

# **GENERAL PURPOSE STANDING COMMITTEE NO. 3**

**Thursday 21 August 2014**

**Examination of proposed expenditure for the portfolio area**

## **ROADS AND FREIGHT**

**The Committee met at 2.00 p.m.**

### **MEMBERS**

The Hon. N. Maclaren-Jones (Chair)

The Hon. N. Blair (Deputy Chair)  
Dr M. Faruqi  
The Hon. P. Green

Mr S. MacDonald  
The Hon. W. Secord  
The Hon. M. Veitch

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### **PRESENT**

**The Hon. Duncan Gay, *Minister for Roads and Freight***

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## **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**

**CHAIR:** I welcome everyone to the public hearing of the inquiry into budget estimates 2014-15. I welcome Minister Gay and accompanying officials to the hearing. Today the Committee will examine the proposed expenditure for the portfolio of Roads and Freight.

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

There may be some questions that a witness could only answer if they had more time or had certain documents to hand. In these circumstances witnesses are advised that they can take a question on notice and provide an answer within 21 days. Any messages from advisers or members of staff seated in the public gallery should be delivered through the Chamber and support staff or Committee clerks. Minister, I remind you and the officers accompanying you that you are free to pass notes and refer directly to the advisers seated behind you. Transcripts of the hearing will be available on the web as of tomorrow morning.

All witnesses from departments, statutory bodies and corporations will be sworn in prior to giving evidence. Minister, I remind you that are you not required to be sworn in as you have already sworn an oath to your office as a member of Parliament. Mr Stewart and Mr Reardon do not need to be sworn in because they were sworn in at an earlier budget estimates hearing.

**DAVE STEWART**, Secretary, Transport for NSW, and

**TIM REARDON**, Deputy Director General, Policy and Regulation, Roads, Transport for NSW, on former oath:

**KEN KANOFSKI**, Director, Journey Management, Roads and Maritime Services,

**PETER WELLS**, Director, Safety and Compliance, Roads and Maritime Services,

**GEOFF FOGARTY**, Director, Infrastructure Development, Roads and Maritime Services, and

**DENNIS CLICHE**, Chief Executive Officer, WestConnex Delivery Authority, affirmed and examined:

**PETER DUNCAN**, Chief Executive, Roads and Maritime Services,

**MARGARET PRENDERGAST**, General Manager, Centre for Road Safety, Transport for NSW, and

**PAUL HESFORD**, Director of Corporate, Roads and Maritime Services, sworn and examined:

**CHAIR:** I declare the proposed expenditure of the portfolio of Roads and Freight open for examination. The questions for the portfolio of Roads will run from 2.00 p.m. to 4.00 p.m. as there will be no Government questions. Questions for the portfolio of Freight will run from 4.15 p.m. to 4.55 p.m. As there is no provision for a Minister to make an opening statement before the Committee commences questions we will now begin with questions from the Opposition.

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** In the period 2002 to 2011 in New South Wales 24 children under five years of age died after being run over by a vehicle travelling at less than 10 kilometres an hour. These incidents are known as "low-speed vehicle run-overs". I note from January to July this year seven children have been killed in New South Wales in pedestrian accidents. Typically these incidents occurred at or near the family home and involved a vehicle being driven by a family member or a person known to the child.

In the United States it will be mandatory for all new vehicles to be fitted with reversing cameras by May 2018. As shadow Minister for Roads, I strongly believe that Australians should follow similar design rules because it will save young lives. I know that in 2012 the Centre for Road Safety made some comments about this policy area. What has happened since then?

**The Hon. DUNCAN GAY:** I thank you for the question and compliment you on it because it is an important area. You are obviously not aware that it is an issue I raised at the Standing Council on Transport and Infrastructure [SCOTI] over 12 months ago. In 2012 I raised this exact issue at SCOTI because if we are to tackle particularly the reversing camera requirement we need to do it on a national basis. I just cannot believe that I can hire a poverty pack Camry that has a reversing camera standard in it and yet in top-of-the-line BMWs, Mercedes, Land Rovers, et cetera, they are an option.

I find it just abhorrent that they are making us pay extra. It is obvious that the cost of putting a reversing camera in any vehicle—it is not just the SUVs, it is any vehicle. Young people are being run over by all types of vehicles; admittedly, there is a higher number within the SUV area. I put it there. I pushed it through with the previous Government and it is something I continue to follow through with the current Government.

**Ms PRENDERGAST:** There have been nine children under 16 years of age killed so far this year. It is of tragic proportions that three of them were under four years old, including one at MacMasters Beach who ran out from the driveway, a driveway crash at Wahroonga, and one at Westmead on a crossing. We are doing a lot in this space. We are trying to get a handle on the data for off-road and we are doing a lot of work in that space. Since Minister Gay petitioned both the Australasian New Car Assessment Program [ANCAP] and the Federal Government to look at reversing cameras there has been one study done federally. We are now funding the second study, which is hopefully the enabling study to get it into Commonwealth legislation either to seek mandating cameras in new models or indeed to get on the ANCAP—

**The Hon. DUNCAN GAY:** Is that out of our speed camera money?

**Ms PRENDERGAST:** Yes, it is indeed. The other work we are doing is communications. In the last year we have released a nought to five years information brochure with a driveway lift-out in it. We are also doing a communications campaign as we speak to address driveways. Interestingly, in the driveway low-speed run-overs it is not only children under six but it is also older people. This year we have had three tragic deaths of people in their eighties in driveways. We are very focused on this and doing a lot of work.

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** Minister, have you raised this with your new Federal counterpart?

**The Hon. DUNCAN GAY:** Yes I have.

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** Can you detail when it was raised?

**The Hon. DUNCAN GAY:** At the last SCOTI meeting.

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** When was that?

**The Hon. DUNCAN GAY:** Alice Springs, May this year.

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** This question will probably be addressed to Mr Duncan. How many staff are employed in Roads and Maritime Services [RMS] currently?

**The Hon. DUNCAN GAY:** Those statistics come out in the annual reports.

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** Mr Duncan, could you assist if the Minister does not have it to hand?

**Mr DUNCAN:** Yes. It is approximately 6,500. Paul Hesford, the Director of Corporate, will have the exact number on the table he has with him.

**Mr HESFORD:** Just to confirm Mr Duncan's number, it is 6,355.

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** How many of those people are employed at the senior executive service [SES] level?

**Mr DUNCAN:** We only have one SES person on staff now because all of our senior officers and the remainder of SES have transferred into the Transport Senior Service. Again I think Mr Hesford has that number.

**Mr HESFORD:** In terms of the Transport Senior Service we have got 355 approved positions and we are in the process of finalising the recruitment to those at the moment. I think the number is a bit shy of that in terms of the number of people in those positions but it is pretty close.

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** How many people have been made redundant in 2013-14?

**Mr DUNCAN:** I can answer that question. We have had 694 voluntary redundancies during the year.

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** Any forced redundancies?

**Mr DUNCAN:** We have had three.

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** What are your projections or what have you budgeted for voluntary redundancies for 2014-15?

**Mr DUNCAN:** I would have to take that on notice but it is substantially less. The majority of the reform work is now completed.

**Mr HESFORD:** In terms of budgeting, we do not actually budget for redundancies. They are budgeted at the Treasury level. So within the financial information and the budget papers that have been presented there is no allowance for voluntary redundancies because we draw that money down from Treasury if and when people are made redundant. We do not actually budget at an agency level.

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** But you must have projections and plans. You are a large agency. You must have a projection or an estimation.

**Mr DUNCAN:** The majority of our redundancies have occurred in the reform in the past 12 months. What we will have in the year going ahead—we have a number of staff who have been assigned to Service NSW. They have been assigned to that agency so if there are future redundancies it will be through that process.

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** I have a question to the new Chief Executive Officer [CEO] of the WestConnex Delivery Authority.

**The Hon. NIALL BLAIR:** Through the Minister.

**The Hon. DUNCAN GAY:** Will you put the question through me, please.

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** Through the Minister, yes. Minister, I would like to know: When did the CEO take up the position?

**The Hon. DUNCAN GAY:** About a week ago, was my understanding.

**Mr CLICHE:** A week and a half.

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** Is the CEO working for free?

**The Hon. DUNCAN GAY:** No. We will be paying him because he is an excellent CEO. I suspect he will be getting more than you, but I am sure he will deserve it. His salary, as will the salary scales, will be made public in the normal way.

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** Further to that, in response to your question on notice dated 22 July 2014, you said it would be made public in 2015. Mr Cliché must know—

**The Hon. DUNCAN GAY:** Cliche.

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** Cliche.

**The Hon. DUNCAN GAY:** You are the only cliché here.

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** To the CEO of the delivery authority: He must know how much he is being paid.

**The Hon. DUNCAN GAY:** Look, I am sure he does, but the answer I gave was correct. It does not contradict the answer I just gave you.

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** Why are you refusing to reveal Mr Cliche's salary?

**The Hon. DUNCAN GAY:** I am not refusing.

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** Through you to Mr Cliche: Mr Cliche must know how much he is being paid. I know how much MPs are paid.

**The Hon. DUNCAN GAY:** I am not refusing.

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** You are. It is very clear.

**The Hon. DUNCAN GAY:** I am not. That is your answer.

**The Hon. NIALL BLAIR:** Point of order: I clearly heard the Minister say that he will provide that answer in due course. He is not refusing to answer the question. He clearly said he will provide that answer. The member continuing down that line is questionable. He should move on.

**CHAIR:** Order! It is true the Minister has answered the question, but the member is entitled to ask the same question continuously if he wants to use his time to do so.

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** Through the Minister to Mr Cliche: I read in the CEO pay in the top 100 companies of Australia in 2011 that in one of his previous roles at ConnectEast in Melbourne his salary package was \$1.293 million a year. Is that correct?

**The Hon. DUNCAN GAY:** That is more than you will learn, but I will let him answer that.

**Mr CLICHE:** Yes, that was correct.

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** While I have you, there is a supplementary question to that: What is your current salary?

**The Hon. DUNCAN GAY:** I answered that earlier.

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** No. I am asking a supplementary question. I am puzzled. Why do you not just reveal the salary?

**The Hon. NIALL BLAIR:** Point of order: The member knows that he should address the questions to the Minister. If the Minister would like to refer the questions to the other members at the table, he can do so. But the member should direct his questions through the Minister and not directly start to badger the other witnesses at the table.

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** To the point of order: It was a supplementary question. The CEO of the WestConnex authority confirmed that his previous salary was \$1.29 million.

**The Hon. DUNCAN GAY:** It is not relevant to this.

**The Hon. NIALL BLAIR:** Further to the point of order—

**CHAIR:** Order! I am happy to rule on the point of order. In budget estimates, all questions are directed to the Minister. It is at the Minister's discretion whether he wishes to answer the questions and how he wishes to answer them.

**The Hon. NIALL BLAIR:** Point of order—

**CHAIR:** Order! I have already ruled on the point of order.

**The Hon. DAVID CLARKE:** It is another one.

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** How can you take a point of order when there is nothing before the Chair?

**The Hon. NIALL BLAIR:** Because we are going back to the same question that you are trying to ask, a supplementary, which I think is questioning—

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** I am sorry. Madam Chair, I was not speaking. I was sitting here.

**The Hon. NIALL BLAIR:** So you are moving on? Are you moving on, or are you going to go back to that question?

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** I am asking another question.

**CHAIR:** Order! Does the Hon. Walt Secord have a question?

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** Yes, I do, please. Minister, I would like to know a timetable of when you will reveal Mr Cliche's total remuneration package.

**The Hon. DUNCAN GAY:** It is the same as the answer I gave you to your question on notice—2015 in the normal procedure. In the normal printing of these things, that will happen then.

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** So you are refusing to provide the salary when you know what it is.

**The Hon. DUNCAN GAY:** No, I am not.

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** What is the rationale? Why the cloak of secrecy?

**The Hon. DUNCAN GAY:** Look, I am not refusing to provide the salary. We will release that in the normal procedures. Just because you have some salacious idea of what you want to do does not mean that we stop or change normal procedures to do with public servants in this State.

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** It is very customary that when you announce an appointment, you announce the salary range. It happened with Mr Eccles and it happened with Mr Eccles' replacement in the Premier's Department. I would just like to know: Why are you refusing to reveal Mr Cliche's salary? Is it due to the fact that it would make him the highest-paid public servant in New South Wales? Is that what you are trying to hide?

**The Hon. DUNCAN GAY:** Look, I am not refusing to answer. I answered your question and indicated that that will be released in accordance with the normal procedure.

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** I would like to know: Did he receive a relocation allowance to come to Sydney? Does his package involve any unusual aspects?

**The Hon. DUNCAN GAY:** That is a fair question. Did you?

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** Did you receive it, Mr Cliche?

**Mr CLICHE:** I have not received anything yet. Part of my contract has relocation in it, but I am not actually across all the terms of it yet.

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** Do you know how much you are being paid?

**The Hon. DUNCAN GAY:** We answered that earlier.

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** No, you have not answered that, and I will continue to ask variations of this question, as is my prerogative.

**The Hon. NIALL BLAIR:** It will be a long afternoon. We have plenty of time. You will just keep going around in circles.

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** Minister, is there a termination clause in Mr Cliche's salary package?

**The Hon. DUNCAN GAY:** Look, I am sure there is. I have not got his salary package here with me, but the details that are appropriate to release publicly we will release publicly at the time that I indicated.

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** Minister, did you insist on the confidentiality clause in Mr Cliche's employment contract?

**The Hon. DUNCAN GAY:** Look, I answered this question earlier.

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** I would like to put it through you to Mr Duncan. Did you insist on the confidentiality clause in Mr Cliche's employment contract?

**Mr DUNCAN:** I do not have the details of the contract.

**Mr STEWART:** Can I just add—sorry, Minister. Is it okay?

**The Hon. DUNCAN GAY:** Yes.



**Mr STEWART:** The contracts are actually with me as Secretary of the department.

**The Hon. DUNCAN GAY:** This is just to help you, Walt.

**Mr STEWART:** So the senior service is actually contracted through me.

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** Thank you, sir.

**Mr STEWART:** I signed a contract and, can I just be very clear, these are standard public service contracts with standard provisions in those contracts.

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** Well then, would you have any objection to releasing and divulging the salary package? What makes this so unusual where the Minister is not releasing it into the community—

**The Hon. NIALL BLAIR:** Point of order—

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** —until 2015?

**The Hon. NIALL BLAIR:** I withdraw. He added something. It is all right. I withdraw that. I thought that the member was implying that the Minister will not release it when the Minister clearly said that it will be released in due course. I withdraw the point of order.

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** Mr Stewart, it is supplementary to that answer.

**Mr STEWART:** Thank you. I think, to be very clear again and just to really reinforce what the Minister has said, these matters are published in the annual reports of the various authorities within the Transport cluster. As is my salary and all my executives, they will be published in the normal course of proceedings.

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** Minister, do you not think the community has a right to know what the CEO of the WestConnex Delivery Authority is being paid? We are taxpayers.

**The Hon. DUNCAN GAY:** And they will.

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** Why are you waiting two years to reveal that?

**The Hon. DUNCAN GAY:** I am not waiting two years. I am releasing it in the normal process, the way it is always done with the executive salaries.

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** I put a question on notice and the answer said that you would release it in 2015. I have asked repeatedly today and I am getting the same answer. Would it not just be simpler or easier if you simply just told us? Is it the fact that he was previously in the top 10 highest-paid CEOs in Australia?

