reason the numbers are quite confusing about what sits in our department and specifically in the Create budget. There have been some changes. There are three powerhouse projects that have been or are underway: Castle Hill, Ultimo and Parramatta. The Castle Hill building has transferred into the Powerhouse in the last year. I think that's visible in their annual report, and that was a transfer of \$53 million.

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: But in this budget, Castle Hill is included under the department.

ELIZABETH MILDWATER: It has now transferred to the Powerhouse, is my understanding.

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: When did that happen?

ELIZABETH MILDWATER: I'm sorry, I can't remember who it was. This morning someone was quoting page 144 of the Powerhouse annual report, and that's where you can see what has transferred into the Powerhouse.

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: But that annual report is from 2023-24.

ELIZABETH MILDWATER: For the last year, yes. I guess what I could do is talk you through the pieces as we understand them. If you would like, I could get back to you on notice about how they're accounted for in the financial statements. But what you're seeing is a move from Create into Powerhouse, as either things are completed or as we have changed the model now and just transferred the other works to the Powerhouse.

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: Isn't it a bit concerning that the Powerhouse annual report doesn't accord with the Government's budget papers?

ELIZABETH MILDWATER: Ms Havilah might be able to explain why.

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: That would be helpful, thank you.

ELIZABETH MILDWATER: I don't purport to be an accountant.

LISA HAVILAH: There was an \$840 million capital allocation towards the delivery of both Castle Hill and Powerhouse Parramatta. That is what's recorded. Sometimes when Parramatta is mentioned, Castle Hill is also mentioned. They're all in different phases. Castle Hill was finished in the 2023-24 financial year, and that was when that asset was transferred onto the Powerhouse books. Powerhouse Parramatta is still sitting with Infrastructure NSW. That will complete at the end of this year and then it will be transferred.

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: In *Budget Paper No. 03*, 4-20, it lists the estimated total cost of the new Powerhouse Museum in Parramatta, including Castle Hill, as "n.a." Do you know why that is?

LISA HAVILAH: No, I'd have to take that on notice. But I can tell you the total capital allocation. I can confirm that as \$840 million.

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: Obviously that's reflected elsewhere in the budget papers. It seemed unusual that it's listed as not applicable here, so that would be helpful. Just to go a little deeper through *Budget Paper No. 04*, the capital expenditure for the museum is increasing an enormous amount. Last year the revised budget for capital expenditure was \$17 million, and then this year it's \$154 million. What's contained within that increase?

LISA HAVILAH: The total government allocation towards the revitalisation of the Powerhouse Museum in Ultimo is \$250 million. Of that, the Powerhouse is raising \$50 million through a philanthropic campaign.

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: You're anticipating that you will have \$50 million in philanthropy. How is that accounted for in the budget here?

LISA HAVILAH: If you go to page—

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: Is it 4-23?

CORRECTED

LISA HAVILAH: Yes, 4-23. Under "Grants and Contributions", you'll see an amount of \$38.2 million. That is philanthropy income that's phased from both Parramatta and Ultimo. That comes both in and out of our accounts.

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: So the Government underwrites the—

LISA HAVILAH: Yes. The process for both Parramatta and Ultimo—I suppose Parramatta is the best example because we're further down the road with that philanthropy campaign—is that we are tasked with raising the \$75 million, and that \$75 million has to be delivered at the completion of construction to pay for the completion of the project. Through our philanthropic agreements, that income comes in over a number of years, and we pay that back to Treasury to the full amount. You can also see on that same page under "Expenses", \$190 million. Of that \$190 million, \$58.1 million is the contribution that we'll make towards Powerhouse Parramatta construction.

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: The funding distribution by the department on the second line of revenue—

LISA HAVILAH: The \$279 million?

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: Yes.

LISA HAVILAH: That is a combination of both capex and opex. It includes the transfer of the Ultimo revitalisation capital budget, so we're holding the capital budget for the Ultimo project.

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: But you're not holding the capital budget for Parramatta?

LISA HAVILAH: No. Because it is in a different phase—

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: Are you holding the opex budget for Parramatta?

LISA HAVILAH: Yes.

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: How much is that?

LISA HAVILAH: It's probably better represented by me explaining it through expenses. If you break down the \$190 million, \$58.1 million of that is what we'll contribute to the Parramatta capex base build through philanthropy, and \$127.5 million is both a combination of workforce and other operating expenses that we are utilising to prepare to operationalise Powerhouse Parramatta and develop and deliver the five major exhibitions in preparation for our opening next year. We take on the Powerhouse Parramatta building in 16 weeks, and we have a period of fit-out that we'll undertake in this financial year.

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: The \$127.5 million, what was that last year—the equivalent?

LISA HAVILAH: The equivalent last year—it's hard to find an exact equivalent—is \$123 million. You can see in the—hang on. I might take that on notice so I can get that exactly right.

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: Thank you for taking me through that. I appreciate the detail. On the revitalisation of Ultimo, it's been put to me that there hasn't been an additional business case put forward, whether it's a semantic change or not to the project. Could you explain why a new business case wasn't put forward?

LISA HAVILAH: There was a period of revision for the project in terms of the scope of the capital works. As part of that process, the capital budget was shifted, and I think the process now is that we'll work closely with government to make sure that we have the right opex allocation to operate the museum in its new form.

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: There was concern that, as part of the modification, the exhibition period for public comment was only about 13 days—around two weeks. Did you receive feedback that that wasn't long enough for the public to respond, given the complexities of these kinds of documents?

LISA HAVILAH: I think what you're referring to is the current planning modification that's sitting with Planning. The revitalisation project is being delivered by Infrastructure NSW, so what I've been advised by Infrastructure NSW is that—it's to do with the replacement of the Wran structure. It was identified through the process of procurement of the builder that that had to be replaced. That's what the planning modification is about. In terms of the timing of that planning, that's really a question for Infrastructure NSW and Planning in terms of the timing of the modification.

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: It has also been put to me that some demolition style work might actually be happening as early as next week at the Ultimo site. Is that accurate?

LISA HAVILAH: Early works have been undertaken for over a period of eight months once the museum was closed so we could undertake those early works. Those early works started to prepare for the main

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construction contract. From what I've been informed from Infrastructure NSW, of course that's all in line with planning approvals.

Ms ABIGAIL BOYD: If I could start with Mr Rodrigues; I think this is one for you. I wanted to quickly talk about the new sexual harassment and sexual violence prevention training through RSA.

TAREK BARAKAT: That's actually one for me, Ms Boyd.

Ms ABIGAIL BOYD: It is? Did that come out of the work that the 24-hour commissioner has been doing?

MICHAEL RODRIGUES: It's for Mr Barakat, but we work quite closely together, so feel free to throw them in this direction.

Ms ABIGAIL BOYD: Okay, I'll throw them at that corner over there. I understand that training—although welcome—on sexual harassment and sexual violence prevention is only for people who are completing their RSA for the first time. Is that correct?

TAREK BARAKAT: Yes, it's compulsory for new entrants into the industry. It was compulsory from, I think, 17 June, and we've had about 12,000 to 13,000 people go through already. We expect it will be about 100,000 over the next 12 months. That's about the amount of people who do RSA training each year. We've also made it available to licensees. We've written to all licensees and said, "While it's not compulsory for people already in the industry to do it, here it is. We encourage you to use it. We encourage you to talk to your staff about it. Here's the materials that are available." Looking at applying it retrospectively, it's quite a challenging task from a capacity perspective. There's about 600,000 people in the industry with RSAs. To put all them through that training retrospectively we thought would be quite difficult.

Ms ABIGAIL BOYD: What does that training look like in terms of how intensive it is?

TAREK BARAKAT: It's part of the RSA course, so it's a component of the RSA course. Exactly what it entails I'd have to take on notice. But it's now built into the course that each new entrant into the industry has to complete. I'm happy to take on notice the detail.

Ms ABIGAIL BOYD: Is it face to face or online?

TAREK BARAKAT: It can be both is my understanding.

Ms ABIGAIL BOYD: How many hours are we talking?

TAREK BARAKAT: I'll take that on notice, but I can come back to you after the break on that if that's useful.

Ms ABIGAIL BOYD: You can imagine where I'm going with this. Is it that hard to really say to people that they need to, say within the next 12 months—

TAREK BARAKAT: It's less about the people in the industry. It's more about the approved accredited training providers, whether they have the capacity to take on that extra cohort. I'm not saying we wouldn't look at it; I'm happy to take it away and consider it further. But the decision at this point was that it would be focused on new entrants into the industry.

Ms ABIGAIL BOYD: I appreciate that you need to take it on notice, but presumably if it's an online course you would imagine—maybe this is a question again to the corner, but also I feel like what we're looking at here is an entrenched culture that needs to change. If we're not addressing the 600,000 people who are already in the industry and part of that culture, how effective is this going to be? It's better than nothing, but do we think that that's sufficient—just a one-off training when you get your RSA?

TAREK BARAKAT: No, certainly not, and Mr Rodrigues can talk to some of the other things we're doing. The RSA component is one aspect of trying to—as you say—fix that culture, but there's ongoing consultation with organisations like Full Stop that Mr Rodrigues is undertaking as well that will feed into that.

Ms ABIGAIL BOYD: Is there going to be ongoing training mandated at any point?

TAREK BARAKAT: This is an ongoing requirement now. If you do an RSA in New South Wales, you'll have to have completed this training as part of that.

Ms ABIGAIL BOYD: Excuse my ignorance. How often do you have to do that training?

TAREK BARAKAT: You have to do it when you enter the industry and I think refreshers are every five years, from memory.

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Ms ABIGAIL BOYD: So in five years time everyone in the industry should have done this training?

TAREK BARAKAT: Yes.

Ms ABIGAIL BOYD: All right. It's not as bad as it could be.

TAREK BARAKAT: I'm glad to hear that.

Ms ABIGAIL BOYD: I'll go to you, Mr Murray. I just wanted to get an update on the extent of consulting spend from Transport in the last financial year.

JOSH MURRAY: Thank you for the question. I will take those details on notice. But I may be able to come back to you within this part of the hearing. We have continued our work to reduce the spend on external consultants as part of the overall savings programs.

Ms ABIGAIL BOYD: Are you able to also tell me the contractor spend and labour hire spend that Transport has?

JOSH MURRAY: I can take those on notice and aim to furnish them as quickly as possible.

Ms ABIGAIL BOYD: You'll be aware that there was quite a focus in our consultants inquiry into Transport spend on contractors and labour hire. It was found to be quite high, and there was a bit of a drive to try and push that down. Noting the Core NSW Public Service Work Policy that was released in July 2025 and the Government's stated aim of trying to reduce reliance on external parties and instead boost the public service, how do we explain the 950 job cuts that Transport for NSW are planning?

JOSH MURRAY: We have been very much focused on the core work policy and also the work that is occurring across government in terms of making sure that any SME consulting style services can be redirected to other parts of the public sector, which Transport is playing a large role in and feeding into Cabinet Office and the Premier's Department as to what services we could provide to other agencies through that. In relation to the proposal that may impact up to 950 senior manager and award roles, we are going through the design of that at the moment. But the aim of those roles is to target corporate and support service branches with the organisation where we've already done the leadership restructures to have fewer divisions in the organisation. This is the last stage of the reform that began in the last financial year and has delivered a new leadership structure and delivery structure across the organisation. Now we need to flow that through. We are very mindful of the skills that we will need, but also of reducing duplication or corporate support services that are tuned more to the previous structure, which had more divisions.

Ms ABIGAIL BOYD: But those 950 job cuts is to cut within not the labour hire workforce within Transport but your actual direct employees?

JOSH MURRAY: That's correct. Ongoing savings will continue in the labour hire ranks and any consultancies. They are part of our overall financial sustainability aims that have been baked into our budget assumptions, but we also need to overall ensure the size of the organisation fits the work that we are doing. That's why we're looking at the structures of those branches.

Ms ABIGAIL BOYD: But in line with the Core NSW Public Service Work Policy, wouldn't you be preferencing those direct jobs over the labour hire jobs that still exist? I understand you've still got well over 700 labour hire positions. Will they be booted out to make way for some of these direct employees?

JOSH MURRAY: We are absolutely preferencing the savings in labour hire. That's why over the last two years we've made major changes in that area. Unfortunately, we also have to face into the fact that, in other parts, the organisation has grown outside of the core roles that it needs to do, and we need to address that through the next layer of branch design. There will be ongoing focus in labour hire, absolutely, and that's one of our core principles. But we can't move away from the fact that we do need to make savings in those other ranks as well.

Ms ABIGAIL BOYD: I can't do estimates without asking Mr Wing a question. We are still getting people telling us that they are being turned away by taxis and by rideshare more generally as well as having abuse hurled at them. What have you been doing since we last spoke to clean that up and stop it happening?

ANTHONY WING: We're talking about people with disability, especially?

Ms ABIGAIL BOYD: Yes, and especially the ones that we hear a lot about are people with assistance dogs being turned away. But also people just generally there is random abuse from rideshare and taxi drivers when they're on the street. It's quite extreme, and it's not just hearing from one or two; it's well reported. What is being done?

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ANTHONY WING: We have a couple of groups of people who specifically have rules in the Act which we enforce. Let me begin with people with assistance animals, because we know that, unfortunately, there is an historic experience that both rideshare and taxi drivers do refuse them. We do a couple of things there. One, we're doing a lot of work with Guide Dogs New South Wales—and I've talked about that in the past—to do education, because we know that when people actually have been exposed to passengers with guide dogs or other assistance animals, they're far less likely to turn them away, but also to do covert operations so that people are aware that, in fact, if you are a rideshare driver or a taxi driver and you refuse an animal, then you are possibly going to face a fine. It's a \$1,000 fine at the moment. We have been going on a number of covert operations around that area. We have been fining people when we catch them doing that on those operations. Or, if we get complaints, we will follow those up as well.

Ms ABIGAIL BOYD: Are you asking those rideshare companies to take proactive action to make sure that their drivers are aware of their obligations, and are they?

ANTHONY WING: Yes, we expect and require them all to have that education as part of their onboarding of all new drivers. But we've also set up a system with the rideshare companies—with Uber, with DiDi, with the taxi companies—around complaint handling as well. Historically, again, the concern was no-one bothered to complain because they thought nothing would happen. We said to them, "Every complaint you get now, you need to, one, follow it up and, two, get back to the complainant and tell the complainant what's happening and also report it to us as well." We've found in other areas that, when they're required to get back to the complainant and to report it to us, we get much more attention to the actual complaint.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: Mr Murray, coming back to the Bomaderry to Kiama line, you keep coming back to this \$1.5 million resilience investment. Do you have any targets or KPIs in terms of what that \$1.5 million is going to bring in terms of improvements with its journey time, service frequencies et cetera?

