



LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY FOR THE AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

**STANDING COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT AND TRANSPORT
AND CITY SERVICES**

(Reference: [Annual and financial reports 2016-2017](#))

Members:

MS S ORR (Chair)
MR S DOSZPOT (Deputy Chair)
MS T CHEYNE
MR M PARTON

TRANSCRIPT OF EVIDENCE

CANBERRA

FRIDAY, 17 NOVEMBER 2017

Secretary to the committee:
Mr A Snedden (Ph: 620 50199)

By authority of the Legislative Assembly for the Australian Capital Territory

Submissions, answers to questions on notice and other documents, including requests for clarification of the transcript of evidence, relevant to this inquiry that have been authorised for publication by the committee may be obtained from the Legislative Assembly website.

APPEARANCES

ACT Veterinary Surgeons Board	101
Transport Canberra and City Services Directorate	101

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Amended 20 May 2013

The committee met at 9.04 am.

Appearances:

Fitzharris, Ms Meegan, Minister for Health and Wellbeing, Minister for Transport and City Services and Minister for Higher Education, Training and Research

Transport Canberra and City Services Directorate

Thomas Ms Emma, Director-General
Corrigan, Mr Jim, Deputy Director-General, City Services
Edghill, Mr Duncan, Deputy Director-General, Transport Canberra
Elliott, Ms Tooley, Executive Director, City Places and Infrastructure
McHugh, Mr Ben, Director, Capital Works and Development Support
Horne, Mr Hamish, Chief Executive Officer, Canberra Cemeteries
Marshall, Mr Ken, Director, Roads ACT
Alegria, Mr Stephen, Acting Director, City Presentation
Little, Ms Vanessa, Director, Libraries ACT
Trushell, Mr Michael, Director ACT NOWaste
Matthews, Mr David, Executive Director, Transport Canberra Operations
Lyll, Mr Scott, Project Director, Light Rail

ACT Veterinary Surgeons Board

Roberts, Dr Steven, President

THE CHAIR: Good morning, and welcome to this public hearing of the Standing Committee on Environment and Transport and City Services inquiry into annual and financial reports 2016-17. Today the committee will be examining the annual reports for the Transport Canberra and City Services Directorate and related agencies for the 2016-17 reporting period. Today's hearing is public, it is being recorded by Hansard and is accessible through the Assembly committees on demand webstreaming site.

I welcome the Minister for Transport and City Services and officials from the TCCS directorate and agencies. We will begin with agencies of TCCS and then move to the wider TCCS report. The first agency today is the ACT Public Cemeteries Authority, followed by the ACT Veterinary Surgeons Board and the Animal Welfare Authority. Minister, do you want to make an opening statement?

Ms Fitzharris: Thank you to the committee for the opportunity to be with you on the last day of annual reports hearings. I would like to take the opportunity to give you a quick snapshot of Transport Canberra and City Services and its performance over the 2016-17 financial year, which was in fact the first year for Transport Canberra and City Services as a directorate, or TCCS, as it has become known after many years of a very well-known alternative acronym.

TCCS is a diverse directorate with a diverse and hardworking staff responsible for the territory's roads, bridges, footpaths, cycleways, traffic management, city amenity, active travel, public transport network, linen, libraries, cemeteries, open spaces, domestic animal services—just to name a few. These are services and infrastructure that Canberrans rely on every day, no matter where they live in the city.

During the past financial year TCCS provided a range of different services to the Canberra community, with a particular focus on customer service. TCCS met its objectives to maintain bus on-time running at 85 per cent and exceeded a five-year target of services operated to completion of 99.5 per cent. Bus patronage also increased over the 2016-17 reporting period, registering 18.3 million passenger boardings, 200,000 more than the year's targets.

I am very pleased to say that over the past 12 months we have made considerable progress towards delivering an integrated public transport system that provides a real alternative to getting around by car, as well as better active travel infrastructure, to help more Canberrans combine their daily commute with exercise.

With tracks being laid as we speak on stage 1 of the light rail network, we have also started the scoping work on stage 2, including seeking the community's views and priorities for the proposed routes as well as starting detailed work on the technical design to underpin what is a significant infrastructure project.

Alongside light rail, we promised to roll out a new network of rapid buses to get Canberrans where they need to go more quickly and easily, and we will have the full network of nine rapids, including one light rail and eight rapid networks, rolled out from mid-2018, accelerating our commitment. Community consultation on the new rapid network has commenced and offers the community the opportunity to provide feedback into local service network design to make their journey as easy as possible, with stage 2 of that consultation getting underway in early 2018.

In addition to the work the directorate has been undertaking on transport, TCCS has also provided a wide range of services that keep our city running and continue to make it an attractive and livable city. We have received great feedback from the community where green bins have been introduced. As at 30 September, 8,200 households have registered for the green bin service. I was pleased to announce earlier today that the government is delivering on our commitment to a city-wide rollout of green bins, including Tuggeranong. Tuggeranong residents will be able to register for their green bins from 27 November and receive their green bins in January, with services to start later that month.

There have also been significant road projects underway right across Canberra. In addition TCCS has managed playgrounds, litter picking, mowing, weed control, irrigation and maintenance for popular town parks, caring for the over 760,000 trees in our urban environment, city ranger services, regular cleaning of all our shopping centres, management of graffiti, and responding to thousands of requests from the community through members of the Assembly. I am also very pleased, with Minister Ramsay, to launch the new and much improved fix my street application.

An important issue at the forefront of many people's minds at the moment is the management of dogs in our community, one we take very seriously, and we look forward in the coming Assembly sittings to debating a bill and strengthening our dog management legislation.

I am looking forward to continuing to work with the community in a consultative and

cooperative manner as we take steps to continue to keep Canberra Australia's most livable city.

I would also like to mention that in the next sittings I will be tabling a corrigendum to the TCCS annual report correcting a couple of minor issues in the annual report. Finally I would like to pass on a huge thanks to the staff of TCCS, one of our most diverse workforces right across the city every day, often 24 hours a day, seven days a week. No matter where you live, no matter who you are, in Canberra you are going to come across the work of TCCS.

In particular, I would also like to thank all the staff here today and all of their staff who do a lot of hard work behind them. I know that this is an issue that is very important to the committee, to the Assembly and to members of the community, and we look forward to answering your questions.

THE CHAIR: Can I also ask whether everyone has read the privilege statement. It is on the pink card on the desk. Is it all understood?

Ms Fitzharris: Yes, Madam Chair.

THE CHAIR: Thank you. I will kick off with the first question. Page 11 of the cemeteries authority annual report notes that Canberra cemeteries undertook a program to replace turf with species with lower water use and maintenance requirements. Was it part of the program to reduce water usage overall?

Mr Horne: Over the past few years we have been doing a number of things not just to reduce the use of water but also to reduce the use of potable water. That has involved upgrades to our capture and storage system. Also, in recent years we have now tapped into the Flemington ponds network of aquifer recharging and reuse. Over the past four years we have reduced our reliance on potable water from about 50 per cent at the Gungahlin cemetery down to nearly zero in this past year.

THE CHAIR: Are there any other measures that you are considering at the moment to reduce water?

Mr Horne: We are changing our grass species, as you mentioned. That program continues. We have limited resources, of course, so we are doing a small section a year, but we are about 85 per cent of the way through Gungahlin cemetery. That will be completed very shortly.

THE CHAIR: It sounds good.

MR PARTON: Natural burials: in November 2015 a natural burial option was introduced at Gungahlin cemetery. The ethos of natural burial, of course, requires that only natural, biodegradable material be permitted in a grave. The outlook for 2017-18 states that the authority will promote natural burial options. My simple question is: how will the authority promote natural burial options?

Mr Horne: In simple terms, by making sure that all of our funeral directors know about it. We have upgraded our brochures and presentation material to reflect the

availability of that.

MR PARTON: It is not, in essence, a hard-core promotion; it is just, “This is one of the options that we have”? It is included with all of the others?

Mr Horne: We do not have any hard-pushing promotions.

MR PARTON: No. I guess in your space it is not—

Ms Fitzharris: But if you are looking for social media content, Mr Parton, I am sure we can give you some information.

MS LAWDER: I have a supplementary. In the annual report, in the outlook for 2017-18, it states that there will be a continued development of strategic master plans for the Gungahlin and Woden cemeteries. Is the expansion of Woden going ahead?

Ms Fitzharris: Is that a supplementary to the natural burial question?

THE CHAIR: Sorry, can you repeat the question?

MS LE COUTEUR: It is not a supplementary.

THE CHAIR: Can you repeat it?

MS LAWDER: I did not know how much time you were going to spend on cemeteries or whether you were going to move on to—

Ms Fitzharris: I am happy to answer it.

MS CHEYNE: The answer is it is subject to a committee inquiry.

THE CHAIR: I asked you to repeat the question. Would you mind repeating it, Ms Lawder?

MS LAWDER: In the outlook for 2017-18 it states there will be a continued development of strategic master plans for Gungahlin and Woden cemeteries.

THE CHAIR: That is not about natural burials, so we will hold that until your substantive.

MS CHEYNE: Income for the year was a bit above the projected income, largely due to increased reservation sales. Do you have any idea why there was an increase in reservation sales?

Mr Horne: It was only a very small increase. In recent years there has been a trend towards slightly elevated reservation sales, but really it is not so remarkable. It was just that in this case it was a little bit more than we expected.

MS CHEYNE: Even though it is 10 per cent above your projected earnings, have forward budgets been revised in light of this or is it just so unremarkable that it is—

Mr Horne: It is not remarkable enough to revise future budgets.

MS LAWDER: Do I need to repeat my question?

Ms Fitzharris: No, that is fine. As we gave testimony to the cemeteries inquiry recently, the government has not yet made a final decision on that. We have said publicly that we are reconsidering the expansion of Woden cemetery in light of a number of other very significant investments in the Woden town centre by the government, not least of course light rail stage 2, as well revitalisation of the town centre and a significant expansion at Canberra Hospital. We look forward to the outcomes of the committee inquiry to add to our thinking and decision-making on that.

MS LAWDER: And the south side cemetery is related to that?

Ms Fitzharris: It is fair to say that it is related to that. Yes, that is why.

MS LE COUTEUR: I was basically going to ask the same question: what is happening with southern memorial park and what is happening down south? But I think you have probably answered it.

Ms Fitzharris: I would not want to pre-empt the findings of the committee.

THE CHAIR: As soon as we have published the report we will send you a copy. As no-one else has questions for the cemeteries authority board, we will switch to the ACT Veterinary Surgeons Board. The first question is quick: what sorts of complaints or issues have been raised with the board in the past year?

Dr Roberts: In answer to your question, the number of complaints or the types of complaints?

THE CHAIR: Both.

Dr Roberts: We work on the financial year. In that period we had 13 new complaints, up from six in the previous year. All these complaints, as you know, are jointly considered by the Human Rights Commission as well as the Veterinary Surgeons Board. During the year we closed out 10 complaints. Of those, three were from the previous financial year, 2015-16, plus seven received during the current year. Two more we have not been able to progress because we have to obtain third party permission to release the details before we can proceed on the complaint.

THE CHAIR: Generally speaking, without having to go through each complaint, what were the general themes of the complaints?

Dr Roberts: Usually concern about the way the animal's problem had been dealt with by the veterinarian.

THE CHAIR: So they were focused on individual cases; is that right?

Dr Roberts: Yes.

THE CHAIR: What powers does the authority have in resolving a dispute between a vet and a client?

Dr Roberts: This is one of the reasons we are moving to new legislation that is being developed now and is out for consultation. The current legislation gives the board no powers to impose any penalties at all. But what the board does is fully investigate each complaint. It gets the details from both parties and evaluates the information. We can then propose an action, if it is required, which then goes to the Human Rights Commission for their agreement, endorsement or disagreement. We work out which way to go from there.

MR PARTON: I turn to the Animal Welfare Authority. Page 330 says, “As at 30 June 2017, four inspectors from the RSPCA, 13 officers from TCCS and all police officers were appointed as inspectors under the Animal Welfare Act.” Thirteen TCCS officers were appointed under the Animal Welfare Act? Is that all the TCCS/DAS inspectors?

Ms Fitzharris: This is a slightly different area. We are happy to do them all at once. We just have to get the right people up at the table. We might get everyone up.