**The Hon. DUNCAN GAY:** Look, previous salaries are not relevant to the questions on budget estimates here today. The question on his salary is a relevant one, one of which I have answered—that it will be released in the normal process.

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** I disagree with you, Minister.

**The Hon. DUNCAN GAY:** That is your prerogative.

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** The salary of the most senior public servant for the WestConnex authority is related and relates directly to this year's budget. If there is a question that is completely in line and in order, this is a question that is.

**The Hon. DUNCAN GAY:** No. He was not appointed until after this year's budget.

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** There is a budget line item involving the WestConnex Delivery Authority and this is absolutely in order.

**CHAIR:** Order! Does the member have a question, rather than statements?

**The Hon. NIALL BLAIR:** No, it is up to him.

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** Yes. Minister, I will return to this later.

**The Hon. DUNCAN GAY:** Thank you.

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** On 1 February 2014 you launched the free speed adviser app, which alerts motorists when they are entering a school zone.

**The Hon. DUNCAN GAY:** Yes.

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** Is that correct?

**The Hon. DUNCAN GAY:** From memory. I will take your word for it.

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** You appeared on Channel 9 demonstrating it. I saw you on Channel 9.

**The Hon. DUNCAN GAY:** It might have been someone else demonstrating it.

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** No, you were next to them.

**The Hon. DUNCAN GAY:** I am sure I was on Channel 9.

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** I stand corrected. You were next to someone offering it to you.

**The Hon. DUNCAN GAY:** Thank you. Some days my tech savvy is not that terrific.

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** I would have to say you are probably more tech savvy than me. How many people have downloaded that app?

**The Hon. DUNCAN GAY:** It is a good question.

**Ms PRENDERGAST:** To date we have had 52,500 downloads of the speed adviser app.

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** Do you think, as a professional, that this app has actually saved lives and changed behaviour?

**Ms PRENDERGAST:** We are hoping that it is starting to change behaviour. It is the start of a journey to actually get people conscious of speeding. What it does is give them an audible alert if they are speeding, and hopefully, that will change behaviour.

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** Do you think that it has saved lives?

**Mr SCOT MacDONALD:** Point of order: The 4.9 convention requires that public servants should not be required to justify government policy.

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** I was being positive.

**Mr SCOT MacDONALD:** You were going into that territory.

**CHAIR:** Order! I uphold the point of order. Rephrase the question rather than asking an opinion on policy.

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** Has the NSW Centre for Road Safety conducted any evaluations on the effectiveness of the Speed Advisor app?

**Mr REARDON:** The NSW Centre for Road Safety undertakes an evaluation on every initiative it puts into the public domain. It is early days with that initiative—it is only six months since it was released. We are pleased that, to date, more than 50,000 people have taken it up. In terms of its evaluation—as with most of the campaigns and as with most of the other measures we have put out into the public—it takes up to two to three years to see the real benefits of those campaigns. We will continue to monitor it and we can happily update it—as we do with most other things on our website—in due course.

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** Are you aware of, or have you had brought to your attention, any teething problems or complaints with the app?

**Ms PRENDERGAST:** Yes. When we issued the app, we sought advice from the public about any errors they may see on it. In the early days we saw, with the variables, we were very clear that it could not pick up the variables and to date we have had 19 reports of errors that we have acted on by correcting the map. We welcome that feedback because that assists us in getting the app to be more accurate.

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** What are you doing with these 19 zones that were reported? I received the same 19 complaints.

**Ms PRENDERGAST:** With the 19 zones that were reported, we feed that back to our map provider and we validate the change. We do a site inspection and change the map that the speed zone app is reading from.

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** Let me get this straight: The app told people that it was fine to drive through these school zones?

**The Hon. DUNCAN GAY:** Just a moment, the app does not tell you that it is fine to drive through a school zone; one still has to watch for a school zone. Come on, cobber. Good try.

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** Good catch there, Minister. Minister, how much does the app retail for?

**Ms PRENDERGAST:** Zero—it is free to download. [*Time expired.*]

**CHAIR:** Order! The time has now expired for questions from the Opposition. I will move to questions from the crossbench, starting with Dr Mehreen Faruqi.

**Dr MEHREEN FARUQI:** Minister, I would like to spend some time asking about WestConnex.

**The Hon. DUNCAN GAY:** You are such a fan—an avid supporter.

**Dr MEHREEN FARUQI:** Well, we will see about. It is a real shame that Mr Tony Shepherd, Chairman of the WestConnex Delivery Authority, is not here. You will have to answer all of my questions.

**The Hon. DUNCAN GAY:** I will pass on your concerns to him.

**Dr MEHREEN FARUQI:** As you know, I recently challenged the claim for privilege over many documents from the WestConnex Business Case, Order for Papers. Your department decided to withdraw claims of privilege over dozens of them. Are you aware of what changed since the privilege was claimed and do you think claiming privilege, in the first instance, is indicative of an "err on the side of secrecy" approach by the Government?

**The Hon. NIALL BLAIR:** Can I seek clarification from the Chair? There is a fair bit of argument in that question, particularly in the last sentence. I would seek some clarification from the Chair in relation to the argument in that part of the question.

**CHAIR:** Could I ask the member to restate the last part of the question?

**Dr MEHREEN FARUQI:** Yes. Was it indicative of an "err on the side of secrecy" approach by the Government?

**CHAIR:** Order! The question is out of order. I ask the member to rephrase the question to the Minister.

**The Hon. DUNCAN GAY:** I am happy to answer it, if that is helpful to the Committee.

**Dr MEHREEN FARUQI:** Minister, are you aware of what changed since the original privilege was claimed?

**The Hon. DUNCAN GAY:** Yes. The Greens put a Standing Order No. 52 in, looking for a huge amount of information. I probably would have been more benevolent if I had realised it was coming from someone who supported the project, like you, and wanted the project to go ahead and wanted to make it better. But The Greens came from a position that they wanted to stop it. Because of the short amount of time that we were given to produce all these documents and the number of documents that we had to produce, we had to make decisions as we went. As it turned out, we erred on the conservative side, as we should have in that case, because we knew The Greens were not here, all warm and fuzzy, to help us. They were looking for things to bring this down and they would have used anything.

We supported the learned opinion that indicated that some should come out and, in fact, I moved the original motion in the Parliament after the report was there that it should happen and you moved the second one. So, it is not as if we were trying to hide it. But you have got to know that that claim for papers cost more than a million dollars. That is 18 nurses, 18 policemen, 18 teachers, 18 social workers, who could not be employed in New South Wales because of the amount of money that you used on that. What did The Greens get out of it? Not a lot. You found an early working document. When we asked the guys to think outside the envelope on what they would do with spoil, one of the suggestions was: Perhaps dump it at sea.

But there were a whole lot of other suggestions as well. And obviously, as we went through, that one was put out. But when we asked these guys—on the biggest and the best project in the country—to think outside the square, to come up with better ideas, those sorts of things are going to be there. No, we are not covering up, but within our documentation, there is commercial-in-confidence material that would put the taxpayer at a disadvantage in a commercial situation. And that is why we are very careful with the documents that we release. Whilst you do not want it to go ahead, we certainly want it to go ahead and have the best deal we possibly can for the taxpayers of the State.

**Dr MEHREEN FARUQI:** Minister, you said you were not covering up, but if you are not covering up, why haven't you released the business case and the cost-benefit analysis for the community to see?

**The Hon. DUNCAN GAY:** Part of that was released in the document that came out, the Business Case Executive Summary.

**Dr MEHREEN FARUQI:** Minister, this is just a glossy advertising document. You cannot expect people to believe that this is a cost-benefit analysis.

**The Hon. DUNCAN GAY:** You have to be careful about calling things "glossy advertising" documents because you will insult your colleague who is sitting at the table.

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** I would have done a better one than that, Duncan. I would have sold it better than you did.

**The Hon. DUNCAN GAY:** You have had more experience at doing them than I have. What we have carefully done, through a proper procedure, is put those in place. Some of the material that you were looking for then follows up in the environmental impact statement [EIS]. Not everything comes in that first part. The following material comes in the EIS. We have been public with whatever we possibly can for the community and had a large number of community meetings—including another one coming up in a few days' time—where we are meeting with some mayors in the community. We will keep doing that, and that is what we should do.

**Dr MEHREEN FARUQI:** Talking about the EIS, one of the figures, section 6.6 in the traffic and transport report of the M4 widening EIS shows that the project will lead to fewer heavy commercial vehicles using the M4 once it is widened and tolled. Why is this?

**The Hon. DUNCAN GAY:** In the early part, that will be the case, although my understanding is that there will be up to 3,000 trucks taken out of the community. The M4, widened, is much more attractive for heavy vehicles and I think you may be confused, because the document actually indicates that there will be more cars moving in there, rather than heavy vehicles. And the cars will move in there because there is a toll going on

there and people, during the times of least traffic on Parramatta Road, particularly at night, will make a choice probably not to pay the toll on the M4 and to take their chances and use Parramatta Road.

So there will be an increase in traffic. Incidentally, it is interesting to note that the figures that we have used, the traffic numbers, rather than being traffic numbers of the previous Government that were quite farcical, we have been conservative in our traffic numbers. In fact, if you look at our traffic numbers in comparison to the actual numbers that were there in real time on the old M4 when it was tolled, we have actually come in at a level below that. I actually think it will be more than that.

**Dr MEHREEN FARUQI:** Can I interrupt for one second?

**The Hon. DUNCAN GAY:** I am sorry.

**Dr MEHREEN FARUQI:** You said I was confused, but I am not confused. It states clearly in the EIS that about 13,922 heavy commercial vehicles will move away from the M4 on to other roads.

**The Hon. DUNCAN GAY:** What page?

**Dr MEHREEN FARUQI:** It is page 175.

**The Hon. DUNCAN GAY:** Can I take that on notice?

**Dr MEHREEN FARUQI:** I want to know where will those trucks go? Where will the heavy commercial vehicles go?

**The Hon. DUNCAN GAY:** That is not my understanding, but I will take it on notice and come back with an answer either in response or here today.

**The Hon. JENNIFER GARDINER:** Could any of your staff here or any of the other people answer that question?

**The Hon. DUNCAN GAY:** We will come back to you.

**Dr MEHREEN FARUQI:** Could you explain if any modelling has been done on the proposed M5 duplication and whether similar congestion will apply also to those roads once the toll is put on?

**The Hon. DUNCAN GAY:** When the EIS comes out those figures will be made public. I have to say, if you put a toll on something, some people who are travelling on it now for free will leave. It is the same as the M4.

**Dr MEHREEN FARUQI:** How do you explain the worsened traffic to people when the specifically stated aim of the project is to improve congestion?

**The Hon. DUNCAN GAY:** There will be 1.5 million extra people in Sydney by 2031. Nearly 90 per cent of people travel by car. They have to go somewhere. If we leave it how it is today, it will be just chaos. On a small section of Parramatta Road there will be increased traffic in the short term, but in the long term there will be less traffic because they will move to the M4: better for the environment, more time at home, better for industry. That is why we do it. We have a different view to you. We have a balance. We believe that public transport is important and we need to get as many people as we can on to public transport, but we acknowledge also that as part of the mix you have to have a good road sector and fix up the obvious things. You cannot pretend that there is not going to be an extra 1.5 million people in Sydney by 2031. That is why we are doing it.

**Dr MEHREEN FARUQI:** So Minister, can you—

**CHAIR:** Order! Time has expired for questions. We will now take questions from the Hon. Paul Green.

**The Hon. PAUL GREEN:** In an earlier comment how much did you say the call for WestConnex papers cost?

**The Hon. DUNCAN GAY:** A million dollars.

**The Hon. PAUL GREEN:** What would that million dollars have covered? Did you say 18 nurses?

**The Hon. DUNCAN GAY:** Eighteen nurses or—

**The Hon. PAUL GREEN:** Eighteen social workers?

**The Hon. DUNCAN GAY:** —18 social workers or 18 police officers.

**The Hon. PAUL GREEN:** They are the ones we are after for the Shoalhaven. We could have paid for them to be there.

**The Hon. DUNCAN GAY:** You could have.

**The Hon. PAUL GREEN:** That is a little annoying. North Coast residents are claiming that ageing roads and bridges are putting lives at risk and local governments are calling for more assistance from the State and Federal governments.

**The Hon. DUNCAN GAY:** Yes.

**The Hon. PAUL GREEN:** I commend the Government for putting \$1.55 billion into council roads since you have been in government. Can you comment on the difficulties RMS may be having with local councils and the priorities they have set with ratepayers' money and what you can do to improve the situation?

**The Hon. DUNCAN GAY:** I know a chart never shows up, but the chart that is heading for the sky is the chart of the money we have put into council roads since we have been in government in New South Wales. It is a large amount of money and that chart does not include the money that we put in.

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** I object to the scale on that chart.

**CHAIR:** Order!

**The Hon. PAUL GREEN:** Do you have the previous chart for the previous term?

**The Hon. DUNCAN GAY:** We do have the previous chart. The previous chart is the one that is going through the floor. It is 40 per cent less than this chart.

**The Hon. PAUL GREEN:** Just turn the chart around then, Minister. Turn it upside down.

**The Hon. DUNCAN GAY:** You just take the initial figure and add 40 per cent and that is where it is, and that is without the money we had to put into flood relief. It is an important question. I am not going to bag councils because most are trying to do the right thing with the money they have. Not all councils are the same, just like everything else in the world; some are better than others, but we have put that money into them. We have also just started putting extra money into fixing country roads, which we think is just a terrific program. It is \$37.5 million next year, and for the gentleman sitting beside you to your left, that is not the only money we are putting in; that is on top. He got a little bit confused at a recent press release.

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** No. I knew what I was doing. I was not confused at all.

**The Hon. DUNCAN GAY:** You were not? So you deliberately lied?

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** No. I was not confused.

**The Hon. DUNCAN GAY:** It is money that is going in. The great thing is that it is into councils to be able to work with us or use it to get other grants. We think it is terrific. In fact, in the first round we received submissions for double the amount of money that we have put aside. That is an indication that you can bet your bippy I am going to go back to the Treasurer, the Premier and the Deputy Premier and say, "Guys, this is an area that is missing. Can we look at using some more of the Restart money?" which is the money that is outside the

normal budget money—it is the money from the lease of assets—to be able to help improve local roads for councils, and, of course, Bridges for the Bush as well.

**The Hon. PAUL GREEN:** That is my next question. You are pre-empting me Minister.

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** Because he gave you the questions.

**The Hon. PAUL GREEN:** No he did not.

**CHAIR:** Order! I remind the Hon. Walt Secord that it is disorderly to interrupt, but also extremely rude to his colleagues.

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** I apologise.

**The Hon. PAUL GREEN:** The Minister has the same passion for the bush as I. Do we know how many timber bridges across the State need addressing?

**The Hon. DUNCAN GAY:** I will get a definitive answer from Mr Fogarty.

**The Hon. PAUL GREEN:** Do you want to take it on notice?

**The Hon. DUNCAN GAY:** It is over a thousand.

**The Hon. PAUL GREEN:** Yes, it is quite a lot.

**The Hon. DUNCAN GAY:** One of the things we are doing as part of an audit is that we are trying to find out exactly how many there are. You would remember in Parliament I talked about our new cookie cutter bridge?