JOSH MURRAY: I might ask Ms Mares to assist me on this, but the \$1.5 million initial spend is to structure those ambitions and to be able to look at those and then put in place a program where we address those outcomes. That work has begun, but it is still too early to put KPIs against some of those elements.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: So \$1.5 million to plan potential upgrades.

TRUDI MARES: Yes. Since March this year we started round tables with industry, community, levels of government and community representatives. We got feedback through those. We used previous studies. As you mentioned before, in the other work we'd done on electrification or duplication, we had been asked to include a south-west rail link as well. So we have a long list of things people would like to see in the plan. We are doing work at the moment—we've engaged some contracts on strategic modelling and technical advisory. That's about rail operations and what we can do for improvements there and getting some of those economic appraisals done.

So, to answer the earlier question, we don't have estimates yet, but we will have those in the new year. When we've got all of that together by about the end of quarter three, we'll be testing that back with the advisory and community groups that we've been speaking with, and then we'll have that report ready for government. When decisions are made on which things we need to progress, we'll use the balance of the \$10 million to do the business case and investment work to get it done. Mr Longland may have some information on improvements that have been made on the line in the short term, but this plan is actually looking at the longer term, as you mentioned earlier.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: One of the other projects that came up when we were discussing this was the Maldon to Dombarton railway line. It seems like every government in New South Wales history has promised this. Where are we up to in that 10 to 20 years of investigation? It feels like it has been going for more than 20 years in terms of a promise to complete it.

TRUDI MARES: That south-west link is included in this analysis, so we'll be looking at that as part of this.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: So we haven't started that 10- to 20-year investigation.

TRUDI MARES: That's all part of that work.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: Can I ask why Hampden Bridge in Kangaroo Valley doesn't rate a mention in this Regional NSW Services and Infrastructure Plan, given its significance and its issues? I know it kind of sits in Minister Aitchison's portfolio, but I'm going to push the friendship a bit here.

TRUDI MARES: Are you talking about this Illawarra plan?

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: No, in general—the Regional NSW Services and Infrastructure Plan. There is no mention of the Hampden Bridge at all in terms of a project of significance.

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TRUDI MARES: I will have to take that on notice and have a look at that particular plan. But I can tell you that we are doing a review of all of our bridges, looking at not just what the asset condition is and when we need to do that work but also accessibility, particularly with the impacts that we've seen around Hampden and the load restrictions.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: With all due respect, Ms Mares, how many reviews are we going to do?

TRUDI MARES: Well, it's to prioritise the work so that we can make sure it doesn't happen—

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: But this is a bridge that has been looked at how many times since 1990?

TRUDI MARES: Hampden?

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: There have been eight consultants on this project since 1990. You're now doing another feasibility study to see what's feasible, even though you know what is feasible and what is potentially being proposed won't—

TRUDI MARES: For Hampden Bridge?

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: Yes.

TRUDI MARES: We're not doing a feasibility study. There was ongoing maintenance work and there was monitoring and—

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: Well, the Minister has made an announcement about doing a feasibility study and what else can be done.

TRUDI MARES: It's a business case to do the full replacement. There are a couple of things. There's maintenance happening now. There's short-term work to see if we can get the load restrictions removed. And if there's any change to the maintenance, we can do more immediately.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: But you know there are no short-term fixes because you've—

TRUDI MARES: That's what they're still working through. The money that they spoke about was for the long-term duplication or replacement or whatever outcome is to be looked at.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: There's a peer-reviewed paper done by your own department officials basically stating that there are no short-term solutions to this. It's duplication or nothing else.

TRUDI MARES: We've got our suspended-bridge engineering experts looking at it just to make sure and see if there's anything else we can do.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: By leave, I table this document for you to have a look at.

Document tabled.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: You're saying these people that work for your department aren't experts in their field, but they presented a paper at a conference in 2022 in South Australia, hosted by Austroads, specifically citing the Hampden Bridge as an example. They basically say the only solution is duplication.

TRUDI MARES: We're just reviewing that to make sure and see if there's anything else that we can do. Obviously I haven't seen that document before, but I can say they are the three things we are doing: the maintenance work and the monitoring, seeing if there's something we can do more short term to remove the load restriction—noting that report that you've tabled, which I'll take a look at—and then the longer term duplication.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: You're not concerned you're giving the community false hope in short-term solutions that you've already previously ruled out on many, many occasions?

TRUDI MARES: No, we're being honest about the work we're doing and genuinely having a look to see if there's anything else that can be done that we haven't looked at before since 2022 or earlier.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: Is the Glenmurray Road being considered as an option for a low-level crossing across the Kangaroo River?

TRUDI MARES: I'm not sure. I'd have to take that on notice.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: Are you able to take that on notice in terms of whether that is being considered or re-examined, and what are the potential engineering obstacles for that option?

TRUDI MARES: Yes, I'll take that on notice.

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The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: I'll go back to taxis if possible, Mr Murray. Mr Wing, do you have any information or feedback around the Uber trial at the airport that you can provide the Committee in terms of how it's progressed in terms of compliance operations that you've been running at the airport? The feedback I've received from users and taxi operators said it's a bit of a basket case.

ANTHONY WING: It depends. At T1 international airport, that trial began in September last year for 12-month period. It allows—

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: I know the details. Can you maybe jump to the point? I've only got two minutes. What are the metrics you're using to measure whether this has been successful or not?

ANTHONY WING: So far it's had about more than 300,000 passenger trips moved through that trial through Uber PIN. Reporting coming from Uber and Sydney airport is that there has been a decrease in passenger wait time and increasing customer satisfaction. From my own point of view, I've obviously also put strong additional safety obligations on it too, and I have my own people go through and check to make sure, for example, at the boom gate at the entrance, as well as requiring Uber to have people to control the kerbside at all times when it's running. I've had my own people go through and check that is actually in place. Of course they do checks in plain clothes, and surprise checks as well, to make sure that the safety obligations are being put in place.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: When was the last plain-clothes compliance check done?

ANTHONY WING: I don't have a day, but it would have been very recent, because we do a lot of stuff at the airport and that's just on the roster of things for people to walk through.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: Are you able to take on notice as to when the last one was? You don't have to give me the exact date, but obviously just a rough—

ANTHONY WING: It is within the last week or two. Yes, sure.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: Are you providing feedback to the Minister on the statutory review? Have you started that process with him yet?

ANTHONY WING: Of the Act?

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: Yes.

ANTHONY WING: The statutory review of the Act will be run by Transport for NSW.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: You won't have any input as, essentially, the regulator of it?

ANTHONY WING: Oh, I see. I'm sure I will get asked for a lot of input, but I guess what I'm saying is they will actually run the timing of the review.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: But you haven't been engaged or asked for that input yet?

ANTHONY WING: Not about the review itself, no.

The CHAIR: I'll take the last 20 seconds. I think this may be for you, Mr Barakat. Do you know whether any appeals have been lodged with ILGA—this is under section 5A of the Music Festivals Act, in terms of appeals?

TAREK BARAKAT: Against decisions of whether or not a festival needs an agreed health and medical plan?

The CHAIR: Yes.

TAREK BARAKAT: Not that I'm aware of.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Mr Regan, what's the status of the extra additional stations for metro west, which Chris Minns promised the Government was looking at? Or is the metro west station alignment being left untouched?

PETER REGAN: The Government has confirmed it is not proceeding with an additional station at Rosehill. As I've advised the Committee before, we have been providing advice to this Government, and previous governments, over metro west station options for some time. We're not progressing any further stations on the nine station alignment at this point.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: No further work is being done on that at this point?

PETER REGAN: That's correct.

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The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Sorry, you mentioned one other? No? Okay. There'll be no further stations, essentially.

PETER REGAN: We're not working on any further stations at the moment, that's right. We are in procurement for the nine stations on the alignment.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: It's a bit of a scar to Western Sydney commuters, though, when they were promised that, but, nonetheless. Can I just go to the EBA negotiations. What's the status of the EBA negotiations between Metro Trains Sydney and the workforce?

PETER REGAN: I understand those negotiations are ongoing. Clearly they are between Metro Trains Sydney, MTS, as the operator, and their employees and the unions. I'm not directly involved in those discussions.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: You're not?

PETER REGAN: No.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: What's the latest advice to Government or the public concerning the dispute?

PETER REGAN: It's a matter for MTS and its workforce.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Are we telling commuters, on rail strikes, "Don't dream it's over"?

PETER REGAN: Sorry, I don't understand the question.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: The commuters and the rail strikes that are happening, is that essentially over, or is that still in abeyance because of those negotiations?

PETER REGAN: I'm not aware of any planned strikes.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: On the Western Sydney airport extensions, what's the status of the business cases for those two Western Sydney airport metro extensions?

PETER REGAN: We are continuing to work on two business cases. There's a business case for extensions between Saint Marys, the Western Sydney airport metro, and Tallawong, the north-west metro. We're working to finalise that work by around the end of this year, early next year, for government. We're continuing to look at options there in the north, and that one is being looked at as a metro extension, given it's connecting two metro lines. We're also working very closely with Transport for NSW. There's a jointly funded business case being done between State and Federal Government in the south, which looks at both metro and heavy rail options between Bradfield, Leppington and further south towards Campbelltown, Macarthur. It's working to a similar time frame—around the end of this year, early next year—for finalisation of those works.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Wow. To my happiness, both of those will be done by the end of this year or early next year.

PETER REGAN: That's correct.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: That's fantastic. When do you anticipate that community consultation will occur, as part of the business case process?

PETER REGAN: I don't think there is a direct time frame for community consultation at this point. There is some consultation with landowners and with industry potential partners that will be taking place, but I would be happy, Ms Ward, to take on notice the time frames going forward for consultation.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: With those stakeholders, but not with the community—or both? Could you take on notice both?

PETER REGAN: With both, yes, that's fine. As we've done previously for these types of business cases, a big part of the business case is location of stations, alignment of railway, and there are considerations, then, as to corridors that are in place—whether those corridors are the right corridors—or areas where there are not yet corridors in place. For part of each of the route, north and south, there are gazetted corridors in place. For other sections there are not. There's a bit of a different piece of work being done where there is a corridor or where there isn't. And certainly engaging with other landowners and other potential land uses. It's not just Sydney Metro and Transport; we're working across government—the department of planning, housing, Infrastructure NSW and others to look at that in an integrated fashion.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: How many stations are being planned for each line?

PETER REGAN: We haven't finalised the number of stations yet.

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The Hon. NATALIE WARD: But is there any indication as part of that process?

PETER REGAN: Not that I would be able to put a number on, but, certainly, depending on the staging of the works, depending on which options are taken forward, we would look to have a number of stations, trying to find that balance between good, efficient journey time but also opportunity to create housing and other economic activity. So they will be spaced accordingly. In some cases, the development is already there; there are certain sections where there's been a lot of development and there aren't yet rail options. Certainly in the north-west, Schofields is something that we're looking at because it interchanges with Sydney Trains. Going further across, Marsden Park is an area where there has been a lot of development, and then there are significant options from Marsden Park down towards Saint Marys.

At the south, obviously connecting across with heavy rail to Leppington—and there are decisions as to what should be in between. There are opportunities at Bradfield South, and there's definitely a lot of development down around Oran Park. So there are anchor points that we would definitely be looking at. The question is whether there are intermediate stations between those anchor points. But we're not at that point yet. There are still a lot of different options being looked at.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: With those existing alignments, or those existing corridors, you might say, obviously you'd be seeking to work with stakeholders—for example, councils. And existing open parkland, flame trees—

PETER REGAN: Absolutely

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: —you want to work in all of the existing infrastructure.

PETER REGAN: I think there's a lot of knowledge that's been built up from the work that was originally done on stage one of the Western Sydney airport metro, around working with those local stakeholders, understanding the environmental concerns and challenges, where the contaminated land is, where it's not.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Speaking of Rosehill.

PETER REGAN: And then, similarly, the work that Transport has been doing is in the same space. There's a lot of work going on and certainly good progress. Ms Mares may be able to contribute further, if you wish.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: That's okay. I'll get to that shortly. Where in the budget is the \$1 billion that the Albanese Government promised for Metro Southwest, for the extension?

PETER REGAN: I think that's a Federal budget question.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: It's not included in this budget, or any of our budgets?

PETER REGAN: I'm not aware of that. I'm not saying it's not, but it wouldn't be included in the metro budget because Federal funds are included at the whole-of-government level.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: But when they're co-funded, they're mentioned, so they are part of the budget.

PETER REGAN: I'm not aware.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: You're not aware?

PETER REGAN: I'm not aware in which budget that is included. It's certainly not included in ours.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Mr Murray, does New South Wales have the money yet?

JOSH MURRAY: As far as I'm aware, that's a Federal Government commitment that's been made for that corridor. It has not yet been activated. That would be a question for Treasury as to when the money would be sought and recognised.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: With respect, though, it might also be a question for you. A billion dollars from the Federal Government will go a long way towards that Metro Southwest extension. I would have thought that would be something that you, Mr Regan and others would be avidly seeking. Am I wrong in assuming that?

JOSH MURRAY: Certainly we work very closely with the Federal Government on all of these questions. The business cases are our opportunity to frame up what we'd be asking for and the timing of those.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: We don't have a funding agreement yet?

CORRECTED

JOSH MURRAY: I'm not saying that. I'm saying the question that you asked about the billion dollar corridor acquisition is separate to all the discussions that we are working through. That's not a consideration for us at this moment.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: It's not a trick. It's just fair to say there is no funding agreement at this stage.

JOSH MURRAY: On which project?

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: For the billion dollars promised by the Albanese Government.

JOSH MURRAY: No, that's not the focus. The focus is on the business cases, one of which is co-funded by the Federal Government.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Where is the funding agreement if that is the case? Is it the case that there is not a funding agreement?

JOSH MURRAY: That will be developed as the project is then considered.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: I just want to be clear, though. It may be developed, but it's not presently—as we sit here today at budget estimates—in existence. Is that correct?

JOSH MURRAY: The billion dollars is a Federal Government election commitment that was made. I'm not sure of the exact timing. We are certainly aware of it. We understand the prerogative of the Federal Government in putting that forward, but we are not currently factoring that into our discussions because we are focused on what the schemes would look like and when the timing of those potential future investments might happen.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Just to be clear, I'm not asking you about the business case; I'm asking about the billion dollars that Albo promised. Does New South Wales have the money?

JOSH MURRAY: We haven't sought the money yet. That's a commitment.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: You haven't sought the money? You haven't sought a financial agreement. You haven't sought to lock in a funding agreement at all.