THE CHAIR: Mr Parton, given that we have limited time, are you happy to hold that question and ask a substantive to the welfare authority board now?

MR PARTON: I refer to page 327. Why was there a significant increase in registered veterinary surgeons in ACT in 2016-17?

Dr Roberts: A simple question.

MR PARTON: What is going on?

Dr Roberts: No 1, there is an increase in new graduates coming onto the market. No 2, there are still some new practices being opened in Canberra. Also, there is often a turnover of assistants who work in practices. Generally you have a principal and multiple other veterinarians in the same practice. Particularly younger graduates will seek to get experience in one area. They might do that for six months, 12 months. They then find out what they really want to do. They will then move out of our territory interstate. That is the usual condition.

When veterinarians take holidays, which they occasionally do, they need a locum to fill that position. Because we do not have what is called national recognition of veterinary registration, someone registered in New South Wales cannot just come and work in the ACT without registering in the ACT. That is part of the fix of the new legislation.

MR PARTON: So it is nothing but positive, is it?

Dr Roberts: It depends on whether you are one of the new graduates not happy where they are working and wanting to go somewhere else.

MS CHEYNE: I have previously declared to the minister and this committee that I have a personal relationship with a veterinarian but, given the dramatic increase in registrants, perhaps it is unremarkable.

Ms Fitzharris: The odds got higher.

MS CHEYNE: That is right.

Dr Roberts: We can send you guidelines on the relationships with veterinarians if you like.

MS CHEYNE: Please do. But you will need to send it to the secretary for distribution to everyone! What will be the benefits of national recognition of veterinary registration—you touched on them there—which will be adopted in the ACT next year? How has this come about?

Dr Roberts: It will benefit the territory in that graduates registered interstate will be able to come and work in the ACT without having to first be registered here. This happens in all other states and territories except for us and WA at the moment.

MS CHEYNE: Has this restricted the movement of veterinarians?

Dr Roberts: It has to some extent, especially locums coming in for say only two to four to six weeks. You have to go through the registration process. Yes, we do have some sort of pro rata variation on the annual fee; it is not always a full fee imposition. Also, if you want to get registered quickly out of session, there is an additional fee in between the board's monthly meetings.

MS CHEYNE: From conversations and feedback that you have had, do you think that has restricted the number of locums that we have been able to get to the territory?

Dr Roberts: It often restricts the choice because, basically, if the process becomes protracted, the opportunity passes. Sometimes if the board is not happy about the qualifications or the documentation, we have to ensure that the thing is legitimate. Everyone is aware of the problems that have arisen in the medical profession with falsified documentation and so on. We are trying to do our best to avoid that.

MS CHEYNE: It makes sense. I see that in this past financial year you waived all registration fees for veterinary apprentices. What was the reasoning behind that?

Dr Roberts: There was confusion in the legislation. There is another reason for the new legislation: it was not clearly worded what the powers were and what was required.

MS CHEYNE: The legislation will fix that?

Dr Roberts: Yes.

MS CHEYNE: Registration fees will be reinstated, potentially, if the legislation passes?

Ms Fitzharris: Yes.

THE CHAIR: We will switch to the animal welfare authority. I ask that our new witnesses acknowledge the privilege statement.

MR PARTON: Going back to page 330, are the 13 TCCS officers appointed under the Animal Welfare Act all TCCS/DAS inspectors?

Ms Elliott: That is correct. They are part of the licensing and compliance business unit.

MR PARTON: I do not fully understand. If an inspector is not appointed under the act, why would they not be? What was the need for that change on 30 June 2017?

Ms Elliott: That just gives you how many people are authorised under the act at that point in time. It is not a new thing; it is just noting how many people are authorised under that act to take on those statutory functions in that act at the time.

MR PARTON: In the same space there were 21 finalised prosecutions and 10 animal bans imposed in 2016-17 for animal cruelty matters. What fines were imposed?

Mr Alegria: I do not have the details of those fines. My understanding is that they were all imposed by the court, so it would be a matter of going back to the court records and finding out exactly what penalties were imposed.

Ms Fitzharris: Do you want to give a sense of the types of bans that were imposed?

Mr Alegria: It is a case-by-case situation and I am not familiar with every detail. But animal bans in general are applied to people who have a repeat offence, potentially, or where there is a risk that their offending in relation to animals is likely to continue into the future and therefore it is obviously valid that they be prevented from owning animals, in order to prevent the risk of further offences occurring.

Ms Fitzharris: It is not a ban on animals. Is that what you are asking, Mr Parton?

MR PARTON: No. In terms of the fines, from your perspective it really is a case of: "Once it has got to the courts it is out of our hands and it is not really our business"?

Mr Alegria: The way it works is that cases are brought forward. In most cases the RSPCA inspectors bring forward a brief of evidence and work with TCCS and the DPP to progress that prosecution through the courts. Then, as you suggest, it is a matter for the courts as to their judgment and their imposition of penalties.

MR PARTON: When those animal bans are imposed on an individual, what sorts of conditions are there?

Mr Alegria: The conditions can vary but in essence they can prevent the person from owning or keeping a particular species of animal or animals in general. Obviously that is quite a serious penalty.

Ms Fitzharris: The role of the government and the parliament in that is the legislation that defines the penalties.

THE CHAIR: Let us switch to city services. New witnesses, could you please acknowledge the privilege statement just before your first answer.

MS CHEYNE: I would like to talk about the scourge of graffiti, which—

THE CHAIR: Not all of it is horrible.

MS CHEYNE: Graffiti tagging, perhaps. There is excellent graffiti in the ACT. I am well aware of our many legal graffiti sites, which are excellent, but there are two particular tags, Pablo and Surg, who have perhaps moved from the city and made their way slowly into Belconnen. They are tagging everything from road signs to development application signs to real estate agent signs to lights at intersections. I note that there was a *Canberra Times* report a few weeks ago in, I think, the context of *Tumbling Cubes* in Margaret Timpson Park, but graffiti overall is going down in the ACT. I am interested in the relationship between our graffiti coordinator and ACT Policing, and what we are doing to make sure that we are on top of this. I appreciate that it is tricky, because drawing attention to it is sometimes an encouraging factor for artists who are tagging.

Mr Alegria: You alluded to the graffiti program and the coordinator. That is indeed a holistic approach to tackling graffiti. There is a range of strategies in that plan that look at not only the end product of graffiti, which is obviously important, but also diversionary programs, engagement programs and working with street artists to provide legal mechanisms to perform their art. Certainly liaison with ACT Policing is a core part of what the graffiti coordinator does. We work cooperatively with them to identify serial offenders: taggers, in essence. We use, potentially, technology to assist us with identifying hotspots and identifying offenders who frequent certain areas. We share intelligence, as well, with the police to try to assist in apprehending the offenders and then working with them, where appropriate, to try to use an educational approach to prevent them from reoffending. It is very much a partnership approach.

MS CHEYNE: What is the average time between graffiti being reported and being cleaned up?

Mr Alegria: That varies. TCCS is responsible for the removal of graffiti on public assets. Assets are inspected weekly. Any offensive graffiti is removed within 24 hours. Graffiti that is more of an amenity issue is removed generally within a week. It is a proactive program of seeing it and dealing with it on the spot, in essence. We have a contract in place that allows us to respond proactively to graffiti through patrolling and monitoring, as well as to react if there is an offensive or really—

MS CHEYNE: What comes under the definition of public assets?

Mr Alegria: Anything that is in the public realm that the government is responsible for.

MS CHEYNE: A playground, for example?

Mr Alegria: Yes, absolutely.

MS CHEYNE: Are you literally looking at all 900 playgrounds every week?

Mr Alegria: As you would know, we have a very large work force. Part of the duties of our officer out there doing the mowing and the litter picking and the trees is also to report graffiti as required and take action as part of their normal duties. That is in addition to the dedicated contractors we have: all they do is remove graffiti. A nuance there is that graffiti on private assets is the responsibility of the private asset owner; however, the government recognises that we have an opportunity to assist the community. For example on back fences, where, technically, it is the landholder's back fence but where it has an obvious impact on public amenity, we will work with the community, for example through the offenders program, to assist in removing that graffiti and perhaps getting a mural painted on the fence to prevent future tagging. We do take that cooperative approach.

MS CHEYNE: You mentioned that it is 24 hours when your officers are out there and see it. What about when something is reported, for example through fix my street? Do you have statistics on what the average time frame is?

Mr Alegria: I do not. But we do have that commitment about the 24-hour turnaround for offensive graffiti. That is the key thing. If it is offensive—racist or anything like that—then we will tackle it within 24 hours, if not less.

MS CHEYNE: Can you add things into “offensive”, like Pablo?

Ms Fitzharris: You are offended.

MS CHEYNE: Once you start seeing it, it is like when you are thinking about buying a Jeep and you see a Jeep everywhere. I see Pablo everywhere. I am not saying that “Pablo” the word is offensive but it really is everywhere, in Belconnen at least. I am not sure about other electorates.

MR PARTON: We do not have much of it down south.

Ms Fitzharris: That is useful, because I do not think we were aware of that.

Mr Alegria: I am not aware of it.

MS CHEYNE: It is Pablo and Surg, sometimes with an “e” at the end. That is why I think it is a variety of people. That is probably enough on this for now.

MR PARTON: I have seen some pretty quick turnarounds on removal of graffiti. In particular I note that there was a big, in bold letters, “Vote No” sprayed on a concrete traffic barricade down in Lanyon, to which within 12 hours the Yes people had come along and added a “w” and an exclamation mark, which I thought was really cool; but when I went to take a photo of it, it was gone. Well done.

MS LAWDER: Could you explain to me the rationale behind expanding the Mugga Lane Resource Management Centre as opposed to identifying alternative sites?

Mr Corrigan: It is all part of the management of the waste system in the territory. The Mugga landfill has been Canberra's main landfill for quite some time. We have capacity there. Studies have been done a number of times, and there are approvals and things; we know there is capacity to keep growing that landfill for still some years to come.

Establishing a new landfill is a really expensive thing to do. It is really high capital. The whole ground has to be prepared. The base layers are put in and all these sorts of things to prevent leachates and the nasties occurring and spilling out and causing those external negative impacts.

We always seek to manage our system of landfill. We have two main ones, of course: Mugga, the main one, and west Belconnen. We can discuss that at another time. With Mugga, we expanded in cells. Specific cells are built to constantly manage the waste. The waste we put in there is treated in the cell. Then it is closed off and we move to the next one. It is not a constant open tip face. It manages the waste appropriately in accordance with guidelines from the EPA and these sorts of things. That is why we continue to expand Mugga.

MS LAWDER: Back in 2013 when that was proposed—there was draft variation 305 to expand the Mugga Lane landfill—a statement from someone at the Environment and Sustainable Development Directorate, as it was then, in early 2013, said:

ACT NOWaste investigated alternative landfill sites and consulted the community before choosing to expand the existing facility.

I know it is a little while ago, but are you able to update me on what the consultation with the community was?

Ms Fitzharris: In 2013?

Mr Corrigan: It is before the time of both Michael and me. Do you recall?

Mr Trushell: Yes. Because that was subject to the EIS process, there was a formal public consultation process carried out by the planning area as part of that process.

MS LAWDER: That is what it says, but I just wondered what form that consultation took.

Mr Trushell: I could not give you the details.

MS LAWDER: Could you take that on notice?

Mr Trushell: I understand there were requests for submissions, public meetings and that sort of thing, as you would normally do. It is certainly the normal process for requesting—

Ms Fitzharris: We could take that on notice, but it would be answered by Minister Gentleman as part of a planning process.

MS LAWDER: Okay; thanks. When that took place, there was a report done by GHD for ACT NOWaste in May 2010 about the expansion. When you did that public consultation—you may need to take this on notice—did you explain to people involved in the consultation about the dis-amenity effects, including, and I will quote from the GHD report—

THE CHAIR: Ms Lawder, the directorate has already said that it is for Minister Gentleman under planning.

MS LAWDER: It was a report for NOWaste.

Ms Fitzharris: Seven years ago? Okay.

MS LAWDER: I thought NOWaste came under this directorate?

Ms Fitzharris: Yes.

THE CHAIR: It does. It is fine. Ask the question.