**The Hon. PAUL GREEN:** Yes.

**The Hon. DUNCAN GAY:** It is a design we have put together that we can roll out to councils for them to use day labour to be able to put it together and use their own staff. It will be on sizes of 12 metres, which most of those wooden bridges are—some are multiples of that; you can go to 14 metres if you stretch it—and use your own local mini-mix and put it together and you save up to 20 per cent. I am informed that I was way wrong in my number.

**The Hon. PAUL GREEN:** Misleading us!

**The Hon. DUNCAN GAY:** In fact there are up to 10,000 across the State.

**The Hon. PAUL GREEN:** That is just another nought; that is all.

**The Hon. DUNCAN GAY:** Two thousand are owned by the State. The rest are in councils.

**The Hon. PAUL GREEN:** How is the Bridges for the Bush program going and where is it tracking?

**The Hon. DUNCAN GAY:** Bridges for the Bush is going well. In fact, an important milestone for Bridges for the Bush is that tomorrow I will be opening one of the Bridges for the Bush near a small town in southern New South Wales, a town that punches well above its weight—Crookwell.

**The Hon. PAUL GREEN:** I thought it was a hockey township.

**The Hon. DUNCAN GAY:** It is a hockey town. It had two Hockeyroos and is pretty proud of that. There are a number of bridges at the moment. There is the Tulladunna Bridge on the Kamilaroi Highway, the Gunnedah Bridge over the rail line, Kapooka Bridge on the Olympic Highway, Echuca-Moama Bridge on the Cobb Highway, Bemboka Bridge on the Snowy Mountains Highway, and program 2 will be a large number of timber truss bridge replacements. We have already finished Dunmore Bridge.

**The Hon. PAUL GREEN:** In relation to the bridges, Minister, where is Grafton Bridge up to?

**The Hon. DUNCAN GAY:** Grafton Bridge is not part of the Bridges for the Bush program.

**The Hon. PAUL GREEN:** No, this is just in relation to bridges. Where is Grafton Bridge up to? Have we started digging?

**The Hon. DUNCAN GAY:** It is fortuitous that you ask this question because guess what happened today?

**The Hon. PAUL GREEN:** We dug a hole?

**The Hon. DUNCAN GAY:** No, the environmental impact study went out today. We have dug quite a few holes because we have been testing the soil. It seemed like it was hundreds of sites that we looked at. From memory, there were about 19 different sites that we looked at. As you are probably aware, planning is underway. We have announced where it will be, and \$177 million was allocated in the 2014-15 budget in Restart NSW funding to build the bridge.

**The Hon. PAUL GREEN:** When is it anticipated it will be completed?

**The Hon. DUNCAN GAY:** Can I come—

**The Hon. PAUL GREEN:** You can keep searching for that. I have some other questions about bridges. I am led to believe there is a delay concerning the Oallen Ford Bridge. Is that right?

**The Hon. DUNCAN GAY:** Oallen Ford Bridge is on what is known as—

**The Hon. PAUL GREEN:** Main Road 92.

**The Hon. DUNCAN GAY:** M52, I think it is.

**The Hon. PAUL GREEN:** Main Road 92.

**The Hon. DUNCAN GAY:** Main Road 92.

**The Hon. PAUL GREEN:** Shoalhaven Highway.

**The Hon. DUNCAN GAY:** The honourable member is quite correct. In fact, his advice is what I have here. A week ago we were told that council has advised that investigations have shown that the existing bridge is not on the council-owned road reserve but is on Crown land that is subject to an Aboriginal land claim. Council advised me that they would undertake further conversations and consultation is required. It would delay the start of work from August 2014 to early 2015. There is an extra amount of money involved in this move but the council involved have indicated their willingness to wear the extra cost.

**The Hon. PAUL GREEN:** In terms of land claims, I think there are about 27,000 of those. Will someone be quickening the process for dialogue to happen with the land council so this major highway upgrade can occur?

**The Hon. DUNCAN GAY:** They will move the bridge to a different site that is not affected by an Aboriginal land claim. That is what they plan. The new site is more expensive, hence the extra amount of money. It was refreshing to have a mayor ring me up and say, "We have a problem", and claim mea culpa. "Will you take the money away from us?" How could you take the money away from them when they are trying to fix things when a mistake has been made?

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** I want to cuddle you, Duncan.

**The Hon. PAUL GREEN:** It is a very strategic route.

**CHAIR:** Order!

**The Hon. DUNCAN GAY:** The current plan is to finish the Grafton Bridge in 2019.



**CHAIR:** Thank you. We now move to questions from the Opposition.

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** Minister, you mentioned a bridge in Crookwell that you are opening tomorrow.

**The Hon. DUNCAN GAY:** Yes.

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** What is the name of that bridge?

**The Hon. DUNCAN GAY:** James Park, I think it is. It is over the Crookwell River. I am not sure of the name of it.

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** Did you disclose to the Premier's office that you have substantial family holdings in the Crookwell area?

**The Hon. DUNCAN GAY:** I would love to be able to disclose to the Premier's office that I have substantial holdings in the Crookwell district. I have a farm in the Crookwell district and I do not think that is a secret to anyone. I am partisan to the people of the Crookwell area and the people of southern New South Wales, including—

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** And you have a bridge now.

**The Hon. DUNCAN GAY:** They have, because they needed one. Mr Secord, I would be very careful not to judge others by your standards.

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** No, I am asking you a question, Mr Gay. I want to know, did you disclose to the Premier's office—

**CHAIR:** I remind the honourable member to refer to the Minister by his correct title.

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** Sorry, the Hon. Duncan Gay.

**CHAIR:** Minister.

**The Hon. DUNCAN GAY:** Everything that needs to be disclosed to the Premier has been disclosed to the Premier. I do not think it is a secret to anyone in New South Wales that I proudly come from Crookwell.

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** Did you disclose in writing to Mr Duncan that you have substantial property and a family farm in Crookwell near this bridge?

**The Hon. DUNCAN GAY:** No.

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** You did not?

**The Hon. DUNCAN GAY:** No.

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** Did you not think that was the appropriate and proper thing to do?

**The Hon. DUNCAN GAY:** No.

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** You do not think it is appropriate—

**The Hon. NIALL BLAIR:** Point of order: As a member of that community that travels on that road, I think the member is trying to tarnish the building of this bridge by casting aspersions against the Minister for having some sort of interest that needed to be declared—

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** That is the nub. Now you get where I am going.

**CHAIR:** Order! The Hon. Walt Secord has been interrupting all afternoon.

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** Not true, not true.

**CHAIR:** Order! I remind him to allow the Deputy-Chair to make a point of order and then he can respond, if he wishes.

**The Hon. NIALL BLAIR:** I find this line of questioning is an insult to the people of southern New South Wales. He is casting aspersions upon the Minister, which I think need to be withdrawn. The member needs to cease this line of questioning on an important piece of infrastructure for a community about which he has no idea. The line of questioning should be ruled out of order.

**CHAIR:** Order! I do not uphold the point of order but I remind the member to be generally relevant to budget estimates.

**The Hon. DUNCAN GAY:** I am happy to answer. My property holdings and my pecuniary interests are registered on the parliamentary pecuniary interests register, the same as everyone else's. If something comes up in a Cabinet discussion that I have a connection with I would declare that. This is not a matter that would normally come up. The holding of farms across the State is not an issue that precludes people making decisions. As for the road that the James Park Bridge is on, I do not live on that road.

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** Minister, what is the dollar value of that bridge?

**The Hon. DUNCAN GAY:** It is \$5.7 million.

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** Minister, you misunderstood my question. The question was: Did you disclose in writing or verbally to Mr Duncan that in fact you live in the vicinity of a bridge that is worth \$5 million?

**Mr SCOT MacDONALD:** Point of order: I do not think the question is relevant.

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** It is very relevant.

**CHAIR:** Order! I again remind the member to be relevant to budget estimates. You have covered this. I am sure the Minister is happy to answer the question again, which he has already answered.

**The Hon. DUNCAN GAY:** Madam Chair, I find the question offensive. It is just totally offensive that because someone lives in regional New South Wales that they would not try to fix up the infrastructure for the people in that area, that they would not listen to the local councils who put this highest on their list of priorities. I say once again to the honourable member, do not judge people by your own standards.

**The Hon. NIALL BLAIR:** Does your Country Labor mate know you are asking these questions? He would be ashamed too. Come on, Mr Veitch, speak up. This is an insult to the people of regional New South Wales.

**CHAIR:** Order! Does the member have a question?

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** I think I will return to this.

**The Hon. DUNCAN GAY:** You can stay with it if you like.

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** Minister, I remind you that this is New South Wales budget estimates. This is not Sir Joh Bjelke-Petersen-Russ Hinze estimates.

**CHAIR:** Order! Do you have a question?

**The Hon. DUNCAN GAY:** I take offence at that.

**The Hon. NIALL BLAIR:** Are you going to withdraw that?

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** What is the inference or the concern? What is the point?

**CHAIR:** Order!

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** What is the objection?

**Mr SCOT MacDONALD:** The inference is pretty clear.

**CHAIR:** Order! I ask the Hon. Walt Secord or the Hon. Mick Veitch if they have any questions because this is Opposition question time.

**The Hon. NIALL BLAIR:** Keep going because this is good. This is good. This will play out well for you.

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** Minister, have you attended any NorthConnex public meetings or public forums?

**The Hon. DUNCAN GAY:** There has only been one public forum and I did not attend that one. That was an air forum that we put on. It was one, interestingly, that is not normally put on. After talking to the local members, in particular, the former Premier, two local members indicated that it would be a great idea, and we made the decision that other than the local members it would be inappropriate for politicians to be there; it was one for the community.

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** So former Premier Barry O'Farrell, Mr Kean and I are not politicians? We sat in the front row. We were specifically asked—

**The Hon. DUNCAN GAY:** Two of those are the local members; you can speak to whether the other one is a politician.

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** You said it was not appropriate for politicians to attend?

**The Hon. DUNCAN GAY:** I stand by that.

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** When was the last public forum or public meeting involving WestConnex that you attended?

**The Hon. DUNCAN GAY:** The mayoral forum.

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** With the community?

**The Hon. DUNCAN GAY:** Yes.

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** No, no, with the community. A public forum sponsored by them. I put it to you that you have never attended a public forum or public meeting for WestConnex?

**The Hon. DUNCAN GAY:** I have been to a number of forums for WestConnex.

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** Can you tell me the dates?

**The Hon. DUNCAN GAY:** Not off the top of my head. I will take that on notice.

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** Your staff can.

**The Hon. DUNCAN GAY:** I will take that on notice.

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** No, no, I can wait.

**The Hon. DUNCAN GAY:** I have answered the question. I will take it on notice.

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** I can wait. Your staff are going to provide you with a note.

**The Hon. DUNCAN GAY:** We will take it on notice.

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** The note is coming up.

**CHAIR:** Order! The Minister has said that he will take the question on notice.

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** Minister, do you remember what happened on 7 September 2013?

**The Hon. DUNCAN GAY:** Remind me.

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** It was the election of the Abbott Government. On 7 September 2014 Tony Abbott said it was going to be an important day. He said that on the anniversary of the election of his Government there will be "cranes over our cities, bulldozers working on big infrastructure projects such as the WestConnex in Sydney ... and that will be underway within 12 months of a change of government". That is three weeks from now. When will tunnelling and construction begin on WestConnex?

**The Hon. DUNCAN GAY:** Tunnelling will not start until the next section. The first section that we are doing is the widening of the M4, which does not involve tunnelling. The construction can only start after the environmental impact statement [EIS] has been passed and any concerns raised in the EIS have been addressed. It is currently out to tender.

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** On 6 August 2014 in Sydney Roads and Maritime Services conducted an industry briefing in the city here on the upgrade of the Ballina to Woolgoolga section of the Pacific Highway. My office, through the appropriate protocol, submitted a registration form to attend a briefing. I identified myself and provided my shadow ministerial title on the application. Advertisements were placed in the *Sydney Morning Herald*. The night before the briefing I received a telephone call and my invite to attend was promptly withdrawn. The bureaucrat was forced to tell me not to attend. Can you give an assurance that your staff did not instruct that bureaucrat to withdraw the invitation?

**The Hon. DUNCAN GAY:** We indicated to you that a briefing, the equivalent of that briefing, would be given to you. This was a briefing for people who build roads, people who have constructed highways across the State. To the best of my knowledge you have never built anything, nor will you ever in your life in the future.

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** Minister, you did not answer my question.

**The Hon. DUNCAN GAY:** Yes I did.

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** Did your staff instruct them to withdraw the invitation?

**The Hon. DUNCAN GAY:** I answered the question.

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** No you did not.

**The Hon. DUNCAN GAY:** Yes I did.

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** I will repeat it.

**The Hon. DUNCAN GAY:** Yes I did.

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** No you didn't. Did you instruct your staff to withdraw the invitation?

**The Hon. DUNCAN GAY:** I have answered your question.

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** Minister, on 13 August I asked you about evidence given in the Supreme Court on 12 August that Tony Shepherd, as a senior executive of Transfield Holdings, was involved in discussions in late 2002 to allegedly drive up traffic forecasts on the Lane Cove Tunnel. At the time you said that he retained your full confidence as chair of the WestConnex Delivery Authority. Have you or your office had any discussions with Tony Shepherd as to the matters raised in the Supreme Court about inflating figures?

**Mr SCOT MacDONALD:** Point of order: This question seeks adverse reflection on someone else and if the matter is before the courts then clearly we should not be canvassing it.

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** Further to the point of order: I am seeking information on public policy. The Minister chose to answer the question in the Chamber and said that he had full confidence in Mr Shepherd. This is virtually a supplementary question, and the Minister actually answered it the very first time. I am now asking if the Minister pursued it in a policy sense and if there were concerns about it.

**CHAIR:** Order! I need to clarify whether the matter is before the court.

**Mr SCOT MacDONALD:** Mr Secord said it was.

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** I was referring to information that was revealed in the proceedings on 12 August. I do not know if it is before the court at the moment. The Minister at the time chose to answer the question.

**CHAIR:** Order! Minister, are you aware if this matter is before the court? If not, the Minister may answer the question.

**The Hon. DUNCAN GAY:** The matter is before the court but I am happy to answer the slur on areas that are not before the court. In their inimitable style, when they have not got a policy they will play the man. The fact is, as I indicated in Parliament, the whole process of WestConnex does not involve a reliance on traffic numbers, whether inflated or not. We are building this ourselves, proving it up, and it will only be leased on actual numbers. Mr Secord and his mate Jake Saulwick have both got it wrong. They do not understand the premise of the business case. The article on 12 August contained imputations, which were repeated by the member against Tony Shepherd. Frankly, they are indefensible and unable to be proved as a matter of substantial truth.

I have spoken to Mr Shepherd on this matter and the facts are as follows. Mr Shepherd was a non-executive director of Transfield Services Ltd, which was a member of the consortium providing operations and management services. In that capacity—as a non-executive director—he was requested by the consortium's members to chair the meetings of the consortium. In the context of the consortium, and in relation to a bid in the nature of the bid prepared for the Lane Cove Tunnel project, the task of chairing the consortium meetings was facilitative in nature only. So he was a facilitator and a chair of those meetings. Mr Shepherd was not deeply involved in the preparation of the bid. The consortium engaged consultants Parsons Brinckerhoff to undertake the traffic modelling. Parsons Brinckerhoff provided expert advice to the consortium on traffic modelling for the project, which advice, to Mr Shepherd's knowledge, was relied upon by the consortium to help refinance for the bid and the project.