JOSH MURRAY: It will be part of our discussions that we have throughout the year with the Federal Government about what is incorporated in infrastructure spending. At the moment, it's a Federal Government commitment to spend that money on acquisition of the corridor, which is not something we require at the moment because we are developing our estimates around the project.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: When does Transport expect the money and to begin to start spending it?

JOSH MURRAY: We'll have that discussion with the Federal Government.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Do you have an expectation about when you might—

The Hon. BOB NANVA: Point of order: I have refrained from taking a point of order on this and allowed quite a number of questions to take place. This is budget estimates.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Yes, precisely.

The Hon. BOB NANVA: This goes to relevance in the terms of reference, which is the estimates of expenditure from the New South Wales Consolidated Fund and related budget papers, not the Federal budget papers.

The CHAIR: I won't uphold the point of order. I do think the member was being relevant in terms of a State project and Federal connections and links to it. I remind the member to come back to the State budget at some point.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Thank you. Mr Murray, will the Federal Government or the State Government do the corridor acquisition?

JOSH MURRAY: Usually that's done by the State Government. We have the powers to do land acquisition when it comes to infrastructure projects. Again, I understand the question. It's just the timing of what we're doing is developing a program of future planning for transport in those areas, and then we would factor in the fact that the Federal Government has made a corridor acquisition commitment. But that's not part of our decision-making at the moment; ours is to get the projects ready so that they could be considered.

CORRECTED

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: That's all a bit *Khe Sanh* to me. Ms Drover and Ms Simpson, I might ask you some questions. I believe Ms Drover is the chief executive for NSW Motorways—or acting, in your present capacity. Are you on the steering committee for the direct deal negotiations with Transurban?

CAMILLA DROVER: There was a steerco, which was across government, for tolling reform more broadly. With the stand up of NSW Motorways, we are going to change its terms of reference.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: I understand that, but are you on that steerco?

CAMILLA DROVER: I am on the steerco, yes, but that's the broader toll reform steerco.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: But you do sit on that?

CAMILLA DROVER: Yes.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: On how many occasions have you met with Christopher John Saxon?

CAMILLA DROVER: Ever or in my role as CEO?

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: In your role in direct negotiations in respect of the toll reform.

CAMILLA DROVER: If I can just clarify, I was on the steerco until I took up the role as the CEO. I was not involved in the direct deal. I wasn't part of the direct deal team, but I did sit on the steerco as a representative on behalf of Transport for NSW. I have met Mr Chris Saxon on several occasions. I would have to take on notice exactly how many times that that was. I did meet him in the last week.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: In relation to toll reform and the direct deal?

CAMILLA DROVER: Yes.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Just to be clear, you said you were on the steerco. Are you still on that?

CAMILLA DROVER: Yes, but it will be reset. In my new role, I will obviously remain on that steerco as the CEO.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: You mentioned the terms of reference are changing. How are they changing?

CAMILLA DROVER: Given we've now got a standalone agency, we will review the exact terms and remit of that steering committee. We're also looking at participation on the steering committee as well. When the prior work was undertaken across both Treasury and Transport for NSW, the need for broader participation was there. Now that those staff members and those teams are coming together—we're not quite there yet, but they are coming together—under a new single CEO, the terms of reference for the steerco can be reviewed and amended.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: It sounds like we're reviewing the review, to be honest. We're changing the terms of reference and changing around the composition, but—

CAMILLA DROVER: No, just reflecting the reconstituting of the agency and the fact that the Treasury direct deal team, for example, is coming into NSW Motorways. Functions like the E-Toll business, which was historically in Transport for NSW, is also coming into NSW Motorways.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Are you responsible now for toll reform?

CAMILLA DROVER: Yes.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Thank you. That's helpful. On how many occasions have you participated in those negotiations with Transurban?

CAMILLA DROVER: As I said, I have never participated in the negotiation with Transurban. I only sat on the steerco until I took up my position as the CEO. I don't intend to be day-to-day involved in the direct negotiations. I will obviously be the escalation point for those negotiations as the CEO.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: What's the plan? Can you explain how that will work now?

CAMILLA DROVER: There are a broad set of initiatives and functions that need to be undertaken by the new entity. One of those is the direct deal with the existing concessionaires. To continue that work, the Treasury team is coming across into NSW Motorways. From a day-to-day practical perspective that transition has already occurred, but the formal transfer of Treasury staff to Transport for NSW is still a work in progress. On a day-to-day basis, they continue to progress the direct deal with those concessionaires. There is also the broader customer reform team. They are largely Transport for NSW staff. The E-Toll business, which runs the Government's retail tolling business, will also be coming into NSW Motorways. Then, of course, there is the asset

CORRECTED

management team, because the NSW Motorways entity will be the long-term owner and oversight the asset management of the publicly owned toll roads.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: I'm not asking how to make gravy. It just sounds quite complicated to pull it together. We're rearranging a lot of groups. I'm just wondering what progress is happening.

CAMILLA DROVER: What we're trying to do is to bring everything to do with toll roads in New South Wales under the one agency. Historically, or in recent times, it's been distributed across five different divisions of Transport, for example.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: With a steerco, but nonetheless. Do you report to Allan Fels or does he report to you?

CAMILLA DROVER: I report to the secretary of Transport. Allan Fels is an adviser to government. I wouldn't characterise his engagement as reporting to the chief executive, no.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Say that again, sorry. Who does he report to?

CAMILLA DROVER: He is an adviser, a consultant, to the New South Wales Government.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Reporting to who?

CAMILLA DROVER: I don't think he reports to anyone. He provides advice to the Government.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: He doesn't report to you?

CAMILLA DROVER: No.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: He doesn't report to Mr Murray?

CAMILLA DROVER: No. He's an adviser.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Is he on the steerco?

CAMILLA DROVER: No.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: How would you characterise his involvement, then?

CAMILLA DROVER: He is used as a sounding board and provides ad hoc advice to the Minister, government and NSW Motorways.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: That sounds a bit like *Somebody That I Used To Know*. In previous estimates, New South Wales Treasury has admitted it has modelled the use of concession extensions to fund toll reform. Are you aware that Treasury did that?

CAMILLA DROVER: There has been a very large amount of modelling undertaken, looking at a very broad range of different scenarios, and that informed the independent tolling review. But that has been tabled and finalised, and we're now in stage two of the direct deal process. Whether that historic modelling is informing that stage two process, I'm not at liberty to say.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: You're not at liberty to say?

CAMILLA DROVER: No, because we're in a direct deal process with the concessionaires.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: But, specifically, you are aware of the modelling for concession extensions?

CAMILLA DROVER: Yes. That has often been done for prior projects like NorthConnex, the M7 widening et cetera. It's a very standard practice to model what the benefits and opportunities would be from a concession extension.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Have you seen that modelling for concession extensions?

CAMILLA DROVER: There's such a broad range of modelling that has been done. I can't specifically recall it, but I'm sure it has been in the mix.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Could you take on notice whether you have seen it? I'm not asking you to table it, but I'm asking you whether you, in your capacity, have had the opportunity to see it.

CAMILLA DROVER: I'll take it on notice.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: We've modelled multiple toll road concessions. Is that correct?

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CAMILLA DROVER: As I said, there has been a very broad range of modelling undertaken for a whole range of scenarios that would add up to tolling reform across the whole network.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: But, as a policy matter, why would concession extensions be used to fund toll reform?

CAMILLA DROVER: Concession extensions historically have been used to partially fund widenings, for example. They're potentially a value pool, although concession extensions at the back end of long-term concessions are not particularly valuable in terms of net present value. They would have been modelled, but what I'm saying is they may not be part of the direct deal process.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: They may or they may not? You haven't ruled that in or out?

CAMILLA DROVER: Yes.

The CHAIR: Mr Barakat and Ms Collins, I'm going to ask some questions around the Music Festival Roundtable and Music Festivals Appeal Panel to begin with. Firstly, Ms Collins, you're on the Music Festivals Appeal Panel as the head of Sound NSW. Is that correct?

EMILY COLLINS: Correct.

The CHAIR: I got some answers to questions on notice that I put in a little while ago that came back this week. This says that the appeals panel has met three times. Is that correct?

EMILY COLLINS: Correct.

The CHAIR: How many appeals have they considered in that time?

EMILY COLLINS: One application has been submitted, and that is still under review.

The CHAIR: When was the first meeting?

TAREK BARAKAT: I've got that, Ms Faehrmann if that would help. There was a meeting on 16 April, 11 June and 11 July.

The CHAIR: At those meetings, if there weren't applications to consider, were the meetings to work out the process?

EMILY COLLINS: Correct. It was looking at the establishment of the panel, going through the ministerial order and making sure that our role as the panel was clear, and getting advice about some of the definitions of what we were considering as part of the process.

The CHAIR: Why do you think that only one music festival has appealed? This is appealing the government charges, isn't it?

EMILY COLLINS: Correct.

The CHAIR: The requirements need to be that it's going to impact the viability of a festival. Are there reasons, from your perspective, Ms Collins, that you've only received one application?

EMILY COLLINS: I would say it's largely due to the time of year and the fact that festivals, in the lead-up to the summer sessions, are still getting their costings from government agencies.

The CHAIR: When were festivals notified—and how—that they could appeal to this panel?

TAREK BARAKAT: That's probably a question for me. The original ministerial order was published, I think, at the end of last year, which set the criteria for festivals to adhere to. From that point on, festivals could apply, and the Music Festival Roundtable was advised that at the last meeting. I can take on notice when exactly that was. But, as Ms Collins said, the first thing the panel did was consider that original ministerial order. We actually received some feedback from both the panel and industry about the criteria in that order. The Minister only recently published an updated order to reflect that feedback from industry and the panel. That has gone live only at the end of last week or the beginning of this week. Our website has now been updated and people have been communicated that that final order has now been published. I would expect, now that that information is available and everything is live on our website, that we might start to see more applications in the lead-up to the summer season.

The CHAIR: So the initial order was made at the end of last year?

TAREK BARAKAT: Yes.

The CHAIR: Can you remember the date, roughly?

CORRECTED

TAREK BARAKAT: I think it was December, but I can take on notice the exact date.

The CHAIR: There have been a fair few festivals in that time. You're saying that music festivals could have applied to have their government charges waived as soon as that order was made?

TAREK BARAKAT: Yes, that's right. But nothing was really communicated until such time as the panel had convened and gone through the things that Ms Collins described. Once that had happened, we took on the feedback from the panel and industry and updated that order, and the Minister republished it with that feedback taken on board. We've now made it more clear that things are ready to go. I think it was largely the fact that—yes, they could have applied once the order was published, but the panel was yet to develop terms of reference and understand the criteria and determine how it wants to assess applications. Now that that has all happened, we expect to see more applications come through.

The CHAIR: How are music festivals being notified that they can do that?

TAREK BARAKAT: Our website has a dedicated webpage which sets out all the information.

The CHAIR: When did that happen? When was that updated?

TAREK BARAKAT: The new ministerial order was only published on Tuesday, I think. Our website would have been updated just after that—either Tuesday or yesterday, possibly. I can take the exact date on notice.

The CHAIR: What were the changes in that new ministerial order compared to previously?

TAREK BARAKAT: Some of them were around being clear about when the panel must make a decision—making clear the panel needs to make a decision at least four weeks before an event—and removing the original requirement that a festival would need to demonstrate that, without the financial relief, it would be cancelled or significantly downsized. That was to take on feedback from industry that sometimes organisers won't cancel or downsize a festival; they might just take the financial hit. But that shouldn't be read as them not being in financial difficulty. It was things like that. I don't have the list of all the things that have changed, but that was the vibe of it.

The CHAIR: What is on the website in terms of "the payment of user charges would threaten the financial viability of the music festival"—that's current?

TAREK BARAKAT: It's what's on our website now. I've haven't got the webpage here. The criteria as outlined on our applying to the Music Festivals Appeal Panel webpage are current. They should reflect the amended criteria in the ministerial order.

The CHAIR: I have here that it was 13 December last year in terms of that regulation. There's no other regulation that has changed?

TAREK BARAKAT: From memory, the only change since the original order was published in December was that an amended order was published earlier this week to take on feedback from the panel itself and from industry.

The CHAIR: Is there any evidence that government charges have reduced since the music festival reforms passed the Parliament last year?

TAREK BARAKAT: I'll take that on notice, unless Ms Collins knows whether the costs have reduced. But I can say that there has been a significant reduction in the number of festivals who have been required to adhere to more stringent requirements. Since the Act came into effect on 27 September last year, we've had 59 festivals notify us of them going ahead. Only 11 of those have had to require an agreed health and medical plan and, of those 11, eight have had to require a law enforcement and safety schedule. That's a significant reduction to when we had the subject music festivals legislation in place. It has made a significant difference there.

The CHAIR: Just to check, I do have 12 festivals here on my question.

TAREK BARAKAT: My understanding—I'll correct this if I'm wrong—is that there were 12 festivals that notified us, but only 11 went ahead. I don't know why the—

The CHAIR: It does say 12 festivals were required to have an agreed health and medical plan.

TAREK BARAKAT: One of those didn't go ahead, is my understanding.

The CHAIR: Which one was that?

TAREK BARAKAT: I don't know, but I can take that on notice.

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The CHAIR: I've probably got it here somewhere. Can I ask about the conditions, then. This is in relation to the changes, so having to submit a schedule to the police and the police coming back with conditions. The secretary can agree to approve it or not with or without changes. The eight that came back, the data I have is that they were all approved with changes—for example, Midnight Mafia, Meltdown, Hyperdome Sydney 2025. Could you give me an example of some of the conditions the police were wanting that were then changed by the secretary?

TAREK BARAKAT: To be clear, the secretary delegated to me, so it's me making the decision. I can take on notice the specifics, but it was things like the police asking for things to be attached to the schedule that were actually dealt with via, say, a liquor licence or another form of licence that the festival would already have in place. Our response was these documents—I think one of them was a pyrotechnics certificate that we'd dealt with through SafeWork. There's no need for the festival to also supply that as part of a law enforcement and safety schedule because they're already providing it through the SafeWork mechanism.

The CHAIR: I might get a bit more of that on notice, but that's good to know. I'll also note that the Music Festival Roundtable was provided an update—this is in March. The meeting minutes provide an update about the internal review of user-pays arrangements for police and ambulance. What is that review?

TAREK BARAKAT: The police review process is run by police. Health runs the ambulance review process. They are internal to those agencies. It's not something we're a part of. It's not data that we hold. But, effectively, separate to the centralised Music Festivals Appeals Panel, organisers can appeal to the police internally if they think the user-pays charges are unreasonable, and the Commissioner of Police, delegated to somewhere else in the police, will make a decision. The same goes for ambulance charges. The organiser can appeal through the secretary of Health to make a determination as to whether or not the charges are reasonable.

The CHAIR: That does not mean that there's actually a formal review of the entire user-pays arrangements; it's just an update?