MS LAWDER: The report said that there was a loss of amenity associated with the continued use of the Mugga Lane Resource Management Centre, including a reduction in prices of properties of 5.9 per cent per mile or 3.7 per cent per kilometre from the Mugga Lane landfill. It identified Macarthur, Fadden, Gilmore, Farrer and Isaacs, with a total at that time of 13,486 people who would be affected by the expansion and continued use. Was that made clear to residents at the time of the consultation: that there would be that dis-amenity and loss of value of their properties?

Ms Fitzharris: Ms Lawder, with respect, we are happy to take that on notice. I note that this is the annual report hearings for the 2016-17 annual report; you are quoting from a report that we do not have the benefit of having in front of us, and we do not have the benefit of subsequent decisions that might have been made. I cannot confirm what you are reading; I have not seen that.

MS LAWDER: It came through the FOI that I put in.

Ms Fitzharris: We will take the question on notice and answer it. To be honest, madam chair, the time frame of five days turnaround when we are going back seven years may be difficult, but we will do our best.

MS LAWDER: Thank you.

THE CHAIR: Maybe we can stay focused on the annual report. Ms Le Couteur?

MS LE COUTEUR: I am keeping on the subject of waste, but more topical waste. On page 24 you have a beautiful graph at the top. I must admit when I first looked at

it, I thought, “Great, we’re going up to 90 per cent.” But then I realised that was purely a projection. In fact, if you look at what we are actually doing, we are going downhill. And it is not due to Mr Fluffy, because you have made it very clear that Mr Fluffy is not part of that. Why are we going downhill?

Ms Fitzharris: Mr Corrigan and Mr Trushell can explain that, but that is exactly why the work under what is called the waste feasibility study has been underway. That has only very recently been completed. It is in recognition of the projections that we need to do something different to reach our target. It has been a very extensive piece of work over the past couple of years, and we expect that we will be able to provide information to the community later this year or early next year around the findings of the waste feasibility study.

MS LE COUTEUR: That was going to be one of my questions. Can we look at why? Look at the graph that we have now. What happened? What is going wrong?

Mr Corrigan: There are three main reasons why it is quite low this year. One is that we did not get reporting. A lot of the reporting from waste businesses in the territory at the moment is voluntary, but we are moving to a mandatory reporting system with the new act. One of the larger ones did not report in time, and we estimate that that counted for approximately two per cent of the waste; that put it up two per cent.

With respect to another two per cent, it is a bit of a challenge for us into the future. The demolition of the ABC flats added approximately 30,000 cubic metres that had to be disposed of, because of bonded asbestos. It is hazardous waste, so we could not pull it apart into its constituent items and recycle it. Construction demolition waste is broken down into aggregate and used for road base and things like that. It was not able to be achieved through that, so that added 30,000—

Mr Trushell: That was 41,000.

Mr Corrigan: 41,000 cubic metres. Remember that in the territory context about a million tonnes of waste is generated every year, and we landfill about 280,000 to 300,000 tonnes a year. When you add 40,000 tonnes, it has a direct impact on the percentages in that graph.

With the last one, we have had to construct and clean out the leachate pond at Mugga. Some maintenance works had to be done there. The material out of that is hazardous. It had to be disposed of as well. We cannot do anything else with it. That added about 30,000 tonnes, so there was another two per cent in that. They were the three main reasons why it dropped so low. If we add those three together, that figure would have been about 71 per cent, approximately, which was in about our target range; 70 to 75 per cent. That is the main reason why it is so low this year.

MS LE COUTEUR: You have had the same methodology all the time; you are just reporting those three issues?

Mr Corrigan: That is right.

MS LE COUTEUR: I have scanned the electronic version trying to find out; do you

have anywhere the actual amounts, as distinct from the percentages? Surely, what is most important is that we reduce the amount going to landfill.

Ms Fitzharris: The volume, the actual—

MS LE COUTEUR: Yes, as distinct from the percentage, because we could have the situation where the percentage is going down but the volume is going up. I searched for “waste” and I could not find that anywhere in the annual report.

Ms Fitzharris: An important aspect of that would be that you would have to match that with the growth of the city as well.

MS LE COUTEUR: Appreciably, that is a factor, but you must have that information. If it really is not in the annual report, and it is not just that I could not find it, could you take it on notice to record that, over a convenient time span? You clearly have some data.

Mr Corrigan: We do have data. We can provide that to you.

MS LE COUTEUR: You used to report it.

Mr Corrigan: Yes. It is not publicly available. There is so much to it, and you have to understand the context of all of those waste streams and what is going on with the volumes and things. But we can provide that.

Ms Fitzharris: Yes, overall.

Mr Corrigan: Overall, it is a million tonnes a year of waste. It is an easy figure to remember, and then we break it down.

MS LE COUTEUR: I will remember that. With quite a few of the questions I was going to ask into the future, your answer will be, “It’s in the waste feasibility study.”

Ms Fitzharris: Yes.

MS LE COUTEUR: I will not ask those. Recently, I remember hearing that the ACT apparently has been exporting a lot of clean fill to New South Wales. There have been questions about whether or not that is in fact clean or whether it has asbestos in it. The ANU apparently exported a lot. It has been a big issue regarding where it has gone to, because of the huge volume of trucks. We are talking about hundreds and hundreds of truckloads of allegedly clean fill. People in New South Wales are concerned that the word “allegedly” may be the accurate word.

Ms Fitzharris: There is also a difference between what the ACT government, in terms of our waste collection, would do, and what other private entities might do with their waste.

Mr Corrigan: That is correct, minister. Yes, we are aware of that. The company that undertook that work did have the appropriate approvals, we understand, and also the approvals in New South Wales to dispose of that material they took. But it was a

private entity undertaking that.

MS LE COUTEUR: As you have mentioned, there is a lot of construction-related hazardous waste from the ACT. Are we confident that no-one is seeking to evade their responsibilities by taking it over the border and burying it at the bottom of a lot of dirt?

Mr Corrigan: There is always a risk of this, absolutely; how private entities deal with their waste. Moving forward, with the Waste Management and Resource Recovery Act that came in last year, we are now in the process of progressively licensing the waste businesses who receive and manage waste, and the transporters as well. It takes time to get them all registered. We are talking about quite a number. Over time we will have those registered, and we will have a much better picture of what they are doing, their operations, where the waste is going and how it is working. Obviously, we work with councils around the ACT. We work collaboratively with them as well.

MS LE COUTEUR: I would like to talk more about this but I know what the answer will be. I assume you have a large section about organic waste in the waste feasibility study.

Ms Fitzharris: It is important and it is interrelated with the broader work, the climate change work, as well. As you know very well, once we hit 2020 where our emissions come from, in terms of which sector contributes most to emissions, changes quite considerably—waste and transport being two.

MR PARTON: I want to go back to the reduction in waste to landfill graph on page 24. Irrespective of some out of the ordinary events with regard to reporting or with regard to a big city building block coming down, we have been flatlining in that space since 2004, I think it is fair to say. Certainly, minister, based on your agreeing with Ms Le Couteur regarding the growing population of the city, flatlining in this space actually means increasing, does it not? Flatlining on a percentage basis means that, over that period from 2004 to 2014-15, and certainly including this year, landfill is not flatlining; it is actually increasing in real terms, isn't it; in actual volume terms?

Mr Trushell: If you understand the composition of ACT waste, the largest components are things like organic waste and construction and demolition waste, not household waste. In fact, when you look at the figures, for example, at the main landfill at Mugga Lane, you are not seeing growth there. That is more or less flatlining. Where we see fluctuation is in areas like construction and demolition, when you have a lot of big projects going on, like Mr Fluffy. Those things do have a material impact upon variability. With the city renewal going on, it is likely that we will continue to see some of those fluctuations in the headline figure. But it is true to say that the underlying figure is flatlining. This year, if you take away those aberrations, we hit 71 per cent.

MR PARTON: The underlying percentage figure would be flatlining but the actual volume would be increasing.

MS LE COUTEUR: The volume, yes.

Ms Fitzharris: Not necessarily.

Mr Trushell: Not necessarily. I will give you some examples as to why. With the composition of material, we measure it in tonnes. For example, what you see in recycling is a move away from heavier recyclables like newsprint and that sort of thing. Similarly, with plastics, we are moving towards plastics which are much lighter. That is the standard measure that is used nationally and internationally, on a tonnage basis, but you are not seeing growth. It does not mean you do not have challenges around recyclables.

MR PARTON: What you are suggesting to me is that over a decade, with the city increasing in population by 50,000, that increase in population has had no effect whatsoever on the volume of landfill?

Mr Trushell: No, what I am saying is I do not think the population-driven aspects are as significant as people might think. I have often heard that referred to. I am saying that that is probably not the key challenge around recycling. It is probably the nature of materials as we move into new technologies: solar cells and that kind of stuff, different sorts of plastics. As we move away from things that were relatively easy to recycle, like newsprint and cardboard, to other products, that is where the challenges arise. It is not so much around the volume; it is around the actual technical aspects of recycling.

MR PARTON: The indicative line after 2017, it must be said, is wildly optimistic. Does anyone believe that that will be fulfilled, and how will it be fulfilled?

Ms Fitzharris: That is the point of the waste feasibility study. That currently remains our ambition. But you are right; it is pretty tough. There are a number of different ways you can do it, and that is the work that has been underway for a couple of years.

MR PARTON: There is a view held by some that the green bin rollout is in part a response to the failure to reduce landfill; that it is a rather expensive solution but it is perhaps a solution to move in that direction when you consider the amount of green waste that just ends up in regular bins. That is potentially a way, in a rather expensive fashion, to address that failure to reduce landfill. Do you have any response to that?

Ms Fitzharris: I am not sure that I follow the assumption.

Mr Corrigan: There are multiple benefits to the green bins, Mr Parton. What you are getting at is right about people using the green bins, particularly in a city like Canberra where we have large blocks, a lot of detached dwellings, a lot of older blocks and trees and all of the landscaping. People can now put things in the green bins. Progressively we are rolling that out.

Keeping it out of landfill is a good thing. Organics in landfill are not a good thing. First, it takes a lot of space. It produces a lot of methane. There are a lot of issues with things like that. The more organics we can get out of landfill the better, because it contributes to greenhouse gases and all sorts of things. You are quite right. That is one of the benefits of green bins.

The other thing is that it also works well on people's psyche. Educating the community about how to manage their waste products is really important. If people are paying a bit more attention to what they are doing in dealing with their waste, whether it is green waste, recyclables or whatever, as in these graphs, we can get percentage increases just by people thinking a bit more about it.

We are doing bin audits now on the domestic collections. We get probably about a third of the contents of the red bin—I am talking about the lids: we call them red bins, yellow bins and green bins though not all red bins have red; it is confusing—that are recyclable. That is where we are coming from. If we can start to educate people and say, "Please take your time," and if we can reduce the domestic collection by a third, we are talking about probably potentially 10,000 tonnes of material keeping out of landfill. So that is the other benefit. I know I am making leaps from green bins into other waste, but this stuff all links together. We manage the whole waste system; we are constantly thinking, "How can we do this to get the best results for the territory?"

MR PARTON: But Mr Corrigan, do you genuinely believe that come 2024-25 we can have a 90:10 split on that?

Mr Corrigan: It is highly ambitious.

MR PARTON: It looks good on the graph.

Ms Fitzharris: It has been a policy setting for a while as an aspiration, and there has been a lot of effort towards it. The waste feasibility study was in recognition of how complex it was getting, that recycling was changing. I think there were new markets for waste, and some new ways of processing waste or recycling waste are supported in some areas and less supported in others. What is going in is changing. The waste feasibility study has been to review that. The government was no longer confident that on its current path it could meet that target. That is the work that is underway at the moment.

I do not mean to obfuscate on it, but it is two years of very considerable work with a lot of in-depth work, particularly with stakeholder consultation with a community reference group and a business reference group, to understand and reset the baseline and get a very good understanding of all the waste streams. There are 70 waste streams, I think.

Mr Corrigan: About 54.

Ms Fitzharris: There are 54 different waste streams coming in. It is to get an understanding of each of those and then understand what you could potentially do to reuse, recover and recycle in each of those streams. It has been a big piece of work.

MS LE COUTEUR: In terms of the very ambitious target—I would agree with Mr Parton—is waste to energy one of the reasons you seem to be so confident that you will be able to make it? There have been a number of recent proposals.

Ms Fitzharris: No, I did not say that.