Madam Chair, as you would remember, part of the way the previous Government did these tunnels was the winning bidder had the most money upfront to the Government, not the best project. That is the way they had their business plan. Our business plan is entirely different, and Mr Shepherd, an eminent man, is chairman of the authority. Anything to do with this case has absolutely no relevance to the current operation of WestConnex. Mr Shepherd has also advised me that he has consulted his lawyers in relation to the *Sydney Morning Herald* article of 12 August and has asked the editor for a printed correction and apology. As I said then, I have complete confidence in Mr Shepherd.

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** Minister, you would be aware of documents that were privileged until last week but are now in the public domain.

**The Hon. DUNCAN GAY:** Yes.

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** Minister, I draw your attention to document RMS.017.021.1836. That document refers to concern about WestConnex not linking to the port. If you wish me to table that document I will. The document states that Sydney Ports "expressed a strong desire for a quality connection to the port". It also states that Sydney Ports was worried about "the impact of traffic from the WestConnex being put on roads and the airport and port precincts". The third point is that 20,000 people work at the port precinct and almost all of them drive. Even Sydney Ports—another one of your agencies—is concerned that WestConnex does not lead to the port. What is your response to that?

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**The Hon. DUNCAN GAY:** Well, we have covered that in our WestConnex enhancement works. If you look at the amount of money since the development of WestConnex that we are putting into the port area—and it is not just Port Botany; it is the airport as well—you will see that it is a large amount of money. Some of it is from the Federal Government but the bulk of it is coming from us. It is going into that area. Since that letter was written we have also enhanced some of the works that we are doing as we progress onto stage 2 and stage 3.

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** So, Minister, Sydney Ports is 100 per cent comfortable with your response? Is there a representative of Sydney Ports here?

**The Hon. DUNCAN GAY:** No, not until the next session.

**The Hon. NIALL BLAIR:** Maybe in the Freight portfolio.

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** Minister, you would be aware that among those privileged documents was another document—RMS.017.021.1639. This refers to the tolling structure for WestConnex. Minister, are there plans for a second toll for motorists leaving WestConnex to enter the airport?

**The Hon. DUNCAN GAY:** Not as far as I am aware.

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** I seek leave to table the document.

**The Hon. DUNCAN GAY:** I am not aware of any toll on that.

**The Hon. MICK VEITCH:** Minister, Main Road 284 [MR294] and Main Road 384 [MR384], or, as I prefer to call it, the Wagga to Tumbarumba road—unlike you I have not quite got my head around those numbers—is burdened by two classifications. It is Main Road 284 in the Greater Hume and Tumbarumba shires and Main Road 384 in the Wagga Wagga local government area—where it is a regional road. There is an issue around the State road, regional road and local road classification. This is the same road. Minister, as you would be aware, this happens in a number of places across the State. What are the plans, firstly, to assist the councils in this case to rectify that status and make it consistent and, secondly, to fix this issue across the State?

**The Hon. DUNCAN GAY:** I do not have an answer for that but it is a damned good question, I have to say. Part of what we did with the new alpha-numeric system was to bring a common sense approach to roads across the State on it. It seems to be working well. The question I normally get asked in this area from local councils is: Will you make it a regional road and pay for it rather than it being a council road? Can I come back to you on this? Mr Duncan might want to add to this.

**Mr DUNCAN:** We can take that up in the next statewide review of classifications. I have not been across that example.

**The Hon. DUNCAN GAY:** It is a good idea.

**The Hon. MICK VEITCH:** If you want to take it on notice and get back to me, that would be fine.

**The Hon. DUNCAN GAY:** We are happy to take it on board as a good suggestion.

**The Hon. MICK VEITCH:** Minister, with regard to the employment of people with disability within Roads and Maritime Services, is there a strategy to enhance the number of people with disability working in your department?

**Mr REARDON:** Across the Transport cluster we have a disability action plan that the entire cluster and includes how we go about staffing within each of the organisations. So there certainly is a plan about both how we deal with customers and how we deal with our people within the organisation and the responses we have to people with disability.

**CHAIR:** Order! The time for questions from the Opposition has expired. I invite questions from Dr Mehreen Faruqi.

**Dr MEHREEN FARUQI:** Minister, if, as according to you, WestConnex is the best project then what alternatives did you compare it to when determining that within the cost-benefit analysis and the business case?

**The Hon. DUNCAN GAY:** The original plan, as Dr Mehreen Faruqi would probably remember, was one that came out of Infrastructure NSW [INSW]. INSW put together a number of competing ideas on the best way to go on this. They ultimately settled on WestConnex because it makes sense. You have an M4 coming in from the Blue Mountains, crossing the M7, hitting Parramatta and then going into Homebush Bay Drive and Concord Road, and just stopping—

**Dr MEHREEN FARUQI:** Minister, sorry to interrupt you but I know about WestConnex. What were the alternatives? Were any considered and what were they?

**The Hon. DUNCAN GAY:** I do not know what alternatives there were. We inherited this from a decision that was made by INSW.

**Dr MEHREEN FARUQI:** But, Minister, you did the business case and the cost-benefit analysis. Did you not consider any alternatives?

**The Hon. DUNCAN GAY:** The WestConnex group did the business case but the alternatives to WestConnex were done prior to when we got it. Dr Mehreen Faruqi asked me the reasons why we chose this and I was starting to answer.

**Dr MEHREEN FARUQI:** Sorry, Minister, I was asking about the alternatives and whether you considered any alternatives during the business case.

**The Hon. DUNCAN GAY:** INSW did that.

**Mr DUNCAN:** The alternatives in discussions about WestConnex were developed as part of the State Infrastructure Strategy. So that was in fact carried out by Infrastructure NSW. We were given the task then to develop the business case around the project.

**Dr MEHREEN FARUQI:** Sure, but, Mr Duncan, do you not think that a business case and a cost-benefit analysis has to be between alternatives and not just on one project?

**Mr DUNCAN:** The alternatives had already been considered as part of the INSW work.

**Dr MEHREEN FARUQI:** Moving on, Minister, your environmental impact statement [EIS] for the M4 widening models travel impacts on Parramatta Road is based on a comparator at Duck River crossing on Parramatta Road. This shows that there will be more traffic on that section of Parramatta Road after the M4 is widened. Would you agree with that, Minister?

**The Hon. DUNCAN GAY:** Yes, but it will be less than what was there previously when a toll was put on the M4.

**Dr MEHREEN FARUQI:** The analysis also shows that this section of Parramatta Road is the most congested section in the morning peak. Would that be accurate to say, Minister?

**The Hon. DUNCAN GAY:** Yes, that would be accurate. I answered this earlier—this is not the time of day travel; this is the total number for the day saying how many vehicles will be there. We have been completely upfront about this. Even before the EIS came out we indicated that there would be more on this section. This is not an EIS for WestConnex; this is an EIS for the widening of that section of the M4.

**Dr MEHREEN FARUQI:** I understand that, thank you. But, Minister, the rest of the WestConnex will be completed in 2023. So people will be stuck in traffic for at least five years while they are paying for being stuck in traffic. Actually the figures in the EIS are not all-day; they are for the morning peak.

**The Hon. DUNCAN GAY:** People on Parramatta Road will not be paying.

**Dr MEHREEN FARUQI:** People on the M4 will be paying a toll, will they not?

**The Hon. DUNCAN GAY:** People on the M4 will be paying a toll; people on Parramatta Road will not be paying a toll. Dr Mehreen Faruqi just indicated that these people would be stuck in traffic and paying tolls. They are not paying tolls.

**Dr MEHREEN FARUQI:** M4 drivers will be stuck on the M4 and will not be to move on Parramatta Road. I want to ask specific questions about the Duck River section of Parramatta Road.

**The Hon. NIALL BLAIR:** Point of order: I am sure that Dr Mehreen Faruqi does not mean to do this but in a lot of her questioning she is adding argument to the questions rather than sticking to the facts and asking the Minister about the facts and asking him to provide information. I think the questions need to be asked with the removal of the subjective argument that the member keeps adding to her questions. Madam Chair, I ask that you would bring her to order.

**CHAIR:** Order! There are two points I want to raise. First, there is a lot of noise amongst other Committee members, which makes it difficult to hear. Second, I remind Dr Mehreen Faruqi not to interject when the Minister is answering a question and also to consider how she is phrasing her questions.

**Dr MEHREEN FARUQI:** Yes, Madam Chair. But this is not subjective argument—these are actually facts.

**CHAIR:** Dr Mehreen Faruqi, I also suggest that you do not argue with the Chair.

**Dr MEHREEN FARUQI:** Minister, you would agree that one of the figures in the environmental impact statement shows that the Duck River section of Parramatta Road is the most congested section of Parramatta Road in the morning peak. That is the current situation.

**The Hon. DUNCAN GAY:** I will take your word on that.

**Dr MEHREEN FARUQI:** Minister, would it not then stand to reason that the traffic impact on other sections of Parramatta Road would be greater than the impact on the Duck River section, because this section is already over capacity?

**The Hon. DUNCAN GAY:** No, that would not be correct—A does not equal B in that situation. As I indicated earlier, this is not an environmental impact statement [EIS] on the whole of WestConnex and nor is it an EIS on the whole of Parramatta Road. There will be a small section, that section along there, where there will be an increase in traffic. But as we build the next section there will be a decrease in traffic on Parramatta Road because at the moment there is no alternative to Parramatta Road. Then you will see Parramatta Road free up and the traffic move into the area that is free. When you say that it is all going to be like Duck Creek, that is not right.

**Dr MEHREEN FARUQI:** Do you have figures for predicted traffic impact on other sections of Parramatta Road and could you provide them to the Committee?

**The Hon. DUNCAN GAY:** It is not part of the current EIS. All we have out there is the current EIS, which is the section beside the M4 where, because of tolls going on it, a number of people will leave the M4 and go on to Parramatta Road. But when we build the tunnel section from Homebush Bay Drive east there will be a whole new road that will take people who are already on Parramatta Road with no alternative off Parramatta Road. As they are removed it is obvious that there will be an improvement. This is the same as when we were honest and up-front and indicated that when you put a toll there will be people who will leave and go on Parramatta Road. But if you want a fast trip you should go on the widened and enhanced M4 because from memory there will be about a 74 per cent improvement in travel times on the M4 once it is widened.

**Dr MEHREEN FARUQI:** You chose that part of Duck River for your analysis because you think most cars will move there and not any other part of Parramatta Road?

**The Hon. DUNCAN GAY:** I have no idea why it was that part.

**Dr MEHREEN FARUQI:** Could you provide the assumptions on which that part of Duck River was chosen as a comparison point and not any other part of Parramatta Road?



**The Hon. DUNCAN GAY:** I am happy to take it on notice. Do you know, Mr Duncan?

**Mr DUNCAN:** It was part of the EIS and it was in the centre of the route so it was the appropriate place to do that analysis.

**Dr MEHREEN FARUQI:** But do you not think it is a little bit misleading given it is already so congested that not many cars can actually move onto it?

**Mr DUNCAN:** There is more capacity provided in the road.

**Dr MEHREEN FARUQI:** On Parramatta Road?

**Mr DUNCAN:** By widening it there is.

**Dr MEHREEN FARUQI:** You are not widening Parramatta Road.

**Mr DUNCAN:** On the motorway. There is more capacity in the motorway. That is the issue.

**Dr MEHREEN FARUQI:** I am talking about Parramatta Road, though.

**Mr DUNCAN:** It is a daily figure. It is not the peak figure.

**Dr MEHREEN FARUQI:** You have given peak figures in your EIS. It is quite amazing that this is the largest infrastructure project in Australia, worth \$15 billion, and the community is extremely concerned about it and we cannot get answers.

**The Hon. NIALL BLAIR:** Point of order: I think that was not a question, it was more of a statement. But whatever it was, it was full of argument. Again I ask the member to come back to the facts and ask questions in accordance with the standing orders so that we can have a proper debate on the issues in relation to the Minister's portfolio in budget estimates.

**CHAIR:** Order! I uphold the point of order. I remind the member to ask questions rather than make statements. Does the Minister wish to comment or respond to the statement?

**The Hon. DUNCAN GAY:** The statement is emotive and, frankly, I do not believe it is true. I was asked earlier if we looked at alternates to WestConnex. There are obvious alternates: do nothing with 1.5 million extra people in Sydney and chaos now; improve only Parramatta Road west of Concord; invest in public transport or rail freight; or take the member's suggestion to use the current Parramatta Road and put a light rail up the middle of it, which we did not look at because it clearly would not work.

**CHAIR:** Order! Time has expired for questions from Dr Faruqi. We will move to the Hon. Paul Green.

**The Hon. PAUL GREEN:** Continuing with bridges, does Roads and Maritime Services [RMS] have a position on the second bridge crossing of the Macquarie River across the flood plain at Dubbo?

**The Hon. DUNCAN GAY:** There is currently the LH Ford Bridge and a low-level crossing on the Newell Highway at the northern end. My understanding is that there is not money in our forward planning, no.

**The Hon. PAUL GREEN:** In terms of the Shoalhaven crossing, which you were down recently to announce, we are still getting representations about why RMS chose the western side. There is great concern that it will compromise the corridor for future development. Does RMS want to put on record how it decided to build it on the western side?

**The Hon. DUNCAN GAY:** We were asked by the honourable member, who is a former mayor of the Shoalhaven and who has close connections to the community, if we would look at it. The current mayor and the council also asked us because they needed to put planning in place into the future. They were not expecting us to build a bridge immediately but they needed to know what route we were going to take so that they could put their planning in place. They needed to know where the bridge would be so they could make the decisions now rather than leave them for years. We were asked. We put a large amount of money into evaluations. It came back in favour of the northern route 30 metres, from memory, above the current concrete bridge. There were

some that wanted it on the south because they wanted some buildings got rid of rather than because it was an actual spot where it could be. The department came back with the decision. It was not mine. That was the recommendation that came to me and I certainly accepted it.

**Mr DUNCAN:** The major assessment occurred through a value management workshop that was held in May earlier this year. It was seen to be the most suitable location out of the alternatives.

**The Hon. PAUL GREEN:** The number one reason was not engineering?

**Mr DUNCAN:** No, there were various reasons. There were the various filters that you would use in any route location for a major road or bridge.

**The Hon. PAUL GREEN:** Where is the Berry to Bombaderry upgrade of the Princes Highway up to?

**The Hon. DUNCAN GAY:** First of all we have to complete the Gerringong bypass and then the Berry bypass.

**Mr FOGARTY:** We are continuing to plan. We have got to the point of achieving planning approval for the next section. We will continue with detailed design in the coming period in anticipation that in the future there will be funds to construct it.

**The Hon. PAUL GREEN:** Do we have an idea of how much money will be needed for the construction from Berry to Bombaderry?

**Mr FOGARTY:** It is hundreds of millions but I have not got the numbers in front of me.

**The Hon. PAUL GREEN:** Recently emergency roadworks were carried out on the failure of a new piece of the road at Gerringong just south of Belinda Street. Do you have comment on why that new piece had to be gone over again?

**Mr FOGARTY:** The section that you are talking about is a temporary pavement that was constructed to enable roadworks to happen in the cutting adjacent to it. It is a temporary section of pavement. In the extreme weather that occurred in the last week the pavement started to fail and it has required some remedial work to keep it going. Currently we are operating a one lane arrangement under traffic control and working very quickly to complete what is the permanent pavement at the base of the cutting so that traffic can be put back on to that as early as early next week.

