

GENERAL PURPOSE STANDING COMMITTEE NO. 3

Monday 19 August 2013

Examination of proposed expenditure for the portfolio area

TRANSPORT

The Committee met at 2.00 p.m.

MEMBERS

The Hon. N. Maclaren-Jones (Chair)

The Hon. N. Blair (Deputy Chair)
The Hon. P. Green
The Hon. S. MacDonald
Dr Mehreen Faruqi

The Hon. P. G. Sharpe
The Hon. M. S. Veitch
The Hon. Luke Foley

PRESENT

The Hon. Gladys Berejiklian, *Minister for Transport*

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 declare this hearing for the inquiry into budget estimates 2013-14 open to the public. I welcome Minister Berejiklian and accompanying officials to the hearing. Today the Committee will examine the proposed expenditure for the portfolio of Transport. In accordance with the Legislative Council guidelines for the broadcasting of proceedings, only Committee members and witnesses may be filmed or recorded. People in the public gallery should not be the primary focus of any filming or photographs. In reporting the proceedings of this Committee, you must take responsibility for what you publish or what interpretation you place on anything that is said before the Committee. The guidelines for the broadcast of proceedings are available on the table by the door. I note that today's hearing is open to the public and is being webcast live via the Parliament's website.

Before we commence, I will make some comments about procedural matters. Any messages from advisers or members' staff seated in the public gallery should be delivered through the Chamber and support staff or the Committee clerks. Minister, I remind you and the officers accompanying you that you are free to pass notes and refer directly to your staff and advisers seated behind you. Transcripts of today's hearing will be available on the web as of tomorrow morning. Minister, the House has resolved that answers to questions on notice must be provided within 21 days. I remind everyone to turn off their mobile phones. All witnesses from departments, statutory bodies or corporations will be sworn prior to giving evidence. Minister, I remind you that you do not need to be sworn as you have already sworn an oath to your office as a member of Parliament. I remind Mr Wielinga and Mr Reardon from the Transport for NSW that they do not need to be sworn as they were sworn in at an earlier budget estimates hearing.

LES WIELINGA, Director General, Transport for NSW, and

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

ROB MASON, Chief Executive, NSW Trains, affirmed and examined:

FERGUS GAMMIE, Deputy Director General, Transport Services, Transport for NSW, and

CAROLYN McNALLY, Deputy Director General, Planning and Programs, Transport for NSW, and

PETER ROWLEY, Chief Executive, State Transit Authority, and

HOWARD COLLINS, Chief Executive, Sydney Trains, and

RODD STAPLES, Project Director, North West Rail Link, Transport for NSW, sworn and examined:

CHAIR: I declare the proposed expenditure for the portfolio of Transport open for examination. The Committee has resolved that there will be no questions from Government members. The questions for the portfolio of Transport will run from 2.00 until 3.00 p.m. The questions for the portfolio of Ferries will run from 3.00 to 3.20 pm. The questions for the portfolio of Rail will run from 3.35 to 4.25 p.m. Questions for the portfolio of State Transit will run from 4.25 to 4.45 p.m. As there is no provision for the Minister to make an opening statement before the Committee commences questions, we will begin with questions from the Opposition.

The Hon. LUKE FOLEY: Minister, why did you award a \$290,000 contract to provide strategic consultancy services to a \$1 company set up by your old mate John "Jack" Simos, who you worked with in the previous Coalition Government?

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: Mr Foley, as you and the committee would be aware, those consultancies are actually issued by Transport for NSW so I will ask the Director General to talk about that specific consultancy if that is your desire.

Mr WIELINGA: For that particular consultancy you are talking about, there was an initial engagement by the Department of Premier and Cabinet [DPC] that was associated with the rail reform process to provide strategic advice and to provide advice on the separation of the two rail organisations. They represented value for money. I was impressed with the advice they got. We engaged them on those services. As I said, we believed it to be value for money and a good commission.

The Hon. LUKE FOLEY: The criteria against which a limited tender was assessed was, firstly, proven relevant experience. Can you tell us what previous relevant experience this company Conrad Capital had?

Mr WIELINGA: I watched their input into the initial commission they had from DPC. I thought their advice was sound. It was good advice. I needed that support as part of the complex reform process. As I said, I believed it to be value for money. That is why we continued the engagement.

The Hon. LUKE FOLEY: The company was only set up a couple of months before it was awarded this contract, are you aware of that?

Mr WIELINGA: No, I am not.

The Hon. LUKE FOLEY: They were only registered for GST in April 2012, and then they landed on 6 July a \$290,000 contract from Transport for New South Wales. How could they possibly have proven relevant experience when they were only just set up?

Mr WIELINGA: As I said, I saw them perform on the earlier commission. There was some considerable involvement with them on that reform process. I believed it was good value for money. We continued the commission.

The Hon. LUKE FOLEY: How long did that previous commission to which you refer date back?

Mr WIELINGA: My interaction with them went over about three months.

The Hon. LUKE FOLEY: It could not be any longer, could it?, because they did not exist prior to three months earlier?

Mr WIELINGA: I hear what you are saying. You asked me if I knew about it; and I said that no, I did not.

The Hon. LUKE FOLEY: Minister, you worked with Jack Simos when you were on the staff of Peter Collins, did you not?

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: Mr Foley, I would like to make something perfectly clear. I have been the Minister for Transport for 2½ years, and before that I was the shadow minister for 4½ years. I have been in the portfolio for seven years. As you will appreciate, the transport cluster has a budget of \$14 billion. I wish to state very firmly that any engagement with consultants has been done completely within the guidelines. I have complete faith in Transport for New South Wales. I believe you have before you some of the best public servants in New South Wales. I am very proud of them and I have every confidence that every single undertaking made on their behalf, on behalf of the people of New South Wales, is done completely within the guidelines.

I also want to stress that, given the transport cluster and the complexities involved, there are many people engaged. I do not think it is appropriate for you to pass judgement on one of the many people who is engaged. I also want to stress again that every single decision my department takes in relation to these matters is done completely within the guidelines. That is the undertaking we gave each other when we took on this job 2½ years ago: that we would work completely within any guidelines which existed—and in fact in some instances we have exceeded those guidelines.

The Hon. LUKE FOLEY: Minister, I am not seeking to judge the company. I am asking you, and giving you the opportunity, to provide some evidence of Conrad Capital's previous proven relevant experience. That is somewhat difficult to understand given the company only set up five minutes, as it were, prior to them landing a \$300,000 contract from you. Could you tell us what proven relevant experience your old friend John "Jack" Simos had in managing the transport system of this state?

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: Mr Foley, can I please ask you to rephrase the question. That contract was not issued by me. So could you please actually make the question factual. It was issued by my department.

The Hon. LUKE FOLEY: Are you not accountable for the decisions of your department, Minister?

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: No, can I say that there are very specific things here as to what a minister can do and as to what a department can do. In relation to the public record, and all the consultancies that are engaged on the public record, that is the responsibility of my department. If you look at the public record, you will see that there are pages and pages of people listed who do work for Transport for New South Wales. I have every confidence that every person who is engaged by the department, irrespective of who they are and what their background is, has been engaged on their merits. That is the basic premise upon which any undertaking is made when you are talking about the transport cluster: merits.

The Hon. LUKE FOLEY: Could you tell us the merits John "Jack" Simos and his new \$1 Australian company? What are his merits to land a contract to improve this State's transport system? You have worked with him. You know him.

The Hon. NIALL BLAIR: Point of order—

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: I am happy to answer the question. As I said, Mr Foley, when you are talking about any consultancy undertaken by Transport for NSW, which are the questions you are asking, I have complete confidence that every single consultancy undertaken by Transport for NSW has been done within the strictest requirements. I have every confidence that the pages of consultancies my department engages in every year is done with the utmost integrity. As I said, I am very proud to serve with the people sitting alongside me at

this table. I have every confidence that every action they take in relation to consultancies or other issues is done completely within the guidelines of what is required. I think Mr Wielinga has answered your question.

The Hon. LUKE FOLEY: You told us you would fix up the trains. You have just fixed up your old mates here, have you not, Minister?

The Hon. NIALL BLAIR: Point of order—

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: Mr Foley, you can ask me whatever you like, but my response remains that every single decision taken by Transport for NSW is based on its merits. I do not want to start the long conga line list of people with political affiliation of your complexion who are still engaged by my department. There is a long list of people still engaged. I do not want to go down that path, because what I want to say—

The Hon. LUKE FOLEY: Give us a single merit of your old chum Mr Simos. Give us a single merit of what he can deliver with his \$300,000 contract from you to improve the transport system.

Mr SCOT MacDONALD: Point of order: My point of order relates to Standing Order 65. There is a heavy weight of inference in these questions by using terminology like "old chum".

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: I am happy to answer the question, Mr MacDonald, because Mr Foley keeps making the same mistake and asking me a question that is not based on fact. He keeps asking me why I awarded that contract. I keep saying to him it is done by Transport for NSW, as he will see if he looks up the website. I know you are new to public transport, Mr Foley. I appreciate your new interest in public transport, but if you look up the annual reports and look at our websites you will see pages and pages of consultants, because that is the nature of what we do. Between us Minister Gay and I have a cluster of \$14 billion, which involves some very technical work. It involves many layers.

The Hon. LUKE FOLEY: So \$300,000 of taxpayers' money does not matter, given that the list is very long. You thought no-one would notice, did you?

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: The point I am making is you have chosen to single out one consultancy on that long list.

The Hon. LUKE FOLEY: The bloke you worked with for Peter Collins before you took Peter Collins's seat. It is all very cosy, is not it, Minister?

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: Can I say again that these are issues for Transport for NSW. Both Mr Wielinga and I have answered your question. I ask you to base your questions on fact, not things you have made up.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: Minister, can you provide the facts in relation to the total cost for the rebranding and new signage for Transport for NSW?

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: What I will say is when we came to Government—

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: It only took you nine minutes to get into the previous Government. This is about you. You have just said that you want to talk about the facts. I want you to state the fact of how much the rebranding is costing.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: I think I had said four words.

The Hon. NIALL BLAIR: Point of order: The Minister did not get a chance to attempt to answer that question. If members are interested in answers I ask them to at least give the Minister the courtesy of allowing her the opportunity to answer their questions.

CHAIR: I uphold the point of order. The Minister may continue.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: In response to Ms Sharpe's question, when I became Minister for Transport and when Minister Gay became Minister for Roads and Ports between us we had about 11 different

agencies with hundreds of brands and different logos. It was not only confusing for customers but also confusing for people who worked within Transport. Indeed, in Opposition it was our policy that we had to consolidate the way we worked. We had to consolidate the way we presented ourselves. I have to say I am very proud of what Transport for NSW has achieved in the last 2½ years. Instead of having many different agencies and brands we now have one agency that, for the first time in the history of our State, reflects freight, roads and public transport. That is something that had never happened before.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: Minister, that is terrific. You have given up your right to take Dixers. The Government has given up its time. If you want to continue with this Dixer you can, but it is a basic question. How much has all of the new rebranding and signage cost the taxpayers of New South Wales?

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: The branding and the signage has not finished, because we made an effort to ensure that we branded things—

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: If you do not know the answer you can take the question on notice, or you can give me the cost to date.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: Can you please let me finish my answer?

CHAIR: Order! Please allow the Minister to answer the question.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: My point is that this is an ongoing piece of work. We are still going through the rebranding. As old things retire, as we order new letterhead for example, or as we order new livery, the new branding takes shape. The point I am making is there are always ongoing costs associated with branding in public transport. We have made sure that within those costs we are presenting the customer with a consolidated point of information and a consolidated point of reference. I am sure there is a relevant line item in the budget that deals with these costs which would have existed when you were in Government.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: Actually it does not, Minister. Could you at least agree to take on notice the cost to date and to provide it to the Committee?

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: Can I agree to take on notice the fact that it is not just the rebranding; it is also tied up with customer information. For example, customers have train, bus and ferry apps they did not have before. Customers now have access to additional information and an online presence. When you talk about a specific line item, I would put to you that the costs are part of the ongoing importance we place on making sure customers have information to transport.

I also want to place on the record that by consolidating the number of brands and logos we are actually saving money. I would put to you that instead of having 11 different agencies with their own branding we have one Transport for NSW and operators who have contracts with Transport for NSW. If you look at the medium to long term, we are saving money.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: So you would be happy to provide those costs to the Committee?

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: Of course we will provide the relevant line item which relates to customer information.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: No, if you are saying that you have got a breakdown of those costs why do you not provide it?

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: I am suggesting to you that because it is ongoing we may not have a specific line item. I am happy to provide to you the cost as is on the public record of what we pay every year to provide customer information.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: That is no help at all, Minister. We will move on. As you know, I have been trying to pursue the issues of the cost of the rebranding and signage under our freedom of information legislation. Can you confirm that Loud has been paid almost \$600,000 to develop and design the brand for the trains, buses, light rail and ferries? Can you confirm that GfK Blue Moon Research has done market testing to the tune of \$634,975? Can you confirm that Stokes Mischewski has been paid to do communications research for New South Wales trains at a cost of about \$32,000?

If I add that up so far I get to about \$1.3 million in relation to brand development. On top of that you have also said that the new uniforms cost around \$7 million. Again, that has never really been properly identified. So far that gets us to just over \$8 million. Can you confirm that is accurate?

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: Again in relation to consultancies I will have to refer to the department because they engage the consultancies. But can I say for the record that when we came to Government your Government had wasted half a billion dollars on the CBD-Rozelle metro.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: Minister, you had an opportunity to be asked a Dixer and talk about the previous Government, but your people gave that up.

CHAIR: Order! The Hon. Penny Sharpe will come to order.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: Can you let me answer the question? Also the cost of RailCorp, even though you had slashed services by more than 400 a day—

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: Again I remind you that I am not asking you about that. I am asking about the cost of your resignation and rebranding.

CHAIR: The Hon. Penny Sharpe will come to order and allow the Minister to answer the question.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: The cost of RailCorp had exceeded more than \$10 million a day after you had slashed services. In relation to the consultancies engaged, I will refer to the Director General or anyone else from Transport for NSW who is in a better position than I to respond to that question.

Mr WIELINGA: I will need to take it on notice and we will endeavour to provide you with the information.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: In that case can you confirm the following figures. Can you confirm that the wayfinding pilot project, which is about signage, was approved in 2012 for about \$4.5 million?

Mr WIELINGA: I will take it on notice.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: And that that was originally supposed to be for Milsons Point, Circular Quay, Martin Place and Bondi Junction but Bondi Junction has been deferred?

Mr WIELINGA: I need to take it on notice.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: Thank you. Can you also take on notice that the plan had been that all ferry wharves would be upgraded with the signage? Could you confirm to me how many ferry wharves are uncompleted, given they were supposed to be done by March 2013?

Mr WIELINGA: Okay.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: Thank you. Mr Wielinga, can you also confirm that there has recently been approved another \$5 million for the Wayfinding projects for further rollout?

Mr WIELINGA: Look, I am not aware of any of these. I will take it on notice.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: All right. Minister, based on that, the one thing we do not have, and that I hope you will be able to provide that to the Committee—and perhaps you can take this on notice or maybe it is actually a question for Mr Collins—is the cost of rebranding onto city trains.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: Can I just say at the outset that, as you know, all trains require livery. If you have noticed, some trains have the branding and some do not.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: Yes. The old ones do not tend to, I notice.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: That is because—for example, the Waratah is our new train—as they come on line, they have the new branding.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: Sure.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: But as the older trains require upgrades and rebranding, that is when we are introducing the brand. That is part of our efficiency, to make sure that the rollout occurs at a rate which is affordable but also ensures that we have good customer information. The point I want to make to you, Ms Sharpe, is I do not apologise for having a single brand for each of our operators and I do not apologise for having a single brand for my department because these are all things that allow us to deliver public transport in a much more efficient way. We know for many years customers did not have a recognisable brand in any operators, and in fact in the department there are 11 different agencies. I also want to stress the point that had a very concerted effort to do the rollout as each livery update is required.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: Thank you, Minister. Can you take on notice that so far, without the costs that are unknown in relation to the costs on trains, the rebranding is up to \$17.2 million and counting and it has so far delivered new uniforms and three stations across the network with new signage?