MS LE COUTEUR: No, I know you did not say it. I am asking a question.

Ms Fitzharris: In terms of achieving the 90 per cent, the work that is underway has been to look at that target and to see what is realistic.

MR PARTON: I think Ms Le Couteur's question is: has waste to energy been factored into that?

MS LE COUTEUR: Factored in.

Ms Fitzharris: Factored into our target?

MR PARTON: Yes.

Ms Fitzharris: Not at the moment.

MS LE COUTEUR: As a reason that you are being mildly confident about it. Are you thinking this is going to have—

MR PARTON: I do not know that they are confident.

Ms Fitzharris: I have said that with the work that we are doing, the current setting is 90 per cent. The waste feasibility study is to look at that target and how we might get there. As we have said, it is a pretty ambitious target, but we have not fully considered all the findings of the waste feasibility study yet and whether we could get to 90 per cent and in what time frame.

MR PARTON: I think Ms Le Couteur's specific question is, though: has waste to energy as a concept been factored into that?

Ms Fitzharris: Not in this, no. Not in this, because this is an estimate. But the waste feasibility study has looked at all potential solutions in the market; that has to look at waste to energy because it is one of the potential solutions in the market. Decision-making on that has not yet happened because it has only very recently been finalised.

MS LE COUTEUR: I understand this is simply: "Waste. Where did it go? Did it go to landfill or go somewhere else?" But in terms of these graphs we are not really looking at the somewhere else. Are we thinking of doing any looking at the somewhere else? We saw the *Four Corners* stuff about what happens to waste. I have been assured that the ACT is not as bad as *Four Corners* would make you think. But are we doing any work about what happens to things if they do not make it to Mugga Lane? Is something useful done with them as distinct from the *Four Corners* allegations that they are effectively dumped somewhere else?

Mr Corrigan: Yes, Ms Le Couteur, it does concern us. We do keep an eye on this. It is a bit complicated, though, because there are a couple of factors here. One is, going to landfill, that we know where that is going. With the MRF, the materials recovery facility, down at Hume, that is where our recyclables go. We contract with a company who runs that MRF. They then package those materials up. They have their own

relationships with other providers. Most of the material that they deal with at the MRF will go to other providers. The paper goes to Visy down at Tumut and other locations, and there is glass and things like that.

They are exploring how they deal with some of those products to open up new markets. This is where it gets quite complicated and quite interesting. How waste and recovered materials move around Australia and internationally is all based on these markets. The markets need to exist to be able to get these materials recycled and recovered and those sorts of things.

We do keep an eye on this. One thing is the relationship that our MRF operator has with who they send it on to. That is their business as to how they do that. Mostly, they manage that in Australia, but some will go overseas. But, also, we keep an eye on it because, for example, there could be fluctuations in large economies like China. China receives a lot of recycling materials from countries around the world. If they were to stop that, and recently they have stopped certain things and prevented things, it can actually dry markets up.

That is why the *Four Corners* report talked about the glass stockpiling in Victoria. Basically, the market for glass disappeared some years ago. The providers who were dealing with this glass could not sell it because no one would buy it, so they started to stockpile it. Thankfully—coming back to what we do in the territory—the company that runs our MRF has put in some technology there to crush it. They are looking to develop relationships with other providers where the crushed glass is used as a concrete mixer, road base material or something like that.

We keep an eye on those things, because part of the waste feasibility work that we are bringing forward to government for consideration is how the territory could even look at its own procurement practices, how we build things and things like that, to try to see whether, if we actually start to build in using some of these products, we develop small markets, so we know where the materials recovered are going.

Ms Thomas: This is a really important conversation. On top of all of this—everyone here talks about waste, and my waste team teach me regularly about reduce, reuse and recycle—the reduction part of it is actually the critical part, and there is a whole national conversation on packaging. Packaging itself is really critical to this whole conversation. If we can reduce at the front end what happens and what goes into landfill in the first place, that is a really important part of getting to meet any targets.

MS LE COUTEUR: Absolutely.

Ms Thomas: That is a national conversation. When you think about whitegoods packaged in polystyrene foam, just think about the amount of packaging that comes into our lives, collectively, from both a commercial and a residential perspective. That is one of the things that are part of the consideration and discussion in the waste feasibility study. What we are looking at is: how do we reduce from the waste stream to begin with, at the front end, before we really have to even think about what goes into landfill?

MS LE COUTEUR: Absolutely, and TCCS are doing that work?

Ms Thomas: Yes.

MS LE COUTEUR: That is brilliant, if you are.

Ms Thomas: Yes. We are certainly contributing to the national conversation, and our minister and other ministers who participate in various COAG discussions will continue to participate. But, also, with our NOWaste team, part of their mantra and part of their passion and enthusiasm towards this subject, is: how do we reduce the use of various materials?

We need to start to understand what is actually going into our waste stream to begin with. That is the real premise of the waste feasibility study: to understand the mix of our waste going into landfill in the beginning so that we really start to think about whether it is a matter of how we recycle this material or whether we can just stop it altogether. The use of plastic bags was a classic example of how we can have a really big impact on waste in that respect.

MS LE COUTEUR: On plastic bags, can I suggest education. Number one is plastic bags, and telling people that if you put it in a plastic bag and then put it in the recycling bin—

Ms Thomas: Yes.

MS LE COUTEUR: In the last year, I have lived in two different multi-unit developments, and people have not got the message. It is really simple; they have not got it.

Ms Fitzharris: I think the Director of NOWaste is vehemently in agreement on that. Can I add another part to the broader conversation around product stewardship and how important that is? While there might be various forms of regulation and incentives for extremely large commercial enterprises to package their goods, if product stewardship is part of that, they have the incentive to change their practices, which is where product stewardship on a whole range of different issues is important. Part of the reason why we now have a container deposit scheme is that if the manufacturers of these products are responsible, because of the externalities of so many different products and services in our community, it ends up being the taxpayer paying, public funding being paid.

MS LE COUTEUR: Absolutely.

Ms Fitzharris: That is why the opposition to the container deposit scheme was a bit of a surprise. Product stewardship, as a principle behind reducing waste, is fairly universally accepted.

MS LAWDER: Going back to the green bins, with the red bins, you mentioned contamination. With the pilot that has taken place in Weston Creek and Kambah—

Ms Fitzharris: Yes, and soon to happen.

MS LAWDER: what has the result of that pilot been in terms of contamination in green bins?

Mr Corrigan: It has been excellent; it has been very good. We have been very surprised. Corkhills is the lead contractor providing that service, and I think the contamination is under one per cent.

Mr Trushell: It is 0.05 of a per cent

MS LE COUTEUR: Very good.

Mr Trushell: On average it ran at about 30 grams of contamination per household, over a four or five-month period. So it has been exceptional.

Ms Fitzharris: When you lift the lid on your green bin, there are very clear instructions. There is also set technology within the truck itself, to monitor any contamination. You might be able to trace what might be accidental contamination back to a particular household, and the driver can monitor that.

Mr Trushell: The other thing is that we have had a dedicated education officer who has done an excellent job. She goes around and audits bins, provides positive feedback when she checks a bin and there is no contamination, and provides information where there is. That aspect of it has been really important. The whole education aspect of it has demonstrated its worth.

Ms Lawder: Will there be a report on the pilot made publicly available?

Ms Fitzharris: I will take that one on notice, in terms of what form that might take and when that might be.

MS CHEYNE: You were talking before about the green bins. I heard you also start to talk about organic waste. With the green bins rollout, something I have been asked is whether organic waste will be allowed in those bins, or whether that is being considered at all.

Ms Fitzharris: It will not be in the green bins as they are being rolled out in the city-wide rollout now. Certainly, it is a pretty significant part of not just household but commercial waste collection under the feasibility study, for two reasons: it is useful for households, and it has an impact on landfill and emissions.

MR PARTON: Regarding the green bins, I know that in response to a question on notice from Mr Coe earlier in the year, minister, you said that there remained a number of critical matters to be resolved before the service could be rolled out to the rest of Canberra, including new suburbs, where few people opt in to the program. You said that “some of these matters will be addressed through the lessons learnt from the Weston Creek and Kambah pilot”. What lessons have we learnt from the Weston and Kambah trials? I note that we have already had the contamination figure, which is very low. What else were we examining in this trial?

Ms Fitzharris: A couple of things. Contamination; take-up rates as well.

Mr Trushell: We have done a lot of in-house evaluation as part of this. I have to say there probably are not too many lessons to learn, other than that the design we have done has been highly successful. One of the key lessons, on the upside, is the amount of research that was involved up-front, talking with other councils and a range of things like that, the design of the contract. All of that work up front has resulted in a very successful pilot. There are not too many things that we feel we need to change. We have a pretty good understanding of the take-up rate now. We think that will probably settle at around 50 per cent.

Even though we look at these things very hard, having regard to the work that I have seen with my team, I have had fresh people come in, not people who did the initial design but a new project manager has come in. He has looked at it independently. I am not sure that there are that many on-the-surface lessons. It reinforces the importance of education, the information that we provide, ensuring that we do not roll the bin out too early on the kerbsides before we start collections. That alignment is really important, so that you do not end up with a bin that is too heavy or too full.

Most of the lessons relate to evaluating the contract and ensuring that the key performance indicators are driving the right performance with the contractors, and checking to make sure that the feedback loops et cetera are working, as are the way that you register and the way we deal with complaints. There are myriad little bits and pieces, but I do not think there are design fundamentals that we would change as part of going forward to the whole of government.

MR PARTON: I am just blown away by the contamination figure, which I gather is radically different from the 2002 Chifley trial. I understand that the whole green bin potential rollout was abandoned then, because of contamination issues. It is fascinating that people's habits, in terms of taking things out to the bin—apart from the apartment blocks where you have resided, Ms Le Couteur—must have changed dramatically in 10 years. Did you have a look at that 2002 trial?

Mr Trushell: We did. We spoke to numerous councils around Australia and worked on their experiences, both good and bad. All of that informed the pilot. A lot of work was done around ensuring the pilot was not some sort of loose experiment, but that it was based on what we felt would work. The purpose of the pilot was to confirm that or otherwise, and then make changes.

We relied heavily on the experience of many councils who have had good and bad experiences. Sometimes it has taken them decades to get it right; sometimes they have not got it right at all. That up-front research, and, rather than looking at one thing that happened in 2002, looking across the country, talking to numerous councils and drawing on their experiences, was probably the key to this being effective.

Canberrans, frankly, love the bins. That is the feedback we are getting. Those who take it on really like it. They appreciate it. I have a place at the coast. I have the bins. I love them, too. I have never had one in Canberra but I have them down there, and they are fantastic.

I think it is about the education, the work that Regina has done, as well as JJ Richards.

They had a really good track record elsewhere in dealing with communities on the kerbside. I refer also to the way the information was designed, ensuring that we got our messaging right and that we were reinforcing that. All I can tell you is that the people who have signed up for it have taken to it in a really positive way. They appreciate the service. Obviously, people do not want their bin to be taken away. They understand that the territory already has a very good organics performance at Corkhills. Having Corkhills involved and working well with JJs, that partnership has been a very strong one, and they both have a good understanding of how to manage this sort of thing.

Sometimes things work really well. You do not assume that they will, off the bat. I think it is a reflection of the hard work that the team has done, as well as the performance of the contractors. As Mr Corrigan referred to before, the focus on education cannot be underestimated, and the need to consistently engage. Regina has been talking to people at shopping centres, and things like that. That engagement, and explaining why it matters, has been really successful. When you see the photos coming back from Corkhills—because Corkhills had some concerns initially—you are blown away by how little this volume of contamination is. I hope that, when we move in to Tuggeranong, we are able to achieve the same level of performance.

MR PARTON: We had those same concerns, too, so I was pleasantly surprised.

THE CHAIR: We have some anecdotal evidence that apartment buildings may, shall we say, struggle a little bit with their waste. Will the green bin program go to apartment buildings, and how do you see that helping?

Ms Fitzharris: Do you mean high rise, not complexes of townhouses?

THE CHAIR: Yes.

Mr Trushell: For what we call multi-unit developments, or MUDs, there is a specific policy around the way we do that. For example, if there are no gardens there then they would not need the service, so they would not be provided with it. Yes, multi-unit developments are already receiving the service, and that is part of that contamination rate. Weston Creek and Kambah do not have the same density of these as other parts of Canberra. As we work through that, we will engage more intensively with strata managers and bodies corporate, and look at how we can translate our education program from a single unit development to a multi, into those.