TAREK BARAKAT: There may well be. This was an explanation from police about the process for festival organisers to appeal police costs, and from Health about the festival organisers appealing health costs.

The CHAIR: It doesn't seem as though up until today, 28 August, there's anything to shed light yet, since music festival reforms happened last year, on whether any of the music festivals have actually seen a reduction in what they've had to pay government.

TAREK BARAKAT: I don't have the information about whether the costs have reduced, but I can say that the feedback the Minister spoke about—the feedback I've received from the sector—is that the system is working significantly better. Those figures that I just talked you through around the number of festivals having to supply an agreed health and medical plan has reduced significantly over the last 12 months.

The CHAIR: In terms of paperwork.

TAREK BARAKAT: Yes.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: Mr Murray, I might come back to the dangerous goods vehicle and the Port Botany issue we were talking about this morning. Given that, for context, there is a Federal law that requires dangerous goods vehicles not to be left unattended, why were we tolerating this situation—for three years now—where drivers have been fined by councils for parking outside the port while simultaneously they're banned from resting inside it, which seems to be the logical option?

JOSH MURRAY: We have sought an update and Ms Mares has some additional information for you.

TRUDI MARES: Mr Banasiak, I just want to check, in relation to this, where the parking issue is? But then, secondly, was this about dangerous goods not being able to stop in that truck parking bay inside the port? I just want to give you the right answer.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: I guess there are several components. Three years ago there was some incompetence by the ports, which led to the ports being gridlocked with trucks, which then led to the kneejerk reaction to ban trucks from parking in there, which had the obviously unintended consequences of dangerous goods trucks having to try to find places on the side streets to park and rest. I know there is a solution of a transport marshalling area, or TMA, but I think the original DA of that TMA said no dangerous goods.

TRUDI MARES: That's right.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: Obviously, there are a couple of problems there—or a couple of questions. Where are we at with the new DA? To my understanding, it has taken three years to progress that DA.

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TRUDI MARES: That's what I do have an update on. Thank you. I just wanted to make sure that I was getting the right information for you. I can't comment on the council compliance work, but I know that we are progressing that DA work as a matter of priority. I've checked in with the freight team in the break. We'll be looking at submitting that as soon as it's finished, which will be very soon. I can give you an exact time frame, if you like.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: You can, or you—

TRUDI MARES: I'll come back to you with an exact time frame. Yes, that is being progressed as a priority—that adjustment for the truck marshalling area.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: Can you help me understand why it is taking so long to progress that DA?

TRUDI MARES: I was unaware of the three years. I just got the update on the fact we were getting that work completed. I'm not quite sure what the delay has been.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: Is it Transport for NSW that is doing it, or NSW Ports? The information that was given to me was that you guys outsourced it to NSW Ports to do the DA.

TRUDI MARES: We have taken it.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: You'll come back to me with a timeline in terms of when that is to be submitted?

TRUDI MARES: Yes, I'll follow that up.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: I go to you, Mr Murray, about the Transport for NSW campaign on social media and at the stations about appropriate commuter behaviour regarding respect and kindness. Is there a budget attached to this social media campaign and announcements over the train stations?

JOSH MURRAY: There is a budget attached to it. I'd have to take on notice the exact number around that. We do obviously run a number of internal campaigns around respect at Transport. We also run these commuter campaigns to harness the issues around antisocial behaviour, and this one emanated from a lot of work we were doing with our staff, with the unions, and also some additional research into how we start to cut through. Certainly the staff have been very keen to put forward that campaigns are not enough—that real action is required. But the research, I'm advised, is also that you have to start with the small elements as well, and reminding people of all of our commitments when we're travelling on the public transport network goes a long way to creating the whole in terms of passenger and staff behaviours. This is just one of those elements. We have been open with our workforce and the unions about our intent in this area. But, yes, there is a campaign running at the moment to highlight passenger behaviours.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: The comments on your social media page are interesting to say the least. How are you going to measure the success of this social media campaign?

JOSH MURRAY: We measure all the behaviour that impacts our staff on the network, and we meet regularly across the operating team as to where there are risks against our staff that are seen. Obviously, elements—

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: Is risk to staff one of the key metrics you'll use, in terms of how often staff feel threatened or are actually threatened when they come across these behaviours?

JOSH MURRAY: Yes, that is absolutely something that is in firm visibility for the whole Transport team. We look very carefully at the impacts on our staff of antisocial behaviour. Obviously, we run a network that operates around the clock—if not in services, but cleaning, maintenance, access to stations and interchanges. We deal with the police in terms of the public transport command, but we also want to know what more we can be doing to create safe spaces around those stations, not just for our staff but for the travelling public.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: Are there any other metrics you're going to be using, other than feedback from your own staff?

JOSH MURRAY: We have a lot of intelligence on the number of reports of either antisocial behaviour or other crimes that take place on or around the network. We have malicious damage elements as well, and we have our twice-yearly passenger satisfaction surveys, which highlight safety and security as one of the key questions.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: Just picking up on the customer satisfaction surveys, why has the campaign so far avoided tackling one of the biggest commuter irritations that has been put to me, which is the use

CORRECTED

of mobile phones and other devices without headphones and on loudspeaker? Why has the social media campaign avoided that so far?

JOSH MURRAY: I could be wrong, Mr Banasiak, but I think that is one of the parts of the campaign. Perhaps it's rolling out in different themes.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: Okay, I just haven't seen it yet. Is there any specific messaging targeted toward schoolchildren on public transport? Obviously, often that can be a source of conflict between schoolchildren and more adult commuters. I've seen it myself.

JOSH MURRAY: These messages are designed to appeal to a broad range of travellers. One of them in particular relates to personal belongings or bags on seats, which is another significant complaint that not only interrupts our staff while they're trying to go about running the public transport network, but it can escalate into much bigger arguments on a crowded train or a bus. That's why that is one of those areas, and it does impact on schoolchildren travel.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: Sure. But there is nothing specifically targeting schoolchildren commuters on the train. It's just more general, around behaviours.

JOSH MURRAY: Yes, this initial phase of the program is to pick up the minimum standards around commuter behaviour, to remind people of the expectation and also to start a conversation with the community that everyone has a role to play, before we get up into the more serious police-led elements of antisocial behaviour or violent crimes.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: You said that your staff are saying social awareness campaigns are great, but we need more. When will we start to see an escalation towards some of that more frontline compliance?

JOSH MURRAY: We're doing that work as well at the moment. We are looking at, in particular—and this will come to fruition shortly; it is in the final design and training phases—some more enforcement around our bus driver safety. That's one area that we see as a key element, so we are looking at that with the bus industry at the moment.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: Sticking with trains, though, how many compliance—what are they called now?

JOSH MURRAY: Transport officers.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: How many transport officers do we have on our system at the moment?

JOSH MURRAY: I might ask Mr Longland to assist me on that.

MATT LONGLAND: Thank you, Mr Murray. While I check on that figure, just on the campaign on the rail network specifically, it has four key areas that we're focusing on: one is passengers blocking the door and the vestibule areas; the second one is feet and objects on seats that prevent that seat from being used by other passengers; one is loud music—as you mentioned, people that are either talking on their phones or playing music loudly; and the fourth one, which is probably the most important from our perspective, is the use of respectful language and behaviour when interacting with our frontline staff. So those themes are, as the secretary highlighted, really about the basic foundational, respectful behaviour areas that I think have been picked up in feedback surveys.

In terms of the teams that we've got on the network, the number of transport officers I'll have to get you on notice. It's around 250 that we have. Their primary job is fare compliance, so checking Opal cards, issuing warnings and infringements. They also do a number of activities, to pick up your issue, around the behaviour of school students particularly. I've been out in the past few weeks with that team in Western Sydney at a number of stations, interacting with school students, particularly around payment of fares and behaviour standards that are expected whilst they're on the platform but also while they're on the train.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: But that's only on rail lines. It's not on buses as well, is it?

MATT LONGLAND: The transport officers can move between modes. They do operations on ferries, on light rail and on buses. But primarily they're employed by Sydney Trains and their focus—probably about 50 per cent of their time—would be spent on trains.

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: I just have a quick follow-up question for Mr Barakat, and possibly Ms Collins, about the definition of live music venues. Obviously, you've both provided me with different ways that we might categorise those businesses. Is there a formal definition that you're using for live music venues?

CORRECTED

TAREK BARAKAT: I think there's one in the legislation. I'd just have to confirm that on notice for you. But, yes, there is, in order for us to determine whether or not they meet criteria to be able to access the incentives that I spoke about earlier.

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: Is that the definition that you've used in the report?

EMILY COLLINS: In the report there are several definitions because there are several different categories, and there is alignment with some parts of the incentive scheme. But it's not exactly aligned.

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: Are there plans to align those? It seems a little bit confusing.

EMILY COLLINS: I'm glad you asked because, yes, there is.

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: Good.

EMILY COLLINS: We're actually undertaking a piece of work to get better alignment between the definitions, noting that the incentive program was established before Sound NSW came into existence and there wasn't a better mechanism for understanding live music venues across the State and the different offerings they have. The next step is we're looking—and this was a commitment in the 10-year Contemporary Music Strategy—to undertake a venue accreditation program, which will step out the definitions for each type of venue and then how it interrelates with the incentive program run by Hospitality and Racing.

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: Fabulous.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Ms Simpson, have you met with Mr Fels?

RACHEL SIMPSON: I've had a number of meetings with Professor Fels over the course of the Independent Toll Review and the subsequent 12 months.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Does he meet with you or report to you now?

RACHEL SIMPSON: He doesn't report to me. As the chief executive explained, he is engaged by Transport primarily as an adviser to government on the implementation of toll reform.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: You don't report to him, he doesn't report to you and you don't meet regularly anymore.

RACHEL SIMPSON: He is engaged to provide advice as required on an ad hoc basis.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: With respect, that was not my question. It was about his meeting with you. Does that occur?

RACHEL SIMPSON: It's not a regular scheduled meeting, no.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Ms Drover, as of today what is NSW Motorways actually doing?

CAMILLA DROVER: We are responsible for the State-owned tolling assets—so the Sydney Harbour Bridge and the Sydney Harbour Tunnel. Eventually, the Western Harbour Tunnel and the M6 will come into NSW Motorways. We are also progressing the direct deal with the concessionaires, and we are driving the customer reforms as well. The E-Toll business is currently still technically residing within Transport for NSW, but that will transition into the motorway entity. In terms of way of working and how we're practically functioning, they're essentially now a part of NSW Motorways. That's the E-Toll retail business.

The CHAIR: Mr Rodrigues, recently there was a story in *The Sydney Morning Herald* regarding the Inner West Council revitalising their night-life as part of six new special entertainment precincts. Some of the business owners that were interviewed talked about needing much more than just late opening hours. The owner of Lazybones Lounge said that extended licences weren't the key to fixing hospitality issues. He said, "I think they're looking down the wrong pond", and that one of the main issues is the cost of living impacting the ability of people to come out and eat, drink and what have you. What else are you looking at in terms of assisting those businesses, bringing people out? A couple of businesses quoted in this story were basically saying that a lot is going into late-night licences and there's no point in staying open because people aren't coming out.

MICHAEL RODRIGUES: Thanks for the question. To frame it, our role has expanded across the State, as you know. There is also the recent NTIA report, which you may have also seen. It focused very specifically on 13 precincts in the City of Sydney and inner west. In analysing that and comparing it with data in other parts of Greater Sydney and across the State, there are different patterns emerging. It's a broad statement but these traditional going-out areas—the inner city piece—are under unique pressures compared to other areas. For example, at the same time that there are those challenges in the inner city, places like Burwood and Parramatta

CORRECTED

North are up 5 per cent, year on year, and Chatswood East's up 18 per cent. The State's design of systems included late-night incentives and they will have applicability to different businesses, depending on the circumstances.

I think it is a complicated question in terms of how you solve for it. The vibrancy reform agenda, broadly speaking, is about flexibility, as you know, but the impact of cost of living is really affecting the inner city areas more. Partly, it's also the combination of affordability of housing. If you start looking at demographics of who's using the areas, you see that traditional areas are thinning out of audience. It is something that we continue to work on. There's no direct funding relief per se, as we saw in the pandemic. That would be a matter for government. I think the special entertainment precinct work has value. You can see that in the Enmore Road area. Arguably it has been the longest standing. It's the most established, and it's probably quite unique in and of itself—I recognise that. Partly I don't know that necessarily it will have the same impact in all those six or seven other areas. It's a combination of factors.

The CHAIR: We can come back with more things to push that a bit further. We will now break for afternoon tea. We will be back at 3.45 p.m.

(Short adjournment)

The CHAIR: Welcome back. Before we kick off I will let go a few of the officials who we don't require anymore: Ms Hoang, Ms Webb and Ms Boyd, and I've already chatted with Ms Herron. Thank you.

(Brenda Hoang, Sally Webb, Kate Boyd and Louise Herron withdrew.)

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Can I follow up on the detail that was going to be provided on the 921 buses? Do we have the details of those—the company that's delivering them, the amount and the order date?

JOSH MURRAY: Mr Collins would like to join the table and give that detail.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: We might come back to that, while he's coming forward. Ms Drover, if I can come back to you on motorways, if I may—a *Sweet Disposition* with motorways. Where is the recruitment for a customer advocate up to?

CAMILLA DROVER: We have identified a customer advocate that will start on 8 September. That's an interim arrangement. We are also advertising the permanent position. The person we've identified is well qualified for the position. She will start shortly while, in parallel, given the importance of the role, we're going to put out in the open market as well.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: We've got an interim, and then the recruitment will be ongoing. It's taken—

CAMILLA DROVER: We're very conscious that our recruitment process can take some months, particularly if we get an external candidate in an existing position, so we want to get going with that role. Hence why we've identified a really well credentialed candidate to start that.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: When did it go out for recruitment?

CAMILLA DROVER: There was a process across government initially, but we are going out for external recruitment probably next week.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: So it has only gone out so far internally.

CAMILLA DROVER: It's gone out across government, so beyond Transport for NSW. We'll put it in the open market. We're just finalising the advertisement for the ad, and then it will go.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: I think Mr Fels recommended over 18 months ago for that to occur. What's been the delay?

CAMILLA DROVER: It was one of the first priorities of the entity, and that's why we sought a candidate fairly quickly. It's one of the first things we did when the entity was stood up. We secured an initial customer advocate a couple of weeks ago. It was pretty quick, given it was only stood up on 1 July. Within about a month we had a customer advocate identified. But we are going to also, in parallel, recruit the position in the open market as well.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: That's likely to start to be advertised next week?

CAMILLA DROVER: No, it will go to the open market. It'll be—

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: How long will that take?