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: Ms Sharpe, that is your figure. It is not ours.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: I think you will find they are drawn from your documents, Minister.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: But can I also—

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: That is fine. I am happy to move on.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: No, no. Can I please make the point that for many years Transport in this State did not have a customer focus. I do not apologise for making customer service the focus of each of our organisations. If you look anywhere around the world—

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: Minister, thank you. We have a very short period of time. I have eight minutes left to talk to you. I would like to move on to the next issue, thank you.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: I regret that you do not want to hear about all the good things that we are doing in Transport.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: You could have taken a dixer from your members. You could have had an hour to tell us all about the great things that you are doing. I would like to move on, thanks. Minister, did you or your office or Transport for NSW—this may be a question also for Mr Staples— receive any advice from any source that the tunnels that could be bored for the North West Rail Link could be bored at the same cost for the diameter that would allow them to take double-deck trains?

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: Ms Sharpe, thank you for the question. It is an important question and it gives me the opportunity to explain the context of the Government's decision-making.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: No, I do not really want you to do that. You could have done that in terms of a dixer. I want to know the answer to a very specific question which goes to the heart of your signature project. Did you receive advice that the tunnels could have been bored at the diameter that in the future would have taken double-deck trains?

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: Can I say at the outset that politically it would have been much easier for me to say that we are building a double-deck system for the North West, but it would have been the wrong decision. We spent at least 12 months speaking to industry, speaking to experts, looking at what other countries around the world had done. When you look at tunnel size, what you need to look at is capacity. We are planning for the future. The key question to ask is: In the future, how many trains can you move an hour? Or, more importantly, rather than how many trains, how many people can you move every single hour?

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: Excellent. Let us talk about that then.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: Can I just—

CHAIR: Order!

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: If you have raised the issue, that is fine.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: I have not finished the answer.

The Hon. NIALL BLAIR: Point of order—

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: That is fine. I have got enough out of that answer from you.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: I have not finished the answer.

The Hon. NIALL BLAIR: I will just make the point that it is very difficult for the Hansard reporters to be able to record the proceedings this afternoon—

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: They are quite used to it.

The Hon. NIALL BLAIR: —if there is going to be a shouting match every time the Minister tries to give an answer. It goes to my earlier point when I said that the Minister should be given the courtesy to be able to provide the answer to the question the member has asked.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: Ms Sharpe, given that in your question you had mentioned Mr Staples—

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: To the point of order: The first thing is that Hansard are more than capable of dealing with the discussions that are happening at this table. This happened last year as well. The Minister had the opportunity to put all of her information on the record, if she has taken dixers. They have given that up.

CHAIR: Thank you. I am happy to rule on the point of order.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: We have got a very short period of time to talk about this—six minutes left.

CHAIR: Would you like me to rule on the point of order, or would you like to continue talking?

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: Yes, please.

CHAIR: I ask that all members show respect to each other, allow the Minister to answer a question and allow Hansard to record that accurately. The Minister may proceed.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: Thank you. Ms Sharpe, in your question you noted that Mr Staples may also have information to provide on this issue. I would ask Mr Staples to elaborate.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: No, at this point actually I want to go back to patronage because that is really where this gets to. Minister or Mr Staples, please feel free to jump in at any time. Minister, in the development of the patronage figures for the North West Rail Link, previously they were largely determined in 2005 and updated in 2010 by various demand reports. These were always obviously considered to be interim figures and have to have been changed substantially, I assume, given that the assumptions around the project have changed now. Are you able to give us the anticipated patronage figures for the North West Rail Link for 2019?

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: Certainly. Rodd, if you want to, you can talk about this. We have a figure that we have set. As you know, when you open a new rail line there is what we call a gearing-up period for patronage to settle down. I will ask Mr Staples to speak to that.

Mr STAPLES: There has been extensive work done in relation to patronage forecasts. We have outlined and summarised those in our environmental impact statement. Our forecasts in the early years of the

operation are about 30 million customers per annum would utilise the service, but there is further detail in our environmental impact statement in relation to that.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: Which I have read. This is what I am trying to check. The November 2011 project scope figures talked about that 29 million passenger journeys a year. Can I confirm that was on the assumption that we were using double-deck trains on the basis of up to eight trains an hour? What has changed in that time?

Mr STAPLES: I am not familiar with the particular figure you are quoting. The concept that—

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: I refer you to the November 2011 project scope.

Mr STAPLES: And what we have put forward since then is our second environmental impact statement, which outlines the operation for the service from Cudgegong Road to Chatswood.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: Which I have read, yes.

Mr STAPLES: That summarises the patronage of 30 million passengers using that service.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: Is that for 2021? Given that the Government now has announced that it will be opened in 2019, what is the anticipated patronage?

Mr STAPLES: One of the aspects with patronage forecasts is that there are a number of variables in the forecast affected by the nature of the service, the way that people access the stations, the interchanges and the amount of car parking, the amount of growth that actually happens on the surrounding network at the time. All those variables need to be taken into account in considering the estimate. We need to consider those in terms of timing, and then there is what we call a sort of ramp-up over a period of years. We are indicating that the 30 million patronage would be in the first five years or so of opening.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: Would you be able to provide all of that detailed work, make that public and provide it for the Committee?

Mr STAPLES: I think we have provided it. It is in the environmental impact statement [EIS].

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: It is in the environmental impact statement. It is already on the public record.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: Some of that is there.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: Yes. The actual environmental impact statement—you may have read the summary document—

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: I have read the whole thing.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: The environmental impact statements one and two are 2,000 pages in total.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: Yes, I know, and in pdf format: very helpfully, yes.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: The executive summary is there, but if you want to go into that level of detail, there are over 2,000 pages in the two environmental impact statements, which actually detail that type of work.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: They will provide all of that. Is the estimation in terms of the number of trains that run the single-deck trains with 1,300 per train basically work on the idea that there will be four people per square metre standing?

Mr STAPLES: There is a range of options in the way that the trains will be configured and we are working with industry at the moment in terms of the layout of the trains as part of the tender process. I cannot give specific figures at this particular point in time because we are looking to get the experience and knowledge

of international partners in terms of the nature of the trains to make sure they give the best customer layout. But certainly there is a range of figures in terms of crowding, but we will not be outside of any sort of normal benchmark, whatever we have.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: But you are using the 1,300 figure. Can you just confirm that that is on the basis that basically, with people standing, you have got four people per square metre?

Mr STAPLES: I do not have the specific information.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: Can you take it on notice and get back to us?

Mr STAPLES: Sure.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: Minister, can you explain to me why, when the Transport master plan was announced in December last year, there are still no regional transport plans released?

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: Certainly. As you know, we spent about 18 months developing the Transport Master Plan. We made sure that we extensively covered every region of the State and, as you can appreciate, never before in the history of our State did we actually have one plan for the whole State that covered roads, freight and public transport.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: But so far you have a Sydney plan, not a New South Wales plan. Where are the regional plans up to?

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: If you look at the Transport Master Plan, that actually contained information relating to each region across New South Wales. After the master plan we then drilled down into our regional plans and I am pleased to advise the Committee that even post the master plan, we engaged in further discussions with relevant stakeholders and within relevant—

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: There have been some complaints though, haven't there, in relation to community consultation locally?

Mr SCOT MacDONALD: Point of order: The Committee member is wasting valuable question time in interrupting the answer.

CHAIR: Order! Please allow the Minister to continue.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: Ms Sharpe, I have been completely bowled over by the amount of interest in the master plan and I want to thank everyone who made a submission, but I would be disappointed if there were no complaints because so many thousands of people either put in submissions, contacted us, looked up the website or downloaded the submissions paper. I also want to say that the release of the regional plans is imminent. I am hoping to have a number of them out in the near future.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: "Near future"—months, end of the year?

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: In the near future.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: They are still waiting. Your close colleague and friend, the Minister for the Central Coast, said last week that you had guaranteed him six new daily express services to operate from the Central Coast under the as yet unreleased new timetable. Can you confirm that to the Committee?

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: I am not prepared to confirm anything in the final timetable because, as you know, we are still going through variations in the last few months. There have been hundreds of variations. I can place on the record that the Minister for the Central Coast and many of my colleagues are taking a very strong interest in the timetable, as I would expect them to. However, I want to place on the record that, under the previous Government we lost more than 400 daily rail services in 2005. The Government made a commitment, when it came to government, to introduce a certain number of express services—

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: Six, yes.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: —in addition to a number of new services. I am not prepared to confirm any details of the timetable, simply because they have not been confirmed. We are still working through the iterations. But, in contrast to the previous Government, I want to state that there will be more services. We are also making a strong effort in relation to ensuring that there is easier customer information in terms of the clock face timetable; in relation to stopping patterns—

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: Yes, thank you Minister, we are getting into Dixieland again.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: Well, I am just answering the question.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: I want to know then, are the Hunter and Central Coast express trains going to go via Macquarie University?

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: Again, I do not want to give out any details as we are still confirming the final iteration of the timetable but I am looking forward to being able to make that public as soon as we have the final version. We are still going through what is required. The other interesting thing for this timetable is that, not only did we start it from scratch and it has taken us two years to get to this point but we also need to ensure that we integrate bus and ferry services, where relevant. So it is a major piece of work and as I have said previously, as soon as we have the final version, I am looking forward to showing it to the community. I think members of the community will share my enthusiasm for what the new timetable will offer people who use rail and other forms of public transport.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: I am sure the people of Kogarah are looking forward to it. Minister, how many international students have purchased the discounted tickets that you trumpeted last year?

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: As you know, international students, for many years and the universities have been—

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: You can take it on notice, Minister.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: No, I don't want to take it on notice—you are asking me a question.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: I am happy to hear your answer, I just want to know how many students have taken it up.

CHAIR: Order! Please allow the Minister to answer the question.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: You are asking me a question. In fact, that was something we did that your Government failed to do. I am pleased that we were able to introduce that product. I want to say that, to date, over 4,000 passes have been sold, as I understand. The figure I have in front of me is 4,200.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: I am happy for you to provide it on notice. Could you just give us the breakdown?

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: These passes offer unlimited travel on buses, light rail, most ferries—

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: I know what they are. I want to know how many have been sold in what zones? So, whether they are MyMulti 2s or MyMulti 3s, how many, and whether they are weeklies.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: The information I have in front of me—I am proud of this fact—is that more than 4,000 have been sold and Tim says he has more information.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: You are aware of how many international students there are in New South Wales, Minister?

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: Four thousand more than you had when you were in government.

Mr REARDON: Just in terms of the regime to roll that out, we have basically on-sold those tickets to tertiary institutions. So, over 4,000 have been taken up by tertiary institutions.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: So we do not know how many the institutions have sold?

Mr REARDON: We have a process of rolling those out through tertiary institutions and it depends on the demand. The institutions have the direct interaction with the international students, so it is based on what they wish to take up.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: Could you provide a breakdown—could you take that on notice? [*Time expired.*]

Dr MEHREEN FARUQI: Minister, it has been said that the Sydney cycleway network is only as strong as its weakest link. When can we expect the long-awaited Central Sydney Access Strategy to be released and therefore allow for proper action and for cycleways to be built?

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: I thank you for your question. When we came to Government, one of the things we wanted to do was to end the days—especially when it came to active transport—where we had an ad hoc, disjointed process whereby governments simply made an announcement, without really looking at the picture holistically. I am pleased with the work we have done with relevant stakeholders to ensure that we have an integrated strategy. I am looking forward to being able to share what is in our Active Transport Strategy, whether it is cycling or pedestrian access. The City Centre Access Strategy will be released in the near future and it also outlines how those things will be done in a coordinated fashion.

Dr MEHREEN FARUQI: Do you have a date for that?

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: Can I use the word "imminent"? There is not too much longer to wait but it is a complex piece of work because, when one is looking at the City Centre Access Strategy, not only does one have to think about cycleways and pedestrian access and motorists but also about how one can configure the future bus network. As you might be aware, for example, earlier this year we redirected 60 buses down the Cahill expressway, as opposed to stopping in York Street. So there is ongoing work in relation to the strategy. I am keen to have a coordinated approach.

Dr MEHREEN FARUQI: So there is no date at this point in time?

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: I do not have a date but I can tell you that it will be in the near future.

Dr MEHREEN FARUQI: In the interim, what measures is the Government taking to ensure that once that City Centre Access Strategy is ready there can be quick progress in constructing those cycleways?

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: We have committed to delivering against all of our plans. I want to assure this Committee that, whether it is the City Centre Access Strategy or any project, that we are delivering against our plans. In relation to the city centre, there are some initiatives that have already started to roll out, as I foreshadowed, in relation to bus services and other measures that we have to ensure that motorists comply with the rules. That is especially important during peak hour because, if they do not comply, it causes havoc. We also want to ensure that what we put in place stands the test of time, in terms of coordination. I think every member of this Committee will be pleased with the amount of work we have done. We have also ensured that that work is based on the statistics at hand. Roads and Maritime Services has been heavily involved to make sure that every intersection, every street and road in the Central Business District has been considered because, when one alters one thing, it has a follow-on impact to something else.

Dr MEHREEN FARUQI: Can we hope that, as soon as the access strategy is released, the construction can start?

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: Obviously, as soon as our policy is released we will be looking forward to working against that plan.

Dr MEHREEN FARUQI: What is the budget allocation for cycleways over the next two years?

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: I do not have the figure in front of me but I am sure one of my team can get you that figure during the course of the—

Dr MEHREEN FARUQI: If you can take it on notice, that will be great.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: In relation to 2013-14 there is \$33.9 million in capital and recurrent funding for the next year. I will ensure that I get the next figure for you as well on forward estimates.

Dr MEHREEN FARUQI: Thank you, Minister. Given that we still do not have the access strategy, is the Government still committed to the New South Wales 2021 goal, to more than double the modal share of bicycle trips in the greater Sydney region by 2016 and do you think it is still a realistic goal?

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: The Government is definitely committed to achieving that goal. That is why we are making sure we get the strategy right. It is why we are engaging with stakeholders who are experts in these areas. The Government is committed to increasing the modal share of active transport, including cyclists. That is definitely a goal. We are also keen to ensure that pedestrian access is given a greater priority. It shocked me when I learned the figures relating to the number of people who walk to destinations within the Central Business District, especially during peak hour. Tens of thousands of people use certain streets in a short amount of time. So our Active Transport Strategy will cover cycling as well as pedestrian access.

Dr MEHREEN FARUQI: Are you still committed to that goal?

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: Definitely.

Dr MEHREEN FARUQI: Still on cycleways—for years the proposed GreenWay route through Sydney's inner west has been up in the air and in July the *Sydney Morning Herald* revealed what many had already expected: That hundreds of thousands of dollars has already been spent in planning but it is not going anywhere. When will the Government come clean and announce the true intentions for GreenWay? When will it be built?