We are already involved in a lot of work around the development control code for services into multi-unit developments. The green bins work will help inform all of that. We are not unique in the sense that most cities are moving towards more higher density living. There is no doubt that there are some unique challenges around multi-unit developments but there are also some fantastic opportunities. I have seen some really good models around how you engage with multi-unit developments, and we will continue to look at those.

THE CHAIR: I would like to talk about libraries. On page 29 of the report, it says that library membership covered 65 per cent of the population. I just wanted a bit more detail on that. One might think that libraries are a dying asset. Some people do,

unfortunately. But 65 per cent is actually quite high. I just wanted to get a view on who is using our libraries and what they are doing when they do use our libraries.

Ms Little: Yes, 65 per cent of Canberrans are registered library members, remembering, of course, that in some families, mum or dad may have a card and that card may be used for a whole family. We are due to have a look at the database and tidy it up a bit for our new library management system. I am anticipating that that 65 per cent is probably more realistically around 60, but at the moment it is 65.

Everybody uses libraries, from babies right through to the very elderly, people who are on high incomes, people who are on low incomes and homeless people. We have an internal committee within the library staff who focus their attention on services to people who are homeless and work through how we can make ourselves more accessible to homeless people. All ethnicities and different cultures come into the library. We have a range of materials in many different languages; from memory, it is over 20 different languages. We have people who come in and just use the wi-fi; we have people who come in and just want to talk.

THE CHAIR: Are you allowed to talk in the library?

Ms Little: Absolutely you are allowed to talk in the library. Yes; you are allowed to come in and sing and dance as well as giggle and wiggle. We cut across such a lot of the community. We know that we have a lot of library use until people are in their mid-20s. Then they drop off a bit. Then, as soon as they have kids, they are back with us. And then they stay with us right through their life journey. We try to focus our attention on the 25-year-olds, but they are generally a bit busy building up their careers, studying and doing those sorts of things.

THE CHAIR: There is a Libraries ACT strategic plan. How is that targeted at delivering better outcomes for the membership?

Ms Little: The library strategic plan goes until next year. We will probably be starting the conversation about a new one early next year. It is very much focused on lifelong learning and on how the library can influence people's learning throughout their lives, and not in the formal setting. It is very much focused on how we can provide services and resources to people so that they can learn whatever it is they need to learn for their life or whatever they are interested in. We know that people do not just learn by reading; they learn by doing, watching, listening and those sorts of things. You would note from the annual report the number of people who come through to the library for library programs—everything from how to fix your bike through to health issues and those kinds of things.

The strategic plan is overarching about our role in lifelong learning. Then we look at collections and the resources. You would also see from the annual report the growth in the number of our e-resources and the growth in the use of those e-resources. And then there is the programming that we run, not forgetting our very important ACT Heritage Library, the role that the ACT Heritage Library plays in collecting the stories of Canberra, the history and heritage of Canberra, and making that accessible for people in the future.

THE CHAIR: I was going to ask about digital resources, how the libraries are incorporating the digital world. I still like books, but for all those people who are not me?

Ms Little: There is a cohort that will be only books, and they tend to be on the older spectrum of the age group. Then you will find some who are younger who will only use digital. But there is a big bunch in the middle who will use both: sometimes they feel that they want to hold a book in their hand and sometimes they want to use an e-reader, often on the bus, coming to work on a Transport Canberra bus. We are finding people are mixing the modes and using both.

As far as digital materials are concerned, we have electronic books which you can download through our website. Those loans have gone really well this year. Only last month or the month before, we hit 5,000 loans of e-books a month. We have e-audio books.

THE CHAIR: That was 5,000 a month?

Ms Little: A month, yes. We have e-audio books. Instead of having cassettes that you can borrow and listen to a story from, you can now download a story which is an audio book. We have something which used to be called Zinio—for some reason they have changed the name to RBDigital, which I do not think is easily marketed—which is for a whole lot of magazines. You can download those magazines from our website and keep them; you do not actually have to return those. It is stretching the definition of a loan a bit, because we already pay the licence fee for them. Everything from *Australian House and Garden* to *Wheels* and all of those really well-known magazines can be downloaded from our website and kept.

One of the other e-resources we have is Freegal—free and legal. That is the entire Sony playlist. You can download three songs a week for free and keep them. Again, the library has paid the licence fee on that. That has come about with the music industry; they wanted ways for people to be able to download things and not pirate. So we provide that service. If you do not do that already and you love music, please do, because we have paid for the licence on it.

The bulk of electronic resources is our databases. People go to the internet and they think that the internet has all of the answers and that all of the answers are correct. That is not necessarily so. We offer a range of databases—everything from arts through to sport, social sciences and music—and they are authoritative databases. The articles on there have been authenticated by somebody in an industry. When you go onto those, if you have somebody in the family who is doing an assignment and they look on our databases and pull up all the things that they need on medieval music, you know that that stuff is authoritative and you can be happy that you can use that safely.

That is the sort of spectrum. We also have a whole range of literacy-based e-resources. There are a lot of play-based e-resources that you can access through our website. If you have little kids and you want them to start on their literacy journey early, you can start playing these games with these resources that you can get through the library.

MR PARTON: When will the Heritage Library be relocated?

Ms Little: We are looking at probably mid next year. There are still people in the building that we are moving into, and they have to move out. Then we have to prepare the building. One of the most important things we need to do in the new building is make sure that the air conditioning is okay. Clearly, if you have heritage materials, you have to have a moderated temperature and those sorts of things. We will be preparing that building early in the new year and probably mid next year.

MR PARTON: What is being done with the emptied Woden Library space?

Ms Little: That will be resumed into public library space. At the moment we have not got a plan for that—we are focusing on getting the Heritage Library part of the project done—but we will be resuming that for public use.

MS LE COUTEUR: More and more government services and private services are only available electronically. For some people, that is fine. What role do you play or can you play for people for whom this is a serious problem?

Ms Little: It is a very good question and something that we are fulfilling on a daily basis. We are finding more and more, as services are going online, that people are coming to us and asking for our help, or simply to use our online services, our computers and our internet connections. We do this on a daily basis. This is core business for us now.

You would see in the annual report that our formal programs have increased. The number of people who come in and do a one-on-one session with us on how to use their device and how to use the internet—those kinds of things—have increased. But yes, you are quite right: we are finding that a lot of people are coming in and saying, “I need to access this government service. Can you help me?” We use it as an opportunity to teach them digital literacy skills and some cyber safety skills. Yes, we are seeing an increase in that.

MS LAWDER: You talked about 65 per cent of Canberrans holding an ACT library card membership. What percentage of those completed a transaction during the financial year?

Ms Little: I do not have that information with me, but I can take that on notice with the caveat that our library management system that we are about to replace lacks a lot of functionality, and sometimes there are pieces of data that I cannot get. I can certainly take that on notice and try to get that for you.

MS LAWDER: I would also be interested in an age profile of membership.

Ms Little: Again, I will see whether we can pull that off our library management system. The new system will be able to do all sorts of fabulous things.

MS LAWDER: And also the relative performance of each of the nine libraries.

Ms Little: The nine branches? Certainly I can give that data to you.

MS LAWDER: Thank you.

THE CHAIR: Do you have to use the library card for every service that the library provides? I went in and photocopied some stuff once; I do not think I needed a card for that.

Ms Little: That is another great question. No, you do not. You do have to use your card to borrow, obviously, and to use the computers. When you book a computer to use, you must have a library card. The rest of our facilities, our services and our resources you can just come in and use. It has been exercising our minds: what are people coming for and whether they are doing multiple things when they come into the library. We are just about to do an exit survey with our customers to ask them those very questions: “Why did you come today?” “Did you get what you came for?” “Did you read the newspapers?” “Did you use the wi-fi?” We will get a much better picture of what people are doing.

On downloading, we will certainly be asking about that. And you must use your borrower’s card for downloading from our website.

THE CHAIR: My other supplementary is this: earlier you spoke about lifelong learning being a priority for the libraries. I think you mentioned giggle and wiggle. I hear the Dickson one is oversubscribed and very hard to get into.

Ms Little: Yes.

THE CHAIR: What other programs are you offering as part of that? Until my friend said she was taking a six-month-old kid to giggle and wiggle, I had no idea it existed.

Ms Little: Something in the vicinity of 46,000 people, in this reporting period, went through giggle and wiggle. Giggle and wiggle is for the zero to twos. It is about teaching parents about the importance of reading, and doing songs and finger play with kids.

We do such a gamut of things. We have author talks so that people can come and meet their favourite authors and discuss books with them. We support over 160 book clubs; that is, groups of people around town who get together and talk about books. They borrow the set of books from us.

As I said, you can come along and learn from Cycle Jam how to maintain your bike. From doing a lot of work with NOWaste around coming and learning how you can turn your old jeans into handbags through to really serious topics like how to manage your asthma and those kinds of things.

We do a fabulous one, which we are reviewing at the moment, called nourishing little minds. That was with Nutrition Australia. We ran a program for parents to come in and learn how to cook for, and what foods to give to, their little kids. We do a lot of partnerships with not-for-profits, other government agencies, as a way of making sure that we are educating the community about things that matter.

Ms Thomas: Vanessa may also want to talk about reconciliation and the contribution

that the libraries make to reconciliation.

Ms Little: This year, as part of reconciliation work, we had Anita Heiss. She is a very famous Aboriginal author. She came and made a presentation. We do something called deadly digital, which is for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander kids, out at west Belconnen at the Kippax library. The kids can come and learn about how to use computers and how to be cyber safe.

We put a lot of material into our collections that are from Aboriginal-specific presses, from publishers. We do a lot in that space. We go out and visit the child and family centres, the Aboriginal parents groups there.

Ms Fitzharris: There is lots of information on the “what’s on” page of the library website.

Ms Little: There is. We do a big fold-up poster thing as well. It is very much core business for us now. Some of the people who use the library may never borrow a book, but come along to a whole range of things.

Ms Fitzharris: A lot of broader government community consultations will often have a presence at a library for hardcopy information to be available or almost pop-up information as well on a range of other ACT government consultations.

Ms Little: That is right; yes we do

MR PARTON: I turn to Output Class 2.4, city maintenance and services, and Domestic Animal Services. I do not know that I got a clear answer to what was a similar question earlier on. I want to know the current head count of DAS rangers.

Ms Fitzharris: I thought that is what you wanted to ask, as opposed to who has the authority to exercise something.

MR PARTON: Yes.

Ms Fitzharris: Of DAS staff or DAS rangers?

MR PARTON: No; DAS rangers. What is the current head count of DAS rangers?

Mr Alegria: I would have to count the boxes, Mr Parton. Would you like me to do that?

MR PARTON: Right.

Mr Alegria: In terms of rangers, I will incorporate the numbers that were announced recently, the additional resources that we are now pursuing. In fact, we are advertising those positions later today or early next week, so I will include them in the figures.

In terms of the overall number of staff that look after domestic animals, we need to consider it in the context of the investigation side and the education side of things. As Michael said in relation to waste, it is the same with domestic animals. The education

stuff is absolutely crucial.

In terms of the people based at Symonston, around 15 staff will be based at Symonston when this new recruitment is completed, all of whom have a ranger role. That includes ranger in charge, senior ranger, ranger and operational support rangers. They all have a direct role in managing domestic animals, including a field role. However, for example the senior rangers have that high level investigative ability and capacity. There are also people at lower levels who are more focused on the front-of-house customer service, managing animals in the kennels and so forth.

MR PARTON: Is that number of 15 what is budgeted for to be in place at the end of June 2018? What is the size of the upcoming intake?

Mr Alegria: Eight additional FTEs.

MR PARTON: Eight additional?

Mr Alegria: Yes.

MR PARTON: What functions or problems have not been satisfactorily addressed by the rangers under the current staffing arrangements? So, prior to the intake, what specific functions or problems were not satisfactorily addressed by the rangers?

Mr Alegria: A key one is around community education. That has been an area where we have had a limited ability to be proactive in: educating people about what responsible pet ownership is. That is the core of the current approach that the government is taking.

MR PARTON: And that is on-the-ground, face-to-face stuff that we are talking about?