**The Hon. PAUL GREEN:** What is the completion date? Is it still on track and on budget?

**Mr FOGARTY:** Yes. The project is moving to completion by the middle of next year.

**The Hon. DUNCAN GAY:** And we are hopeful—holding our breath—that we can do similar to what we were able to do at South Nowra last year with the Christmas traffic.

**The Hon. PAUL GREEN:** That would be wise.

**The Hon. DUNCAN GAY:** It is a hope, and that is what the guys are working towards. There is no guarantee on this. There is a lot of their own personal pride in getting towards this, but there is not a guarantee. But we are hopeful of being able to do that.

**Mr FOGARTY:** The specific challenge that they have been set is to get the dual carriageway open from the northern end through to the entrance into Gerringong so that it is operating prior to Christmas in its final configuration. The balance of it to the south will continue to be completed towards the middle of next year.

**The Hon. PAUL GREEN:** It is already an improvement, there is no doubt. In terms of unregistered motorbikes being ridden illegally on public roads, what is the department doing about that?

**The Hon. DUNCAN GAY:** We are looking at a recreational licence in that area. We have had suggestions from you and from others on the crossbench who are interested in this area. That is an indication that it works both ways. You have a better ability to be able to find out who is around what is happening, but

also it is cheaper than a road licence for people who just ride off-road. There is an incentive for people to go about it in a proper way and there is a better knowledge of what is happening. Tim has an update.

**Mr REARDON:** The Minister has asked us to look at a recreational registration in off-road so we are undertaking that now. We have to work through an interdepartmental committee to bring that forward. As you would appreciate, it is a matter that has been around for some time so there is a fair bit to work through.

**The Hon. PAUL GREEN:** That is the reason I keep bringing it up.

**Mr REARDON:** Yes. That is what we are doing. We will lead that work with other agencies who are directly involved.

**The Hon. PAUL GREEN:** Last year I asked a question relating to standardising safety helmets and one standardised system. Do we have an update on that?

**Ms PRENDERGAST:** We are representing nationally. We are actually leading it for all the other jurisdictions as well. We are looking at progressively adopting the UNECE (European standard). We are hoping to release a discussion paper later in the year. We have been working really closely with the ACCC, the national helmets committee, the New South Wales Motorcycle Alliance and the New South Wales Motorcycle Council. We are very confident that by the end of the year we will have something out. We are actually making really good progress in that space too. What that will do is broaden availability of the helmets and more lightweight helmets will be available to consumers.

**The Hon. PAUL GREEN:** How is the progression for locking down a route for the M9 linking Camden, Penrith and Windsor in terms of the importance of the role this road will play in the future as an extension to Badgerys Creek?

**The Hon. DUNCAN GAY:** It is underway.

**Mr KANOFSKI:** Currently there is preliminary planning for the M9, which would be a multimodal reservation. We are looking at rail and road. That is underway. It is very early stages in terms of a range of options being developed. Those would be taken through to a full community consultation process. It will certainly be a road-rail corridor. That is what is being looked at. Those options are in development as per the recent announcement from the Government.

**The Hon. DUNCAN GAY:** That community consultation will start happening later this year.

**The Hon. PAUL GREEN:** Back to the bridges. How is the North Richmond Bridge? Where is that up to in its process?

**Mr KANOFSKI:** There are three intersection upgrades on the approach to North Richmond Bridge that are planned to reduce congestion and improve traffic flow. We published a study of those in July 2013. That has got short-term options for 2021 and long-term options to 2036 to best address traffic congestion on the bridge. Short-term options include intersection upgrades at Grose Vale Road, Yarramundi Lane, Kurrajong Road, Old Kurrajong Road, Bosworth Street, which are all congested during morning and afternoon peaks. Long-term improvements include replacing the North Richmond Bridge. We are working with the Hawkesbury City Council and developers, looking at a draft voluntary planning agreement that outlines a commitment by the developers to fund improvements on the local roads for some of the short-term options to ease congestion. Intersection improvements will start after community consultation and the normal design and environmental impact assessment process.

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** Minister, I am asking about wet weather variable speed zones. In New South Wales there are two wet weather variable speed zones: I think there is one on the M1 motorway north of Hawkesbury Road to Mount White, which is 100 kilometres an hour during dry weather and 90 kilometres an hour during wet weather; and there is another 6.5 kilometre stretch on the Bells Line of Road near the Darling Causeway, which is 100 kilometres an hour and 80 kilometres an hour during the rain. Has the Centre for Road Safety carried out any studies in this area?

**Ms PRENDERGAST:** Absolutely. We are obviously exploring rolling out more of the variable-type speed limits with RMS and we are constantly evaluating. The first evaluation we have looked at is the fog one

on the F6. The Bells Line of Road was only installed on 5 June so it is a little early, but we are looking at that as a future mechanism both for variables for rain but also even for peak activity times.

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** So the preliminary research has been positive?

**Ms PRENDERGAST:** Absolutely, for the fog warning, yes.

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** Do you envisage running out more of them in the next year?

**Ms PRENDERGAST:** What we are doing is we need to evaluate the variables that are in place now, but we think it is a practical, sensible solution.

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** Have you identified any sites where it would be appropriate to consider installing these?

**Ms PRENDERGAST:** There is some work underway in collaboration with RMS starting to scope potential other locations.

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** Could you give on notice the number of locations?

**The Hon. DUNCAN GAY:** Peter Duncan is happy to add to that.

**Mr DUNCAN:** Can I just add that there is another level to this, too, and it is the managed motorways concept or smart motorways. In fact, on our motorways network we have variable speed limits as well for, usually, congestion reasons or traffic flow reasons. Areas like that we will definitely be looking at in our future motorways provision.

**The Hon. DUNCAN GAY:** And the M4 in particular. The Mount White variable speed limit has been hugely successful in bringing down the toll in that area.

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** Let us switch to clearways. Has the RMS or the Centre for Road Safety carried out any evaluations on the current clearways program that you have announced?

**The Hon. DUNCAN GAY:** It is underway.

**Mr REARDON:** We released a clearways strategy between Transport for NSW and Roads and Maritime Services late last year. We put five priority locations within that. The first of those was for Victoria Road and that has been installed. We and Roads and Maritime Services are currently going through the evaluation of that. Again—this is the same as the previous answer—it is early days here. The effectiveness is very encouraging, but over a period of time and reasonable time periods we will certainly respond to the effectiveness of that, as we will with other clearways once they have been implemented.

**The Hon. DUNCAN GAY:** And you add the Pinch Point Program to that, which has been hugely successful. Without a full evaluation of these, if you came out and stood with me there, the number of thumbs up and air horns from people driving past makes you feel good. You know you are doing the right thing when the community acknowledges you when you are on the road.

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** Obviously you were not on Oxford Street when you did that.

**The Hon. DUNCAN GAY:** No, but you probably were.

**The Hon. NIALL BLAIR:** What does your statement mean?

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** I want to know the Minister's response to Clover Moore, Alex Greenwich, who is the member for Sydney, and the Paddington Business Partnership, who in fact raised concerns about Oxford Street. That is why I said Oxford Street. What is your response to their concerns?

**The Hon. DUNCAN GAY:** What concerns in particular? They have raised a number of concerns.

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** They said in fact that there is widespread community objections on Oxford Street to the—

**The Hon. DUNCAN GAY:** Bus lanes?

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** Clearways. Do you want me to rephrase it?

**The Hon. DUNCAN GAY:** First of all, before I hand over to Mr Kanofski, I have sat down and met with the NSW Business Chamber. It is not much use meeting with the others, because you cannot trust them. They give you their word—particularly on rainbow crossings—and they do not stick to it. But the chamber members are eminently decent people, with fair concerns that they have raised. One of the things we have already done to help them is to shorten the bus clearway hours there during the afternoon. We have rolled the operating hours back. And you must remember, of course, that these clearways were put in during your time in the previous Government, but we have started to roll them back.

**Mr KANOFSKI:** The first point I was going to make is that we have reduced the time for the buses. It is not a clearway, it is a bus zone. It has been reduced so that, instead of commencing at 3.00 p.m. it commences at 4.00 p.m. That was in direct response to representations made by the local business community. I have met personally with the community at the western end of Oxford Street and also the community at the Woollahra end of Oxford Street. We have had some useful and meaningful discussions with them about a range of issues and my expectation is that there will be some further improvement plan for Oxford Street, in consultation with those groups. So we have responded to some of their concerns up front and there is active participation and engagement with the two community groups. The two business groups have slightly different sets of concerns, depending on where they are located on Oxford Street.

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** Minister, I ask a question about the clearways on King Georges Road, Wiley Park because there are some concerns expressed by the mayor, Brian Robson, and local residents. Can you bring me up to speed or up to date on what is happening with their concerns and are you responding to those concerns?

**The Hon. DUNCAN GAY:** I am unaware of concerns. My early meetings with that council were really positive. The first thing we do when we begin this process is to meet with the council and say, "Look, we want to put clearways in but we understand we cannot do it until we address the situation for parking for your High Street and your business community and we have a sum of money to be able to work with you to provide off-street parking." Now the early meetings we had were positive but Mr Kanofski has to do the hard yards after I have the pleasant meeting up front and that is when the wheels hit the road.

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** Could Mr Kanofski fill it in? I understand the mayor and council have had a mayoral minute and have issued press statements and had meetings or a request for meetings with Roads and Maritime Services about this.

**Mr KANOFSKI:** The issue with all these clearways is replacement parking and the location of replacement parking. With regard to King Georges Road, there are a number of options for replacement parking and we are in the process of working through those with council. The important thing to note about this is that, particularly with Leichhardt council, for example, where we implemented the Victoria Road solution, we gained agreement with that council—

**The Hon. DUNCAN GAY:** He was a good mayor and would have made a great candidate.

**Mr KANOFSKI:** So we gained agreement with that council before we implemented that solution. That is the process that these clearways are proceeding by. There will always be some debate about what is the appropriate location for the parking and we are working through those issues with the council.

**Mr REARDON:** I just add that, when we put out the clearway strategy, we did undertake a lot of consultation leading up to its release on those priority five locations, we met with each of them at council general manager level and put in a fair bit of information in those sessions around where the parking on the main street was going to be removed and specifically looking at offset parking. The clearway strategy itself specifies the process we have to undertake within that, about parking assessment that has to be undertaken. That is what RMS is following with each of these. RMS is putting in the hard work right now with each of those locations through further consultation, to find those offset locations. Victoria Road worked very effectively in

that regard, to find offset parking when it was announced and then opened more recently. As I said, RMS is working hard through the next tranche of those locations.

**The Hon. DUNCAN GAY:** I was surprised to hear your comments, because at the initial meeting we had with the mayor and that council they seemed the most enthusiastic of all. If they have changed their minds, it is very different to the first meeting we had and what they indicated to us in that meeting.

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** Thank you, Minister. They have changed their position and the mayor has issued a mayoral minute and a press statement expressing his concerns. On the Safer Australian Roads and Highways [SARAH] group, Mr Peter Frazer is a man you are familiar with. He set up the SARAH organisation after the tragic death of his daughter Sarah on the Hume Highway and the tow-truck driver who came to her assistance. In May 2014 you and the Premier refused their request to light up the Sydney Harbour Bridge in yellow to mark Yellow Ribbon Road Safety Week. I understand that the State Government allows mobile phone companies on New Year's Eve, Asian Cup Soccer, Earth Hour and Vivid, to name a few, to use the harbour bridge for various purposes. Will you reconsider in 2015 allowing the SARAH organisation to use the Sydney Harbour bridge?

**The Hon. DUNCAN GAY:** Saying no to that foundation, I have to say, was pretty damn hard. I have worked, right from the start, with them, shared their anguish, admired their stoicism and their positive nature on the way that they approached such a tragedy. I do not believe a fresh approach is going to get a different answer. The bridge is such an icon that everyone wants a piece of it and I wish we could give everyone a piece of it. It is a decision that is made by others, not by me, but it is a decision that I accepted.

As I indicated at the time, I am more than happy to work with the SARAH group, as I have done in the past, in respect of their loss and in respect of the work that they are doing. In fact, it was only this week that I noticed a letter in the NRMA *Open Road* magazine congratulating us on the work that we have done in closing the third lane near where the accident happened and making it a breakdown lane. Someone drove past and indicated that they saw a broken-down vehicle that they could have hit, had it not been in that lane. So it is working. I wish the answer was otherwise, I really do, but I suspect it would not be different.

**Mr DUNCAN:** I agree with the Minister's comments. The issue that we have with the Sydney Harbour Bridge particularly is a very strict Sydney Harbour Bridge Conservation Management Plan and guidelines that were established some time ago. When various events such as this come up they go through that set of guidelines. Unfortunately, on that occasion that one did not pass the guideline test of the Conservation Management Plan.

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** In response to a supplementary to Mr Duncan on that plan: How does flashing yellow lights on to a bridge differ from other coloured flashing lights?

**Mr DUNCAN:** It is simply to do with the nature—

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** I do not follow the difference—it is light that is flashed up. What is the real reason why you continue to refuse the request for this?

**CHAIR:** Order! I caution the member in the line of his questioning and ask him not to make an emotive issue political.

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** I take your point, Madam Chair. How does the conservation argument come into play? I do not see that.

**Mr DUNCAN:** The Conservation Management Plan sets out a process by which we assess various events on the bridge and there are often requests. I would be happy to provide that criteria to show how that assessment occurred.

**The Hon. MICK VEITCH:** Carrying on with the SARAH program, as you know I have had close attachment to this family as well and, like Niall Blair, I drive past that section of the road a lot. Can you update us on the progress with the transition? I know the northbound breakdown lane has been put in place. What is the status of that and how long will it be before it is finalised?

**The Hon. DUNCAN GAY:** I could only tell you. The same as you, I drive past it all the time going home and coming back. Could we take that on notice please?

**The Hon. MICK VEITCH:** Absolutely.

**The Hon. DUNCAN GAY:** Do you want to add something on the strategy, Ms Prendergast?

**Ms PRENDERGAST:** Yes. Only that the 1.5-kilometre climbing lane was closed to provide the three-metre breakdown lane. Also, all the emergency breakdown lanes, of which there are two, were then upgraded and completed in May 2013. The northern bay was completed in December 2013. We have done a lot in the breakdown safety space to address the issue that happened on the Hume Highway that day. We are quite proud of our work. We have distributed over four million glove box guides in the last year to rego renewals and the Royal Easter Show. Obviously, we have released the "Slow down give us space" video. We are working also on looking at the shoulder lane for incident responders to get their people there quicker. We have had the motorcycle response team out there not only helping clear incidents quicker, but they are actually helping people who have broken down. I have seen that on the Harbour Bridge.

We have also the new rules in place for furious and reckless driving so that if you drive without showing due care past an incident or breakdown, there will be a level applied in your sentencing. So we are working on it on a multitude of fronts. Just this week we had published by Standards Australia a release of the new standard that allows the winch for tow trucks to vary the side because the winch that day was on the right, which is why they were standing there. We actually are proposing a new standard and leading that.

**The Hon. MICK VEITCH:** What is the status of the Newell Highway centreline trial, the larger gap between the oncoming lanes—which, by the way, I support? Is it being rolled out? Where are we up to with that?