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: I want to again put into context the decision I made to defer that project. When we came to government, it became apparent to us that the previous Government had not done sufficient work in relation to both the cost of a light rail project and the likely cost of the GreenWay project. That was a concern for me. I also was strongly of the view, based on the advice I had received, that if we did that project it may not necessarily have been part of a broader coordinated effort, and also that the work not being done could jeopardise the time in which we were able to deliver the inner west light rail extension. So I made the tough decision to continue with the Inner West Light Rail Extension and defer the Greenway until we have a coordinated response to our cycling strategy. When the cycling strategy comes out I will have more to say about the Greenway project.

Dr MEHREEN FARUQI: As you alluded to, there were some cost differences between what the previous Government costed the Greenway, which was \$30 million, and your Government costed it at \$37 million. Can you be specific about the \$7 million increase?

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: Yes, certainly. The previous Government had not done a lot of the detailed engineering and design work which was required. I want to commend the councils that have been involved in putting that project together over many years but, regrettably, the State Government had not done the designed engineering work that was required to get a better estimation of cost. At that stage as the Minister for Transport I thought it was too much of a risk, given the cost blowout. It was not a cost blowout; the previous Government again had not done sufficient costings for the Inner West Light Rail Extension. In fact, we had to rip up some of the work it had done and redo it because of what we discovered after we came to government. For that reason the project was deferred. But I will have more to say about that when our integrated strategies come out.

Dr MEHREEN FARUQI: Given the high cost, would you consider staging the project?

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: All I will say is that when it comes to cycling I am always committed to working within an integrated strategy. I was keen to make sure that we did not put the cart before the horse; that we had an integrated strategy before we committed to any specific project of that nature because it is a very big project. So we are considering the options in view of the consolidated cycling strategy. I will have more to say about that at a future date.

Dr MEHREEN FARUQI: So no cycleway will be built until that strategy is in place?

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: I anticipate that the strategy will be public in the near future.

Dr MEHREEN FARUQI: According to the Barangaroo Integrated Transport Plan, which was released in August last year, 96 per cent of people will travel to Barangaroo by public transport, cycling or walking, yet we do not have any plans for upgrades to Wynyard station, given that most people through the walkway will come from or go back to Wynyard station. When will these plans be released and a budget attached to them?

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: We actually do have an integrated transport strategy for Barangaroo, which is publicly available. I am not sure if you have had a chance to look at that. Transport for NSW already has put that up on the website. In relation to access to Barangaroo can I talk about the Wynyard Walk, which our Government is investing in?

Dr MEHREEN FARUQI: I know about the walk but—

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: It talks about pedestrian access. Yes.

Dr MEHREEN FARUQI: —I am more concerned about the station, which is at capacity already.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: Certainly.

Dr MEHREEN FARUQI: With so many more people coming in, have you considered upgrading the station?

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: Part of the Wynyard Walk improves access to the pedestrian facility. That is happening as part of the Wynyard Walk project. As you appreciate, we estimate there could be about 20,000 pedestrians in the morning peak going from Wynyard to Barangaroo. The Wynyard Walk will cover about six minutes on average per customer. We are looking at how we can best cope with that demand. The Wynyard Walk project deals with access from Wynyard station.

Dr MEHREEN FARUQI: Sorry to interrupt, Minister. Could you talk about the upgrade of the station?

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: Certainly.

Dr MEHREEN FARUQI: And when that has been planned for?

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: I am sure you have been down to the station recently, but part of the station is barricaded where people will actually enter the Wynyard Walk. Unlike the Kent Street tunnel, the Wynyard Walk will be, from memory—please correct me, anybody, if I am wrong—about nine metres wide. That in itself allows people greater access from the station to the Wynyard Walk. Obviously, in the morning peak where managing the crowd is a challenge for us, we have made sure the access to that pedestrian way is increased by the width of the Wynyard Walk. In addition to pedestrian access and in addition to that we obviously also are at work on the ferry hub as a lot of people also will come to Barangaroo by ferry. Obviously, I am not doing the integrated strategy justice by my words. Please look it up on the website. It is very detailed. Mr Wielinga and Ms McNally were responsible for coordinating that strategy. I am not sure if either of them would like to say anything further to that.

Dr MEHREEN FARUQI: I am more interested in Wynyard station. It seems at the moment that there are no plans to upgrade Wynyard station?

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: There are if you look at the Wynyard Walk.

Dr MEHREEN FARUQI: Okay.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: Obviously, upgrading major CBD stations is something we are looking at.

Dr MEHREEN FARUQI: Under the original plan for Barangaroo only 156 car spaces were allocated to the hotel. Now under the new Packer proposal this hotel will also house a casino and may require about 2,000

car spaces. In view of this and the transport strategy from Barangaroo, is there a shift now from public transport towards car use?

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: I am not sure if I am the correct Minister to answer that question, but I can tell you that from a public transport perspective we certainly are doing all we can through this integrated strategy to make sure we are prepared for Barangaroo. I am very pleased with the work that is taking place on the Wynyard Walk and the ferry hub and also looking at whether we need to reconfigure any bus services. But as you would appreciate, the geography of that area is a bit challenging as well. Our integrated transport strategy deals with all these issues and includes forecasts for people accessing the site and the mode of transport they are using to access the site.

Dr MEHREEN FARUQI: Would you still say that you stand by the statement that 96 per cent of people travelling to Barangaroo will do so by public transport, cycling or walking?

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: Definitely. And rail will take the heavy share. Rail takes the heaviest share for people simply coming into the CBD every morning. If you look at modal share, heavy rail has the greatest share of customers. Obviously, our challenge then is to make sure we make the integration between the rail stations and Barangaroo as simple as possible.

Dr MEHREEN FARUQI: I draw your attention to the Taxi Transport Subsidy Scheme. Why has there been no increase in the subsidy scheme cap since 1999 when other States have made those increases and the taxi industry inquiry report also recommended an increase?

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: Dr Faruqi, I could be very cheeky in saying that you are right, there has not been an increase since 1999. That is extremely challenging for people who rely on the service. I was very pleased that late last year we put out our Disability Action Plan where we spoke to stakeholders about the challenges in the transport portfolio. That is one of the issues raised with us. I have since asked my department to review that scheme. I have also received representations in particular from quite a number of people, including some in my own electorate, about how challenging it is for them under the circumstances. I have asked the department to review that. Tim, can you comment on where we are up to with that?

Mr REARDON: I certainly can. In terms of the review of wheelchair accessible taxis and the Taxi Transport Subsidy Scheme, the Minister has asked us to look at the incentives involved in the use of wheelchair accessible taxis. In the short term we are out talking to customers who use wheelchair accessible taxis and the Taxi Transport Subsidy Scheme to understand what is very important to them. We are getting that feedback in at the moment as part of that review process. We will be in a position later this year to provide the Minister with some advice for consideration in what is important to customers and what we might do to increase the incentives available to ensure that wheelchair accessible taxis meet customer needs.

Dr MEHREEN FARUQI: Was this not done in the 2010 New South Wales taxi industry inquiry, which actually recommended subsidies be increased?

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: Regrettably, the previous Government did a lot of inquiries and a lot of reviews, but did not actually make decisions on anything.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: This was chaired by your parliamentary secretary.

CHAIR: Order! The Hon. Penny Sharpe will come to order. Committee members have had the decency to not interrupt Opposition members when questioning.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: The Minister should be accurate as to the board.

CHAIR: I will allow the Minister to answer the question.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: Dr Faruqi, I stress that I regard this as an important issue—

Dr MEHREEN FARUQI: Yes, it is critical.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: —which is why I have asked my department to look at it. Since 1999 there has not been an increase, yet the demand obviously is growing. Affordability and accessibility are an issue,

especially for those who have mobility challenges. So I am eagerly awaiting the advice I get from the department. But I have asked it to undertake a review.

Dr MEHREEN FARUQI: As you said, it is a really critical issue for many people to access transport this way. Every day it is difficult for them. Is there a timeline on when this will be released and when you are looking to increase the subsidy?

Mr REARDON: We will certainly be looking to bring back our results by the end of the year to the Minister.

Dr MEHREEN FARUQI: According to 2012 annual report of Transport for NSW, Transport Infoline 131500 responded to more than 127,000 complaints, compliments and other items of customer feedback. Could you tell us a little about how this information is analysed and does the public have access to that information?

Ms GLADYS BEREJKLIAN: Certainly. When I became the Minister for Transport it was concerning to me that we did not actually have an expert division or group of individuals that actually looked at customer service and experience. So we established a division called the Customer Experience Division within Transport for NSW. Part of the division's responsibility is to gain valuable insight into customer satisfaction levels, what they aspire to achieve or the standards of service they hope to achieve.

We have done a lot of work in the past 12 months in particular about what information is best for customers and how we can convey that. I am looking forward to be able to have something public to say about that in the near future, because we have collated a lot of valuable information. I also wanted us to look at the way in which we present the information so that it is useful for customers. Customers, for example, want reliability, cleanliness and safety. There are a lot of different ways to best measure that. We are finalising a piece of work on that and I will be able to issue that publically.

The Hon. PAUL GREEN: In regards to a couple of issues such as the taxi transport subsidy voucher system, what checks and balances are in place to ensure that people are accountable?

Ms GLADYS BEREJKLIAN: I am glad you have raised this issue, Mr Green, because I met with Blind Citizens Australia only last week to discuss their concerns and challenges in relation to this scheme. The department is also looking at ways in which we could perhaps potentially apply some form of electronic ticketing to replace the vouchers. A lot of disability groups have raised issues with me regarding their concern for the system, how we can make it user-friendly, but also future proof in respect of the technology that is available. I am hoping to get advice before the end of the year in addition to the subsidy scheme itself on whether or not we can apply some form of electronic ticketing system. Obviously if you are visually impaired you cannot see what amount is being written on the voucher, and that concern was raised with me only last week. Mr Reardon, do you have any update on what I have just told the Committee?

Mr REARDON: In terms of the scope of that review, any issues we consider we have with the Taxi Transport Subsidy Scheme at the current level of \$30, for example, how it is administered, we will take that on board through the processes we have in place at the moment. Being a paper-based ticketing system means we will always look for improvements where available and, within the scope of that review, we will look at any electronic mechanisms we can.

The Hon. PAUL GREEN: You said you were going to get stakeholders' feedback. Is that going to be city-centric, or are you going out to regional and rural New South Wales? What are you doing to get out and about?

Mr REARDON: Most of the consultation we do undertake is certainly not just confined to the Sydney basin. We certainly undertake it across New South Wales and will continue to do so with a whole range of areas. On this, it will be the same. I have already been involved in consultations where the issue was raised in regional centres, such as Tamworth, et cetera. We are out and about consulting with regional and rural areas as well as urban areas.

The Hon. PAUL GREEN: What is the protocol in terms of disallowed vouchers? How do you deal with that? How do the drivers get feedback why it has been disallowed?

Mr REARDON: The management of the regime is through the Roads and Maritime Services. Instead of taking up the Committee's time, I might take that on notice.

The Hon. PAUL GREEN: Will that be in that review?

Mr REARDON: The process for managing the system will certainly be part of the review. The operational matters should be part of the advice we bring through to set any new policy.

The Hon. PAUL GREEN: From what I understand, there is not much feedback about disallowed vouchers and how that works. You might want to address that.

Mr REARDON: Yes.

The Hon. PAUL GREEN: Thank you. In respect of the cycleway strategy and budget, Minister, you mentioned about \$39 million was allocated. What section or portion has been allocated to regional or rural areas? In respect of their ability to get access to that money, how do they ensure they get their fair share of funding?

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: Can I please take that on notice, Mr Green? I have seen the figure somewhere. Obviously we are keen not only to have a strategy for cities but also for regional New South Wales, which is why we consulted so much during the transport master plan. I was very pleased to hear the importance placed on cycling in regional communities, not just for tourism, but generally to access and venues. I have just been given some information which says that more than \$800 million has been allocated to match council expenditure on local cycleway projects to improve infrastructure—sorry, \$8 million. I did not mean to say \$800 million. Your eyes would have lit up if I said \$800 million. Sorry to excite you unnecessarily. That would have been a big mislead in the Committee, would it not? It was only \$8 million—I should not say "only"—but \$8 million has been allocated to match council expenditure on local cycleway projects, and that is primarily to improve infrastructure at a local level by engaging with councils to ensure we understand their needs as opposed to imposing what we think should happen. That is a subset of the budget in the next 12 months.

The Hon. MICK VEITCH: That was a good catch, Les. You get a gold watch now.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: He earned the gold watch a long time ago.

The Hon. PAUL GREEN: I did not question the 800 million because in fact down south their cycleway strategy would be 52 million—

The Hon. MICK VEITCH: For the Shoalhaven.

The Hon. PAUL GREEN: Now that you mention it, yes, so I did not budge on that 800 million, but we would welcome it right across New South Wales for the cycleways strategy. Minister, can you provide an update on the Opal card rollout? Obviously there has been some negative feedback in the media about the price rise and hikes. Are we catching people off guard, thinking that this was going to be a better system and suddenly it is more expensive?

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: I am really, really pleased with how the Opal rollout is going. To give you a headline as to where we are up to, at the moment 16 ferry wharves are accessible, so all of the ferry wharves east of the harbour bridge. I have made a commitment that all ferries would be accessible on Opal by the end of the year. In relation to trains, as you know, at the moment the Bondi Junction line is accessible on the Opal card. I am thrilled that already we have 14,000 people who have signed up to it.

In relation to some of the incentives people have, obviously if you use the Opal card nobody in the State pays more than \$15 a day for the card. For everybody it means that after you have clocked up eight journeys—so if you catch public transport to work every day—Friday, Saturday and Sunday will be free. So after you clock eight journeys the rest of the week is free and that is on any mode of transport. We have made sure that those incentives exist. For rail, for example, if you use the Opal card in the off peak, you save 30 per cent of the equivalent single rail ticket. If you use it in the peak, the Opal card offers a saving of about 8 per cent compared to the single ticket price.

The reports you are referring to, Mr Green, are for those people who have periodic tickets. They are people who outlay a lot of money once a year and buy a yearly ticket. I place on the record—and if the figure I quote is not correct, I am sure someone will correct me—that 96 per cent of all tickets purchased are not periodic tickets. So 96 per cent of all tickets purchased—weeklies, singles, or TravelTens—those customers will be far better off. But even if you are a periodic ticket user, you will be better off under this system because the periodic ticket such as a yearly ticket does not take into account holidays, if you are sick, public holidays. The beauty of the Opal card is you only pay as you use it; there is no up-front payment.

At the moment, for those who purchase a yearly ticket, for example—and a lot of people cannot afford to purchase a yearly ticket so they rely on the weeklies or the TravelTens, or whatever else—the average person, they will be much better off under the Opal card. The feedback we get most strongly from people is they love the fact they do not have to queue up anymore. At some railway stations across the State, Monday mornings or Friday afternoons are a nightmare, depending on when they purchased the weekly. Again, those types of tickets do not always capture public holidays and other things. The beauty of the Opal card is that it has incentives for people to use transport every day of the week.

The Hon. PAUL GREEN: What percentage of the buyout of the overall ticketing is the Opal ticket carrying now?

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: It is only on limited lines. Is that what you mean?

The Hon. PAUL GREEN: Yes, what is the percentage of those lines?

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: 14,000 cards have been issued at the moment. The 16 wharves only came online last week. Before then it was only the Manly ferry and the Neutral Bay ferry and the Eastern Suburbs line. A lot of people are waiting until we expand the system further. For example, if you catch a train to the city, some people then change modes and go elsewhere. For people who use more than one mode of transport or switch services to other lines, obviously they are waiting for us to roll it out further before they take it on. I think it is up to 14,000. It was definitely 13,000-something last week and I have been advised this morning it has gone up to 14,000. That number has certainly exceeded our expectations. I did not assume there would be that many people taking up the opportunity this early on the rollout. I am confident that as we roll it out to further geographies and further lines that people will find it more useful and that is when the take-up will increase.