Mr Alegria: Yes, on the ground; absolutely. For example, much like libraries again, we have had people out and about at shopping centres and at schools teaching people about responsible pet ownership, what you have to do as an owner to manage your pet, particularly your dog. That has been underway already, but on a relatively small scale, through the paws for thought campaign. We will now have the ability to put additional resources into that area and have a more comprehensive, well-targeted program.

MR PARTON: You talk about additional resources and there are eight new people. How much is that going to cost and where is that money coming from?

Ms Fitzharris: We can take that specific one on notice. Another aspect probably is a level of enforcement on issues such as people having their dogs on lead in on-lead areas. I receive a lot of correspondence asking why we are not everywhere in every park and every playground making sure that that is enforced.

There is a fine balance. There is people taking on the responsibility themselves of knowing and community acceptance of people saying, "Jeez mate, put your dog on a lead". There is the role that Domestic Animal Services might play in that well. It is fair to say, in terms of what role Domestic Animal Services plays, that it has a number

of different functions, but the community awareness and engagement is something that we have been talking about all year.

From its very simplest level, the paws for thought started with very simple messages: keep your dog on a lead where you are required to have your dog on a lead; keep your fences and your gates safe and enclosed if you have a dog at home, because it protects both your dog and the community as a whole. The question of what we have or have not been able to do is really like asking how long is a piece of a string.

MR PARTON: It is interesting that you talk about a number of 15 at Symonston. Earlier on we were going through—

Ms Fitzharris: Who is authorised under the act? There were 13.

MR PARTON: Yes. There were 13 TCCS rangers authorised under that act. But they are obviously not all based at Symonston; they are scattered around the place.

Mr Alegria: That was probably only a partial answer. There is another group of people that also have a direct role in managing animals based in our building in WOTSO. That includes the investigations unit. They are the staff that take the information from the field, from the field rangers, in terms of an investigation of an incident. They then undertake investigations.

That is a related function required to support the work of those field people. Some of those numbers that we mentioned are included. They are part of a related work group that has that investigations primary role.

MR PARTON: Under legislation currently before the parliament, do you anticipate having to add more staff to oversee the possible amendments to Domestic Animal Services legislation pertaining to greyhounds? Will more staff be required to do that?

Mr Alegria: The government's firm commitment is that the cost of implementing and managing the greyhound-related—

Ms Fitzharris: And racing related.

Mr Alegria: In terms of the racing greyhounds, there will be full cost recovery. So we are developing—

MR PARTON: That is the basis of my question: are you anticipating that more staff will be required?

Mr Alegria: No.

Ms Fitzharris: No.

MR PARTON: I imagine it will be exceptionally difficult to do the mathematics on exactly what cost recovery is on that basis if no extra staff are used.

Mr Alegria: As you know, a code of practice is being developed to manage the racing

greyhounds. That will outline the specific requirements for the monitoring regime. Then we can work backwards and understand the staffing component required for that. We can then produce a cost that would then be passed on to the people involved in receiving that service. We do not yet understand the scale of that, but we do not expect that it will be a significant additional impost.

Ms Fitzharris: It would be fair to say too that, where there are licensing arrangements in any field that have a commercial element, the government would have cost recovery. But where it is for public broader community reasons, there would not be a cost recovery element.

MR PARTON: That is an interesting statement to make. The suggestion there would be that regulatory monitoring of thoroughbred racing, for argument's sake, should then go down a total cost recovery basis because it is commercial, to some extent.

Ms Fitzharris: I do not know the basis of that now. But a number of regulatory enforcement activities have a cost recovery element.

MS CHEYNE: I have questions about smoking in public places and about enforcement, as well as the cleaning up of cigarette butts. It is wide ranging and potentially covers bus interchanges, which I could leave till ACTION. Should I leave all those questions till later, or I can do some now?

Ms Fitzharris: In terms of enforcement, they are with Access Canberra.

MS CHEYNE: I have been reading the Health Protection Service notice, which says that it is Access Canberra, ACT Policing and Transport Canberra and City Services officers who are inspectors.

Ms Fitzharris: Yes. We can do some of those questions.

MS CHEYNE: My questions are mostly about the bus interchanges. I know that that has been implemented now but I guess the consultation was done in the annual report period. I am being a bit cheeky but—

Ms Thomas: I will answer it from a high level but the more detailed questions around bus interchanges themselves might be better to talk about in the Transport Canberra context. I have a delegation through ACT Health to provide to some of our staff to maintain areas around the city for smoking. Some of that would be through some of our city rangers and some of it is through our transport officers, so it is a range of people across the directorate. But essentially it is through ACT Health and the responsibility that they provide will flow down from that. It is a team effort.

MS CHEYNE: That is why I was not quite sure if I would be wasting your time by asking now. In terms of enforcement of smoking in public places where there are bans, do you have a sense of generally how many, at least through the rangers that you are responsible for, fines have been issued by people who have been delegated as inspectors?

Ms Fitzharris: We will take that one on notice.

MS CHEYNE: Okay.

Ms Thomas: No smoking at bus interchanges, though, is a fairly new—

MS CHEYNE: Very new, yes.

Ms Thomas: Generally with new outcomes like that we take more of an education role. We have talked about education quite a lot today. My team generally tries to help the community in the first instance by helping them understand that the rules have changed, rather than taking a firm enforcement stand straight up, because the transition, for any form of regulation, is important for people to understand.

MS CHEYNE: Can you talk to me about what that education has involved? I have seen lots of signs on buses and at the Belconnen interchange, which has been very good. However, on Tuesday morning I was at the bus interchange and within the space of five minutes two people came in smoking, totally oblivious. So—

MR PARTON: Surg and the other bloke, I bet you.

MS CHEYNE: I do not think it is fair to equate smoking with people who are tagging. We do not know what people get up to in their spare time. I guess signs are effective to a point but then people's eyes glaze over, and people who are not as excited about it as me probably are not going around reading all the signs. Do we actually have officers on the ground, or was it just for the first month after it was implemented? Are we going to have refresher officers or—

Ms Thomas: It is all of our officers who would generally have a conversation with people, but that is the added element of the education. It will be more like, "Hey, do you realise the regulation has changed?"

Mr Alegria: That is right. The city rangers, in particular, who have the active role in enforcing the Litter Act would always take that approach of, "Did you know you're not supposed to smoke here?" rather than immediately issuing a notice. The other thing that is important is that the signage gives the community at large a kind of permission to call out behaviour that they see. That is really where we need to go. It is the same with dogs off lead and so forth. Having the social pressure where you feel comfortable saying, "Excuse me, could you please put your dog on a lead? It isn't an off-lead area" or "Could you please not smoke here? It's actually a non-smoking area, as you can see by the signs." Obviously, as the minister said, we cannot have a ranger around every corner at every bus stop, so getting the community to own that is the long-term—

MS CHEYNE: In theory, I think that is sensible. However, I was with someone who was calling people out and—

Ms Fitzharris: It did not go down very well?

MS CHEYNE: Mixed, I guess. It is perhaps less so with dogs off leads, but smoking is a really personal decision and you are being told you are not allowed to do

something that you previously were allowed to do, by your average Joe in the community. Yes, it is very helpful to go, “There’s a sign right there and this should stop.” But even though I can be a pretty up-front person, I would be a bit nervous about telling people, “Hey, you really shouldn’t be doing that here.” So having people who have that authority—while social pressure helps, it is probably more in glaring at people rather than actually approaching them. So I am interested in whether education officers will keep coming out and enforcing that or, if not, compliance officers really sending the message.

Ms Thomas: We do not have any specific education officers. Our role is more that the people in their day-to-day roles and responsibilities will help in having those conversations.

Ms Fitzharris: In terms of transport, there is signage not just at the interchanges but at the 100 most used bus stops as well. But I think it would be fair to say that it has only been six weeks, so let’s just see how it goes. If we get reports that, say, Belconnen is a particular hotspot or Woden is a particular hotspot, then we would look to target that. That would probably come through Health, so there might be a role that our health promotion and health protection area could play as well, again, in conjunction with some compliance activities. If there does seem to be a real problem, then we might look to do something next year if we do not think that the message has really got through.

MS CHEYNE: Do you get that feedback from your rangers and other staff who are at the interchanges?

Ms Thomas: Yes, sure. Transport officers, bus drivers; people will generally give us feedback about what is happening out there. We can start to think about how we do other things then.

Ms Fitzharris: Wearing my health hat for a moment, the other interesting aspect has been e-cigarettes. I have gotten on buses behind people who literally have one hand out the door with their vaper and the other one tagging on with their MyWay card to get on the bus. But because e-cigarettes are now treated like cigarettes, that is going to be the same. For the people who vape or use e-cigarettes there is a perception that there is not the second-hand smoke harm, and there is not the same smell as there would be with other ones. So that is another one to keep an eye on. I have seen that a few times at bus interchanges. But that is a new regulation I think people are getting used to as well.

MS CHEYNE: While we are on the city services clean-up side of things, cigarette butts generally are a pain in the proverbial to pick up. Doing Clean Up Australia Day and things like that, you just do not want to touch them. Our rangers do a very extraordinary job across a very wide territory in the morning. Do they have any focus on cleaning up cigarette butts or are they more working on cleaning up bigger items of rubbish, in terms of efficiencies?

Mr Alegria: It probably varies. Where you have a city centre or local shopping centres where they are able to be very efficient, use the blowers, sweep all of the stuff into a pile and use the sweeping machines, potentially, to pick it up, then that would

obviously cover off cigarette butts. It is the same with playgrounds. If there is some issue at playgrounds where there are butts around, they will pick them up. In the broader realm, it is a very labour intensive task to pick up individual butts, so it is really on a priority basis. If it is a visual issue and it smells, it will get cleaned up. If it is less visible, potentially there would not be as much of a focus.

MS CHEYNE: Where your rangers see a hotspot that is clearly an area where lots of people smoke and there are lots of cigarette butts, do you feed that back? We would prefer people to not smoke at all, but people are always going to, so you could have a little butt disposal unit. I do not see many of them around the territory.

Mr Alegria: Often those issues are related to a private building. We have had a few of those instances lately where there have been smokers congregating and they have used the butt bin. It looks like it is in the public realm but actually it is not, so we have worked with the building owners to try to rectify that situation. Even though it is not directly a government responsibility, obviously we are all there to serve the community, so we choose to go and engage with the building owners and try to come up with a solution that meets the needs—

MS CHEYNE: So the ACT government does not actually have any butt bins itself?

Mr Alegria: I could not tell you off the top of my head. I believe we do. You do see them around, and certainly people can use the public rubbish bins to put the butts in. There are a number of those around the place but—

Ms Fitzharris: Put them out and then in.

Mr Alegria: Yes, definitely. I do not have a figure on exactly how many butt bins are publicly managed.

MS CHEYNE: Thank you. I think that is enough of me saying “butt” for today.

MS LAWDER: I want to ask a bit more about dog attacks. The Access Canberra website says to phone Access Canberra or DAS through Access Canberra on 132281. The TCCS website says, if you are in danger, to contact police on 000. Which is the correct procedure for someone to call in the event of an attack by a dog on a person or another dog?

Mr Alegria: The differentiation there is that if there is an attack underway or it is something very serious, you should just go straight to ACT Policing, because it becomes a safety matter. That is the key message: if it is life threatening or serious, please call the police. If it is less serious or less time critical, the direct path to domestic animals services via Access Canberra is the preferred option, because then it can be triaged. In essence, we would triage that particular issue in accordance with its seriousness and allocate resources accordingly.

MS LAWDER: How long does it take generally for DAS officers to respond to such reports? Does that again depend on whether it is currently taking place?

Mr Alegria: Yes, absolutely. With any serious attack that we get notified of, it is

basically an instant response. We have 24-hours a day, seven-day a week operations. We have on-call officers who have their mobile phones; they are paid to be on call, they have a vehicle in their driveway, and they respond basically as soon as they physically can get out of the house and get to that incident. For a less serious incident, as I say, it will be triaged. In general, an attack is treated as a category that is the highest priority for domestic animal services because it relates to public safety. That would override, for example, reports of nuisance dogs.

Ms Fitzharris: Or barking.

Mr Alegria: Yes; barking dogs or less significant offences, allegations or complaints. Any attack is treated as a high priority. Then, within that, an attack in progress or an attack that has caused an injury would obviously be treated as higher again.