CORRECTED

CAMILLA DROVER: I would have to confirm exactly how long that process will take. The individual that is starting on an interim basis, she may well be the successful candidate. I don't know. We need to go to the open market and test it.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Maybe Kieran Ash can apply. When will the independent tolling ombudsman be appointed?

CAMILLA DROVER: We are looking to have that in place from early next year—from the start of 2026.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: For a person to be independent, my understanding is it requires legislation. Will it still require legislation?

CAMILLA DROVER: Yes, that's my understanding.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: When is it anticipated that might be introduced?

CAMILLA DROVER: It'll be introduced later this year in support of that stand up for early next year.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Following that legislation and that person being independent—the legislation being introduced and presumably passing, how long do you anticipate that all of that will take before the independent tolling ombudsperson will be appointed?

CAMILLA DROVER: The legislation is already in place, and we're just doing the final measures to actually stand that up for 1 January next year.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: It seems to me, essentially, toll reform is going pretty slowly. We're standing up lots of entities, but we don't seem to have progressed the actual toll reform. Is that an unfair way to phrase it? There have been lots of bureaucratic changes and mechanical changes. There doesn't seem to have been actual toll reform progressed.

CAMILLA DROVER: No, I think the work that was commenced over a year ago in general customer reform and toll reform continues. But, in parallel to that, the Government has stood up this new entity, which is NSW Motorways, which takes that work forward and continues that work. The other benefit of it is that it does respond to many of the recommendations of the ITR, but it also will be the long-term owner of the Government's toll road assets.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: I feel like, with toll reform, am I ever going to see its face again? In relation to the consultants, what were BDO used for?

CAMILLA DROVER: My understanding is that BDO were engaged to do strategic traffic modelling, and that's to provide additional capacity to the in-house Transport for NSW team, and that continues. They also provided some services around strategic assessment and interpretation of that modelling work.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Of traffic modelling?

CAMILLA DROVER: Yes.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: The definition among other contracts on the tender analysis was to analyse and define a pricing structure for the tolling review program.

CAMILLA DROVER: Yes, that's correct. They did both traffic modelling and then they did that piece of work that you correctly described.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: And that piece of work is completed?

CAMILLA DROVER: I think there is some of that work that continues, and that's more about the interpretation of the traffic modelling results.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: To define the pricing structure?

CAMILLA DROVER: To inform impacts across the network and to inform pricing impacts, yes.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Why was an additional pricing structure required if Allan Fels, in the toll review published by the Government, already had a pricing structure?

CAMILLA DROVER: The Independent Toll Review made recommendations for broad network reform, but that needed to be interpreted and developed in terms of what the Government goes forward with. Of course, there are a number of options, too, that the Government will be considering.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: But we've started again on toll reform, haven't we?

CORRECTED

CAMILLA DROVER: No, we're continuing—

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: We've got a new structure. We've had an independent review, and it's had recommendations. Now we're reviewing the recommendations to make new recommendations.

CAMILLA DROVER: I wouldn't categorise it as that at all.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: There are two options in the Fels report. Deloitte were paid \$165,000 to engage expert advisory services for toll reform, analysis, policy and implementation. What did they do, and what was the specific outcome of the funding to them?

CAMILLA DROVER: That was before my time at NSW Motorways. I believe they assisted with some—

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: I'm just a bit *Thunderstruck* by all the consultants involved here and the amount of money that's been spent for no outcome in the entirety of toll reform.

CAMILLA DROVER: We are making good progress, Ms Ward. I think the degree of complexity that we're dealing with—these are long-term contracts, some of which have been in place for decades. There are over 10 concession agreements right across the network. They've all got different pricing regimes. We've got different equity investors in each of those toll roads. It's a very complex matter to address and reform.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Can I ask you on notice then to indicate what Deloitte did and what was the specific outcome of their funding?

CAMILLA DROVER: Yes, unless Ms Simpson can help me.

RACHEL SIMPSON: I can answer that now, Ms Ward, if that would be of assistance.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Sure.

RACHEL SIMPSON: Deloitte were engaged as part of the budget process to provide additional capacity to Transport to prepare materials to support Transport's budget bids to support toll reform.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Yes. Expert advisory services for toll reform analysis, policy and implementation. But I'm wanting to have specifics on what they did and what was the specific outcome of the funding. Can you take that on notice, please?

RACHEL SIMPSON: Yes.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: What were P.I. Research Pty. Ltd. paid \$165,000 to complete?

RACHEL SIMPSON: P.I. Research is David Cousins. David Cousins was one of the independent toll reviewers. In the same vein as Professor Fels, he's been engaged to provide ad hoc advice to government regarding the implementation of toll reforms.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Does he report to you or to Ms Drover?

RACHEL SIMPSON: He doesn't report to us.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Can I invite you to take on notice what Mr Cousins or P.I. Research Pty. Ltd. did and what was the specific outcome of that \$165,000 of funds?

RACHEL SIMPSON: It's still ongoing. Happy to take on notice the service he's providing.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: I'm interested in what they actually did. Just for Hansard, are you able to speak rather than nod?

RACHEL SIMPSON: I'll take that on notice.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Thank you very much. What did Jacobs Group (Australia) do to be paid \$388,850 for the toll review?

RACHEL SIMPSON: Jacobs provided some additional modelling capacity but also undertook a peer review of the modelling that was done as part of the Independent Toll Review to ensure that the modelling that was undertaken and the modelling that is continuing to be undertaken by Transport is of an investment grade to support the direct deal.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: These days it seems that there's just review after review of peer review of review and then a new review of a new consultant to do a review of the previous consultant's review. Can I ask you to take on notice in relation to Jacobs Group (Australia) what was the specific work they did, and what was the outcome of that funding?

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RACHEL SIMPSON: Happy to take that on notice. Jacobs provided some advice to Transport with regards to the model that is used, and that advice has informed the further work to refine the model that's being used to do the traffic modelling to support the direct deal.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: So they reviewed Clarity Consult's modelling?

RACHEL SIMPSON: No. If I can clarify, the modelling for tolling reform is being done in house by Transport for NSW. It is augmented with some additional capacity from VDO. But it's very important that we get peer review to make sure that the modelling—the inputs, the way the model is used and its outputs—is appropriate, particularly given if it's going to be the basis of a direct deal.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: I invite you to put that in the answer on notice. You're the voice, so put through the ideas that is the thinking behind that. But the specifics would be helpful. The Government rebadged the More Trains, More Services program to become the Rail Service Improvement Program. In relation to that digitisation of signalling on those South Coast lines—T4, T8 and South Coast—when will South Coast commuters see a service every 15 minutes in the peak, and every 30 minutes in the off-peak between Wollongong and the Sydney CBD? Or has the Government abandoned this uplift?

MATT LONGLAND: Thank you, Ms Ward. I'm happy to respond to that question. Just before I do, I wanted to follow up on a question we took on notice this morning.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: We can do that afterwards. Thank you. If I can just get to this question.

MATT LONGLAND: Digital Systems is currently in testing phase. I think you asked about where the project was at. We are testing the technology on track between Cronulla and Sutherland, system integration testing. We're also in the process of preparing for system integration testing on the section between Bondi Junction and Erskineville, so two ends of the T4 line. That project is progressing. It's being delivered by Transport, but very closely working with our team in Sydney Trains. In relation to the timetable on the T4 and the South Coast line, we are preparing for a timetable upgrade in terms of the integration of the new intercity fleet onto the South Coast. That will involve some changes to the way that that line operates, particularly the longer trains that will no longer be able to service Bondi Junction. That is planned for calendar year 2026, so next year. That will include a number of improvements on the South Coast. We're working through the final details at the moment and engaging with local stakeholders around some of that. We'll have further details as we get closer to implementation.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Thank you, and thank you for proactively offering a date. It's very helpful. It saves me having to ask. But I'm just interested in when that would translate to seeing a service every 15 minutes. Given the engagement with stakeholders, I'm pretty sure I can save you the money and time and say that they want more regular services, given they have very unreliable services at the moment compared to the other unreliability, if I can put that respectfully. When will they see that service every 15 minutes in the peak?

MATT LONGLAND: I would need to take that on notice and have a look at the detail around the timetable options. I wouldn't want to commit to a date in terms of specifics around individual lines. What I can say is that, in relation to reliability, clearly we are doing work across the whole network and we are making progress in improving reliability, specifically on the South Coast. That involves maintenance. It also involves capital investment in a number of priority locations on the South Coast, and then, ultimately, the implementation of the new fleet into service. Those works combined will provide a significant uplift in the reliability of that line.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Okay, we hope so, and we wish you well in that endeavour. When will T4 commuters see a 30 per cent increase in peak services?

MATT LONGLAND: Again, in relation to the T4, that will be integrated with the South Coast in the improvements to the timetable that we're currently working through. I'm happy to take that on notice, similar to the South Coast, and we can provide some further details on that work that's ongoing.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Just for clarity, has the Government committed to that uplift or has the Government abandoned that uplift?

MATT LONGLAND: I'm not in a position to speak on behalf of the Government in terms of their commitments. What I can say is we're working on improvements on the T4 and the South Coast as an integrated package of timetable improvements. That work will be delivered in 2026.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Does the improvement include a target of a 30 per cent increase in peak services?

MATT LONGLAND: Again, if you're comfortable, I'll take that on notice in relation to the earlier question about the South Coast, and we'll see what detail we can provide.

CORRECTED

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: All right. I would have thought it's relatively obvious, though. There must be, as part of that improvement, some targets to reach. It wouldn't be controversial to say what those targets are or what the aim is for commuters.

MATT LONGLAND: I guess there's a number of aims. The primary one is about reliability. We talked about that earlier. Improving on-time running, improving capacity, bringing the new intercity fleet into service and also, where we can, looking at the frequency of services.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: You might take this on notice also. When will T8 commuters see an 80 per cent increase at airport stations? Or has the Government abandoned that uplift?

MATT LONGLAND: The T8 line was included in the timetable improvements that we delivered in October of 2024. They were quite successful in terms of the implementation of those services. There will be additional T8 changes in relation to the works we're doing on the T4. That'll be included in the one package.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: If you might include that detail in your answer on notice also just because I have three minutes left. In 2023 it was reported that 10.3 million people passed through Bondi Junction and the infrastructure capacity was at high capacity. Has anything changed?

MATT LONGLAND: The patronage changes year on year depending on the growth that we see across the network. We have seen growth in overall patronage on the Sydney Trains network in the last full financial year.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: I'm just interested in this Bondi Junction part.

MATT LONGLAND: I'd need to take that on notice in terms of the station boardings at Bondi Junction. What I can say in relation to Woollahra is that the average loads on the T4 services, particularly in the peak periods, have sufficient capacity for an additional station at Woollahra, so there's plenty of spare capacity.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: But that wasn't my question, with respect. It was reported at 10.3 million and the infrastructure capacity was at a high. My question was has anything changed. Perhaps you might take that part on notice.

MATT LONGLAND: The rail interchange, not the bus? Just rail boardings?

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Yes.

MATT LONGLAND: Got it. Thank you.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Can you guarantee today that the train will continue to run to Bondi Junction while this station is being built?

MATT LONGLAND: What I can say about the Woollahra project is that it has been planned to be undertaken during weekend possessions, so that would allow train services to continue to service the Bondi Junction line. We do undertake a regular program of track work across weekends. We're doing a lot of work on the T4 line at the moment—as I mentioned earlier—on signalling upgrades, particularly on weekends.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Just noting that more than 18,000 people tap on every day, I think the community is interested to know—as are we—does Transport intend to excavate any of the surrounding land to build the station?

JOSH MURRAY: At the moment that is the work that is ongoing. We have the indicative proposal around that. We are now underway with the design and development that will be required to go into the fast-track business case. But all of those elements about station access—as well as the actual platform and shelter that will be required—and disability accessibility will need to be factored into that proposal to meet modern standards. But we are confident, given the number of stations that have been upgraded or built across the 160 or so stations on the Sydney Trains network, that we have different models that can be used to expedite that construction.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Has Transport got any information around how the properties adjacent to the site would be affected? Will they be compulsorily acquired or can you rule that out today for residents?

JOSH MURRAY: This will all be part of the planning work that now goes on into the site and what's required.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: If you can't rule that out today, then when can they expect to know?

JOSH MURRAY: I'll take that on notice in terms of the timelines, but our first priority is to develop the abridged business case so that we can then put forward a construction plan.

CORRECTED

The CHAIR: Ms Collins, who was involved in determining the criteria for the Contemporary Music Festival Viability Fund?

EMILY COLLINS: The criteria was developed by Sound NSW.

The CHAIR: When was it developed?

EMILY COLLINS: In the lead-up to the launch of the program. Over several weeks—actually, probably several months—we tried out different opportunities or tested different models, worked out who it might include or exclude, and then settled on the final criteria.

The CHAIR: Are you saying that's an internal process—

EMILY COLLINS: Correct.

The CHAIR: —in terms of assessing the different criteria?

EMILY COLLINS: Or just understanding what the ambition of the program was, and trying to make sure that the criteria fit that ambition.

The CHAIR: Did you have discussions with the Sound NSW advisory board or anybody outside the organisation—for example, the Australian Festival Association?

EMILY COLLINS: No. At the time, the board wasn't consulted about the development of that program. We'd met with festival organisers in the 18 months preceding the launch of that program, but no-one was consulted specifically about the detail of it.

The CHAIR: One of the eligibility criteria, for example, was that the money can't go to a hallmark event. Why is that?

EMILY COLLINS: My understanding was that hallmark events were already having their fees reduced by government as part of the categorisation of hallmark, but that's not managed by Sound NSW—the hallmark status—so it was considered that they were already getting support.

The CHAIR: In terms of the eligibility criteria for part-Australian owned, how did you work out that part-Australian owned is anything up to 99 per cent? I assume this is what Sound NSW is saying.

EMILY COLLINS: That was one of the criteria. We looked at a range of festivals, some of which didn't end up applying, and the size of those festivals. We decided that part of the intention of the policy and the program was to keep major music festivals—give them confidence to proceed over that summer festival period. So, yes, we decided that some part-international ownership was eligible. There's a reason behind that, one being that we wanted to leverage and maximise international investment in the New South Wales music industry, whilst also maintaining a balanced partnership with Australian businesses, which is why we excluded 100 per cent international ownership.

The CHAIR: So investment in the New South Wales music industry is basically taxpayers' money going towards companies that are majority owned by international companies. That's okay?

EMILY COLLINS: At the time of funding, of the five festivals that received funding through the 2024-25 financial year, three of them were 100 per cent Australian owned. One of them was 49 per cent Australian owned, and the other was 62.4 per cent Australian.

The CHAIR: So, technically, in terms of part-Australian, part-international owned, that means that majority-Australian ownership is 51 per cent.