**Ms PRENDERGAST:** Obviously, we trialled that a couple of years ago, which showed that it was really successful in separating the oncoming traffic. Where we are at is that on 1 September we are introducing some road rules changes, which are national road rules, and the wide centreline is in there so that all States can start rolling it out.

**The Hon. MICK VEITCH:** Minister, are traffic controllers or contractors that RMS may use from time to time for traffic control and/or management engaged on a contract basis?

**The Hon. DUNCAN GAY:** I better hand to Mr Duncan for that one.

**Mr DUNCAN:** Yes. There are various methods, but usually they are part of a major overall head contract. So they are subcontractors. We deal with them through other processes, associations and things like that.

**The Hon. MICK VEITCH:** In those subcontracting arrangements is there any clause, requirement or consideration given to using 417 and 457 visa holders?

**Mr DUNCAN:** I could get you a response on that. Obviously, I have not got a line of sight on the contract.

**The Hon. MICK VEITCH:** If you would, please.

**Mr DUNCAN:** I would be more than happy to do that. There are some fairly strict conditions around it. The industry associations, such as Austroads but particularly Roads Australia, have been very interested in this topic in recent times on the safety point.

**The Hon. MICK VEITCH:** If you would take that on notice and provide a more full response that would be good.

**Mr DUNCAN:** What conditions generally are in the contracts?

**The Hon. MICK VEITCH:** Yes. Returning to my previous question about employing people with disability within RMS, when was the employment strategy last reviewed or determined whether it is working?

**Mr REARDON:** I refer to the Disability Action Plan. It was released in December 2012 across the cluster.

**The Hon. MICK VEITCH:** It has not been reviewed? Is it ongoing? I guess what I am asking is whether there is ongoing monitoring.

**Mr STEWART:** Could I take that on notice? It is something we take very seriously around the whole cluster, opportunity and diversity in our employment regime.

**The Hon. MICK VEITCH:** Yes.

**The Hon. DUNCAN GAY:** Which includes my office.

**Mr STEWART:** If you like, I could take it on notice.

**The Hon. MICK VEITCH:** Yes.

**Mr STEWART:** I think it is a really key issue, and I am happy to take it on and come back with a more full answer.

**The Hon. MICK VEITCH:** My concern is that sometimes people in organisations and governments of all persuasions develop these fantastic plans and there is no ongoing monitoring to ensure they are effective in the end result.

**Mr STEWART:** Can I just assure you that from an organisational point of view, from a diversity point of view, we discuss it every month at our leadership team. But I will come back and try to give you some fuller details.

**The Hon. MICK VEITCH:** Thank you.

**CHAIR:** Order! The Hon. Walt Secord wishes to table a document.

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** Minister, I seek your indulgence to table the mayoral minute and press release from Canterbury City Council expressing concerns about King Georges Road clearways.

**The Hon. DUNCAN GAY:** That is very generous of you.

**Document tabled.**

**Dr MEHREEN FARUQI:** Minister, could you inform the Committee what will be the toll cap for using WestConnex once the toll road is completed?

**The Hon. DUNCAN GAY:** Yes, we have it somewhere. It is a public document.

**Dr MEHREEN FARUQI:** Is it \$7.35 Minister?

**The Hon. DUNCAN GAY:** There you go, you have answered it yourself. Well done.

**Dr MEHREEN FARUQI:** Minister, could you—

**The Hon. DUNCAN GAY:** You are worth more money than him.

**Dr MEHREEN FARUQI:** Could you guarantee that this will actually be the toll cap once the road opens completely?

**The Hon. DUNCAN GAY:** That is the indicative toll in those figures under the current scoping. That was the toll we put out and that is what it will be in 2012—

**Dr MEHREEN FARUQI:** In 2023?



**The Hon. DUNCAN GAY:** In 2012 numbers. Obviously, it will be different in 2023.

**Dr MEHREEN FARUQI:** For adding inflation to it?

**The Hon. DUNCAN GAY:** Yes.

**Dr MEHREEN FARUQI:** What will be the toll cap for stage one after it is completed?

**The Hon. DUNCAN GAY:** Yes, we have that too. I think it is about \$3 on average. It is in the document—there you go, I got that one right. The average toll is \$3. The minimum is \$1.50 and the maximum is \$3.90.

**Dr MEHREEN FARUQI:** Is that both—

**The Hon. DUNCAN GAY:** And the average toll across is \$4.50, a minimum of \$1.50 and a maximum cap of \$7.35.

**Dr MEHREEN FARUQI:** The cap is \$7.35?

**The Hon. DUNCAN GAY:** Which was the one you mentioned earlier. And that is in 2013 dollars.

**Dr MEHREEN FARUQI:** I understand that when the M4 is widened there will be a toll put on it?

**The Hon. DUNCAN GAY:** Yes.

**Dr MEHREEN FARUQI:** And when the tunnel is completed, which is part of stage one—

**The Hon. DUNCAN GAY:** Yes.

**Dr MEHREEN FARUQI:** —there will be another toll put on it? Could you confirm that?

**The Hon. DUNCAN GAY:** Yes, that is correct.

**Dr MEHREEN FARUQI:** Will the maximum toll be \$7.35?

**The Hon. DUNCAN GAY:** Yes. It is in this document that you told me was glossy and had no information. It is actually in that document.

**Dr MEHREEN FARUQI:** Excellent.

**The Hon. DUNCAN GAY:** It is a public document. On page 13 the M4 East, the Homebush Bay Drive to Haberfield indicative average toll \$2.40, minimum of \$2 and a maximum of \$3.60. The same will be the case on the M5 East.

**Dr MEHREEN FARUQI:** That was my next question.

**The Hon. DUNCAN GAY:** Okay. These are distance-based tolls, the same as the M7. They are pretty much in line with the tolling that the previous Government allowed on the M7.

**Dr MEHREEN FARUQI:** Does the \$7.35 cap also apply to the M5 duplication?

**The Hon. DUNCAN GAY:** Yes. You will not get to that on the M5 duplication or on the M4. The cap only comes in place in reality when the full project is there.

**Dr MEHREEN FARUQI:** But is there a cap on those roads?

**The Hon. DUNCAN GAY:** There is a cap on the existing scope.

**Dr MEHREEN FARUQI:** With respect to modelling and traffic projections for the project, what assumptions have been made for growth of car demand?

**The Hon. DUNCAN GAY:** The assumption goes back to the one I indicated earlier. It is an indisputable fact that there will be 1.5 million extra people by 2031. In fact, the figures coming out now indicate that there may well be more than that, given the economic growth in Sydney. We need to look at the extra capacity with people using cars. Part of what we are building is for public transport. We are also at the same time doing the south-west and the north-west rails. We are doing light rail in the city. We are doing a balanced project. As we indicate, this will free up a bus lane, potentially, on Parramatta Road and buses on WestConnex itself. Do not forget also, we have that beauty—the princess, the queen of railway, sitting there in the middle of them all: the heavy rail link that comes in from Parramatta.

**Dr MEHREEN FARUQI:** Can you tell me if you know what has been—

**The Hon. DUNCAN GAY:** Sorry, the document outlines all the numbers on that. I apologise for taking a little extra time, but our base case for WestConnex is different to the previous Government where it sold traffic numbers. We will be leasing this project on proven figures.

**Dr MEHREEN FARUQI:** I understand that, but you still would have assumed some car growth demand for your figures?

**The Hon. DUNCAN GAY:** Yes.

**Dr MEHREEN FARUQI:** Do you know what the growth in car demand has been in Sydney for the past five years?

**The Hon. DUNCAN GAY:** I could not tell you that off the top of my head, but I am more than happy to take that on notice and get it for you.

**Dr MEHREEN FARUQI:** That would be great, if you could, and also if the figures are comparable with your predicted growth on the WestConnex.

**The Hon. DUNCAN GAY:** You will find that in most situations the figures we are using are very conservative. The company that did it for us took a jaundiced view on where the numbers might be. We have no argument. We did not need to inflate the figures unnecessarily.

**Dr MEHREEN FARUQI:** I will move on to another toll road, the NorthConnex. According to the information leaflets that were handed out by the NorthConnex project team at a recent public meeting, truck movements on Eaton Road, West Pennant Hills, will be approximately 1,500 per day during tunnelling. This means that Eaton Road alone, which is a suburban street, will have approximately two million truck movements during the tunnelling period of three to four years. Minister, do you think this is acceptable in a quiet suburban street?

**The Hon. DUNCAN GAY:** We think it is a large number and we will be doing our best to manage it and mitigate it, but the spoil has to come out somewhere and this site is seen to be the ideal site and road for it to be able to happen but, as with everything, we will be careful about the times, particularly when people are at home at night and weekends. That is a part of the initiatives that are within the environmental impact statement that indicates that we will have those restrictions and we will talk with the community about any changes that need to be put in place. Does anyone wish to add anything?

**Mr DUNCAN:** Simply, Minister, that the end result will remove 5,000 trucks a day from Pennant Hills Road and associated environments, so the end result is a substantial improvement.

**Dr MEHREEN FARUQI:** Thank you, Mr Duncan. As you said, the end result is taking 5,000 trucks off the road and into the tunnel. How will you force those trucks into the tunnel?

**The Hon. DUNCAN GAY:** Part of what we will do is use a point-to-point camera style to indicate that heavy vehicles that are going at a quick pace along Pennant Hills Road will have to pay the equivalent of the toll or more than the toll. There is no economic advantage for a heavy vehicle to go back onto Pennant Hills Road, unless it is one that has to deliver fuel, groceries, whatever to that community. Obviously if it is doing that it

will take a lot longer, so it will not trigger. That is the initial plan. We will refine that, of course, as we go. Mr Reardon, do you want to add something?

**Mr REARDON:** Simply the fact that the North Connex is part of the national freight network and, therefore, we want trucks to use the service road. If there is a proper purpose for a truck to make a local delivery then so be it, otherwise we will be looking for them to use NorthConnex.

**The Hon. DUNCAN GAY:** They will avoid 21 sets of traffic lights, so there is a big incentive apart from the financial detriment that we will put on them.

**Dr MEHREEN FARUQI:** Minister are there any examples of this system being successful in Australia or anywhere around the world?

**Mr STEWART:** I can speak from my previous jurisdiction. There is something in Queensland. We looked at the Brisbane urban corridor where we put a regulatory process in place to try to get heavy vehicles from those local areas, that arterial, back on to the motorway system and it was very successful. In fact, it is now a voluntary process. It was originally regulatory enforced, but it has been so successful that heavy vehicles have moved on to the southern bypass.

**Dr MEHREEN FARUQI:** Onto a toll road?

**Mr STEWART:** They have, yes, travelling on that part of the urban corridor has seen that move.

**Dr MEHREEN FARUQI:** Thank you.

**CHAIR:** Order! Time has expired for questions from The Greens. The Hon. Paul Green may now ask his questions.

**The Hon. PAUL GREEN:** Minister, how is the non-sticker registration going and are pensioners being caught up in a situation where they have been booked for having unregistered cars because they thought they went through the process?

**The Hon. DUNCAN GAY:** Thank you for that question. My understanding is that, generally, it is pretty good. Occasionally we get a concern from them. I have had half a dozen people into my office and it is mostly people who are not very organised; they are not good at opening and reading their mail. The triggers come. You get your registration; that should be one trigger. You get your green slip in a separate letter; that should be a second trigger. We have a follow-up reminder note as well. There are potentially three triggers. If you miss all of them you cannot really blame us. NRMA and others have little stickers that you can put on your windscreen as well. People have done that. Mr Wells, do you want to add something?

**The Hon. PAUL GREEN:** Can we have some statistics?

**Mr WELLS:** I can assist you a little bit with some background material. This initiative does not apply to heavy vehicles. They are still required to have a registration sticker. There is a little bit of a false hope with the registration sticker. There is no guarantee that the registration is paid. At the same time, we brought out a registration app, which is useable on a smart phone or an iPad. That is in fact being used far more heavily than we anticipated. People use that to see if a car in their street is registered or mechanics will use it at the start of a day's work to see that the 10 or 20 cars they are working on are registered. The app has an additional reminder for people when their registration is due.

**The Hon. PAUL GREEN:** That is good. What I am after—

**The Hon. DUNCAN GAY:** The stats?

**The Hon. PAUL GREEN:** I have had representation recently that a law-abiding citizen did all the right things, but apparently she did not tick one little box on the website and she did not realise that that was part of the process that engaged her whole—

**The Hon. DUNCAN GAY:** We are happy to look at that—

**Mr REARDON:** We will fix it.

**The Hon. DUNCAN GAY:** —to see if there is a particular problem and, if there is—

**The Hon. PAUL GREEN:** That is what I am asking. Has there been an increase of pensioners who have been caught suddenly as being unregistered because the process is not helpful?

**The Hon. DUNCAN GAY:** I am not aware.

**Mr REARDON:** Thanks for your feedback on the specific customer. I am happy to receive more details. In terms of pre and post, before it went live obviously we looked to baseline to see where things were up to and how many unregistered vehicles were out there. We received comments from South Australia and Western Australia. The automatic number plate recognition and the coverage that the police had in their vehicles was important. Basically we have analysed four years prior, 2009 to 2012. Early indications are that there is not a great deal of difference in terms of pre and post at this point in time. Again, as I said for other initiatives, it is early days. We will continue to monitor and I am happy to provide any update that we can over the next period about where we get to, but we are actually undertaking that right now.

**The Hon. DUNCAN GAY:** We are happy to take the information on that lady.

**Mr REARDON:** On the specific issue.

**The Hon. PAUL GREEN:** I was interested to know if this person's experience is an experience that is happening across New South Wales with the new system, particularly with pensioners who may not be online.

**Mr REARDON:** I am happy to receive that.

**The Hon. PAUL GREEN:** In terms of evaluation, has there been an evaluation of how the one-stop shop is going?

**The Hon. DUNCAN GAY:** It is not in our portfolio; it is in the Finance portfolio.

**The Hon. PAUL GREEN:** Roads and Maritime Services [RMS].

**The Hon. DUNCAN GAY:** No, it is—

**The Hon. PAUL GREEN:** The one at Dubbo Creek, I hear.

**The Hon. DUNCAN GAY:** Finance and Services are doing the one-stop shop. I am loving the anecdotal evidence. People are pulling me up in the street and saying what a great done job I have done to RMS with these new offices, how good it is, how great the service is. RMS is fantastic, but it is good for me to get the feedback. The only jaundiced view I have heard is your colleague on the left.

**The Hon. PAUL GREEN:** No, do not take my time.

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** He is provoking me. He is referring to Murwillumbah—

**CHAIR:** Order!

**The Hon. PAUL GREEN:** I know a lot of flashing lights at schools have been installed but can you indicate whether you have implemented any at Nowra East Public School?

**The Hon. DUNCAN GAY:** I could not tell you off the top of my head.

**The Hon. PAUL GREEN:** Can you get back to us?

**The Hon. DUNCAN GAY:** Certainly.

**The Hon. PAUL GREEN:** At the same time, can you indicate where that would be on the priority list, because there are two pedestrian sections around that school.

**The Hon. DUNCAN GAY:** It is on our website when they are going to be done. We will find out, anyway. I can guarantee it will be done by the end of 2015 because all schools will be done by the end of 2015.

**The Hon. PAUL GREEN:** Minister, we have done WestConnex, NorthConnex and every other Connex except for SouthConnex. How is the F6 going?