MS LAWDER: Earlier, minister, you talked about areas where a dog is supposed to be on a lead as opposed to off-leash areas. Can you explain some of the rationale behind having some off-leash areas in walkways and bikepaths, the little green areas through suburbs? If you are on a bike, it is not necessarily safe to have off-leash dogs.

Mr Alegria: That is a really good point, and that is something that we are very aware of. Many dog attacks are related to dogs being off their lead, whether they have escaped their yard or whether the owners have let them off and are unable to control them. We are very aware that that is a crucial aspect of our policy work that we are considering at the moment. We plan to undertake a consultation process with the community to determine people's attitudes and their understanding of those off-lead areas. We know there are also conflicts potentially with cyclepaths and off-lead areas or where an off-lead area is not obvious on the ground and people are not aware of what they can and cannot do.

We know that there is an issue. We want to get the community's views on that, with the idea of potentially changing some of those off-lead areas and also reinforcing the messages to people. That is a piece of work that we are hoping to do in the near future.

Ms Fitzharris: As I have said, I think the priority now is debating legislation and amendments and making sure we have the best legislation. We looked at getting this particular work out before the end of the year, but we know that people's views on consultation when it gets close to December make it difficult. We will probably look to do that early next year, particularly around the dog off-leash areas.

MS LAWDER: With the DAS ranger staffing, I guess it is probably less on weekends than weekdays. Does that affect the response time if someone calls about a dog?

Mr Alegria: It does not affect the response times, because we always have that 24 hour a day capacity to respond to attacks. What we are looking at, with the additional resources, is to use those additional resources to better target the times when people are out and about with their dogs. Clearly that is not nine to five Monday to Friday; it is in the evenings, it is in the mornings and it is on the weekends. We are very aware that it is a great opportunity to put more resources into those times. That means more education, but also more opportunities for compliance work. It is a really good opportunity for us, and we will be rolling that out in consultation with staff to

make sure that we have covered off all of the requirements.

MS LE COUTEUR: My questions come from page 35, output 2.4, city maintenance and services. We can probably spend all day on this one page, but I thought I might start with policies re playgrounds, playground upgrades and the provision of new playgrounds, as they are a hot issue in my electorate.

Ms Fitzharris: What would you like to ask about in particular?

MS LE COUTEUR: There are three places in my electorate which are actively doing petitions for community—

Ms Fitzharris: Farrer, Waramanga and?

MS LE COUTEUR: Torrens.

Ms Fitzharris: I have not come across Torrens.

MS LE COUTEUR: You will. What is the policy? I said to them that I imagine that all three of them are not going to be winners this year, but we must have more of a policy than that.

Mr Corrigan: Yes, we do. We do have a policy around how we manage the playgrounds. It is based around usage patterns and things like that. Obviously, the high end playgrounds near town centres and locations in the city that get lots of visitors, lots of kids, are the big ones. Our town parks all have very good playgrounds. There are Eddison Park, Yerrabi Pond and places like that with very good parks. There is quite a range of play equipment made available, often with shade sails and things like that. They receive that. After that, it goes right through to suburban locations. I think we manage over 500 playgrounds, 512 or something.

Where it gets interesting with the requests is when the community come in and say, “We would like to look at a different playground. What could be done?” That is good. It is always a balance, though, between a new playground, a new opportunity, and something where the community comes in and says, “We think a better located playground would be in this location at these shops.” We look at it and often say, “That is a really good idea.” It is just how we manage that and also manage the other playgrounds in the suburb, in the locations.

We are constantly looking at those things. We do have a policy about how to manage those and how to invest in and maintain the playgrounds, keep them safe. Obviously, we welcome discussions with the community when they have particular ideas. But one of the things we need to look at is how to do that but also recognise what else is in that immediate area; other playgrounds. With some of our older parts of Canberra, some of the playgrounds in suburban locations, there is not much to them; the equipment is pretty basic. Sometimes the usage patterns are surprising, and they may get a lot of use, but others do not.

So we need to have those conversations with the communities. Some of the groups organise themselves really well for their new playground, but we are saying, “Okay,

that's good, but how do we also work with the other playgrounds?"

Ms Fitzharris: It is probably fair to talk about what playgrounds look like now. I know particularly the chair has done an amazing job in Giralang with what a different type of playground and community gathering space could look like. There are natural play spaces; we now have four, and I expect we will have more and more. There was traditionally a playground with a swing and a slide; now there is a huge variety. It is how you play, how contrived all the equipment is and whether you have a spontaneous response to natural playgrounds.

There is a lot happening. It is fair to say that I think, off the top of my head, that there have been more petitions on playgrounds in the past year. It is a challenge. People are doing quite a lot of work saying, "This is my community and this is where I live." In some cases we have one suburb where we have the community in the eastern part and the community in the western part, or vice versa, putting together proposals.

There is some great community grassroots work going on around people saying, "We want to have this." But we are doing a bit of thinking, particularly in the work that we have done around better suburbs. That piece of consultation, a survey, just closed on Wednesday. We got lots of responses about that. There is some co-design work underway at the moment to talk to the community more specifically about the things that we found through better suburbs.

Playgrounds and parks have come up very highly in terms of people wanting to access them and use them, but different communities have different needs as well. New suburbs are very well serviced with playgrounds. Molonglo Valley, you will know, has an extraordinary network of parks. With the newer parts of Gungahlin, it is the same. And there is what it looks like when you have much higher density living in different parts of the city; it makes the type of playground different. Is a playground just for kids? Is it just for kids under five or kids under 15? You see the community recreation parks where you get kids of all ages. Having something for older kids especially can make quite a difference.

MS LE COUTEUR: The consensus in Murrumbidgee seems to be that everyone would like the Chifley playground at their shops. That is the model that everybody talks about.

Ms Fitzharris: I understand—maybe you can correct me on this—that when local schools put up fencing because there was so much vandalism—

MS LE COUTEUR: I was also going to say that particularly in Waramanga, you go to the site that the community is talking about and you can see two playgrounds which 10 years ago would have been accessible to kids, and they are not. Are we looking at doing any work around any other responses? My understanding was that the government had in the past rejected CCTV cameras. I guess this is getting into education.

Ms Fitzharris: We will have a think about it.

MS LE COUTEUR: It is an issue—

Ms Fitzharris: If it is right on the verge and there is nothing else within the school grounds, maybe that is a possibility. I will talk to Minister Berry about that.

MS LE COUTEUR: Waramanga is the one where you really notice it, because you can see the other playgrounds. I assume that when it was planned they said, “Yes, tick, playground.” Farrer is interesting because there are quite a few very small playgrounds in Farrer but none of them is very accessible for shops. And I understand, from talking to the community, that some of them are not very well used.

MS LAWDER: I have had quite a bit of correspondence about east Greenway, where Mimi’s Pit Stop is, and the lovely new learn-to-ride park. It is very popular. Those two aspects have combined to really revitalise and attract a lot of people to that area. We have spoken previously about the toilet block nearby—or not that nearby, according to parents. Also, the small playground nearby has a metal slide. I understand that you like nature playgrounds, but do you still install metal slides or have you moved away from them?

Mr Alegria: We do.

Ms Fitzharris: Do you mean metal slides or slides, full stop?

MS LAWDER: Slippery dips.

Ms Fitzharris: You mean slides, not just the fact that they might be—

MS LAWDER: Yes.

Ms Fitzharris: Yes.

MS LAWDER: We get a lot of complaints about how hot they get.

THE CHAIR: Yes, I thought you were progressively replacing them.

Mr Alegria: Where they have worn out, we will replace them, but the choice of material is very site-specific. Obviously, we face them south, not north. But a metal slide is very robust. Other than being hot, it is probably the best slide experience.

Ms Fitzharris: You slide faster.

THE CHAIR: Yes, plastic is not so great.

Mr Alegria: There are a number of considerations about whether we use metal or plastic slides, but we do roll out metal slides.

MS LAWDER: Do you have a policy or a guideline for having a shaded park within a particular area, at least one per suburb or something like that?

Ms Fitzharris: We have just finished rolling out another 20 shade sails—

Mr Alegria: Twenty-five.

Ms Fitzharris: Twenty-five shade sails over playgrounds. The hierarchy of playgrounds and where they are is a consideration. Natural shade would be great, in particular, but there are issues sometimes with trees in playgrounds.

Mr Alegria: We roll those out on a priority basis. Again it is about bang for buck: where the playgrounds have the most use and have the most benefit to the community, that is where we prioritise the shade sails.

MS LAWDER: How do you measure “most use”?

Mr Alegria: The big town and district parks have the highest numbers of users, so they are clearly a high priority. We also take into consideration community needs, as expressed on occasion. We can respond to particular circumstances on occasions, so that is another way of prioritising. Again it is also responding to the changing community perspective. Shade sails, probably years ago, were not really even a thing. Now they are kind of expected.

MS LAWDER: That small playground near Mimi’s Pit Stop is a good example. So many people are going there now, to the learn-to-ride park, and it has a hot metal slide. They are wondering whether they can get a plastic slide or a shade sail so that the slide is not so hot.

Mr Corrigan: That is something we can look at. The location is very good and there are not a lot of other recreational facilities nearby, obviously.

MS CHEYNE: I know that the better suburbs consultation closed earlier this week. Can people still sign up to register for the workshops?

Mr Alegria: Yes, they are welcome to.

MR PARTON: With respect to Birrigai, on page 36, I found it fascinating that the highest priority in 2017-18 for Birrigai was to be prepared for power outages. I wondered why that was and what power outages were foreseen.

Ms Fitzharris: This is run by Education, so in terms of the services that Birrigai provides to the multiple school groups that go out there, there would clearly be strong educational priorities, whereas this is really just about the asset of Birrigai. It is not that Birrigai’s outdoor education curriculum priorities are about power outages. That is a question for the operations of Birrigai, for Minister Berry.

MS CHEYNE: With respect to shopping trolleys, as the annual report notes, I know that you worked with major retailers to work on having containment mechanisms. There was some delight in the community but also some concern, particularly in terms of some interesting shopping trolley configurations, in order for people to retrieve coins. Also, there was concern about whether there were enough bays to which to return shopping trolleys. I am interested in the success or otherwise so far of the containment program, or encouragement, what challenges or feedback you might have had and how that has been addressed.

Ms Fitzharris: It is a solution that is the relevant supermarket's solution. It has been interesting but it goes to the—

MS CHEYNE: Yes. It was not the government saying, "You must do this." It was saying, "You've got a number of options and it's up to you which option you do."

Ms Fitzharris: Yes. It also goes to other issues. When you bring in a new way of doing things, there is an element of people getting used to it and understanding what it is all about. If you plotted it on a graph, knowledge would build, frustration would peak and then people would get used to it. That is my personal experience of it in a couple of fairly busy locations. But I have also noticed in locations, because I happen to live near a couple of big multi-unit properties, where there used to be a lot of shopping trolleys abandoned outside them, that I hardly ever see any anymore. That is an anecdotal observation.

Mr Alegria: That is exactly right. In the 2015-16 report we reported we had impounded 177 trolleys, and we have not impounded any since the system has come in.

MS CHEYNE: Really? None?

MR PARTON: Not one?

Mr Alegria: We have not had to because the retailer has the system and people are using it, so there are fewer trolleys out there. And when they are out there, there are the apps that anyone can use, and the rangers use them, and they get reported to the retailer and the retailer comes and collects them. It actually works. I would encourage you to try it: download the app and report a trolley, and if it is not picked up within a certain time then the rangers can go back and impound it.

MS CHEYNE: What app is this?

Mr Alegria: There are two apps. One is for the Wesfarmers group, Coles and so forth, and there is another one for Woolies—

MS CHEYNE: Wesfarmers are very used to me calling them.

Mr Alegria: One is called trolley tracker.

MS LE COUTEUR: Can't you put it on fix my street as well?

Mr Alegria: You can report it through fix my street. That means we would then have to report it through the app.

MS CHEYNE: Is that right? So if someone reports an abandoned trolley through fix my street at the moment, TCCS officers are then telling the supermarket first to come and get it, but if the supermarket does not in a certain period of time, do we go and get it?

Mr Alegria: Yes.

MS CHEYNE: Really, we should just be approaching the supermarket directly?