The Hon. PAUL GREEN: There is no expiry date on the card?

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: No expiry date; it is indefinite. The other beauty of it is that in New South Wales we took the decision not to put a price on the card so currently if you access it you do not pay anything—obviously you have to put your own money on the card. I am also pleased that about 70 per cent of the users—which is almost as high as you can get anywhere else in the world—currently are choosing to do a direct debit, which means you can link the account directly to your credit card or your debit card. That means you will never have to queue up for a card again or you do not have to manually put e money on the card but, if you choose to, you can still manually top up your card. Some people do not want to register a card and obviously later on they may not want to do that; there are still options for that as well.

The Hon. PAUL GREEN: What impacts will the changes to the Inner West light Rail have on the morning city bound peak hour traffic?

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: Do you mean in terms of patronage?

The Hon. PAUL GREEN: In terms of the load, yes.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: Obviously we are very pleased that the Inner West light Rail extension is going along very well. I am hoping that passengers will be able to use the service early next year—I have said the first half of next year but I am obviously hoping that the project goes well and we can have people using it next year. I think it will have a very positive impact on travel to the central business district. Obviously in the future when the CBD and South East Light Rail is built that will have further benefits. One of the things we did when we came to government—actually we did it in the first 100 days—was to extend the use of concession tickets on the light rail and we have seen a huge jump in patronage since the equivalent period the

year before. We are finding that by making the light rail more accessible we are getting more people onto the light rail. I can give you specific projections on anticipated light rail but I will take that on notice.

The Hon. PAUL GREEN: Has the Government considered the feasibility of making wi-fi available to commuters across all forms of our transport system?

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: We have indeed. We have, as you know, recently made wi-fi accessible on Central station, Platform 1, which especially helps people travelling longer distances. We are looking at that as an option across the modes but what I am very proud of is that we now have mobile phone reception in tunnels—it should have happened a long time ago. The telcos told me personally, or told my office, that they tried to engage the previous Government 15 years ago and got nowhere so they came to speak to us—that's a fact—and we were very pleased to work with them to make sure that happened. We have made very strong efforts since we have been in government to make use of updated technology, whether it is reception in tunnels or whether its apps on all modes of transport, whether it is looking at wi-fi options, we really want to use technology to improve the customer experience and we will keep working hard in that regard.

The Hon. PAUL GREEN: The whole shift has been towards customer experience—

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: Thank you for noticing.

The Hon. PAUL GREEN: —how are you evaluating the approach? How are you getting feedback that you are actually meeting some benchmarks?

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: I think it relates to the question Dr Mehreen Faruqi asked me as well. We have set up a new division and we have new ways of gathering information on customer insights and I will be making something public in the near future about how we intend to report on that in the future. I would like to make sure that customers have the opportunity to get feedback on what other customers think about the situation, where we can improve, what they like. I am looking forward to having something to say about that. It has been I have to say the work of the Customer Experience Division, which never existed before—we set that up when we came to government. Because no matter where you go around the world we move people; not trains, not buses, not ferries. This is, unfortunately, a newer concept to New South Wales but one I am really pleased to introduce. I do want to thank Transport for NSW for its efforts in that regard.

The Hon. PAUL GREEN: Do you see a place for the very fast train in New South Wales?

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: I might ask Mr Wielinga to talk about the work he has done but certainly we were involved in stage one of the feasibility study undertaken by the Federal Government and stage two is currently taking place. My personal opinion as the Minister for Transport is that we do need to consider that option in the future. Even though it involves a lot of capital investment there is no reason why we should not start talking about potential corridor preservation, and this came out in the feasibility work we did. Mr Wielinga, do you have anything you want to add to that?

Mr WIELINGA: As the Minister said, it is in stage two of the feasibility study at the moment and the objective is to preserve the opportunity to be able to build it if it becomes viable in the future. It is a step-by-step investigation. The next step I would expect would generate enough information to reasonably locate a corridor.

The Hon. PAUL GREEN: Given your experience, and given the fact that you are moving on, what would be your initial view of how many stations should be included and which way it should go—whether we go to Queensland or Canberra? Do you have a view on a quick route to Canberra or Melbourne?

Mr WIELINGA: I do have a view but I am not going to express it until the right amount of work has been done. What I mean by that is you are talking about something that is for the long-term future of the eastern seaboard and the connection to Melbourne. You need to look at the planning and land use development along the eastern seaboard and base it on that work. The compromise you have to develop is that it is a very fast train and the more stops you have the more impact you have for the network. So it is a very strategic decision around infrastructure.

CHAIR: Our time has expired for questions on the portfolio of Transport. The Committee will now move to questions on the portfolio of Ferries. There will be no change of witnesses.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: How often do you meet with Harbour City Ferries?

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: As you can appreciate day-to-day operation-wise Harbour City Ferries meets quite regularly with Transport for NSW or engages with Transport for NSW.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: Is there sort of a monthly meeting?

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: Fergus will answer that question.

Mr GAMMIE: There are a number of regular meetings with Harbour City Ferries. There is a monthly contract management meeting. We then have a meeting monthly as well with the chief executive, who meets with our Executive General Manager. Those are the standard regular meetings.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: You would be aware of the issue in relation to cruise ships that is driving a significant number of complaints from Harbour City Ferries passengers?

Mr GAMMIE: I need the member to be more specific.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: If you look at the breakdown of the complaints from Harbour City Ferries, which I assume you are pretty familiar with because there is a monthly report, there is a significant number of complaints that deal specifically with the fact that when cruise ships come into the overseas passenger terminal they are significantly delaying Manly ferries in particular. Are you aware of that?

Mr GAMMIE: Yes.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: What is happening in relation to managing that issue?

Mr GAMMIE: I will have to come back to the member on the detail on that. I have to say that that is only one of the smaller areas of complaints so it is perhaps not the number one focus.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: It is a fairly significant number but I am happy to accept that. Would you be concerned if Harbour City Ferries were looking at putting up posters? I will cut to the chase here. I have an email from Harbour City Ferries that speaks specifically about this issue. It basically says, "Given the amount of complaints recently on the Manly service generated by cruise vessels berthing at the Quay I feel we need to notify the public in advance of vessel movements in and out of the Quay that might affect services, similar to the posters that we notify people of tidal restrictions on the Parramatta service." Do you think that is a reasonable thing to do given the delays?

Mr GAMMIE: I am not really across the specific issue but if they are going to put posters up they do require our agreement to that. I will have to come back to you on that point.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: What is perhaps more concerning in these emails is that people from Harbour City Ferries have indicated that they are not particularly keen on the posters. They say, "Our customers want us to fix the problem; not pass it onto them." That is very commendable, but the next suggestion is quite disturbing, "Maybe we can get a petition going with the customers on social media and the local politicians if we can't influence change alone." That suggests to me that they do not have a very good relationship with your office or feel as if they are able to raise this issue if, firstly, you are not aware of it and, secondly they are considering running local campaigns via passengers to get the issue fixed.

Mr GAMMIE: Harbour City Ferries are not allowed to run separate campaigns. Anything they do requires approved by our office. I am not aware of every detail of what is going on, but my team are. Certainly there would be no provision where we would allow them to do such a thing.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: Has your team had any discussions with maritime services in relation to the Overseas Passenger Terminal issues to do with cruises?

Mr GAMMIE: Again, I will have to come back to you on that specific question.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: I am interested in how you are going to manage this. Between tomorrow and the end of the year there are 52 services that are going to be coming into the quay. They will have a

significant impact—that is several a week—on commuters from Manly, and, as you know, that is the biggest service route. So if you could get back to me on that, that would be fantastic. There is also a significant number of complaints in relation to major events. There have been significant complaints around the Vivid Sydney festival, around the Cockatoo Island event and around overcrowding on Sunday services, which are very popular, as people know. What is being done to manage that within the contract?

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: We are, through Transport for New South Wales, obviously working with the operator on those issues. I state at the outset that I regard our relationship with Harbour City Ferries to be very constructive. I am extremely pleased with how the franchise process has gone, with little disruption to the customer—

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: Even though every key performance indicator has gone south since the takeover?

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: Those are your figures. I actually want to place on the record, and I am glad you have raised that issue, Hon. Penny Sharpe, because I am very pleased with the positive—

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: I want to know about the major events first though, please, Minister.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: In relation to major events, firstly, I think everybody accepts that we as a Government underestimated the popularity of the Vivid Sydney festival. Obviously as a transport department we base our projections on what is the anticipated attendance at a major event. I think it has been on the public record that we underestimated how popular Vivid Sydney was, and obviously we have that in mind for the future. I just want to put on the record that Harbour City Ferries—

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: If you want to put something on the record then you should have taken a Dorothy Dixier. I again go back to the question about complaints.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: I just want to correct an incorrect factual statement you made because I think that is appropriate.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: You can put out a press release about that, Minister—or you can do in your Dorothy Dixier answer—because I want to ask about complaints.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: So you think it is okay to ask me questions which have incorrect facts in them. I do not think that is appropriate.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: I asked you whether there was a significant number of complaints to do with Vivid Sydney. Are you denying that there were complaints or that there is an issue with major events?

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: No, you made a comment about all the performance indicators going down and complaints going up. I am telling you that that is factually incorrect, and I am happy to correct what you have said but you are not giving me the opportunity.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: That is because I want to know about major events and how you are managing them in the future.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: All I am asking is that you put the facts in your questions, please.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: Sure, I am very happy to, Minister. Always rely on your own figures—those are the ones that I am using, Minister. There has been a significant number of complaints in relation to vessels being full, not just for major events but particularly on Sundays. As we know, that time is hugely popular; and everyone likes to see that. Can you outline what happens in relation to the contract for Harbour City Ferries about how they decide whether to put on extra vessels when services are full.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: Can I make the point that just before I became the Minister for Transport the previous Labor Government cut 233 weekly ferry services. I just want to put that on the record. When we came to Government we added an extra 140 weekly services.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: Thank you, Minister, you have done that many times. Can you talk to me about how you are dealing with full vessels?

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: That was the longer version. The short answer is that we are actually putting on more services, and the timetable in October will have an additional 50 on top of what we have already put on. So we put on an extra 140 services then we added another 25 services for the inner west, the West and the river and now we are putting on an extra 50 services for the October timetable. We are really pleased that demand is increasing. That is because the ticketing, especially on weekends, is very positive. That will only increase with Opel because people will get free transport on the weekends—

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: Sorry to interrupt, I just want to clarify something there. So you expect that the complaints to do with vessel capacity will go down as a result of your new timetable in October?

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: No, I expect customers to take up the opportunity to use ferry services and in fact—

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: So you will not guarantee that the complaints will go down?

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: This is one fact that you need to appreciate: when you have more people catching a service and when you have increased services by so much, if you look at the raw figures then that is actually not an honest way of making comparisons.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: They are your figures, Minister. It is the way that you measure them.

CHAIR: Order! The Hon. Penny Sharpe has asked the Minister a question and will allow the Minister an opportunity to answer that question.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: Given the shadow minister has raised issues regarding customer complaints, I would like to put the facts on the record.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: Minister, you can table it, you know, or provide it on notice. Minister, you had an opportunity to provide Dorothy Dixers or put information on the record through Government questions. You have given that up.

CHAIR: Order! Hon. Penny Sharpe, do you have a question you would like to ask?

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: Yes, I do. I want to know about my question. Minister, you say that you are committed to customers—I call them passengers—but complaints are up and you are trying to argue about the figures. What are you actually doing with the operator to deal with their contract to drive that figure down?

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: Can I please stress to you, Hon. Penny Sharpe, that Harbour City Ferries service reliability over the 11 months for which we have figures is 99.9 per cent. It is an improvement of 0.3 per cent compared to the previous operator. In the same period Harbour City Ferries on-time performance was 99.1 per cent, which is an improvement from 98.8 per cent on the previous year.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: So, Minister, you are denying that service cancellations are up?

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: Given we have put on an extra 165 weekly services, it depends whether you are looking at percentages or raw numbers.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: I have looked at the percentages.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: The problem is that your previous Government cancelled all the services so you had far fewer passengers.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: Minister, you keep blaming the previous government. We get it, "You good; previous Government bad." That is what you say about every single thing, and it has taken you nine minutes. So far you have said that about 20 times in the last hour and 15 minutes. What are you doing to improve the customer complaints figures for Harbour City Ferries?

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: In addition to increasing services, which is the best way to deal with overcrowding, can I make that point—

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: But you make no commitment that the complaints are going to go down.

Mr SCOT MacDONALD: Point of order: can we allow the Minister to answer the question. There are serial interjecting going on here.

CHAIR: Order! The Minister may answer.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: I do not have a crystal ball, Hon. Penny Sharpe. I can certainly say that if you are talking about adding services and improving the customer experience, if you are talking about improving ticketing and the opportunities that customers have to use ferry services in a better way then we are certainly doing all of those things. I have no crystal ball as to what future figures will look like. I can go by performance though. I like to base my responses on facts. The facts are that services are improving, customers are happier, there are more people using ferries and there are more services available. That is a very positive story. I am very proud of what we have achieved in relation to ferry services and I am looking forward to further improvements.

Since we have been in government we have 165 additional weekly ferry services. There will be an extra 50 starting with the new October timetable. We also have a 20-year report entitled Sydney's Ferry Future, which talks about new rolling stock and other initiatives we are putting in place. This compares to your plans, which were to have patronage go down. The most recent report I had when I was the shadow minister for transport was that you were predicting—

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: That is 2½ years ago, Minister. When are you going to focus on your time as Minister and stop talking about the past.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: I am just trying to highlight your hypocrisy, that is all.

CHAIR: Order! We will move to questions from the crossbenches.

Dr MEHREEN FARUQI: Minister, it is stated in the Sydney's Ferry Future plan released in May this year that six new vessels will be added to the additional existing fleet of 28 by 2016. Could you please confirm that the six new vessels will increase the fleet to 34, or are they part of the planned ferry replacement?

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: We are actually considering that as we speak. They are replacement vessels. But we are also looking at how we can better manage the size of vessels required by maintaining the iconic look of the ferry services. I think people appreciate not only the positive experience they can have with catching ferries but also the iconic status that our ferry system has and that our harbour has. We are very mindful of that. The six ferries that we announced are to be replacement vessels. That is not to say that we cannot look to future opportunities, but that is what our current plans are.

Dr MEHREEN FARUQI: Do you have a plan then to look at increasing the fleet and a budget attached to it?

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: We are definitely looking at how we can better manage the fleet. As you know, one of the recommendations made by Mr Walker was to reduce the type and class of vessels. I think from memory his report made 17 recommendations, and in one of the recommendations he highlighted that there were six or seven different classes of ferries which makes it very difficult to maintain and also very difficult to provide customers with the services they need. So obviously we are looking at reducing the classes of ferries available to make sure that we meet customer needs. Some parts of the network are growing very quickly and we have to make sure that we have ferries available during the peak periods, and on weekends in particular. Our fleet replacement strategy actually looks at all of those things, and that is outlined in our plan. What I am most keen about in the short-term is to make better use of the vessels that we have and to increase the number of services. But, as you know, we also have opportunities for the private sector to be more involved and some private sector operators have their own vessels as well.

Dr MEHREEN FARUQI: Is there a levy for ferry wharf upgrades on each ferry ticket sold?

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: Not to my knowledge, no.

Dr MEHREEN FARUQI: Where is the budget coming from to improve wharves?