EMILY COLLINS: That's how I would interpret majority owned, but that wasn't a criteria.

The CHAIR: How many applications were received? I understand that the festival fund opened, according to a Sound NSW Instagram post, on 18 September?

EMILY COLLINS: I believe it was around that date, yes.

The CHAIR: Do you have a record of how many applications were received per month, for example?

EMILY COLLINS: Not per month but, in total, we received five applications.

The CHAIR: How were the festivals selected, then? Who was on the panel to select them?

EMILY COLLINS: The process for assessment was that applications were received. They would then go to an independent financial assessment process where they would look at the financials of the festival and also

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the business structures and ownership structures. Then the panel would get an independent report and make recommendations on the funding.

The CHAIR: Who assessed that, when you say "an independent report"? Who produced that?

EMILY COLLINS: Ernst and Young.

The CHAIR: So Ernst and Young then provided it to a panel. Who was on the panel?

EMILY COLLINS: It was New South Wales government representatives.

The CHAIR: Who were they?

EMILY COLLINS: I don't have the names in front of me, but I believe there were representatives from Destination NSW, Sound NSW and potentially Create NSW, but I'd have to take that on notice and confirm for you.

The CHAIR: The turnaround, then, for Listen Out—the applications opened and the public was notified on 18 September.

EMILY COLLINS: Correct.

The CHAIR: So, in that time, Ernst and Young received some application, had a look at it in terms of financial viability, got it back to a panel of government representatives, all in time for Listen Out to be given half a million dollars of taxpayers' money—or did they know they were going to get it because the eligibility criteria was pretty much set up to support them?

EMILY COLLINS: No. The conditions of the grant were that they had to be submitted up to the day of the festival. There were delays in the development announcement of the program. Their festivals still, to the current criteria, can apply up to the day of their festival, which means that the assessment from the independent financial review happens after. Listen Out were not notified as to whether they received the funds before their festival.

The CHAIR: What about the other festivals? Five festivals applied.

EMILY COLLINS: Correct.

The CHAIR: Earlier you said that the eligibility criteria, in terms of whether some of the festivals could have some kind of international ownership, was based around looking at what festivals were out there, essentially. Ms Collins, the Contemporary Music Festival Viability Fund eligibility criteria for existing festivals seemed to have been written to support those big festivals, in particular individual festivals.

EMILY COLLINS: It was written with a view that there were several festivals who, on paper, could have met the eligibility criteria, not the assessment criteria necessarily. There were festivals that didn't apply to the fund, because they weren't in the financial need. I think it's important to note that—

The CHAIR: Who were they?

EMILY COLLINS: Who are they?

The CHAIR: Who were the festivals that meet this criteria that didn't apply?

EMILY COLLINS: A Laneway Festival, for example.

The CHAIR: Over 15,000—that's one?

EMILY COLLINS: Yes.

The CHAIR: Any others?

EMILY COLLINS: I do believe there's one other, but I can't recall the name off the top of my head. I'm happy to take that on notice and come back to you.

The CHAIR: With the discussion of this Contemporary Music Festival Viability Fund, it would be fair to say that this was talked about between Sound NSW, the Minister, Australian Festival Association, and festivals for quite some time—around the need to establish this fund?

EMILY COLLINS: There had been calls from the industry for many months—in fact, over a year—for the need for support. I think it's been well discussed here at estimates, about the financial position of festivals and the challenges that sector has been facing. So, yes, there had been many conversations over quite a long period of time.

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The CHAIR: The Australian Festival Association lobbied for the fund. Indeed, they celebrated when it was announced, including the managing director and the chair, who owns Fuzzy, which runs Listen Out and Field Day. What you're saying here is that the eligibility criteria for that fund were tailored specifically to support those big festivals. In terms of that amount of money, they were almost guaranteed to get it, weren't they? Two festivals, a million dollars—thanks very much, Minister.

EMILY COLLINS: No, because they still had to meet the assessment criteria. They had to go through a rigorous process of providing their financial position. It's really important to note that the festivals who received this fund are festivals that did not make a profit. In order to get the \$500,000 investment, they did not make a profit. There were festivals who didn't apply. We put \$3 million aside for the fund. Not the entire fund was utilised in the first year, because some festivals did much better than expected.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: Mr Murray, who can I speak to about the zero-emission bus trial in Tweed Heads? Is that Mr Collins?

JOSH MURRAY: It is, yes.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: Mr Collins, the press release at the end of July stated that there was 93 per cent passenger satisfaction figures collected. What was the sample size and methodology used to measure that?

HOWARD COLLINS: I'll take the details on notice, but in usual customer satisfaction it's making sure we have a sample size—normally over 200 gives you the standard deviation of five to 10 per cent. But I'll check to ensure that it was done. There was overwhelming feedback, both anecdotal and through the survey, of the major benefits of ZEB buses: the quietness, smoother ride, modern vehicle—they are a few. But I'll get the details to give you—

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: How was the survey administered? Was it administered at the time of the trip or was it sent to them afterwards?

HOWARD COLLINS: I think there was online. There may have been some feedback given directly, but I believe it was online. Let me check the details to give you the accurate facts.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: Beyond the obvious emissions savings and satisfaction, what other things were noted during the trial? Were there any challenges noted, like maintenance, downtime, any failures to charge, any differences in performance during different weather events et cetera? Was any of that observed in the trial?

HOWARD COLLINS: I do not believe so. In fact, even the people who are a little bit less supportive of electric vehicles were quite surprised by the performance characteristics, even in those regional conditions, and the reliability of the vehicles. Certainly the industry has been quite supportive of the regional trial, and we continue to trial those vehicles now.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: What other areas are you trialling them in besides Tweed Heads?

HOWARD COLLINS: There's 16 vehicles overall. We've had both hydrogen and zero-emission vehicles down in Wollongong. Obviously, we're looking across the States to ensure that these vehicles are capable of dealing with all conditions.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: Do you have any metrics around running costs on these trial buses compared to the more traditional buses—like fuel, maintenance et cetera?

HOWARD COLLINS: Again, not on the details of the trial—that may be possible. I think overall we're seeing a significant reduction in cost in two areas. One is the equivalent fuel costs, because one of the great things we can do is procure electricity in bulk, because we will be sharing those costs in the future and, certainly going forward, with Sydney Trains, Sydney Metro and light rail. The other thing is the actual cost—far less moving parts compared with an internal combustion engine. We're seeing reliability and general maintenance reduced on electric vehicles.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: Are you able to, on notice, come back with any quantitative figures around that?

HOWARD COLLINS: We'll see what we've got as an industry. Obviously, in other countries they're about 10 years ahead of us. They've certainly got a lot of data which is publicly available on the comparison of costs, diesel versus zero-emission vehicles.

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The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: The press release obviously talks about the trial being proof of concept, and we can now get on and do it with all the buses across the State. Have we got any estimated capital or operational costs, in terms of that transition to a full electric regional bus fleet?

HOWARD COLLINS: As stated, I think publicly, the conversion across to a zero-emission fleet in the regional context is until 2047, if I remember rightly. There will be many diesels out there for many years to come—hopefully the more modern ones, which have low-emission Euro 6 engines. I think, over time, already battery technology is proving that range improvements—we've seen this in the car industry, but already bus vehicles are now getting range improvements and in reliability issues as more and more of these things are either manufactured locally or brought in from other countries.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: Obviously, Tweed Heads is pretty flat. Are we testing these buses in other areas that have harsher conditions, in terms of strain on batteries and power? Somewhere like the Blue Mountains?

HOWARD COLLINS: Yes.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: Or the Snowy Mountains where there's that different terrain that offers different challenges or stressors?

HOWARD COLLINS: Wollongong, even Tweed Heads if you go up to the hospital—it's a little hill up there. But I certainly think we are also looking at extreme conditions—cold temperatures, extreme heat—testing air conditioning. So far, the trial has coped with most of those experiences within regional towns. But we aren't complacent. I think we continue to ensure that these products do cope with quite harsh and unique conditions of Australia and New South Wales.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: Have there been any reported breakdowns of these vehicles?

HOWARD COLLINS: Like diesel vehicles, occasionally electric ones do break down. But, on average, if you're looking across the 220 vehicles that we have which are electric, despite some of them showing a little bit of infant mortality, especially those locally built, we have seen improvement, and certainly the reliability—one of the advantages is there are far less moving parts.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: Did you just say that we're experiencing a bit of infant mortality in the ones that are locally built?

HOWARD COLLINS: Yes, because—I've said this publicly—when people build 77,000 vehicles you've got a pretty good reliability curve. The important thing about locally built vehicles—and they are proving to be pretty good—is that the first few do start to shake out some of those issues. We had that. I know there was a view about the reputation of one manufacturer, but now we're seeing good reliability of those vehicles. Whilst you may be able to say, "Well, Howard, this thing broke down yesterday or today", we are seeing lots of electric vehicles running and proving very reliable.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: In terms of the breakdowns, are there any metrics or quantitative data around the time it takes to get those vehicles back on the road versus the more traditional diesel buses?

HOWARD COLLINS: I haven't got that data. Quite often sometimes it's a bit like Matt's trains; it's resetting the system, bringing the vehicle to life again, rather than towing it back, because it's destroyed its engine.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: But there's no data available?

HOWARD COLLINS: There may be. We get a lot of data every day. I could take on notice to have a look to see whether there are any trends. Generally, and only qualitatively, we're seeing good reliability of electric vehicles.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: If you could take on notice any data on restart time and if it's a case of hitting the reset button.

HOWARD COLLINS: Yes, switch off and start again.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: Mr Rodrigues, can I just ask some questions of you regarding the \$1.9 million allocated to the Illawarra, Wollongong and Shoalhaven districts?

MICHAEL RODRIGUES: Yes, the uptown program, I think you are referring to.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: What specific criteria was used to allocate that \$1.9 million across the 10 selected districts?

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MICHAEL RODRIGUES: That program has been opened up across Greater Sydney and those other areas. It's a competitive process. District teams are invited to apply. They are then assessed by a panel and recommendations are made.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: Are there any weightings applied now that we've broadened it to include Wollongong and Shoalhaven? Are there any weightings to provide not necessarily an advantage but more opportunity for some of those less-resourced districts or precincts with the ability to be successful?

MICHAEL RODRIGUES: The first part of the program is an accelerated program. It's an educational capacity-building exercise. It's followed by the grant program. The point of the capacity-building exercise is to give people the skills they need so that they're well placed to apply for the grants. If you're asking if there was a provision for preferred funding on a geographic basis, I might need to take that on notice.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: How are we going to measure the success of these uptown-funded districts? What metrics are we going to use?

MICHAEL RODRIGUES: The uptown program itself has had one round of evaluation. That is being used to inform development of the program. These districts we are observing take time to form and build. Ultimately, what we are trying to achieve with them is sustainability, repeat visitation over the long term and alignment. There are multiple measures for assessing that. They will include things like footfall and business confidence. Behind the program design is the ambition for these districts to start attracting other benefits through partnerships, council support and even commercial arrangements with third-party sponsors.

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: Staying with you, Mr Rodrigues, on Special Entertainment Precincts. I asked you earlier in the year about how progress had been made. You said that the Enmore Road one was operational and then two were receiving grants in Burwood and Fairfield councils. There were six listed as having detailed applications ongoing. Could you please provide me an update about the Special Entertainment Precinct status for all of those councils?

MICHAEL RODRIGUES: Yes. I'll provide you with the information that I have. There is the permanent Enmore Road precinct and six trial Special Entertainment Precincts in Balmain, Dulwich Hill, Leichhardt, Marrickville north, Marrickville Town Centre and Rozelle. There are 20 councils that have passed resolutions to investigate or establish entertainment precincts. The grant funding that's been announced is in, as you said correctly, Burwood Council. I can give you the numbers if you like or just rattle off the names or both.

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: Yes.

MICHAEL RODRIGUES: Burwood Council, \$195,000; Fairfield City Council for two Special Entertainment Precincts—one in Canley Vale and one in Canley Heights—for \$183,308; Hornsby shire for Hornsby Town Centre, \$200,000; Byron Shire Council for Byron Bay, \$162,000; Northern Beaches for Manly, \$173,760; and Sutherland shire for Cronulla, \$187,330.

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: When are those intended to be rolled out? Have they been given the money?

MICHAEL RODRIGUES: They've entered into funding agreements. I could confirm on notice, but I imagine the funds may have been transferred. Just to be clear: this is not for the trials to start. This is so that the councils can do the work so that they're in a position to commence the trials. It is important to note that that work—Special Entertainment Precincts do two things, primarily. One is to allow council to designate a specified area and designate the length of trading hours and the noise levels. Those things need to be done on the basis of the council having a plan for its night-time economy, number one. Number two, consultation with residents and businesses and then, in order to achieve it, working with the relevant experts around acoustics and the like. The funding is for that.

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: Do they have a time frame in which to complete that work to receive the funds, or are the funds delivered and then they report back to you within a particular time frame?

MICHAEL RODRIGUES: Yes.

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: What is that?

MICHAEL RODRIGUES: I may need to take the exact detail on notice, but the general way it works is they are funded. There is a funding agreement. There is a criteria they have to establish, and then those funds would be acquitted. It would be an expected outcome—although maybe not desired—that if it isn't going to work, it's not going to work. I think it's an important point to make, because an announcement in relation to the funding is not an announcement about a special entertainment precinct starting. I think there has been a bit of a communication challenge with that principle.

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I'm quite at pains to make sure that communities understand that this is the beginning of a process, not the end. It's very deliberately designed to be a tool for councils who know their communities and can work out the local conditions that are suitable to trade. The City of Sydney, for example, has taken a view around its traditional late night areas that it may have longer trade, as Parramatta council have done, but that may not be the case in Fairfield or in Hornsby.

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: I understand. Is there a timeline in which the councils have to get back to you, essentially, with a result?

MICHAEL RODRIGUES: I'll take it on notice. Our team is working quite closely with the councils through this process. They're quite engaged and are working proactively to it. As you can imagine, all communities are different. The manner in which community engagement is done and the response from that may be a factor—plus council meetings and things of that nature. For example, the City of Sydney—

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: I am so sorry to interrupt you. I'm just mindful of the time, but I appreciate that.

MICHAEL RODRIGUES: No worries.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: You can take it on notice if you like, Mr Rodrigues. We'd be delighted to hear the detail in writing.

MICHAEL RODRIGUES: Yes.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: I have some questions, Mr Longland, about train assets and maintenance—our favourite topic *In Bloom*, if you like. Is the Sydney Trains asset management and maintenance task being delivered as per the required works schedule?

MATT LONGLAND: Broadly, yes. We are delivering—

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: It's not tomorrow that it's happening.