**The Hon. DUNCAN GAY:** The F6 review is underway. There are two areas. We are looking at an enhancement of WestConnex with a northern artery and southern artery. The northern artery is to connect to Victoria Road and Anzac Bridge via Rozelle, and a southern artery will link at President Avenue. Separate to that is the F6 review that is underway. That may or may not join that enhancement of WestConnex on to President Avenue because the roadway was originally put through there in the early 1950s. The demographics and the roads around the F6 were quite different in the 1950s to what they are in 2014.

We are looking at two or three different alternates. The F6 in particular is to provide a conduit to the south— Wollongong, Illawarra and Shoalhaven. It could be Alford's Point. There are three or four different alternates. We are going in with an open mind to look at this. I would have to say that the favourite probably would have to be the Princes Highway linking up. If it adds up that we do the enhancement to WestConnex that would be an obvious one, but I have to say that the others are not without merit. Do you want to add something?

**Mr DUNCAN:** No. I think I can answer the question on the flashing lights. In the Shoalhaven City Council area there are around 300 sites across a number of councils. That is commencing in November 2014.

**The Hon. DUNCAN GAY:** So November this year for the Shoalhaven.

**The Hon. PAUL GREEN:** East Nowra Public School is a bit more vulnerable for students.

**The Hon. DUNCAN GAY:** We are trying to do them altogether in a region. It is not political, it is just geographic so as it works.

**The Hon. PAUL GREEN:** We have recently seen older driving statistics taking over from younger driving statistics in terms of fatalities and crashes. Why do you think that is and what are you doing to address the issue?

**The Hon. DUNCAN GAY:** There are a couple of things. There has been a call to have an older driver sticker on a car. I have to say that I am not supportive of that. I think that infringes on their rights as much as anything else. It is a hard to get the balance between helping them to be independent, allowing people to stay in their own homes and visit their relatives without being a burden on the community and their relatives, yet facing a safety situation of someone else in the community hitting them. It is hard to get that balance right. Ms Prendergast knows a lot more on this than I do.

**Ms PRENDERGAST:** Obviously we have had great success recently with younger drivers. Statistics on older drivers are going up. There is an exposure issue at play here but we are seeing a much higher representation of older drivers. In fact, they have a stronger crash risk than younger drivers.

**The Hon. DUNCAN GAY:** There are probably more of them too.

**Ms PRENDERGAST:** The Older Driver Task Force was established to review the arrangements and we confirmed the current arrangements. More importantly, we identified that we needed to do more in terms of communication with older drivers. So we are currently developing a locally based seminar, which will cover safe walking, buying a safe vehicle and the whole transition for your licence. What are the local transport options for you? What is the fit in the car? We are really going to roll that out and start engaging more with the older community just to improve safety because what we know is that from a pedestrian perspective it is very worrying. There has not only been a middle age increase in pedestrian deaths but this year five people aged over 80 have been killed in pedestrian incidents. So we do need to do work in that space, and we are.

**CHAIR:** Unfortunately, time has expired for the examination of the Roads portfolio. We will take a short break before examining the Freight portfolio.

**(Short adjournment)**



**PETER DUNCAN**, Chief Executive, Roads and Maritime Services,

**DAVE STEWART**, Secretary, Transport for NSW, and

**TIM REARDON**, Deputy Director General, Policy and Regulation, Roads, Transport for NSW, on former oath:

**ANGUS MITCHELL**, Director, Maritime, Roads and Maritime Services, and

**GRANT GILFILLAN**, Chief Executive Officer, Port Authority of New South Wales, sworn and examined:

**RACHEL JOHNSON**, Deputy Director General, Freight and Regional Development, Transport for NSW, affirmed and examined:

**CHAIR:** We will now examine the portfolio of Freight until 4.55 p.m. As there is no provision for the Minister to make an opening statement, we will begin with questions from the Opposition.

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** Minister, when was the last time you visited the port of Yamba?

**The Hon. DUNCAN GAY:** That is a good question. I think it was in the second two-thirds of last year or earlier this year—within the last six months anyway. I am happy to take that question on notice and come back with a definitive answer. I do remember that on the last visit I made there I visited two establishments: One was a boatbuilding facility in Yamba which does a lot of work for marine rescue and builds a lot of State government boats, and the other one, on the northern side—and I am looking for help from Mr Gilfillan here—

**Mr GILFILLAN:** Was it Harwood Marine?

**The Hon. DUNCAN GAY:** Yes, it was Harwood Marine—on the northern side of the Clarence River.

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** Minister, have you or your department had any discussions on the closure or sale of the port of Yamba?

**The Hon. DUNCAN GAY:** No.

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** Through you, Minister, may we ask the Chief Executive Officer?

**The Hon. DUNCAN GAY:** I am happy to ask the CEO. I certainly have not.

**Mr GILFILLAN:** No, there have been no discussions, not even internally within what was the Sydney Ports Corporation and is now the Ports Authority of New South Wales. There has been no consideration of closing that port.

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** And on the latter part of my question, what about the sale or privatisation of the port?

**Mr GILFILLAN:** No.

**The Hon. DUNCAN GAY:** That is no from both of us.

**The Hon. ADAM SEARLE:** Minister, are you aware of discussions between the Department of Premier and Cabinet and Australian Infrastructure Developments Pty Ltd involving this port?

**The Hon. DUNCAN GAY:** That is three noes in a row. If I was aware, my earlier answer would have been invalid.

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** Minister, through you, can I ask the same question to the CEO? Mr Gilfillan, are you aware of discussions between the Department of Premier and Cabinet and Australian Infrastructure Developments Pty Ltd?

**Mr GILFILLAN:** No.

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** Can you take it on board to explore that?

**The Hon. NIALL BLAIR:** Point of order: If the Hon. Walt Secord has a question for the Premier or the Department of Premier and Cabinet then I suggest he duck over to the other estimates committee and ask the Premier. This is an estimates hearing examining the portfolio of the Minister for Roads and Freight. I do not believe that the Minister or his officials should be commenting on questions that should be directed to the Premier and the Department of Premier and Cabinet.

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** To the point of order: This relates directly to policy development involving the port of Yamba.

**CHAIR:** Order! Both the Minister and his departmental officials have answered the original question. The Hon. Walt Secord, if you have a new question relating to the port of Yamba then I suggest that you ask it.

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** Minister, and through you to the CEO of Sydney ports, are you aware of recent comments by the member for Clarence, Chris Gulaptis, involving discussions between the Department of Premier and Cabinet and Australian Infrastructure Developments Pty Ltd on the future of the port of Yamba?

**The Hon. DUNCAN GAY:** No, I am not.

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** I ask the same question of the CEO, through the Minister.

**Mr GILFILLAN:** No, I am not either.

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** Minister, in Nick Greiner's 2012 Infrastructure NSW report "First Things First", he stated that container trade through Port Botany is forecast to quadruple by 2031 from two million containers to more than seven million. This prediction will mean that Sydney will be choking with congestion around the port and that freight will be hauled around the airport. How will the Government move freight from the airport through Sydney's streets, as the WestConnex will not connect to the port?

**The Hon. DUNCAN GAY:** The last part of your question is wrong—WestConnex will connect to the port by way of enhancements, as I indicated earlier. We are doing a large amount of work around the airport, and I spoke about this in the last section and the enhanced part around WestConnex as well. What we are looking at with WestConnex is not only a better road connection but also an improvement in the rail connectors. We are looking at improvements in the modal connections as well.

Finally we have a grown-up government in Canberra. Despite the promises of the previous Government to fix up the Moorebank intermodal, it looks like this is starting to happen in a more productive way with this Government. It is interesting that it is a bipartisan position, and I congratulate the Federal Labor Party for their support of the Moorebank intermodal. We have to look at the rail connections as well. I am more than happy if Ms Johnson would like to add something to this in a moment. As we have indicated, part of the works we are doing on that rail include going underneath instead of using the existing rail crossing on General Holmes Drive.

That will help not only the rail congestion going into the port but also the traffic that goes in. That is just an example of some of the things we are doing. You are a great watcher of the media. You would have noticed the head of the Sydney Airport Corporation Limited [SACL] with me at Sydney Airport recently announcing a joint project. We are not only working outside the airport but also working with them in a considered way to be able to free up the problems at the airport. If we free up the problems at the airport we help free up the traffic that goes past. Ms Johnson is the Director of Freight and Regional Development. She might like to add something.

**Ms JOHNSON:** Thank you. I was going to add, as the Minister has alluded to, we see that transiting what is a heavily built-up metropolitan area is best done on rail wherever we can. There is obviously a road task as well but we are looking at ways in which we can improve and enhance opportunities for rail. Of course we have Enfield, which will come on line at the end of this year. We also have Moorebank, which is subject to negotiations now but will come on line somewhere between 2017 and 2019. So we have infrastructure improvements and we have a series of other programs that are happening as well. We are looking at rail but there is also, as the Minister said, the road upgrades that we looking at. They include the proposed extension of



the southern section of WestConnex to ease congestion at the ports, the Pinch Point Program and the WestConnex enabling works.

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** On 13 March the State Government announced it would provide \$3 million to support the expansion of Breakwater Wharf in the port of Eden on the far South Coast. I understand part of the reason for that is to attract the lucrative cruise ship industry and to increase tourism opportunities in the region. What stakeholders have you consulted with on this plan?

**The Hon. DUNCAN GAY:** My understanding is that we have consulted with all the stakeholders down there. I will hand across to Mr Gilfillan and/or Mr Mitchell in a moment. There is a group that works out of the council in Eden. As you would probably be aware, the woodchip industry is coming to a halt. It is a great community down there. The council got together with a community group to make suggestions for the future. It is a historic and a beautiful area. One of the great things would be if we can get cruise ships into there.

It is important that a lot of supply already goes out into Bass Strait. Eden is used as a port to provide and supply Bass Strait. It is also used as a port to bring in those wretched wind turbines that I hate in my community. If I could stop those and let everything else happen I would be happy, but I know the Hon. Walt Secord is a supporter of the wind turbines that are annoying my community. He would not have one in his backyard at Stanmore, I suspect, but he is happy for us to have them in Crookwell.

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** You need a backyard, Duncan.

**The Hon. DUNCAN GAY:** We have put the money in there. We are working with the community group which has partnered with the council. The Federal Government is putting money in there as well. We are putting in money to look at extending it and to also look at a wave attenuator, which I think is the term. The first step of the project control group was engaging a consultant to investigate options to provide a safer anchorage in the port for local and visiting recreational and commercial vessels. One option that will be considered is the construction of a wave attenuator. Mr Mitchell may wish to add something. He is new to the job but he has been around in this area for quite a while, so he brings a wealth of experience. He has only been at Maritime for a very short time in this role.

**Mr MITCHELL:** I guess all I can say is that a project control group has been established that is being led by Crown Lands at the moment as the landowner. On that control group are representatives from RMS, Ports, Crown Lands and some local representatives from the boating and fishing community. As the Minister alluded to, I think at the moment they are looking at three different wave attenuator-type options but that is part of the strategy of finding a safe anchorage.

**The Hon. DUNCAN GAY:** The Federal Government has put \$10 million in there.

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** Can Mr Mitchell please explain what a wave attenuator is?

**Mr MITCHELL:** Essentially the end goal is that they are looking for a safe port with safe anchorage. A wave attenuator, in very crude terms, is something that breaks up some of the wave energy. One of the problems they have in Eden is the incoming conditions. A wave attenuator can be anything from something on the ocean floor that disperses or deflects a wave's energy or it can be all the way up to something like a breakwater. It is a very generic term to describe something that provides safe anchorage behind it.

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** You said there were three different options?

**Mr MITCHELL:** It is very early stages but my understanding is the control group met at the beginning of this week. At the moment they are looking at three potential options but I think it is probably a little bit early to narrow in on whether that is going to be part of the overall strategy.

**The Hon. DUNCAN GAY:** They are meeting with the community. To your question, there is \$10 million to the Breakwater Wharf and the New South Wales Government through Infrastructure NSW [INSW] will contribute \$3 million and there will be an additional \$2 million from Bega Valley Shire. As Mr Mitchell said, it is a whole-of-government approach. We are working with the other departments and with the community to bring a solution to this.

**The Hon. NIALL BLAIR:** You have learnt enough during your turn?

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** Thank you, Mr Duncan.

**The Hon. MICK VEITCH:** Minister, on 24 March 2014, the Government opened a request for tender process for what I call the Blayney to Demondrille rail line, but which the Government is calling the Cowra lines.

**The Hon. DUNCAN GAY:** Yes.

**The Hon. MICK VEITCH:** The tender has invited submissions from the private sector to restore, operate and maintain the Cowra lines on a commercially sustainable basis. The request for tender [RFT] process closed on 25 July.

**The Hon. DUNCAN GAY:** Yes.

**The Hon. MICK VEITCH:** When will an announcement be made on the outcome of the RFT process?

**The Hon. DUNCAN GAY:** Thank you for that, and I will hand to Ms Johnson in a moment. My understanding is that there are two that we are examining at the moment. Am I right?

**Ms JOHNSON:** Yes, there are.

**The Hon. DUNCAN GAY:** So it is over to you.

**Ms JOHNSON:** Thank you. We have two proponents, and the tender evaluation committee met for the first time today. Of the two proponents, one of them is the Cowra Rail Company and the other proponent is the Australian Rail Partners.

**The Hon. MICK VEITCH:** Out of Junee?

**Ms JOHNSON:** Yes, that is right. They are the two proponents. We hope—and obviously it depends upon the negotiations and how they are concluded—to finish this process by the end of the year.

**The Hon. MICK VEITCH:** So those organisations—I suppose it is commercial. I will not ask that question.

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** I will.

**The Hon. DUNCAN GAY:** There is nothing the Hon. Walt Secord would not ask.

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** On that note I will—

**CHAIR:** Order! Please allow the Hon. Mick Veitch to ask his question.

**The Hon. MICK VEITCH:** Those organisations have tendered to restore, operate and maintain the line. I am still concerned about the restoration part—to restore, operate and maintain the line. There is some significant flood damage on that line now. I just figure that will be a big dollar item.

**Ms JOHNSON:** Yes, there is some flood damage. I know that back in 2000, the Cowra-Blayney-Demondrille lines were reopened on the promise of volume and freight and so on. I should say in relation to the cost that we are not sure of the entire cost, but certainly the Mudgee to Kandos line was about \$15 million and the Cowra to Blayney section was about \$3 million. That is about \$18 million to reopen it, and the Government ended up progressively closing it between about 2007 and 2009. That was really because of lower than expected freight volumes, high maintenance and also safety concerns on the line. There has been flood damage. Certainly reopening the lines is not what it was in 2000.

**The Hon. MICK VEITCH:** Through you, Minister: What is the time line from this point on? When do we expect an announcement on the successful bidder?

**The Hon. DUNCAN GAY:** Later this year she said.

**The Hon. MICK VEITCH:** December?

**Ms JOHNSON:** I hope by the end of the year, but we will have a project deed to negotiate and we do not want to put a hard time line on it. But we are hoping to conclude it by the end of the year, yes.

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** Has the cost of transporting goods increased or decreased since the Government's sale of Port Botany?

**The Hon. DUNCAN GAY:** I do not know.

**The Hon. NIALL BLAIR:** Lease.

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** Sale.

**The Hon. MICK VEITCH:** We say "sale". You say "lease".

**The Hon. DUNCAN GAY:** I do not have a full year to analyse it. I am happy to take that on notice.

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** Ms Johnson was getting ready to respond.