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: Just generally speaking, because of the way that we manage transport services, we are able to reduce back-office costs and put money into the front line. We have worked very hard to reduce tasks which were inefficient and to put those resources into the front line. I am very proud of that. That is why we have been able to afford all the extra services. I understand the wharf upgrade program is currently funded by Roads and Maritime Services [RMS] but is in transition to Transport for NSW. Was that the nature of your question?

Dr MEHREEN FARUQI: I wanted to know what the budget was and whether there is any delay in the program.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: There is no delay at all. In fact, I am pleased with the progress we are making. We have a strategy not only to improve existing wharves but also to look at new wharves in areas where there is growth. We have already upgraded a number of wharves since we have been in government. I am pleased with the progress we are making through the Transport Access Program. In the past, in every mode of transport and even within modes money to upgrade wharves, stations or other such infrastructure was disparate in different funds or different pots of money with different administration. We have pulled it all together so now we are able to look at those issues in a holistic way.

Dr MEHREEN FARUQI: What is the design life of the proposed upgrade of the wharves?

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: We are taking into account the customer experience, so in particular for ferry wharves we look at things such as—

Dr MEHREEN FARUQI: Is the design life 25 years, 50 years? What is the design life?

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: I can provide more information on that, but initially we look at the customer experience, for example, in relation to protection from weather.

Dr MEHREEN FARUQI: Could you take that on notice?

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: Certainly.

Dr MEHREEN FARUQI: My next question is linked to the questions asked by the Hon. Penny Sharpe. Your department strategy says that you are making progressive best practice improvements to customer experience for the Circular Quay to Manly ferry service, but in the last year there have been five ferry collisions and, according to the department figures, there has been a 25 per cent increase in cancelled services. How do these best practice improvements happen?

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: I might ask Mr Gammie to comment as well, but safety is our number one priority when it comes to public transport. We take each incident very seriously. Cancellations sometimes are because of the weather and because of other circumstances. Obviously, we try to reduce the number of cancellations as much as possible.

Dr MEHREEN FARUQI: I understand that, but where is the best practice here?

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: The best practice also is the ability we have through Transport for NSW to ensure that the service provider, in this case Harbour City Ferries, has a deep understanding of our expectations about customer service. I know that it has an ongoing strategy to reduce cancellations. Sometimes cancellations happen because of things outside our control such as weather. But things within our control such as improving maintenance practices and improving the class of vessels are critical because that has an effect on the number of cancellations as well.

The Hon. PAUL GREEN: Minister, will you elucidate on the criteria you use to cancel services? You have mentioned the weather. What other things might happen that the consumer may not know about?

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: From time to time there may be a maintenance challenge or there may be a decision that the operator takes. The day-to-day operations are the responsibility of the operator. The operator has very strict guidelines within which it needs to operate regarding safety considerations and the customer experience. Obviously, the operator has to make the call when it is safe or not safe to proceed with a service. Part of the strict contract we have with the operator is to ensure these benchmarks. I am proud of the fact that from transitioning from the government running the services to the private operator there was very little disturbance to the customer. Also, all the indicators are going in the right direction. Mr Gammie, would you like to add anything in relation to the current contract we have with Harbour City Ferries?

Mr GAMMIE: In terms of service reliability, the key statistic is that overall Harbour City Ferries ran 869 additional services over the past year and their reliability was the same as the previous year at 99.9 per cent. There are essentially two main things that affect service cancellations, as the Minister said. One is safety and weather conditions. The other one is mechanical errors. Primarily, cancellations are to do with the weather. Members will remember the unusual fog conditions we experienced around May. For example, that meant that all the Parramatta services were lost immediately and then eventually we could not run all of the services on those days. Those are the main things that affect it.

In terms of mechanical errors, we closely monitor the performance of Harbour City Ferries around its maintenance regime. We run audits on it to ensure that it is keeping the vessels up to standard. Collisions and groundings tend to be either related to mechanical error or master error. We also closely monitor the training of Harbour City Ferries staff and ensure that the masters are well trained. Of course, there are some very tight situations for ferry masters in our network.

The Hon. PAUL GREEN: Will the upgrade of ferries that was recently announced make the service faster?

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: Do you mean in relation to the vessels of the new ferry fleet?

The Hon. PAUL GREEN: Yes. Will that create efficiencies?

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: We have engaged someone to give us advice on what they think the vessels should encompass. We have our requirements for maintenance and space, but I am also keen to make sure that the iconic nature of the ferries is maintained with the new ferries coming online. We are at the very early stages, but the work has commenced. I am not sure if Mr Gammie has any update on that.

Mr GAMMIE: No.

The Hon. PAUL GREEN: Are you looking to take advantage of renewable or clean energy such as solar panel ferries as part of the upgrade?

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: I would like to think that the advice we have definitely takes all that into consideration. As Minister for Transport my approach has always been the more people using buses, ferries and trains the less people driving cars. My contribution to sustainability is increasing the capacity we have on public transport and the capacity we have for people to use ferries. I am cognisant that the demand we have on weekends is very high, especially when people from other parts of New South Wales visit Sydney and take advantage of our public transport. We are looking at how we can better manage demand on weekends and how we can charter vessels or use vessels that are available to supplement that demand.

The Hon. PAUL GREEN: You spoke about problems during major events. Vivid Sydney was a particularly popular event. How do you propose to address some of these issues?

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: As I said, we rely on advice we receive about the approximate number of people coming to an event. We accept fully that the number of crowds that were anticipated for Vivid were underestimated and more people came to the event. We are making sure that we build on that and learn from it. For example, the crowds at previous Vivid festivals were about half a million; this year there was 800,000. That is a substantial increase in 12 months. We accept that we need to anticipate larger crowds in the future. But at least we now have a coordinated approach to transport where roads, the Transport Management Centre and the public transport operators are linked to respond to major events. I am really pleased with that level of coordination and thank Minister Gay for the work that we do together. We are also more focused on

what we anticipate major events to be and what strategies we have in place in case there are more crowds than anticipated.

CHAIR: Unfortunately, time for questions on ferries has expired. We will now take a break and resume the hearing at 3.35 p.m.

(Short adjournment)

CHAIR: We resume the hearing with questions from the Opposition relating to rail.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: I welcome Mr Collins to his first budget estimates in New South Wales.

Mr COLLINS: Thank you.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: Welcome to Sydney and to New South Wales. Minister, it has been reported to me that in the last four weekends, from Friday to Sunday night, there have been seven reports of assaults causing actual bodily harm, 30 reports of common assault, and four reports of indecent assaults on the trains. I do not necessarily think that you will be able to confirm that for me today, but could you take that on notice and come back to the Committee to confirm that?

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: I certainly can, Ms Sharpe, but I was also pleased to hear in a report last week—I think you were involved in the media story—when it was stated that the number of assaults on customers has decreased by 16 or 18 per cent. That was reported a few days ago in the story in which you appeared. I will certainly be happy to take that on notice and to assure you and the Committee that I take safety and security on the network very seriously.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: Minister, are you aware that at Central station currently public announcements are being made to passengers and people who move through Central station that thieves are active in the area?

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: I have even heard those announcements myself before. I think it is appropriate to warn customers of what we think might be an issue. Mr Collins, add to that, if there is anything you would like to add to that.

Mr COLLINS: Yes. I think it is certainly an important thing to make people aware. It is quite common in many world cities for people who are unfamiliar to have their wits about them. Sometimes during times when they are unfamiliar upon arrival, the last thing they think about is looking after their possessions, so I think it is a sensible thing to do.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: Sure, that is fine. Would one of you or either of you be able to take on notice the last time period in which these announcements were being made, whether they a new thing and when they were introduced?

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: I have certainly heard them frequently in the last few years. I have not heard any change in policy in that regard. But we are happy to take that on notice.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: I am happy for you to take that on notice. Just come back to on the last time they were done and how frequently, et cetera.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: Yes.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: Have the number of contract security guards been increased at Central station, or maybe Mr Collins?

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: Contract security guards? Do you mean as in—

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: Not transits, not Police Transport Command [PTC], but Chubb or whoever.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: I will have to take that on notice, unless any of our rail operators have the answer. I am happy to take that on notice.

Mr COLLINS: All I can say is that we have seen a major increase in the number of visible police in the area, thanks to the new relationship we have got there. Certainly the visibility of our station staff, which is an important part of security, has improved a lot over the last few months.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: Thank you, Mr Collins, Would you be able to, on notice, come back to me and provide the figures for the number of contract security guards that there were in 2013 and how many are budgeted for in 2013-14?

Mr COLLINS: Certainly we can give a breakdown of the areas where we are providing security guards. It might not be specific to Central station.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: Anything you can give us would be good. Minister, as I am sure you are aware, the next redeployment of transit officers begins again at the end of next week. I think it is next Saturday. Can you confirm that that means there will be less than 100 transit officers left on the rail network?

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: I know at the moment there are about 130 transit officers. I am not sure of the time frame you are discussing, but I am happy to take that on notice. I do want to stress also that, in relation to the Police Transport Command, as I said I take safety and security very seriously on the network. I think any of us who use public transport want to make sure there is a strong physical presence. I have been really pleased with the outcomes of the Police Transport Command because, unlike before, we have seen real evidence of what that sharing of intelligence does. We now have police who are able to access the closed-circuit television [CCTV] footage and deploy staff where they think it is necessary. I am very pleased with the result.

I also want to add that some of the transit officers have actually applied and joined successfully the Police Force. Some have been deployed in other parts of Transport. I want to thank them for what they have done, but there is no doubt that nothing replaces a police presence. It is one of the things I am most proud of being able to do in the past two years. I think it really sends a strong message to anybody that when you are in and around the Transport network, you have to be on your best behaviour.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: Mr Collins, can you confirm that there are currently 100 former transit officers in redeployment, which means that they are on full pay but they are not working on the trains?

Mr COLLINS: This is part of a transition between the new Transport officers and working with the NSW Police transport section. This is really the old regime going out, which we did not feel was effective. We have moved forward in trying to ensure that we have Transport officers which are both customer friendly and supportive but also provide that level of security along with the police. It is a much more effective regime. I think the old regime was not appropriate.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: But can you confirm to me that there are currently 100 former transit officers in redeployment, on full pay, and not on the trains?

Mr COLLINS: As part of our process for reform, there are a number of people in all sorts of jobs who are moving from their current roles. We are doing all we can to find alternative roles, and many of those transit officers have found roles. We will continue to do that, but as we find that moves on, we will obviously end up with a small number of people who will be in that position.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: I appreciate that. You do not have to give it to me now, and you can take it on notice, but can you confirm how many there are currently?

Mr COLLINS: Those numbers change every day. We certainly could provide that number today but it moves further down.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: Great. In that case, could you also confirm to me the final date when you think there will be no transit officers left on the rail network?

Mr COLLINS: I do not think we can confirm the final date. We are working very hard to ensure that number is reduced over time. We are working with the individuals as we find more roles for them.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: But in terms of actually taking them off active duty on the trains, can you confirm that you expect in December for the last of the transit officers to be gone?

Mr COLLINS: I can certainly find that date out but I am not sure there is a specific date in mind when we intend to do that.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: We are working with the Police Transport Command to make sure that, as police come on, the transit officers come off. That is a collaborative approach. Mr Gammie might have something to add to that.

Mr GAMMIE: I can confirm that, by the end of this year, transit officers will not be operating on the network.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: Minister, you are aware that the Police Transport Command is 100 officers short when compared to their authorised strength. The figures given by Deputy Commissioner Kaldas last week were that there were 431 officers authorised but, as of last week, there were only 328 on active duty.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: I have always said that we would have 610 members of the Police Transport Command by the end of next year. I also want to make the point that, when I was the Shadow Minister for Transport, through the Freedom of Information process, I would often ask how many transit officers were on duty. At any given time roughly two thirds were on duty because there was a high proportion on sick leave, stress leave and annual leave. So I would put to you that, in the past the numbers on paper were never actually on the network. Secondly, when I became the Minister for Transport I was concerned with reading a number of reports. Transit officers did not have police powers and would have to wait around for police to arrive before an incident could be dealt with but now the police are on the spot and ready to do that. Thirdly, transit officers have traditionally travelled in fours and fives. However, because of police powers they can travel in pairs, which increases their reach. In addition to the Police Transport Command there are the 150 transport officers who will be deployed and focussing on fare evasion.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: Yes, I noticed 33 of them at Town Hall the other day—all at the same time. I appreciate that you were concerned about the number of transit officers that were deployed when you were the Shadow Minister but now that you are the Minister there are supposed to be 431 Police Transport Command officers but there are only 328. They are only at 75 per cent capacity. There are fewer officers than ever before patrolling the rail network—let us not even talk about buses, ferries and light rail which they are also supposed to patrol. Are you comfortable that that is a reasonable thing for commuters to be dealing with, given that there are fewer people to assist them if things go wrong?

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: Nothing replaces a police presence. I have been pleased with the intelligence—

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: But there is not a police presence because there are hardly any there.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: According to your own figures, there are at least more than 300 on active duty now—nearly 400. I want to make this point clear: Nothing replaces a police presence. If you ask commuters how they feel about police, they will tell you that they love having police on the network and they are looking forward to having more police come on to the network. What is extremely pleasing for me is that, in recent weeks and months we have seen that intelligence-based approach pay off because a number of people who the police have approached on the transport network—people who may not have a ticket or may be breaching regulations or engaging in antisocial behaviour—are found to have bigger criminal issues. The ability to match intelligence with deployment and being able to deal with issues as they arise, gives me greater confidence that the system is becoming safer for our commuters.

At the end of the day, in good conscience, I have to think about what I believe is in the best interests of customers. I would not have made this decision to introduce a Police Transport Command if I did not think it would have the benefit of a safer network. That is my number one priority. I know this because I am a regular user of public transport and I want to make sure that the system is as safe as possible. The only way to do that is to employ the officers of the Police Transport Command.

I also want to say that network safety is supplemented by close to 10,000 closed-circuit television cameras. Through the Transport Access Program we have also made sure that things like lighting and other amenities around stations are there to complement and supplement the work that police are doing.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: Given that there are 100 and possibly up to 200 transit officers who are going to be in redeployment and given that the Police Transport Command continues to be significantly under-staffed, are you saying that there is no way that you would consider keeping transit officers actively patrolling trains until the Police Transport Command reaches authorised strength?

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: We have set strong benchmarks on performance and on what constitutes having a safe network. The department takes advice from Police on a regular basis because Police have the intelligence and can give advice as to how we can best manage security. If you were to ask me do I think it was safer having the old transit officer network or the Police Transport Command, without hesitation I would say that what we have now—

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: That is not the question I am asking.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: I think it is the heart of the question you are asking me.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: No it is not actually. The heart of the question is, what is the best number of officers to have on the rail network? There are now fewer than there ever have been. We can argue about the numbers but they are about half the number there were when you came into Government.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: That is not true.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: As I said, we can argue about the numbers. What I am saying to you is, there are 200 trained people who are used to patrolling trains and have some skills who would be able to be deployed on the network for a longer period of time, while the Police Transport Command is building up strength. You are saying that you are not prepared to deal with that. In the meantime, what you are going to do is to send all those people to deployment, keep paying them, not have them on the trains but continue to have this gaping hole in security on the network.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: I know the issue you raise is one that the unions raise but I need to do what is in the best interests of the customer. That is my motivation.

Mr COLLINS: If I may add to that. In London, where I had 800 police officers in a similar unit, my experience is that it is not about the number of people. You can have people walking around looking like bouncers and perhaps intimidating the customers but in London we took them away. The combination of customer-friendly transport officers and the abstraction deployment of officers is critical. It is not just about a number; it is about where those officers get deployed, how they are managed and how they work with our transport people. I have seen that model work. I think the model we are adopting here has great merit.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: You are comfortable with the fact that the number of fines issued in relation to fare evasion has almost halved since the removal of the transit officers?