MATT LONGLAND: We are delivering our annual works program as per our priorities across the network, particularly safety critical maintenance. We have had a difficult year during the financial year 2024-25, the year that we just finished, related primarily to industrial actions. We've had a number of weekend possessions that were cancelled during that period. We have seen the flow-on impacts on reliability across the network in terms of asset failure and lack of reliability. The good news is that we are closing out a lot of work. Temporary speed restrictions were 65 in February. They're now sitting at 12. That's really helping us speed the network up and keep trains running on time. Our target is to get that under 10, and we're very close to that.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: *Beds Are Burning*, Mr Longland. Is the maintenance schedule being delivered on time, or are you saying that, realistically, it's—no judgement—it's slightly behind because of those things you mentioned.

MATT LONGLAND: Catching up on the weekend works, we have allowed for the remainder of this calendar year. By the end of calendar year 2025, we will have caught up that weekend work that was lost during the period of protected industrial action, particularly even the last two weekends. Last weekend on the line between Sydney and Newcastle, \$9.5 million worth of work was delivered. The weekend prior to that—we talked about the South Coast earlier—\$10 million worth of work was done on T4 and South Coast. We're doing a lot of concentrated work on weekends to catch up on that maintenance that was lost over that period of industrial action and get the network back in shape.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: For which I note back pay was paid. But, nonetheless, I'll move on. *The Less I Know the Better*. If not, how many maintenance interventions are overdue?

MATT LONGLAND: I'd need to take that question on notice in terms of the network statistic. It does change week to week depending on the work orders that come in and the work that's undertaken.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: As at today, perhaps—that would be very helpful. Does the asset management database accurately reflect this? You could perhaps take that on notice as well.

MATT LONGLAND: Yes. We have a detailed system that tracks all of our maintenance orders and the condition of the assets. Yes, it is accurate and, yes, as works are undertaken they're included in that database.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: I have some questions on buses. Perhaps Mr Collins wants to come forward. While he's doing that, I'll continue on a couple of these lines, if I may. Are overdue works and their criticality reported to the Sydney Trains executive on a regular—for example, monthly—basis?

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MATT LONGLAND: Yes, we have a number of executive reportings. We have a performance meeting once a month. That's where the heads of each of our operating functions report in the status of their function. Then we have an overall executive committee meeting once a month where we look at the status of not only our performance but also what's happening across the network.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Is Sydney Trains, would you say, aware of how many of these overdue works are critical and have the potential to impact on the safety and operability of the railway?

MATT LONGLAND: Yes. I mentioned earlier about safety critical maintenance. That has always been a priority. To be fair to the unions involved, that was always a priority during industrial action. Anything related to safety was always prioritised, and those works were always delivered. Where we had issues was around the reliability works. Some of our major upgrades—re-railing, points, a number of the signalling upgrades—have been delayed as a result of that action.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Are there plans in place to correct this?

MATT LONGLAND: Yes. I spoke earlier about the work we're doing to catch up on those weekend works, which is underway at the moment. We're also doing a targeted program, particularly in the inner west, looking at Strathfield into the city and also the City Circle, looking at power assets, signalling and track. That's the part of the network that really makes a big difference, given the number of lines that move through that part of the rail network.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: It's a big question: How many corrective maintenance interventions have been undertaken outside of the schedule, evening or p.m. work cycle, in the past 12 months?

MATT LONGLAND: If you're happy, I'll include that in the question I took on notice about the current status of any works that are outstanding.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: You might kindly, if you are minded to, take this on notice as well: How many of those corrective maintenance interventions have been the result of evening or p.m. works not being undertaken as per the work schedule, or not being undertaken correctly?

MATT LONGLAND: This is about night possession, not weekends?

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Yes, correct.

MATT LONGLAND: Yes, we can have a look at that.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: I think you call them p.m. works but either phrase is fine. Can I ask, then, was the overhead wire failure near Auburn earlier in the year the result of those p.m. works having not been carried out or not carried out correctly?

MATT LONGLAND: Yes. The incident at Homebush that you're referring to on 20 May is obviously the subject of the review that is underway. We have undertaken our own assessment of the incident within Sydney Trains. That indicates that the inspections that were due to be undertaken were undertaken as per the plan. That section of wiring was inspected in early April and the incident occurred in May, so it was within its inspection window in terms of the inspections undertaken. The wire was found to be thin wire that failed. The nature of the degradation of that wire is work that we're continuing to do.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: How was it approved and it still failed?

MATT LONGLAND: That is the subject of the work that's underway in the review. Was the inspection methodology that was used appropriate? Should it have picked up this failure in the asset? What we do know is that the inspection was undertaken per the schedule, and the results of that inspection were included in the asset management database we spoke about earlier.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: It's quite a significant thing, isn't it? What confidence can the public have given that things are being ticked off and a month later they're failing? What confidence can the public have in this inspection protocol?

MATT LONGLAND: I certainly appreciate your perspective. The question is around, could this happen anywhere else on the network? These sorts of incidents are very rare. In my time in Sydney Trains, there were probably one or two. We've had issues with the overhead wiring. When they do occur, they are significant. Since the incident at Homebush in May, we've not only undertaken inspections of those particular types of wiring where we have crossovers or forking points but we've also looked at the survey across the broader network to understand any other risk areas, and we're working through that process. Absolutely we're addressing the inspection process, because clearly there was a problem that this wire was inspected and then failed a month later.

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The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Why was the gentleman fired from Sydney Trains after this incident?

MATT LONGLAND: I'm not sure of the gentleman you're referring to.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: The Sydney Trains employee related to the inspection.

MATT LONGLAND: There was one of our executive who isn't with us any longer. Yes, correct. It wasn't related specifically to that incident, just for the record.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Did he resign?

MATT LONGLAND: His contract—between Mr Murray and I—he has left the organisation.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Yes, but he didn't resign; he was terminated. That's correct, isn't it?

MATT LONGLAND: The language in terms of the—his contract came to an end and he left the organisation.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: We may come back to that. Mr Collins, if I may turn to you, in relation to the 680 bus route in the Redbank Estate, mindful that you—I'm sure you probably do know every single bus route—

HOWARD COLLINS: I'm learning.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: —but I'll forgive you if you don't. But I wouldn't be surprised. Representations have been made to the Minister regarding the expansion of bus services in North Richmond, specifically to include a loop within the Redbank Estate for the 680 bus route from Richmond to Bowen Mountain via Grose Vale and Grose Wold. Can you confirm if these requests have been brought to your attention, investigated, progressed?

HOWARD COLLINS: Surprisingly, that's one I haven't got my mind around entirely, but I will take on board—

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: I'm glad I could bring it to your attention.

HOWARD COLLINS: Obviously we have had many requests for many additional bus routes. As you know, the Government is focusing on Western Sydney bus improvements.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Sure, but I'm just asking about this particular one, if I may.

HOWARD COLLINS: Let me take on notice the 680 Redbank—I think you said—to North Richmond.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Yes, that's it. There was a request for a loop within the Redbank Estate.

HOWARD COLLINS: It's not in my notes, so I'll take it away and take it on notice.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Could you take on notice and confirm whether those requests have been actioned, investigated or brought to your attention and what progress might have been made on those?

HOWARD COLLINS: Yes.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Also, if you could perhaps take on notice—I'd be appreciative—if it has been actioned, what stage it might be at.

HOWARD COLLINS: Okay.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: If the department's considered opinion does support additional stops, could you advise of the likely time frame for this to be implemented and the likely cost?

HOWARD COLLINS: Certainly. We'll look at that. Part of the work we're doing with Ms Mares is the bus review, but I will look up that one and see what inquiries have been made regarding 680.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: I guess it's important to that community, bearing in mind that the entire community shouldn't be limited—because it's a whole estate—to using a car when they are very keen to embrace public transport, and they're keen to use it. It would be interesting to see what the department's view is of that.

HOWARD COLLINS: I do have the numbers, if you want, of the 921. I can rattle those off for you—of the 921 vehicles.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Do you mind if we do that at the end, Mr Collins? I have three minutes. I'd be very appreciative of hearing it, but I do want to get to one final area, if I may. I'm not sure who this might involve—the freight strategy?

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TRUDI MARES: The reform plan?

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: As part of the New South Wales freight strategy, Ms Mares, it has a list of the public-private investment opportunities that have been developed to fast-track shovel-ready projects. You're nodding in agreement. You're familiar with it?

TRUDI MARES: I'm listening.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Okay, you're listening. Thank you. You're being generous. Those fast-tracked shovel-ready projects aimed at boosting productivity and economic infrastructure—has that been developed? Do you know?

TRUDI MARES: We are just working through the short-, medium- and long-term opportunities that the report identified, and coming up with the program of what we will be working on. We have not commenced any specific work on that just yet.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: So that hasn't happened, in short?

TRUDI MARES: No.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: It just hasn't?

TRUDI MARES: No.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: The Minister, as I understand it, has requested Dr Kerry Schott to prepare an additional report.

TRUDI MARES: Yes, on freight at night.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Yes, to the freight strategy on freight at night and the importance of the 24/7 economy. When will that report be made available?

TRUDI MARES: I will have to take that on notice and come back to you. I'm unaware of the time frame.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: There is a time frame, presumably?

TRUDI MARES: I'm sure there is. I'm not across it, sorry.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: One of the New South Wales Labor Government's election commitments was to increase freight carried by rail and to subsidise rail usage. What progress has been made in delivering that commitment?

TRUDI MARES: Again, if that is part of the freight reform report, we're just working through the program at the moment.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: But if it's not part of freight reform—if it's part of a separate—

TRUDI MARES: I haven't got any information on that at hand.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: So you'll also take that on notice?

TRUDI MARES: Sure.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Since the Government took office in 2023, New South Wales has experienced significant industrial action. I think we all understand that. What steps are being taken to mitigate disruption to the freight and the supply chains?

TRUDI MARES: I think that's a question for Mr Longland.

MATT LONGLAND: I think the engagement with the freight industry is regular and it's ongoing. We certainly appreciate the importance of a connected supply chain through the metropolitan part of Sydney.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: So do we, when we're waiting for our deliveries.

MATT LONGLAND: The good news is that not only are we now measuring performance, we're also reporting that back to the freight companies so they can track what's happening on the network. We've got a dedicated freight lead in the rail operation centre. On the day of operations, when there's an incident, we're able to manage the balance between passenger and freight needs to make sure that they've got a seat at the table.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: And they can contact directly through that lead person?

MATT LONGLAND: That's correct.

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The Hon. NATALIE WARD: That's very helpful. Was that utilised during or as a result of the industrial action experience of having to—

MATT LONGLAND: It was something we worked on probably over the last 12 months, not specifically related to industrial action.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: One last question in the time I've got—to Mr Murray, if I may. How many independent reviews or reports has this Government commissioned and received since the election in relation to Transport for NSW?

JOSH MURRAY: I'd have to take that on notice. The Government has been clear about the reviews that were in place. The bus taskforce, the rail review—they were the significant ones to enable Transport for NSW to calibrate with service delivery challenges. But there have been some others that have been mentioned. They're all of different size in regard to what has been completed, but they've helped us form new strategies and policies. I can get you that list on notice.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: To clarify, just for example, there was one train review with two reports. If you could list those as itemised items, that would be great.

The CHAIR: Mr Murray, with the plan to cut 950 jobs, how many of those 950 jobs are envisaged to be senior service executives?

JOSH MURRAY: Of those 950, that does not include senior executives within Transport. The senior executive target within Transport is 300 roles within three years.

The CHAIR: Why is that? I understand that the executive has ballooned out—according to a number of people that are speaking to me about this—to 1,100. Is that correct?

JOSH MURRAY: That's right. When we say senior executives, obviously that's the top four senior bands of staff members in the organisation.

The CHAIR: So 1,100 staff out of a workforce of—

JOSH MURRAY: Thirty thousand.

The CHAIR: And they earn between—what's the pay scale?

JOSH MURRAY: I'd have to take that on notice.

The CHAIR: I've got here between \$250,000 and \$700,000. Does that sound about right?

JOSH MURRAY: I would think the lower end of that is the starting point under the general government sector, yes.

The CHAIR: The department has been told to find \$279 million in labour savings. Why wouldn't the TSSEs be considered as part of that?

JOSH MURRAY: It's actually broader than that, Ms Faehrmann. The people-related savings that we are attempting to achieve at the moment are around about \$600 million. The senior executive reductions, which will amount to about a 30 per cent reduction in senior executives, are included in that \$600 million. The \$279 million target is what we've loosely attached to the senior manager and award staff numbers that would also make up some of those savings. What we've said is we've tried to envisage what the number of roles that could be impacted would look like, but we are driving a dollar-related saving, not a headcount-related saving. But we've tried to quantify that for staff because the first question asked was how many people could be impacted.

The CHAIR: Is it also correct to say that there is an enormous voluntary redundancy entitlements liability, if you like, in terms of the senior executives requiring 38 weeks pay regardless of their length of employment?

JOSH MURRAY: Yes, that is the senior executive—that is the standard separation terms under a senior executive contract. There has been an early exit program put in place for the senior executive, which has enabled us to move more than 200 roles already out, which is more than 17 per cent of the senior executive. We are continuing that process with 100 more roles to go in that restructure. In regard to the senior manager ranks, the unions also asked us to consider an early exit voluntary program there and we have conducted an expression of interest, which we will now review.

The CHAIR: I just wanted to—

JOSH MURRAY: I might add, if it's of interest, that, in terms of other measures that have been included in the budget statistics, we have reduced the number of people coming into Transport for NSW by more than

CORRECTED

39 per cent over the past financial year. We have reduced labour hire—Ms Boyd was asking the question earlier—by more than 50 per cent since June 2023. We have reduced managed services arrangements, so professional services contractors, by 25 per cent. Then, if we add senior executives being reduced by around 30 per cent, you'll see that the senior managers and awards savings or job changes would amount to about 7 per cent. We really are trying to prioritise those high value, high expense ends of the workforce. But we have been clear with our people and with the unions that we have to make savings across the board to reshape the organisation for the priorities that we have.

The CHAIR: I want to go back to the questions that I was asking earlier about the signalling work with Sydney Trains. Was there a \$50 million contract that was awarded in 2021 to Prometheus to implement an electronic permitting system which apparently failed to deliver? Is that correct, Mr Longland?

MATT LONGLAND: I'm happy to respond to that question. I would need to have a look at the details and provide that on notice if that's okay. I am aware of the company and the project is related to a program of work around electrical isolations on the network, so switching and permitting and the ability to turn the power on and off quicker on the overhead power network.

The CHAIR: I've been told that Prometheus has been taken off that contract. It would be good to know how much of that \$50 million has come back to Sydney Trains and how much we didn't recover. Also, there's a contract now worth around \$450 million that was recently awarded to SYSTRA for similar work.