**Ms JOHNSON:** I was just going to comment that the increases that have occurred have been on the public record. I know that there have been some increases, yes.

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** In light of that, what is your response to Asciano Chief Executive, John Mullen, who said the prices paid for New South Wales ports have meant that there has been a dramatic increase in the cost to use the ports?

**The Hon. NIALL BLAIR:** Point of order: The Hon. Walt Secord is actually seeking an opinion on comments made by a third party. I believe the question, unless the Minister wants to answer it, is out of order.

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** I can rephrase it.

**CHAIR:** Order! The Hon. Walt Secord will rephrase his question to the Minister.

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** In the light of community concerns about that, what is the Government's response?

**The Hon. NIALL BLAIR:** Point of order—

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** There is nothing. That is completely in order. I have sought advice on it.

**The Hon. NIALL BLAIR:** The Hon. Walt Secord has asked a question with argument. The Minister may be happy to answer it. I have had a cup of coffee. We can do this all afternoon, but stay within the standing orders and ask the questions that are in order.

**CHAIR:** Order! I remind the Hon. Walt Secord that he has only about a minute left for questions.

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** On that note: Minister, did you accept any hospitality on the weekend for the Bledisloe Cup?

**The Hon. DUNCAN GAY:** Yes. I attended the Bledisloe Cup and hospitality in the appropriate manner. My hospitality will be detailed in the appropriate way. In answer to your previous question, I am unaware of community disquiet about an increase in charges. Mr Mullen, who is on my advisory committee, I have to say is never short, if he has a concern in a particular area of industry concerns, of telling me. He has not said that there have been huge increases in New South Wales. There have been some increases in New South Wales. As I remember the comments he made in the press, I think you will find that they were directed towards Queensland. Do not forget, as part of the lease of the ports any charges that people find that are outside the range that is acceptable can be referred to the ACCC.

**CHAIR:** Order! Unfortunately time has expired. We will now move to questions by Dr Mehreen Faruqi.

**The Hon. DUNCAN GAY:** That is a shame.

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** The Millennium Forum. Was it the Millennium Forum, Duncan?

**CHAIR:** Order! I call the Hon. Walt Secord to order.

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** Was it the Millennium Forum, Duncan?

**Dr MEHREEN FARUQI:** Minister, what is the most recent share of containers moving to and from Port Botany that travelled by rail?

**Ms JOHNSON:** I can give you the containers in 2011, which was 14 per cent; in 2012, it was 14.1%; in 2013 it was 14.2%; and we are still concluding the numbers for the remaining year.

**Dr MEHREEN FARUQI:** Minister, can you explain why there has been a miniscule increase in those movements?

**The Hon. DUNCAN GAY:** Yes, I can. The reason that there has been a miniscule increase in the movements by rail is the huge success we have had with the Port Botany Landside Improvement Strategy [PBLIS]. One of the few things that the previous Government had success in and one of the few times that you could use the name Joe Tripodi outside a slur of inappropriateness was in this area. He worked with Sydney Ports at the time and Grant Gilfillan who was the head, and who still is the head, and put in place this new regime. It has been successful beyond our wildest imagination. The problems that were facing truck movements in there have been fixed terribly successfully. The challenge for us is now to replicate it on the rails side. It is a challenge that I take seriously because it is one of the things that you and I share. There is not a lot in the transport sector about which we share a common bond.

**Dr MEHREEN FARUQI:** Good to know!

**The Hon. DUNCAN GAY:** One of the things about which we share a common bond is on rail in this area. For us to get those numbers in and out into the future, we have to increase the rail. On not too fine a point, it is a slight embarrassment that we are still at 14 per cent because we have to get to a doubling of the number that was there, but we will do it. We believe we will do it, but we are a long way off at the moment. Ms Johnson wants to add something else.

**Ms JOHNSON:** The only thing I can say is that I do know that the Waterlines series came out the day before yesterday and sometimes that does create some confusion. In the Waterlines series they reported the first two quarters of last year and their numbers are different. But the way that the Waterlines series counts is that they count in the precinct. What we do at the port is we count in the stevedore. That is because we have consistency of counting procedures. Waterlines compare Sydney Port and they might compare Melbourne and so on. The numbers are slightly different there.

**Dr MEHREEN FARUQI:** It is still a very small increase. You could not deny that.

**Ms JOHNSON:** They are.

**The Hon. DUNCAN GAY:** I apologise: I just wanted to add one more thing. In 2009, trucks were taking 53 minutes to get from the queue to the end of their job. By June this year, they were in and out of the terminal in 25 minutes. That is halving their time and that accounts for it. It is success in one area that stopped progress in another. We have to replicate that.

**Dr MEHREEN FARUQI:** Minister, you just said that the Government's target is 28 per cent by rail?

**The Hon. DUNCAN GAY:** Yes.

**Dr MEHREEN FARUQI:** When do you want to achieve that by?

**The Hon. DUNCAN GAY:** Is it 2020, Ms Johnson?

**Ms JOHNSON:** It is a 2020-21 goal.

**Dr MEHREEN FARUQI:** Thank you. Through the Minister to Ms Johnson, you have mentioned that the Enfield Intermodal Terminal will be completed between 2017 and 2019?

**Ms JOHNSON:** No, if I said that I mean to correct it. The Enfield Intermodal Terminal will be completed by the end of this year. We are looking to put it on line by the end of this year. It was Moorebank, sorry.

**Dr MEHREEN FARUQI:** Moorebank between 2017 and 2019? My mistake, I apologise. Minister, does the Government plan to complete stages 2 and 3 of the Northern Sydney Freight Corridor after stage 1 is completed in 2016?

**Ms JOHNSON:** As you say, the first stage is to be completed by 2016 and the second stage will be subject to a similar arrangement or negotiation with the Commonwealth Government. So I suppose that will be subject to how that negotiation continues.

**Dr MEHREEN FARUQI:** Has that negotiation started?

**The Hon. DUNCAN GAY:** It has started but it has not been completed. In other words, we have not got the money.

**Dr MEHREEN FARUQI:** Minister, you might know that there is increasing community concern and a little bit of angst over freight train noise, especially in Epping and that area.

**The Hon. DUNCAN GAY:** Yes.

**Dr MEHREEN FARUQI:** As I understand it, there is no mandatory noise standard for freight train rolling stock. What measures will the Government take to address this issue?

**The Hon. DUNCAN GAY:** We have a really great story on this and I will hand it to Ms Johnson in a moment. One of the things when we put freight and regional development together, we needed statistics. We have never before had statistics in New South Wales, so we have a section on statistics. The other thing that they took on board was to come up with solutions to freight train noise, in particular wheel squeal. And in the area you mentioned, coming through that Beecroft area, it is one of the big complaints. They have done a hell of a lot of work. Ms Johnson has put a former Department Liaison Officer [DLO] in my office in charge of the project and I will ask Ms Johnson to comment on what they have done.

**Ms JOHNSON:** We understand and appreciate community concern about rail noise and that is why we have pulled together the Strategic Noise Action Plan. The Strategic Noise Action Plan has three pillars. The first pillar is designed to deal with noise at source, which is an effective way of dealing with it. For example, we would do track lubrication, where we would install dampers and we would look at working—

**The Hon. DUNCAN GAY:** If I may interrupt—the track lubrication, we are putting grease on the rails, as the train goes.

**Dr MEHREEN FARUQI:** Yes, I understand, thank you, Minister. Ms Johnson, I have limited time. Could I ask for a timeline?

**Ms JOHNSON:** We are optimistic about how the program is going.

**Dr MEHREEN FARUQI:** Yes, for sure. Could you tell me the timeline of when this will be completed?

**Ms JOHNSON:** One of the initiatives we have at the moment is looking at a pilot program and the pilot program is for property treatment. We are looking at treating properties. They have never been treated in a rail corridor. They have been treated in road corridors and airline corridors but they have never been treated in a

rail corridor. We are doing a trial before we look at taking that further. We are looking at three detached properties and 11 apartment blocks. We are looking at treating those properties and we will look at how that comes out. That is another one of the pillars.

**Dr MEHREEN FARUQI:** Thank you, that answers my question. Minister, how will freight rail be accommodated in the Government's proposed metro-style train system as it rolls out through the city?

**The Hon. DUNCAN GAY:** It is in the Transport Master Plan. It is identified there and it is detailed there.

**Dr MEHREEN FARUQI:** Minister, to be specific, as you know some lines such as the Bankstown Line will be cannibalised by the so-called rapid transit system and freight may not be able to travel on those lines. How will you accommodate freight travelling along those lines?

**Mr STEWART:** One of the clear messages we discussed with the Minister for Transport earlier in the week was that one of the great advantages of rapid transit is that it frees up capacity on the remaining part of the rail network. So the opportunity we have is providing a number of paths. But I think you would also appreciate, in the long term master plan, and what you are actually seeing in an investment sense now, is that where we can, we are putting greater focus on freight movements on dedicated lines. Ms Johnson has already talked about a number of those investments but rapid transit does provide that freed-up capacity for moving freight on other parts of the network.

**The Hon. DUNCAN GAY:** The one that works the best for freight in Sydney is the inland rail, because there is a lot of rail that goes through the Sydney network that is going from Adelaide and Melbourne to Brisbane and vice versa. If one takes that straight through on the inland rail route, the best thing one is going to do is to free up these lines, particularly that line between Newcastle and Sydney which is running close to capacity. Taking the interstate allows the intrastate to be able to use those lines. [*Time expired.*]

**CHAIR:** Order! Time having expired, we will move to questions from the Hon. Paul Green.

**The Hon. PAUL GREEN:** You probably heard reports regarding some residents of Moorebank being up in arms over a proposal to build a massive 24/7 intermodal freight hub there. I note comments from the Liverpool mayor who said:

You're talking about bringing trucks from the eastern suburbs and putting them out here in the south-west. Anyone who uses the M5 is going to be stuck in significant amounts of traffic and no-one is talking about how we're actually going to solve that.

Can you confirm the impact this proposal will have on M5 congestion and have you modelled what effects this will have on surrounding suburban roads?

**The Hon. DUNCAN GAY:** Thank you for your question. It is a lot less dramatic than the quotes that were made by some of the local politicians. I think it is no accident that this intermodal is planned on a site that is at a major transport junction. It is a junction of the M5 and the WestConnex and a junction of the Southern rail line. The key for this to work is rail. Part of the development of that site involves a rail spur going in through the centre of the intermodal site. So the whole *raison d'être* about having Moorebank work to help the city and remove congestion and trucks and boxes off the road is to come to the port, onto a train and to the intermodal site. From there it will either go on by train elsewhere or go into smaller vehicles and onto the M7, the M5 or the F1. It will remove a lot of the traffic from the communities. Would Mr Duncan or Ms Johnson like to add anything?

**Ms JOHNSON:** The upgrades of the roads around Moorebank will be dealt with through the statutory planning process and all those roads will be considered in that process as the finalisation of the facility concludes because it is obviously under negotiation at the moment.

**The Hon. DUNCAN GAY:** The best thing is that now Albo has gone we will not be looking to go through the Arts Centre at Liverpool, because Albo wanted to put the line through the Arts Centre.

**The Hon. PAUL GREEN:** The Maldon-Dombarton rail, is there any movement in that?

**The Hon. DUNCAN GAY:** We are going out for a register of interest [ROI] on the Maldon-Dombarton to see what interest there is from private enterprise. We have done some research work.

I was critical of the former Federal Minister a moment ago but, in this case, he is Albo the Good—and when they do something good I praise them. Labor did not get much praise because they did not do much. The situation is that it is ready to see if someone is interested in building it.

**The Hon. PAUL GREEN:** So none of the lessees of these ports are dabbling in the idea?

**The Hon. DUNCAN GAY:** I do not know. That is what the ROI is for—they may well. Only a couple of days ago I was at Port Kembla, digging the first sod on a new grain terminal. That grain terminal is going to use rail all the way down. In fact, it will be rail down the Southern line, through Moss Vale and Robertson, right into the port. A combination of three grain buyers plus Qube Logistics are down there building and, from memory, spending \$75 million there. That is one of the good things when you lease a port. It is like selling your house with a DA. You come back and you see that they are starting to build the roof conversion. The next time you come back they have put a man cave in the backyard and you feel pretty good that you put that start there.

**The Hon. PAUL GREEN:** I am pleased Mr Scot MacDonald raised the Shoalhaven because Main Road 92 and the O'Allen Ford Bridge are strategically placed. Has the Government considered addressing the south-western freight corridor by bringing freight to Nowra and up to Port Kembla?

**The Hon. DUNCAN GAY:** Since I have been the Minister, I have always had trouble—with the exception of the new grown-up Government in Canberra, which actually gave me some money for the Nowra Bridge planning work—getting funding onto the Princes Highway or an acknowledgement that it is a major highway. I went with support from you and others to the previous Federal Government to try to get it to make it a national highway. It should be as far as HMAS *Albatross* on the south. This would then take it to that road, which is a great route up across the escarpment. For anyone who has not travelled it, across the escarpment is the best natural incline on the eastern seaboard. It is quite outstanding. A large amount of money has been spent on that road and it certainly has potential.

**The Hon. PAUL GREEN:** What is the Government doing about the substantial noise increase that seems to be occurring around Port Botany? Concerns have been raised that noises are increasing from containers being moved, truck horns being blown and beeping from reversing forklifts. I think the projected growth is by about six million containers. If we have these issues, is there any plan to deal with noise attenuation there?

**The Hon. DUNCAN GAY:** It is an issue for the EPA, particularly the control of noise. Mr Gilfillan or Ms Johnson, do you want to add anything? The noise around our ports is one for EPA. We tend to leave that to it. Certainly, anything that affects citizens we need to be concerned about as well.

**The Hon. PAUL GREEN:** Finally, can you update us on what steps the Government has taken about heavy vehicle movements around Port Botany? I have heard a little of your ideas, but what else will happen to minimise the number of freight containers and the movement of heavy vehicles around Port Botany?

**The Hon. DUNCAN GAY:** In general terms, the link to WestConnex will come down Gardeners Road from St Peters. You will be coming off the WestConnex there and we will be looking at enhancements and new roads through there. The money we are spending there is in the plans I announced for the airport and I am more than happy to get you a copy. We would be looking to work with SACL—Sydney Airport Corporation Limited—to get the right outcome, but there will be a better connection through there. Do not forget that the existing connection on the Eastern Distributor, where the bulk of the freight goes, remains. Coming straight off the Eastern Distributor onto General Holmes Drive and off Foreshore Road onto the Eastern Distributor remains a very viable adjunct.

**The Hon. PAUL GREEN:** It is pretty jammed most of the time?

**The Hon. DUNCAN GAY:** It will not be nearly as jammed when the new road goes in.

**The Hon. PAUL GREEN:** I understand.

**The Hon. DUNCAN GAY:** That is what we are fixing and providing. There is not a single route in there. There are several routes and we need to make each one better without being tougher on the local community. Making Bourke and O'Riordan streets one way, which is part of that plan, will add to a better flow.

**CHAIR:** Order! Unfortunately, time has concluded for the examination of the portfolio of Roads and Freight. I thank the Minister and officials for appearing this afternoon.

**The Hon. DUNCAN GAY:** I thank Committee members for their courtesy—mostly.

**(The witnesses withdrew)**

**The Committee proceeded to deliberate.**

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