Mr COLLINS: The recent data that we have has reversed that. We have seen a significant improvement and that is probably why you have seen quite a few officers around.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: Thirty-three at Town Hall seemed a little excessive.

Mr COLLINS: Yes, very busy. I dare say, most of them were dealing with 33 people at the time. We have seen a significant improvement in dealing with the reductions of people falsely travelling on concessions and an improvement in dealing with penalties for people travelling incorrectly.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: I am very interested in your comments about numbers on the network. I understand that for Western Sydney on Friday and Saturday nights between 40 and 50 people used to be rostered on to do security. Can you confirm how many used to be rostered on Friday and Saturday nights for security across the train network in Western Sydney? You may have to take the question on notice.

Mr COLLINS: I know that we have recently looked at and provided support through policing on specific locations and trains.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: When you say you have looked at providing support, what sort of support?

Mr COLLINS: On trains at certain times of the evening we have provided additional support. The issue here though is about intelligence policing. Everything moves around. If you provide a resource just purely in a certain location, that can move the next week to another. I have had several meetings already with Max Mitchell. We have shared our experience. I am very confident that we are going in the right direction here.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: That is fine. Again I ask you to take on notice and confirm those figures for rostering Friday and Saturday nights.

Mr COLLINS: Rostering of what?

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: Previous rostering of transit officers: How many were rostered on Friday and Saturday nights? My advice is that it was between 40 and 50 in Western Sydney. I want to know whether that is correct.

Mr COLLINS: We can certainly do that.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: Obviously, the Guardian trains are very important when you talk about enhanced security. Guardian trains take people out of the city on Friday and Saturday nights, particularly those working in the city, and they are guaranteed to have security. Would you again take on notice and provide the number of CCTV operators, transit officers and station staff dedicated to the operation of the Guardian trains now? Could you then provide information on how you expect the Guardian trains will operate once the Police Transport Command takes over?

Mr COLLINS: We can provide that data. I think in a more general point, there is ongoing review of how we deploy our new resources, particular police and station staff. We are seeing a greater visibility of all those individuals. I am very keen to ensure that we continue to maintain the safety of Sydney trains. In terms of many other networks around the world, Sydney is a pretty safe place to travel, even late at night.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: I asked this question of the Minister for Police. I am assuming someone will have an answer for it. Last week I was travelling on a train when the guard made an announcement that if there were issues with people smoking, graffiti or antisocial behaviour one option was to call 000. No intermediary was offered other than trying to find station staff. Can you confirm what is happening regarding announcements for passengers on trains?

Mr COLLINS: I do not think that is policy. In fact, we want to keep those 000 lines clear for immediate emergency. We are working on using social media. I know again in a conversation with Max Mitchell that we are looking, as I have previously done in London, at providing all sorts of alternative communication so that if people are not in imminent danger they can communicate and get that message straight to the New South Wales police. Obviously, we would encourage everybody if they feel threatened or in immediate danger to seek the best form of support. That can be the guard, station staff or calling 000.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: Is there no intermediate step? I know there are help points, obviously, on some trains, but not all. Is there an intermediate number? At the moment there are the 131500 report graffiti stickers or whatever inside the train. Currently, there is the 000, emergency and another number that I do not know off the top of my head, which I think is for rail security. Is that right Mr Mason?

Mr COLLINS: Yes.

Mr MASON: I believe that is so. I will certainly come back to you on that. There certainly used to be a number advertised on the trains. I am pretty sure it is still there.

Mr COLLINS: It is still there I think.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: Can you confirm that that is remaining and what will be the instructions to passengers? I do not think anyone here wants to see 000 clogged up with people wanting to report seeing someone smoking on the train by calling 000.

Mr COLLINS: I think the important thing is that as we all move into the world of other communication forms, certainly in that area we have to keep up with the times. There will be other opportunities to use a wider range of media to communicate non-emergency items.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: Social media is something in which I am quite interested Mr Collins. I am not sure I am asking the right person; is there currently a review of Twitter arrangements for the 131500 line?

Mr COLLINS: That may be more one of my Transport for NSW colleagues.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: That is actually in Tony Braxton-Smith's team in customer experience. Tony is not here today. Can I take that on notice?

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: Yes. I wanted to say that I know there has been a customer survey about how people would like to use it. I thought it was very good. It seems to me that what people particularly want is more interactivity when they are asking questions. It is a very static broadcast service at the moment.

Mr COLLINS: My experience is that we have used almost line by line social media and live updates, which gives people good information. It is used extensively in Europe and America. It certainly is something I am looking to encourage here. It is certainly supported by Tony Braxton-Smith.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: Mr Mason, CountryLink, now known as NSW TrainLink?

Mr MASON: Correct.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: What is the time frame for the rollout of the new signage and rebranding for NSW TrainLink?

Mr MASON: As the Minister already said, rebranding of NSW TrainLink will take some time, so we are not going to rush into this. We are currently trialling the new uniforms for station staff and front-of-house staff.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: How is the feedback going in the very cold places, such as Lithgow?

Mr MASON: I have been to Bathurst myself at 5.20 a.m. I know how cold it can be. The new jackets I have been trialling myself.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: You think they are going all right?

Mr MASON: Yes. The feedback so far is very positive. Clearly, we need to do some work on certain things, but that is what a trial is about.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: What is the expected time frame for the full rollout?

Mr MASON: There is no end date as far as I am concerned. We will bring in the trains for rebranding as and when they go through that periodic recycle. We have been branding to a certain extent with the Quiet carriages. That has been showing our colour scheme.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: We have all seen the bush plum.

Mr MASON: The bush plum. The eight car V set intercity car are the first ones out now. The second one is due very soon I hope.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: I may have asked this question last year of Mr Wielinga. Can you update the Committee on advice you have provided about replacement, upgrade or refurbishment of the XPT fleet?

Mr MASON: I think it is the same answer as last year. I provide no advice. Having now been in this job for six weeks I have probably travelled on six long distance XPT journeys and we walk in the customers shoes very directly. The feedback is, yes, those trains are 32 years old. The refurbishment is now over six years old, I believe, in terms of customer experience.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: That is right, but my understanding is that previous advice said they really are at the end of their life and we need to look at fleet replacement. If you have not provided any advice, is anyone else sitting here able to let me know what the advice is about XPT replacement?

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: We make mention of it in our long-term Transport Master Plan in looking at future options. Obviously, we are looking also at how we can expand the customer experience on the XPT. If you travel two hours in most parts of the world you have a very different experience than when you travel two hours in New South Wales. We certainly are looking at how we can improve the customer experience, looking at how we offer the service product but also how we look at fleet replacement in the future. We do allude to it in our Transport Master Plan.

It is an ongoing piece of work, but having set up the operators the way we have gives us the opportunity to give those services the focus they have never really had before. In NSW Trains we now have an extra focus on intercity and rural and regional travel, which we did not really have in the one organisation before. We want to make sure that we lift standards so that when you do travel on the train for a longer distance you have an experience that is more comparable to what happens elsewhere in the world. Obviously, fleet replacement is part of our consideration in that, but also it is about how we offer the service product and whether we can enhance the services.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: Obviously, there is much interest in speeding up the journey between Sydney and Newcastle in particular. What work, if any, is being done on that, aside from plans for express trains beyond that?

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: I will let the train operators speak on that issue, but obviously from our perspective the big challenges we face are things like stopping patterns, which has an impact on travel time and what that means. Obviously maintaining infrastructure to ensure greater speed—

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: That is fine. I was just wondering whether there was any specific work being done on the Newcastle to Sydney—

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: It is obviously ongoing. I place on record that that work is ongoing. I will ask Mr Collins and Mr Mason to provide comment as expert rail operators—

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: That is fine. I have got one minute left. If you can take that on notice and come back to me, that would be fantastic. Mr Mason, have there been any costings done in your area or, indeed, anyone else's—this might be one for Mr Wielinga—on the cost of the change to light rail in The Hunter at the Wickham interchange?

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: Ms Sharpe, if you do not mind, I will ask Ms McNally to answer that question.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: Yes.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: She runs the Planning and Programs team—

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: If we are taking up other people's time, I am happy for you to take it on notice.

Ms McNALLY: Okay.

Dr MEHREEN FARUQI: Continuing on the Newcastle light rail theme, Minister, the Long-Term Transport Master Plan for New South Wales includes a commitment to ensure that decisions are founded on a solid evidence base. What solid evidence or studies has Transport for NSW relied on for closing down the rail line from Wickham to Newcastle and switching to light rail in Newcastle?

Ms GLADYS BEREJKLIAN: Obviously that decision is a whole-of-Government decision and is not just a transport decision. It is about revitalising the city and the transport component is one part of it. When you are looking at the decision to truncate the line, it goes to the heart of revitalising Newcastle, and obviously what I want to ensure from a public transport perspective is not only do we maintain continuous services but enhance the services. I think light rail offers a fantastic opportunity for Newcastle. I will just throw to Carolyn McNally, who runs our Planning and Programs, team to give you an update on the feasibility study, just to make the point that—

Dr MEHREEN FARUQI: Minister, to make it clear, I am looking for the evidence for the switch. What evidence did you have to make the decision to close down the rail line from Wickham to Newcastle and switch to light rail?

Ms GLADYS BEREJKLIAN: I am sorry, I may not have made my position clear, but I put to you that the decision to truncate the line was not merely a public transport decision. It was a decision regarding the revitalisation of Newcastle. The reason we opted to have light rail as an option rather than continuing bus services is because we think that light rail offers a great opportunity to link up with other parts of the city and what we are proposing is to look at what would be the spine of a future light rail network.

Dr MEHREEN FARUQI: Sure, but you still need evidence to support that decision, whether it is part of a bigger planning decision or light rail decision.

Ms GLADYS BEREJKLIAN: Certainly. That is my point, though. I am trying to say—probably not in the best way that I can—it comes down to planning for the future growth of the city and transport is one component of it. The decision to truncate the line should not be looked at in just a transport perspective, but how can the city of Newcastle be allowed to reach its full potential? It is the second largest city in our State, and I think it has enormous opportunities to grow. My job as the Minister for Transport is to make sure we do what we can to enhance and improve the transport links. If you are interested in where we are up to with the light rail—

Dr MEHREEN FARUQI: I will ask the next question. Will the light rail be built on this existing rail corridor or somewhere else?

Ms GLADYS BEREJKLIAN: We are currently going through a tender process on that issue. I will ask Carolyn to talk about what we have asked industry to come back to us with.

Dr MEHREEN FARUQI: That was my question. You have not made a decision yet where the light rail will be but you have made a decision to close the line already?

Ms GLADYS BEREJKLIAN: Correct.

Dr MEHREEN FARUQI: Why is that?

Ms McNALLY: We are currently doing a lot of detailed analysis about where people travel from and to, what sort of connections there need to be, how we interface with things such as bus interchanges, what are the benefits in some of the urban planning work that is being undertaken. We are doing a lot of concept and route analysis to look at those issues, where there are intersections with roads.

Dr MEHREEN FARUQI: Sure, but the decision has been made before that is done. That is fine; that is all I needed. Minister, in a radio interview in May, the Minister for Planning and Infrastructure said that light rail in Newcastle was not economically viable or sustainable due to there being too few potential patrons in inner Newcastle. Is there a division within the Government on this decision? Why did the Minister for Planning and Infrastructure say that it was not viable and yet we are having a feasibility study on the viability of light rail?

Ms GLADYS BEREJKLIAN: Can I assure you that the Government is completely holistically like-minded on this issue. We all accept that light rail is a fantastic option for Newcastle, and I am pleased that my department has the responsibility to test that theory, which we are going through now. By the end of the year we hope to have a schedule, or at least an explanation to the community, what we anticipate the project will look

like and when things will happen. That interaction with industry is happening now. If you want us to go specifically into what interaction we have had with industry to date, I can ask Ms McNally to do that.

Dr MEHREEN FARUQI: That is fine. I am still a little bit baffled as to why the decision was made to close the rail line.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: I am trying to say that it is a whole-of-Government decision.

Dr MEHREEN FARUQI: Sure.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: Obviously we believe the Government has acted in the best interests of the future of Newcastle, and The Hunter region, not just Newcastle.

Dr MEHREEN FARUQI: Minister, do you have any plans for selling the Wickham to Newcastle corridor?

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: No current plans, no.

Dr MEHREEN FARUQI: That is good to know. Thank you.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: "No current plans", that is Duncan's favourite.

The Hon. MICK VEITCH: Current. Duncan Gay did that very well.

Mr SCOT MacDONALD: So answer the question.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: He is an old hand.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: No current plans to sell the Newcastle port.

CHAIR: Order!

Dr MEHREEN FARUQI: My question time, thank you very much. Minister, The Greens welcome your recent announcement for plans to install a lift at Redfern station, and it is thanks to a lot of community campaigners who have campaigned tirelessly for a lift. Minister, will you please provide me with a firm time line for this installation?

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: Certainly. Again, I will refer to Ms McNally's Planning and Programs team. For the Committee's information, Ms McNally's team is responsible for determining our future plans and programs in transport. Once the planning work is completed, it then goes to Transport Projects. We are still in the planning stage. We have committed to one lift on Redfern station. This has involved months of work. I will get Ms McNally to explain how we came to that decision.

Dr MEHREEN FARUQI: A time line is all I need, Ms McNally.

Ms McNALLY: We are still doing the detailed planning. What we need to do is ascertain on which platform we can provide the best services. We are doing a detailed engineering and cost analysis that will also look at the impacts and the implications of putting in the lift. That issue is still being resolved as part of that analysis.

Dr MEHREEN FARUQI: Sure. The community has been waiting for 20 years. Do you have a time line of one year, two years, months, anything that the community could hang on to?

Ms McNALLY: I cannot be that specific until we have finished the detailed planning.

Dr MEHREEN FARUQI: Thank you. Minister, you noted that the station serves 50,000 customers every day. How will one lift at one platform serve the needs of so many people and what plans do you have to upgrade the whole station?

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: I understand that there are a number of platforms at Redfern, and obviously I would love to have been able to say we are going to have a lift on every platform, but that is not feasible at this stage. We have committed to one and there are two different platforms in particular we are looking at to see which is more feasible. There were two options and we have narrowed it down. The challenge for us is to make sure that whatever we choose to do in the future beyond the one lift is consistent with our second harbour crossing, which will emerge at some place in Redfern, so we have to make sure that we are planning for the future as well.

Obviously if you have mobility challenges, and I note there are some very nice people sitting at the back of the room who are great lobbyists in this regard, at least if there is one platform that is accessible at Redfern, you can catch a train back to Central and then get whatever service you need. I know it is not ideal, but it is a good start. At least if you are challenged with mobility, you can access the one platform that has the lift, make the trip back to Central and then catch the service that meets your requirements. I know it is not ideal, but it is a good start.

Dr MEHREEN FARUQI: Thank you. Minister, in October last year you said your department was doing some work on what it would require to adequately upgrade Redfern station. This was after the petition was put forward to Parliament. Could you provide me with anything that has happened since, such as any planning documentation you could give out on notice?

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: As Ms McNally has said, the challenge for us is to determine on which platform it is best to install the first lift. That is what we are looking at. We have had to look at what is the potential scope for future upgrades at the station. Obviously what we have announced is a start. I know it does not make the station completely accessible. What is interesting, also, is that we have considered Redfern almost as part of the city circle, which was not how it was looked at before. It was regarded more as a suburban station as opposed to a city circle station. We have realised that the growth at that station and the potential for growth really means we have to look at the station differently. I do not know if Mr Collins has anything to add to that.