MATT LONGLAND: Sure, I'm happy to have a look at the details that I can provide around Prometheus and SYSTRA. Again, the program of work is ongoing; nothing has stopped. In terms of the supplier's role, the cost of their work and what's been delivered, I'm happy to take that on notice and will include both of those suppliers in the same response.

The CHAIR: What's your response to senior members within Sydney Trains who have outlined in detail with management how there is internal capacity to deliver the electrical permitting system in house without relying on external contractors? Do you not think that's the case?

MATT LONGLAND: I am not across the specific details of your question in terms of which senior members or what they've shared. What I can say, on principle, is that my preference and our preference as an organisation is always to insource where we can and use the skills of our own people rather than bringing in additional. This program of work has been running for a number of years. It's complex, both from a safety perspective—clearly, dealing with high voltage power—but also from an industrial perspective around the roles of our teams and how that would interact with future technologies. So, it's a complex program of work, a very important part of modernising the rail network looking at making our switching more efficient, particularly when dealing with major incidents—being able to turn the power off quickly—not just related to infrastructure, but more importantly to incidents of community safety on the network. We often need to turn the power off if there's a risk to somebody's safety.

The CHAIR: Sure. But at this point it looks like we're talking half a billion dollars, potentially, to do this work that you're saying needs to be outsourced. The workers who are within Sydney Trains, who have the skills, are saying that they can do this work. That's a half-a-billion-dollar disconnect. Surely we should be spending that internally if we can?

MATT LONGLAND: In response to your question, respectfully, the half a billion dollar figure is your figure. I've committed I would come back on notice and provide the details of those two companies and what we've invested. It's a large multi-year program of work and, as with any of these programs of work, the investment is in the development of the system. This is a complex, clearly safety-critical system. The operation of that system would obviously be our own people doing that. This is about the planning and the development and the delivery of a system. The operation of that system would be through our own people.

The CHAIR: Mr Murray, will you commit to having a look at this? You heard the Minister before in terms of the philosophy principles, if you like, of the Government not wanting to privatise anything further within Transport for NSW. This does sound like it is potentially a big privatisation, at least from an operational perspective, of some of the workings of Sydney Trains.

JOSH MURRAY: What would you like us to do, Ms Faehrmann? I'm happy to state our principles back on notice.

The CHAIR: Just to be confident that you have oversight of what is potentially half a billion dollars.

JOSH MURRAY: Yes, I think, if I could, not wanting to take up the time, we'll answer on notice around the principles of these contracts.

CORRECTED

The CHAIR: Thank you. Ms Collins, last year when Sound NSW was looking at the Contemporary Music Festival Viability Fund, what grants were you looking at or what funds were you also working up that would support smaller music festivals? Some of them cancelled over that same summer, for example, Souled Out Festival in Sydney, the Lookout Festival in Wollongong and a couple of others. What was Sound NSW doing for them?

EMILY COLLINS: The primary support mechanism for festivals, for Sound NSW, is the Contemporary Music Festival Viability Fund. There is other work being done by other parts of government to support those smaller festivals, including work through the Open Streets Program, through Transport for NSW, looking at the regulatory process through the music festivals panel, and also investments made through Destination NSW. There's 140 festivals in New South Wales, and we'd love to support all of them. This is not to say that we won't be looking at ways to better support those smaller festivals in the future. We're developing new programs all the time.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: Mr Rodrigues, I'll just stick with you and the questions I was asking you before. You spoke about an evaluation of the previous Uptown program round. Is that evaluation publicly available, or are you able to provide that on notice to the Committee?

MICHAEL RODRIGUES: I think it's publicly available, published online, but we can provide it to you if it makes it more convenient.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: Thank you. One of the program aims is for the districts to become self-sustainable. Is there any aspirational timeline for this independence? I imagine it might differ between districts, but is there any timeline, albeit aspirational?

MICHAEL RODRIGUES: There's no stated timeline for government. The origins of this program came out of the pandemic. That was the circumstance. What we've done is provide rounds of funding on a reducing basis to districts—they have to go through a process of acquittal of their original grant and so forth—in order that they find ways of becoming sustainable through other revenue streams. In some cases, that might be membership schemes.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: What would be the lowest amount you would offer a district before you cut them off from the sugar hits?

MICHAEL RODRIGUES: Currently \$100,000 is the last round of funding. I think, if it's helpful—but I'm not trying to take up time. The community improvement district initiative for Transport for NSW is another model—that legislation's passed; regulations are currently on exhibition, I think—which is another mechanism for businesses and landlords to fund district initiatives.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: I wouldn't necessarily compare that program with yours. There's mixed reviews of that program, in terms of the trial. How are you going to assess whether this investment leads to increases in patronage and it's not just a localised reshuffling? I know Port Kembla is referenced in the example. How are you going to measure that it's not just me and my mate shifting from Towradgi Beach Hotel, going down to the Commercial in Port Kembla? How are you going to measure that impact?

MICHAEL RODRIGUES: I guess we'll be able to observe it through the Data After Dark platform over time, which is one way of monitoring it, is probably a better way of expressing it. I think it's a good question insofar as, as we continue to develop or enable districts—and Greater Sydney's a good example of this—with the airport coming online, with metro openings, patronage is moving around. I guess it's one of those things that Data After Dark is there to just monitor and understand whether the long-term ambitions around the agenda are working. That's about as much as I can say.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: Ms Glasscock, I just want to ask some questions around the regional theatre, dance and museum tours. There was \$700,000 invested to 10 touring productions. How was that \$700,000 figure determined?

KERRI GLASSCOCK: All of our funding rounds go through a competitive funding process. They're assessed by 10 Artform Boards that have members from the sector.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: How did we come up with the figure of offering \$700,000? Did that happen before the assessment or after the assessment?

KERRI GLASSCOCK: At the start of the year, Create NSW allocates certain budget envelopes to the rounds that we have.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: How was it determined that \$700,000 was the right figure in terms of this part of this grant program?

CORRECTED

KERRI GLASSCOCK: That predates my commencement, so I'd have to take that on notice.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: I'm happy for you to do that. Forty per cent of the funded projects were developed by regional artists. Are there any specific strategies you are going to put in place to increase that percentage so we have more regional artists touring and it's not just Sydney artists going out to the regions, but regional artists travelling in between regions?

KERRI GLASSCOCK: That's right. Regional artists—makers, audiences and organisations—are a key priority of government. They're certainly a priority area in the current ACFP and a key priority area in Creative Communities. As the Minister mentioned earlier today, we're currently in development for a regional strategy, which is being undertaken with deep consultation right across the regions with the sectors. We're hoping this will address some of that as well, and we'll have targeted support.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: The jobs that have been created or that are projected to be created by this grant program, which the press release quotes as 60—how many of those jobs will full-time or ongoing, or is this more of a gig-style relationship, for want of a better word, or engagement?

KERRI GLASSCOCK: Applicants note how many jobs are created from their projects. As this is touring round, it is short-term touring and the duration varies depending on the project.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: How are we going to track attendance across this grant program? I note 76,000 people are expected to attend. Are we going to track the different demographics? Particularly, are we reaching out to be more inclusive of culturally diverse communities, people with disabilities, low-income families? How are we going to track whether we're hitting those markets?

KERRI GLASSCOCK: As with any of our funding programs, successful applicants are required to submit acquittal documentation after their events. For anything that has ticketed attendance, it depends on their ticketing platforms and how detailed their post-event surveys are as to how detailed the demographics go into. But certainly, again, culturally and linguistically diverse audiences, deaf and disabled audiences, youth audiences and regional audiences are all key priorities for Create NSW.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: But Create NSW aren't mandating any reporting based on that. You're just relying on, I guess, the functional limitations or abilities of the different ticketing programs to decide what gets recorded?

KERRI GLASSCOCK: Our acquittal documentation asks for that information, yes.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: Specifically?

KERRI GLASSCOCK: Yes.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: And if they can't provide that information because their ticketing system provider doesn't collate it, what's your response to that?

KERRI GLASSCOCK: I would have to take that on notice. I'm not across what the process is in relation to how we assess those acquittals.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: If you take that last question on notice, that will be all from me, Chair.

KERRI GLASSCOCK: Yes.

The CHAIR: We're coming back to Ms Collins now. In terms of different funding for festivals that don't meet the eligibility criteria, which just five festivals applied for—recognising that quite a few have cancelled over the last 18 months because of what most say are rising costs—you mentioned the Open Streets Program. I thought that was just for councils.

EMILY COLLINS: Yes, but it's also for communities. If you're talking about grassroots and councils delivering events that involve musicians, that's one of the programs that is supported.

The CHAIR: But music festivals can't apply for that?

BRENDA HOANG: Not that I'm aware of, no, but it is support for music activity.

The CHAIR: Not if there are rising costs. That's what I'm asking—grants for music festivals. The second one is that you said Transport for NSW. I note the Minister also said that in the article that appeared in the paper about the fact that Fuzzy is owned by Superstruct, which is owned by KKR, which has links to the Israeli Government. What about Transport for NSW? Which ones go to music festivals?

EMILY COLLINS: The Open Streets Program is, I believe, a program of Transport.

CORRECTED

The CHAIR: That doesn't go to music festivals?

EMILY COLLINS: No.

The CHAIR: Destination NSW?

EMILY COLLINS: There's a list that I don't have in front of me, but there are festivals like the Wanderer Festival on the South Coast, the Mundi Mundi Bash, Yours and Owls, and Laneway. These are festivals that have been supported through Destination NSW.

The CHAIR: Is there a reason why Sound NSW doesn't have a grant program for festivals that have less than 15,000 people? If you look at the Music Festivals Act, that's not just to support large-scale music festivals. Is there a reason why Sound NSW is just focusing on this select few?

EMILY COLLINS: One of the primary reasons behind supporting major music festivals in New South Wales was really—there are a few key factors that informed that decision, one being about the significant cultural and economic impact. The \$2.25 million that we invested in those five festivals supported 6½ thousand jobs, and those festivals of that scale are also really crucial to the broader contemporary music ecosystem in terms of sideshows and the flow-on effect to local artists and venues. Whilst we absolutely value smaller music festivals, and we are looking to support them in the future, in this short-term program we had to focus on a targeted area.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Mr Collins, can I invite you to take this on notice. Under the Zero Emission Buses program, could you inform the Committee: (a) how many buses have been ordered up to the end of the last financial year; (b) how many are expected to be ordered this financial year; and (c) how many are expected to be ordered next financial year?

HOWARD COLLINS: I can certainly take that on notice.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Mr Murray, does Transport for NSW have a social media policy for its own pages? Could you provide that on notice to the Committee?

JOSH MURRAY: Yes, I'll take that on notice.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Could you also take on notice how many people are employed to run Transport for NSW's social media pages?

JOSH MURRAY: Yes.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: And how many people were employed by Transport for NSW in a communications or marketing function?

JOSH MURRAY: Yes, we can respond on notice.

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: Ms Page, given the reduction in funding to the Art Gallery of New South Wales, are you considering increasing ticket prices to exhibitions?

MAUD PAGE: We're considering everything in terms of revenue streams.

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: Are you intending to cut staff as a result of the funding cuts?

MAUD PAGE: At the moment, as you know, we are doing a change management plan, so it's a proposed one. Yes, there are proposed cuts.

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: What's the range of staff cuts that you're looking at?

MAUD PAGE: As you know, it has been quite well documented through the PSA. What we're looking for is—we need to find revenue of \$7.5 million.

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: In terms of increasing ticket prices for exhibitions, are you looking at removing free entry to the Art Gallery?

MAUD PAGE: Absolutely not. That is one I can categorically say we will not do that.

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: So it's about increasing ticket prices?

The CHAIR: Order! Ms Collins, in terms of Sound NSW's budget, have you expended the budget allocated to Sound NSW now? I think last time there was an underspend of a few million dollars.

EMILY COLLINS: Yes, for the 2024-25 financial year we expended our budget fully.

The CHAIR: What was the budget again?

CORRECTED

EMILY COLLINS: The total budget was \$18.9 million.

The CHAIR: In terms of the wages and salaries, was that the same in terms of both years? I suppose you've got more staff, is that correct?

EMILY COLLINS: Sorry. How do you mean? Over the two years?

The CHAIR: Yes. How many staff does New South Wales have now?

EMILY COLLINS: As at 19 June we had 12.

The CHAIR: The wages and salaries—how much did you spend on that in the previous financial year?

EMILY COLLINS: In 2024-25 we spent \$2.064 million.

The CHAIR: That's the last financial year, is that correct?

EMILY COLLINS: Yes, and the year before was \$1.7 million.

The CHAIR: Is Sound NSW then, in terms of the grants to music festivals, actively considering looking at a grant program to support those smaller music festivals?

EMILY COLLINS: We are looking at a range of investment programs, coming into this new financial year, specifically looking at grassroots community festivals and artists.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Chair, with your indulgence and that of my colleagues, I just want to extend thanks to the Transport for NSW staff. I note that there was a very large protest on the Harbour Bridge. I'm not commenting on the protest one way or the other, but I wanted to give a shout-out because they facilitated the protest. It was enormous and, obviously, they did so and facilitated thousands of people being there safely on very short notice. I just thought it was important. Clearly, they did a lot of work to make sure that people got there and that they were safe. I just wanted to say that they did a really good job managing thousands of people coming into the city without incident. I just extend that thanks to them.

JOSH MURRAY: Thank you. That's appreciated by the team.

The CHAIR: Maybe just put on record that it was over 300,000, in fact. With that, Government questions?

The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM: I just wanted to afford an opportunity to any of the witnesses today if there are any issues that they wish to clarify or other matters.

MATT LONGLAND: If you're comfortable, I'll just clarify a point. I think we were asked earlier about the performance of the T4 line in the a.m. peak this morning. I did receive advice from the Rail Operations Centre that we delivered on-time running at 94.2 per cent this morning for the a.m. peak between 6.00 a.m. and 10.00 a.m. The longest delay was a 13-minute delay at Wolli Creek as a result of a train with a fault with its doors. We haven't had any records of hour-long delays on any part of the network today.

The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM: Thank you very much for your attendance.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: I think there might have been some answers that some of you were kindly going to bring back on the 921 buses.

The CHAIR: I think, if they were bringing them back, they would have brought them back by now.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: They offered.

The CHAIR: That was the opportunity then to potentially get any of that, which they haven't.

JOSH MURRAY: We'll deliver those on notice as needed.

The CHAIR: Thank you very much once again for appearing before this Committee and for the work you do. Obviously, the secretariat will be in touch with any supplementary questions or questions you took on notice. That's the end of our hearing today.

(The witnesses withdrew.)

The Committee proceeded to deliberate.