Dr MEHREEN FARUQI: To add to that, is there 10 years to go before you determine the feasibility of the upgrade to Redfern station?

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: I would not say years at all. As Ms McNally said, we are going through the detailed planning work now. I will be able to say something publically once we finish that work, which I am hoping will not be in that time frame, but much shorter than that.

Mr COLLINS: It does seem to me in my new arrival here that Redfern is a big exchange—I use it quite often coming from Olympic Park and changing for the Illawarra line—and it does seem need some care. We have to work with Carolyn in terms of understanding what the best benefit operationally is to support customer access. I think certainly that it could do with a makeover; it does feel part of the city centre.

Dr MEHREEN FARUQI: I can imagine the frustration of the community who has been hearing this for a very long time now. Minister, you mentioned the second harbour crossing. What plans have emerged for that? Are you doing a feasibility study at the moment and how long will that take?

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: We announced in our 20-year rail strategy and also in our master plan that after the North West Rail Link the next project would be the second harbour crossing, which will transform our network in that it will increase capacity by 60 per cent across every single line. That is something very exciting to look forward to. Ms McNally's team is responsible for starting the planning work on that. There is actually a line item in the budget where we have put aside quite a substantial amount of money towards the planning work there, which has begun. Ms McNally may have an update on that issue.

Ms McNALLY: We actually have a team in place that has started the detailed work. They have been doing a lot of engineering analysis around things such as station locations and station depths. We have been looking at how the line through the CBD would connect up, particularly in supporting connection to the North West Rail Link and rapid transit sector. We are also looking at what the route options are. We are looking at whether there are opportunities for new markets. We are doing all of that work as we speak.

Dr MEHREEN FARUQI: Will the second harbour crossing be a metro-style crossing only?

Ms McNALLY: In Sydney's rail future it has been identified as part of a rapid transit system. So it is about connecting Sydney from the north to the south, a rapid transit sector.

Dr MEHREEN FARUQI: What does that mean?

Ms McNALLY: A rapid transit sector being a single deck train, high capacity.

Dr MEHREEN FARUQI: So it will be a metro-style?

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: Yes.

Ms McNALLY: High capacity, hop on, hop off.

Dr MEHREEN FARUQI: How will that increase in capacity from the North Shore line be dealt with? Will they always have to change from one train to another?

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: When the second harbour crossing is completed if you catch the train on the North West Rail Line you will come straight into the CBD and beyond—that is what is outlined in our 20-year strategy. When you announce a major project like the North West Rail Line you have to put it into context for the future. We desperately need a rapid transit system in Sydney; we do not have one. I think we are the only major global city around the world that does not have one. I am sure Mr Collins can shed light on his experience as well—he has operated a number of train services in different continents. It is about time that we made this step change. I am very excited by what we are offering not just to the people of the north-west but the future of rail travel in New South Wales. I am also very pleased with the work that Transport for NSW has done in developing the 20-year strategy. To have a vision for what rail services should be in the future allows us as decision-makers to ensure that every decision we take has an eye to that plan and to delivering on that plan.

Dr MEHREEN FARUQI: It is quite incompatible with the current system. If the plan is to have more and more single decker lines on other parts of the network, particularly those that are already used for freight, how will freight then be carried?

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: For the information of the Committee about 100,000 passengers change trains on a daily basis so it is not something new, and around the world when you have got good cross platform transfers people do make those changes. But what is really important is our ability to increase the number of people we carry every hour, especially in the morning peak. The key thing for us is when you have the second harbour crossing—which is a rapid transit system—it will mean that you can have additional new stations in the CBD, which will take pressure off the existing CBD stations. That is critical because, as you know, we have enormous challenges in terms of growth in the CBD. The second harbour crossing not only deals with capacity on the network everywhere but it also allows us to create new CBD stations. It also really gives us the chance to play catch up because we do need to play catch up in that regard. I might ask Mr Collins to add to that.

Dr MEHREEN FARUQI: In moving more and more to this metro-style way, and most of these are public-private partnerships, could you confirm that you are not trying to privatise Sydney's train network through this process?

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: As we have said the North-West Rail Link will have a private operator—we have been very clear about that.

Dr MEHREEN FARUQI: I am talking about the whole network.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: I really want to make clear that our motivation is customer service and meeting future capacity needs. We cannot continue the way we are. If we do not introduce rapid transit we simply will not be able to keep up with demand and our city will not be able to grow. We have a huge modal share of carrying people to the city and other places already but that needs to increase if we are going to decongest our roads. The other interesting phenomenon, which works on the North West Rail Link and is highlighted for us, is that not everybody wants to come to the CBD. There are thousands of people moving between regions and a rapid transit network allows us to cater to that. Especially when you look at areas like Parramatta and Macquarie Park, for example, the number of people who want to get to and from Macquarie Park in the morning peak is growing substantially. I will now throw to Mr Collins to shed some light.

Mr COLLINS: I certainly support what the Minister has said. My experience of rapid transit is not, as one would imagine, a tiny little tube sort of network. These are fairly big trains; they provide a lot of capacity. Rapid transit is about automatic train operation. It is the regular, reliable despatch of trains. It is really important to understand that we have got to get ahead of the game. Sydney is probably the last global city not to have such a system. If you have seen them you will know why we want them.

Dr MEHREEN FARUQI: One viable option to increase the patronage and success of the Sydney to Newcastle train line is to improve the existing track and install tilt trains on that line—it has been done on some Queensland lines—as this can reduce the journey time by 60 per cent. Has the Government considered this option?

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: I certainly have not seen any distinct proposals. I am assuming that the issue did come up during consultation on the Transport Master Plan. It is not currently in our plan. We are looking at other options in which we can reduce the travel times certainly between the Hunter and Sydney. I am not sure if any of our transport experts have anything further to add to that but the notion of tilt trains is not currently on the Government's agenda.

The Hon. PAUL GREEN: Congratulations on Redfern. That was a question from last year and you have got on with it, which is great. What percentage of train stations remain without access for wheelchairs?

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: I will just look up that figure. When we came to Government there were about 124 stations that had access, so two-thirds of the stations did not. The previous Government managed to do about one or two upgrades on average a year; since we have been in government we have done about 20. I can tell you now. When we came to government only 124 out of 307 stations were considered wheelchair accessible so, as you can see, we have a huge task to catch that up. I am pleased that through the Transport Access Program we have got about 115 projects on the go but we also have 20 more accessible stations across the network than when we came to government. So the previous Government was managing about one or two upgrades a year but because we have reformed the way that we provide the funding, and we have boosted the funding, we have made an additional 20 stations accessible in the last two years alone. I have a list in front of me, which I am happy to table.

The Hon. PAUL GREEN: Do you have some sort of outcome where you expect the remaining percentage of train stations to have accessible ramps or lifts?

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: We are trying to get through it as quickly as possible. I have made a number of announcements about additional stations we have put online. For example, 20 stations have come online since we have been in government. We have also made a number of announcements in regions around the State, including yours Mr Green, about what we are making accessible. As Minister it is something that I feel very strongly about and it is something I made a commitment to before we came to government. I have to say I have been blown away by how the teams have remained focused on this; to do 20 upgrades in two and a bit years is huge. We do have a very ambitious agenda ahead of us but it is something we feel strongly about. Obviously the other thing that pleases me is that we have a set of criteria developed that helps us determine which stations come next because no matter which community I go to every community wants to see their station accessible, including my own, but there are strict criteria now that Transport for NSW follows. We have complete transparency in the way that we are making our decisions.

The Hon. PAUL GREEN: People with wheelchair access used to be able to get right into Newcastle in one go but they will now have to transfer across if you terminate at Wickham. Was any thought given to keeping the tracks and maybe transferring the train system to slow down to 30 kilometres in that particular area and thereby save the expense for the Government?

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: Obviously disability access is part of the conditions of any work that we are doing so I am sure it is in the criteria for what we need to look at. Just in the Newcastle and Hunter, I am pleased to say that, for example, at the Cardiff railway station, which did not have easy access for many years, we have managed to now provide a lift. We have also improved the ramps at Greta, which is a very small station, Hamilton; Scone and Singleton. So places like that have actually had an upgrade in the Hunter. So we have made sure that every region has seen benefits to accessibility. It is a very important issue, and not just for people who are confined to wheelchairs—obviously they are important—but also for people, parents with

prams, elderly people with lack of mobility. If we are serious about accessibility then we need to include or increase the number of people who can access our services.

The Hon. PAUL GREEN: In terms of the strategy you have for vandalism, how many prosecutions have been successful?

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: I cannot answer government wide as to how many prosecutions have been successful, but I can certainly give you an update on some of the initiatives we have taken, if you do not mind.

The Hon. PAUL GREEN: It is frustrating getting new trains and then having them vandalised or graffitied.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: Yes. On top of the initiatives we have in relation to graffiti, we have done extra projects. For example, we are investing about \$11.5 million in targeting cleaning blitzes. During 2013 we will be undertaking an additional, more than 117,000 cleaning hours on top of the normal every day cleaning, and that includes deep cleaning. You may have heard recently I spoke publicly about the fact that some of our carriages and seats had not had deep cleaning for 12 years. They had been cleaned but not the deep cleaning required. So now we have an ongoing program to maintain that. Deep-cleaning of Waratah trains is now completed every 30 days. On top of the daily cleaning we are also making sure we do that deep cleaning to maintain as much as we can.

On top of the regular cleaning on Millennium carriages, for example, we are also doing an extra clean every 30 days. Between October last year and June this year we have undertaken a 27,000 hour cleaning blitz on the interior of our trains to make sure that we address those issues. In addition to that, we have also put bins back on stations. That is very important because when you have nowhere to throw any rubbish it becomes easier to leave it behind. Evidence shows here and elsewhere that when you maintain the cleanliness of a network people are less likely to cause any damage. I note that one of the things that Mr Collins said to me when he came here was that we have to do something about graffiti, we have to reduce the incidence, and we are certainly working hard to make that happen.

The Hon. PAUL GREEN: You do not have any statistics on prosecutions?

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: I am sorry I do not in relation to—

The Hon. PAUL GREEN: Would you be able to take that on notice?

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: To the extent that it is limited to my portfolio; I suspect it is government wide.

The Hon. PAUL GREEN: When do you expect the light rail from the CBD to the University of New South Wales to be fully operational?

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: From the start of construction we anticipate it will take about five or six years but we have not given a construction start date yet because we are still doing the detailed work. I always said that by the end of the year we would have an environmental impact statement out to the public to talk about the project and what is required. So, we will have a better idea by the end of the year as to when our completion date is likely to be. But if you notice with the North West Rail link I held off giving an end date until we had done the detail work required. I will adopt the same policy here. I will make sure that we are in a position to talk about what we are doing when before we provide an end date.

The Hon. PAUL GREEN: What sort of ticketing system are you looking at?

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: The light rail, similar to the North West Rail Link and the South West Rail Link, any new project we build will be completely integrated into the Opal ticketing system. That is a condition of the type of public-private partnerships we adopted when it comes to the North West Rail Link. Even with Sydney ferries, the Government owns the network and pays someone else to run it but that means we can ensure that all the ticketing is continuous and consistent. So from a customer perspective the customer will not feel a difference, they will just be glad they are getting extra services. So no matter where you are on the network you will have to tap on and tap off and pay the same rate as everybody else on the network.

The Hon. PAUL GREEN: Did you keep statistics on trackwork performed throughout the network?

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: We do but maintenance is one area where obviously we have to put a lot more focus and reform into. One thing we are doing, for example, is consolidating the almost 130 different sites we have down to eight Centres of Excellence and four satellite sites, and that equates to what Victoria has. Melbourne has about eight maintenance depots, we have about 130. I am sure that Mr Collins and Mr Mason have examples whereby if you want to source parts or move staff or get that expertise it is very difficult to do that. Some staff are operating out of old sheds, which is completely unacceptable. I think Mr Collins is quite shocked—shocked is probably a strong word—but I will let him speak for himself.

Mr COLLINS: I certainly think the program now of having these eight locations plus four satellite locations—I have been to the new one which opened up in Blacktown. I think living in what looks like someone had bought a shed from Bunnings and 30 years you can imagine the work environment. People are talking to each other directly now between departments, tracks, signalling. This is a great move forward and I think it will improve the maintenance. The maintenance numbers are starting to improve now as these people come together.

The Hon. PAUL GREEN: Would you be able to track whether the South Coast line has a higher trackwork average than other lines?

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: I will ask the rail experts to comment but the challenge with that line is the freight task with that line as well. Obviously for the first time we have an integrated strategy to work with freight operators and in passenger services. If Mr Mason or Mr Collins has any comments about the additional trackwork required then I am happy for them to talk about it.

Mr MASON: Certainly we have been doing some signalling and receiving down there over the last couple of years. We have almost finished that now I believe. I think the signalling is due by the end of 2014, so that will certainly open up some of the trackworks. Clearly we have been working with the freight operators down there as well to open up new sidings.

The Hon. PAUL GREEN: When do you think that might reduce all this trackwork to a level that has a consistent train service?

Mr MASON: I look to my colleague on my left who will actually do all the trackwork with me, but we will certainly come back to you. We have a five-year plan.

Mr COLLINS: There are still some critical points to deal with but the good thing is that the work they are doing now is you get in, you fix it and then you do not have to come back for some time. There are a lot of points in crossings to replace but once they are done—it does require some open heart surgery as I have said on record, and it does mean occasionally people get the inconvenience but long term it will mean less weekend closures.

The Hon. PAUL GREEN: How is the safe, quiet carriage initiative going? Are you getting much feedback?

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: We essentially extended, as you know, to the South Coast line and the Southern Highlands line the notion of quiet carriages because it has been so popular. But part of the feedback we did get from customers was that they wanted to see more signage to make people aware that there are quiet carriages. So we have taken that feedback on board and you might notice on the intercity that there is more signage. It has been an extremely popular initiative.

I actually went back to Gosford, which is where I made the initial announcement just over a year ago about the quiet carriages, and a lot of the staff there were quite cynical and they said to me, "Minister, we can't tell you how popular it is." I think more than 90 per cent of the feedback we received was positive. We did get some constructive feedback about making sure that we had better signage, and we are addressing that. The other challenge is that we rely on the public to respect each other. There are a few examples here and there where that does not occur but overwhelmingly people have really taken to the idea. We have expanded it so that on the New South Wales train network, in particular where people are travelling those longer distances, some trains have half the percentage on quiet—four of the eight cars are essentially quiet carriages.

CHAIR: The time for questions on rail has expired.

(The witnesses withdrew)

PETER ROWLEY, Chief Executive, State Transit Authority, and

TIM REARDON, Deputy Director General, Policy and Regulation, Transport for NSW,

LES WIELINGA, Director General, Transport for NSW,

FERGUS GAMMIE, Deputy Director General, Transport Services, Transport for NSW, on former oath:

CHAIR: We will now move to questions on State Transit.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: Are you able to inform the Committee how many extra buses have been put on Friday and Saturday nights to take people from Kings Cross to Central station?

Mr ROWLEY: I do not have that information on me. I can get back to you on those figures.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: Mr Reardon can answer that question. He was in charge of the Kings Cross strategy on transport.

Mr REARDON: The Kings Cross Plan of Management involved putting on extra services direct to Central from Kings Cross and increasing the N100. In terms of the direct service from Kings Cross to Central, that service still operates on a frequency that augments the N100. So there are two destinations from Kings Cross into the city, both are linked to the broader NightRide services throughout the network.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: Would you be able to give me the detail about the frequency of those services on notice?

Mr REARDON: I can do.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: Are you able to give me the patronage on those services?

Mr REARDON: We track the patronage on a weekly basis on those services to ensure—

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: Would you be able to provide that to the Committee since it started?

Mr REARDON: We can take into account some of the work that has been undertaken to date but I will take that one on notice as well.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: Ms Sharpe, I have just been given some information that might assist in your question. Since Friday 12 October last year there has been an additional six bus services an hour to Central to link up with the NightRide buses. This means there are now a total of eight buses operating each hour from Kings Cross.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: Starting from what time?

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: I will have to get back to you on the time, but I can say this includes four new direct services to Central with no stops in between. Buses also operate from Kings Cross to Town Hall four times an hour. On advice that I have we estimate that about 20,000 people have used the new bus services since the introduction of the late-night transport initiatives.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: Would you provide on notice the figures on how many people are getting on those buses on a Friday or Saturday night?

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: Yes.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: Mr Rowley, do you believe that enough is being done in relation to diversity and inclusiveness at the State Transit Authority [STA]? Are you able to take me through the staff policy?

The Hon. NIALL BLAIR: Point of order: Asking Mr Rowley about his opinion—

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: I accept Mr Blair's point of order. I will recast the question. Mr Rowley, will you take me through the equity and diversity policy of STA?

Mr ROWLEY: The State Transit Authority does not condone any harassment, bullying or vilification of anyone in the State Transit Authority. Our code of conduct and our policies and procedures back that up.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: Will you take me through what is done when a complaint is made by one of your staff?

Mr ROWLEY: If a complaint is made it is assessed at that time as to whether it is a protected disclosure or whatever. When that is determined a full investigation is conducted.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: Are there time frames that are supposed to be met within that process?

Mr ROWLEY: As speedily as possible. It is as simple as that.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: How long does it take from complaint through to assessment?

Mr ROWLEY: It could take some time. It all depends on how long the investigation takes.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: No, once a complaint is made an assessment must be made about whether you will move to an investigation. Or are you saying that every single complaint is investigated?

Mr ROWLEY: Every complaint is investigated. Every complaint.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: What is the spectrum of the investigation? What does the simplest investigation and the most complex investigation look like?

Mr ROWLEY: If a complaint is made by a staff member it is taken down and it is assigned to one of our staff to do an initial investigation. It all depends on what comes out of that initial investigation as to whether it can be handled at a local level or has to be passed on to our corporate area. If that is the case, a more substantial investigation would take place and the outcome would flow from that.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: If there have been issues in the workplace for individual staff, what sort of training and advice is given to everyone else? If a complaint has been identified that STA management believes is serious enough to warrant concern, what sort of things are put in place at the depot, for example, to talk to staff about some of these issues?

Mr ROWLEY: If the investigation has identified a perpetrator, for want of a better term, or has identified a clear course of action then it will be dealt with with that person who has been identified as the perpetrator. They would face disciplinary action if it is a case of bullying and harassment.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: As they should. The question I am really asking relates to that broader workplace issue. Racism or sexism or homophobia is not unheard of in workplaces. None of us endorse that or think that is reasonable. But when it comes to your attention within the depot environment as an example, what active steps does management take to talk to staff about their obligations and their responsibilities to one another?

Mr ROWLEY: We regularly remind staff of their obligations, one of which is that bullying and harassment are not acceptable in our workplace.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: How is that done?

Mr ROWLEY: It can be done locally via a staff notice or more generally through our newsletter, which is *We're Moving Sydney*. That is the general side of things. As I say, we do not do that just for bullying and harassment or equity and diversity; we do it for a whole range of things. We are constantly issuing safety alerts to remind staff about safety and so forth. We provide feedback and regular reminders to staff on various issues.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: What support do you provide to staff who have made these complaints? Particularly if an investigation has been going for a long time, what sort of support is in place for those individuals?

Mr ROWLEY: They have our full support, would be the correct answer to that.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: That is very good. How is that demonstrated?

Mr ROWLEY: It is firstly done through offering counselling at a local level. It is communication with our workers compensation people, if it is a workers compensation case. It is feedback on where an investigation is up to. It can be various ways. But we feel at the State Transit Authority that we do give considerable support. I have been on the job for 35 years and one thing I have always known and liked about the State Transit Authority is that we try to look after our staff as best as possible.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: Mr Rowley, will you give me the latest updated patronage figures on the Metrobuses?

Mr ROWLEY: I do not have those at hand.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: Will you take that on notice?

Mr ROWLEY: I can take that on notice.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: As a regular user, they are pretty good.

Mr ROWLEY: If you want detail I cannot give you that off hand, but I can—

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: That is all right. I accept that they are good. I use them too.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: Anecdotally, people are saying to us to put more on.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: Minister, the master plan talks about redoing the bus network. I understand that is not an easy task. I accept that we have many buses in complicated arrangements across Sydney. I do, however, think that the Metros have been a demonstrated success. I wonder if there are any plans in Western Sydney to further increase the use of that style of bus or expand the network.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: As a Government the decision we have made on buses is that there is not one hole you can stick every area in. We are using Metrobuses, normal-sized buses, longer buses and shorter buses. Depending on the region, we are looking at what is the best mix for that area. We have also introduced double deckers, which are relevant for some parts of the city.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: Are all the double deckers operational?

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: I understand that we have eight that are supposed to be operational. I am not sure how many of them have come online yet.

Mr GAMMIE: There are eight double deckers.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: Are they all operating all of the time?

Mr GAMMIE: Yes.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: I have heard some reports that some of them have not been operational because of tree trimming and access into the city.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: As far as I understand it, those issues were resolved. Eight of them are functioning. I saw one on the bridge this morning. They are proving to be quite popular and we always said we would look to see how they go. Whether it is Metrobuses, double deckers, longer or shorter single deck buses we are looking at all the options to see what is best for each community.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: The strategic corridors are clearly announced in the Transport Master Plan but there is not necessarily a commitment around Metros. Are they actively being looked at?

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: They are actively being looked at, because some strategic corridors might be more conducive to double deckers. If you have a lot of people at the origination point and not a lot of stops double deckers might be better in that instance. If you are thinking about better depot management so empty buses are not going back to the same region, that is where the Metro cross-regional buses are really useful because it means you are carrying people all the time. We are looking at all those options and we are looking at a diversity of services. We are working with the operators, whether it is the STA or private operators, to see what better products we can offer.

Dr MEHREEN FARUQI: Minister, could you please clarify how much space at bus depots will be sold off under the New South Wales Government plan to raise money by letting go of public assets?

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: I understand what was announced was to consider development around bus depots. As far as I understand, those proposals are still being worked up. There is nothing concrete that I have seen. But it is about developing above bus depots; it is not about any other thing. There is nothing concrete as far as I know. There may very well be, and if that comes to light we will share that with the public.

Dr MEHREEN FARUQI: Was there any consultation between the transport department and former finance Minister Pearce before announcing that the space will be sold off?

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: Given that it is Government policy to look at that I am sure that there will be coordination between relevant departments about how that might be managed.

Dr MEHREEN FARUQI: Okay. But the decision has been made, I understand.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: It was announced during the budget process that the Government would consider or look at it, but there is nothing firm though. It was just simply an announcement that we would consider making better use for depots for development above the depots, but I have not yet seen anything concrete.

Dr MEHREEN FARUQI: Thank you. Minister, do you know how much overtime has been paid to bus drivers? Could you give me a figure on how much overtime was paid to bus drivers last year or over the last three years?

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: Yes. Do you mean State Transit or private bus operators?

Dr MEHREEN FARUQI: State Transit.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: I might ask Mr Rowley to deal with that question.

Mr ROWLEY: The specifics I would have to take on notice, but I would like to point out one very big thing. State Transit actually operates overtime on every Sunday. It is the most economical way to provide bus services on a Sunday. Every shift that we operate on a Sunday goes in as overtime. It distorts the figures to make it look like we have a very large overtime budget whereas we are able to minimise our staff requirements and on-costs and operate a much more efficient operation. From my recollection, in 2012-13 compared to 2013-14 we had a reduction in overtime. However, that would have been tempered by the fact that with optimisation commencing in May 2013, we were anticipating a significant reduction in staff due to a more efficient operation. Therefore, from March onwards, we started to decrease our staffing levels so we would not go surplus once optimisation had been introduced. I might add that that optimisation saved two million dead-running kilometres and was able to save 44 buses. It has been a very sound economic move.

Dr MEHREEN FARUQI: Would you say that apart from the Sunday overtime bus drivers are also paid overtime because of congestion on roads?

Mr ROWLEY: That can occur. If a bus operator comes into the depot and is late signing off as a result of congestion, they can book up overtime, yes.

Dr MEHREEN FARUQI: Is anything done about the congestion to make the trips run on-time?

Mr ROWLEY: We are constantly reviewing our running times, with support from Transport for NSW introducing bus priority and better traffic conditions. Yes, we regularly review our running times and therefore, hopefully, minimise the need for late running services, and therefore for overtime.

Dr MEHREEN FARUQI: Sure, but how do you do it? What are the actual implementation strategies to reduce the running time or congestion on roads?

Mr ROWLEY: We use what is called PTIPS, which is the public transport information priority system. It is a global positioning system [GPS], which allows us to have real-time service monitoring. Attached to that is a State Transit running time module attached to our scheduling system called ATP Rider in Hastus. From that we are able to determine, on average, very accurate running times. Running times are easy to predict and plan for. It is the incidents on-road that generally create late running, which results in overtime.

Dr MEHREEN FARUQI: Sure. Thank you. I would really appreciate it if, on notice, you could provide me with the costs of overtime, both Sundays and during the weekdays.

Mr ROWLEY: Okay.

Dr MEHREEN FARUQI: Thank you. Minister, I was recently made aware that the Kogarah shuttle bus, which is route 430, became a paid service. Could you give any reason for why this happened?

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: Most certainly. As you might be aware, just before the last election, the then Government introduced a number of shuttle services in key areas. What they did not tell us at the time was that each of those services was funded only for 12 months: They were only on a trial basis. I gave those services the benefit of the doubt and had them extended time-wise to see whether there would be additional patrons. Regrettably, for the Kogarah service—and I can go through all of them—there was only 0.7 or less than one person boarding every kilometre, even though the service had been operating for more than 12 months. On that basis I do not think it was good value carrying an empty bus. That is why we made the decision to turn it into a paid service. It goes via the hospital, I understand from memory, to see if that will increase patronage.

Dr MEHREEN FARUQI: Yes, it does.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: That is the reason. There was no patronage on that service.

The Hon. PAUL GREEN: I congratulate the Government for its initiative in setting up real-time tracking on buses. Do all State Transit buses have the trackers on them?

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: Yes, they do now.

The Hon. PAUL GREEN: We have had feedback from some constituents that some buses do not show up on their tracking software. They have said that, obviously for the system to work, if they miss a bus, they need to know when the next one is. It should be track-able so that passengers can make informed decisions about taking alternative transport means. What sort of compliance or evaluation program do you have to know that these things are working all the time, especially in peak hours?

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: Mr Rowley might be able to give you more detailed information on how the public transport information priority system [PTIPS] is tracking on State Transit Authority [STA] buses, but certainly we have tried to ensure that bus apps will give customers information if there are changes to the timetable. But in terms of how we are collecting data on the public transport information priority system, obviously we are using technology where possible but I do not have any extra information in terms of how the public transport information priority system is going. Mr Wielinga wishes to add to that.

Mr WIELINGA: There are a few isolated areas where communications experience difficulties in Sydney because of electrical facilities nearby. In those circumstances, sometimes the public transport information priority system and apps information goes back to the scheduled timetable, but there are very few of those and they are being looked at. The quality of the data is improving all the time. It is a very sophisticated electronic system. The public transport information priority system actually talks to the traffic signals. To give you an example of how it works, if a bus is coming up to an intersection and it is running half a minute late or

something, it checks out the cycles that are on the intersection. If it can adjust the cycles on the intersection to get the bus through, it does so.

The Hon. PAUL GREEN: Minister, what is the Government doing to assist youth in regional areas to facilitate their abilities to get to TAFE and training opportunities after hours?

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: Obviously public transport is key to that. The one thing we can do, which overwhelmingly assists them more than anything, is increase the number of services, I think. Where possible, we are trying to do that. Since we have been in Government across the State, we have brought on more than 2,800 bus services, which include government and non-government. Obviously in rural and regional areas, only non-government services operate. We are looking at frequency issues. We are looking at connectivity between services and also accessibility and affordability. They are all the issues that we take into account. I completely accept every time I am in rural and regional New South Wales, especially for young people wanting to seek employment on a part-time basis or to do shift work, or even to seek education opportunities, how important public transport is, and what role we have in that regard.

Looking at the number of services, connectivity, hours of operation and accessibility obviously is key to that. Across the State we have increased the number of services, but obviously there is more to do. I am constantly getting representations from communities about where they think we need to increase that. But obviously what we also look at now is that we have a fact-based approach whereby we look at demand to see where communities are growing and what extra services we can put on. I am pleased with the results we are getting, but obviously our aim is also to work with local operators, who often give us feedback on capacity issues and service issues, because that is the key for us. Mr Gammie's team is responsible for the relationship with our private bus operators, and we are constantly trying to engage with them to see what demand there is on the ground. We do look at things on a case-by-case basis, whether it is from parents or other stakeholders.

The Hon. PAUL GREEN: Just in terms of the safety of bus drivers, obviously there were a few episodes last year that were quite disturbing. What is happening there in terms of making bus drivers safer?

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: Obviously the safety of drivers, no matter where they are, is a primary consideration. That involves not just when they are on the bus but obviously work safety practices in depots and the like. Obviously we take advice, depending on where the services are, from the Police Transport Command but also in relation to gathering intelligence and conveying that to the relevant authorities. I am not sure whether Mr Rowley or Mr Gammie have anything further they would like to add on that.

Mr ROWLEY: We treat the safety of our bus operators as we do our passengers.

The Hon. PAUL GREEN: Has there been an increase this year?

Mr ROWLEY: My recollection from our safety stats is there has been a significant decrease in lost time injuries of our bus operators—in fact, from 10 in 2011-12 to, I think, about six in 2012-13. That would include all types of injuries, including assaults. So I think that is a pretty fair indication that we are doing everything we can and we are not standing back and letting that sit idle; we will continue to improve that figure as well.

CHAIR: Unfortunately, time has expired for examination of the portfolio of Transport. Before we conclude I would like to note that it is Mr Wielinga's last estimates as the director general. On behalf of the Committee I would like to thank you not only for appearing today but also for the assistance you have provided in previous inquiries. I invite the Hon. Penny Sharpe to say a few words.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: Les, I wanted to say thank you on behalf of those who sit on the other side of the table and those who sit on this side of the table for jumping on grenades for us for many, many years and we wish you well for your retirement.

Mr WIELINGA: Thank you.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: Ms Sharpe, I thank you for your generous comments in relation to Mr Wielinga and say that is one issue we are in wholehearted agreement on. I think Mr Wielinga has demonstrated to me and to every previous Minister and Parliamentary Secretary his ample commitment to the State of New South Wales. This is his last opportunity. I am not sure whether he will miss this as much as other things he has

to do in his responsibilities, but I again extend my heartfelt gratitude to Mr Wielinga and to all members of the Committee for their respect this afternoon. Thank you.

CHAIR: On that good note we will close the meeting. Thank you again, Minister, and your officers.

(The witnesses withdrew)

The Committee proceeded to deliberate.