Mr Corrigan: There is a fine for the supermarket, too. That is what really works. It is \$123 a trolley.

Mr Alegria: Once they are impounded. Of course, there would be exceptions. If there is a trolley that is very difficult to retrieve—maybe it is in one of our lakes or something—we would obviously deal with that in the annual clean-up. But, by and large, it actually works very well. As you mentioned there have been some teething issues with people just getting used to the new system, but that—

MS CHEYNE: I understand that in Belconnen you have worked with some shopping centres to encourage them to install more bays.

Ms Fitzharris: I would make a general point as well around these kinds of issues, because they do come up a lot for us, around enforcement of things. Everyone has a stake in this. Often we get correspondence from people who demand that the government is there enforcing every rule and regulation. While we have an essential role in that, often businesses and a whole lot of people are involved in this effort. TCCS do an incredible job in working with people. Often they will be responding to things and going above and beyond, to meet community expectations.

It is really important to understand that a lot of work goes on behind the scenes—having conversations with all sorts of groups, businesses. Everyone has a stake in this. It is about the supermarkets, and you have levels of regulation and levels of incentives. At the end of the day, they are going to lose money by not doing the right thing; otherwise who pays for it? The community pays for it through government resources. So we have to get a better balance between community expectation and who is paying, because often the community, through their taxes, would pay, and we are responsible for prudently managing those resources. If there is an expectation that we are always going to be the ones paying for other people's issues then we have to find the right balance.

This is a really good example of the supermarkets now having a very strong incentive, because otherwise rangers were pulling them out of playgrounds. There was one on the top of a bus stop that we could see from the first and second floors here. That was a significant danger. It is a really good example of strong work in the community with the private sector and the community sector that TCCS does to get the balance right, and realising that we all have a role to play.

THE CHAIR: That brings us to the end of this morning's session. We will take a break for 15 minutes.

Hearing suspended from 11.14 to 11.33 am.

THE CHAIR: We are back on the Transport Canberra and City Services portfolio, for roads and infrastructure. In the 2016-17 year, our percentage of territorial roads in good condition was above target, at 90 percent. This is strategic indicator 4.3, page

23 of the annual report. Was there any particular reason why we were above target?

Ms Fitzharris: Excellent work.

Mr Marshall: I guess that really is the answer: that it is indicative of a successful preventative maintenance regime. The percentage of roads in good condition is based on, essentially, an aggregation of condition indicators into an overall condition score, if you like, for every segment of road in the network. That result indicates that our extensive resurfacing program, in particular, which is our main focus in terms of preventative maintenance, has been successful in maintaining a high level of overall condition.

THE CHAIR: When you say preventative resurfacing, can you just run me through what you do to keep our roads in such good condition?

Mr Marshall: Our main focus, as I touched on, is a preventative maintenance program, which essentially is a resurfacing program that we undertake in the summer months every year. It is essentially about doing two things in restoring the surface condition. The two important roles of the surfacing on a road are to provide a running surface for vehicles, a smooth and yet skid-resistant surface, and to prevent water ingress into the load-bearing layers underneath the surfacing. What happens with surfacings over time is that environmental conditions embrittle the surfacing and the surface can become polished or cracked. So you progressively lose skid resistance and you progressively lose the sealing qualities, the waterproofing qualities, of the surface.

The objective of the resurfacing program is to restore the surface texture but also, perhaps more importantly, to seal cracks to prevent water ingress, to protect the more expensive structural elements of the road underneath. That, primarily, involves spray seal. We target to spray seal four per cent of municipal roads and five per cent of territorial roads each year. That is based on the expected life of those surface treatments, of around 20 to 25 years. The primary objective of that program is to seal the cracks, prevent the water from entering the pavement, and prevent the deformation that essentially would mark a section of road down in terms of its overall condition index.

MR PARTON: I just wanted to know, in that space, what we are doing to address the criticisms from the Auditor-General. This is probably for the minister to answer first up.

Ms Fitzharris: I think I said on the day that the audit came out that we welcomed it, and it did identify areas that we were aware of. I think in the next sitting I will be tabling the response to the Auditor-General's report. I think that is correct. There, you will see the formal government response to that. There are a number of things already underway, and a number that we will factor in over the coming years. Mr Marshall and Mr Corrigan can speak in more detail on that.

Mr Marshall: The Auditor-General's recommendations fall broadly into four categories. The first of those is about governance connectivity. A second is about resource allocation at the highest level, at the macro level. There is a series of recommendations that are essentially quite useful. There is peer review from a subject

matter expert that the Auditor-General involved in the process. They are more technical suggestions from essentially our peers in the industry. And the last category is a series of recommendations that are around asset information processes and systems.

In the first category, in terms of governance connectivity, the tone—which Roads ACT agrees with, had itself recognised and was already working to improve—was around some deficiencies in the connections between the strategic processes, so between risk management processes and asset management planning processes, and how the strategic tasks that were undertaken connect to each other and influence all the way through to the operational outcomes. Specifically, there were some recommendations about reviewing asset management plans and operational plans. That work was underway during the audit, and continues. That work is well underway, well progressed. Most of those documents are now at least drafted. Some are still in the process of review and implementation, but most of them are now at least redrafted.

In the second category of recommendations around macro level resource allocation, the Auditor-General noted that there were a series of years prior to 2014-15 in which Roads ACT had not managed to meet the resurfacing targets that I mentioned earlier. There is some discussion in the report about the causes of and contributing factors to that. In relation to that, I would note that, in the past two financial years, that situation has been turned around and those targets have been met.

MR PARTON: Well done.

Mr Marshall: Thank you. It is a significant challenge.

MR PARTON: I can imagine. The report did, as you say, mention a number of backlog issues. I just wonder what it is going to cost to deal with those, because I am imagining it is quite a significant amount.

Ms Fitzharris: Can I make a general comment about the use of the word backlog. There are targets. It is like asking how long is a piece of string. Every household has a backlog of chores, and every organisation has a list of things that they need to do. There is no government or organisation anywhere that does not have a considerable list of things to do. But you need to have the right planning and processes in place to prioritise what those are.

Yes, the Auditor-General's report chose to term that a backlog, but we also have our targets within the range of performance indicators. It is important that we continue to meet those performance indicators as well as think, in the longer term, more strategically about preventative maintenance as well as how we might, in the list of all the things that we might need to do across government and within TCCS, make sure that we are investing in the right priorities. That is some of the work that is under consideration, and it is under consideration every year in the context of preparing the budget.

MR PARTON: Are you telling me that when you come up with a road maintenance plan with specific deadlines on it, that is a bit hazy in terms of when we get to that: it is not really a plan; it is indicative.

Ms Fitzharris: No; that is why there are targets in the annual report.

MR PARTON: Right.

Ms Fitzharris: You could have a target of resealing 25 per cent of roads across the territory, but that would be at the expense of possibly doing something else. Would that be the optimal use of the funds?

Mr Marshall: The situation there is from asset class to asset class and program to program. The road resurfacing program is one of the most significant programs, and one that the Auditor-General did focus on in particular. In relation to the resurfacing program, my understanding of what the Auditor-General was talking about when she used the word backlog was the difference between targets and achievements in those years prior to 2014-15. The term backlog is not so useful in terms of the way the resurfacing program development works, because we do not work with a list of identified projects that carries over from year to year. Projects do not sit on a list waiting for their turn to come up; there is a rolling program of condition assessment of the whole network. A third of the network is assessed every year, so every segment of road is assessed at least once every three years. We have a vast database of information about the condition of roads, and we are monitoring the condition of each segment of road progressively over time.

What happens each year is that we take that whole database of information, we reassess the whole network, and we identify, within the resourcing constraints that exist, what is the optimum allocation of resources over the whole network. A road that was identified for potentially being resurfaced last year, for a whole range of reasons, would not necessarily be on the list or at the top of the list come the next year. The program is reinvented, if you like, from the ground up, based on optimising the effect over the entire network.

MS LE COUTEUR: The Auditor-General had similar findings as far as footpaths go. Would you like to comment on that and how we can get our footpaths fixed more rapidly?

Mr Marshall: The situation with footpaths is quite significantly different, at least in relation to concrete footpaths, because we do not have a treatment like resurfacing, which is a preventative treatment, in relation to concrete paths. Effectively, the concrete path maintenance program is, unfortunately, necessarily reactive. It necessarily is about identifying defects and repairing those defects.

As the minister touched on earlier, in order for that process to work efficiently, it is useful to have a database of identified defects. That allows programming of the works for efficiency. The way concrete paths work essentially is that when Roads becomes aware of the defect, there is immediately an inspection and assessment. If it is assessed that there is an immediate public safety risk, the repair is scheduled straightaway and the repair happens within days or a make-safe treatment is applied within days.

For works that do not have that immediate public safety risk attached, the details of

the defect and the proposed treatment are recorded in our asset management database. From there, our officers are able to organise the work regionally and on a time basis for efficiency. That is packaged up and contracted out into bundles of work that maximise dollar value.

Interestingly, something that the Auditor-General did bring to our attention which I think is a really useful insight, perhaps in hindsight an obvious insight, is that a third of the path network is in fact asphalt, and we had not in the past taken quite the same proactive approach to the maintenance of asphalt paths that we did for asphalt road pavements. But many of the principles also apply. As a result of the recommendations in the Auditor-General's report, we have now mirrored many of the processes that we apply to road pavements for asphalt paths.

MS LE COUTEUR: Because especially the shared paths tend to be asphalt ones.

Mr Marshall: Indeed.

MS LE COUTEUR: Again, if you have a problem, you should report it via fix my street and it will then wander its way into the system. And you can assume that if you can see spray-painted things on the problem, it is already being at least assessed.

Mr Marshall: It is another distinction between a reactive program, a defect repair program and a preventative program. Clearly, the sort of intelligence that we need to inform a preventative program requires expertise and equipment. That is quite specialised. But any member of the public can see a piece of path that needs repair. The intelligence that we get from the community is high quality and high value in terms of path maintenance. That is a big contributor to the way that program actually works.

Ms Fitzharris: The other thing with the upgraded fix my street is that you can see where footpath issues might have been entered already. It does not mean that you cannot also put yours in, but you can see if something has already been reported.

Ms Lawder: You might not have liked the term backlog, but the Auditor-General said:

a significant maintenance backlog for road pavement ... has increased by more than 400 percent since 2010-11.

The Auditor-General's report came out not long before the end of the financial year. I think 20 times in this year's annual report you have said "to be reported in 2017-18". It is five months since the Auditor-General's report. Are you able to provide an estimate of what the current road maintenance backlog is and what you are now doing to address it? Earlier, Mr Marshall, I think you said, "within the existing resources". Do you allocate an amount of money for road maintenance, road pavement, and then address the top priorities, or do you identify the priorities, and then allocate money to fix them? Is it a finite bucket, or do you say, "Yes, these things are urgent and must be done" and therefore get the money to do that? Do you understand what I mean?

Mr Marshall: Yes. The answer is, of course, that the resourcing is finite, is limited.

Roads ACT uses its strategic asset management planning process in order, essentially, to understand the desirable technical input into each class of assets and then use that proportionality between different classes of assets in order to allocate within the fixed funding envelope that is available. Effectively that process results in an allocation within the overall road maintenance budget for the resurfacing program. That allocation clearly has an eye to the targets, but there are similar technical targets on all other asset classes that have to be worked against each other in order to determine what ultimately the allocation is to each asset class and each program. Having determined the overall allocation to the resurfacing program, then it is a question of the technical optimisation of the effect of the investment of that amount of money.

That is about looking at the whole network and optimising the net effect in terms of extending the life of pavements. It does not necessarily mean that we are treating the worst pavements first. That is the reason why a piece of pavement that was on the program last year will not necessarily be on the program again next year. When you look at it broadly, across the whole network, the most cost-effective strategy is not necessarily to do the worst pavement sections first. Indeed, sometimes pavements that get beyond the point where they are going to be responsive to a preventative maintenance treatment are better left to go through to a corrective program. That is the way the optimisation works. That is the reason why we do not keep a “backlog”, a list of projects waiting to get their place in the resurfacing program. It is because the resurfacing program is reinvented and re-optimised each year based on the overall condition of the network.

Ms Thomas: I think it is also important that different weather events and different external conditions upon the road network can continuously shift that priority system. The condition of roads can be tested by lots of different things, not just the volume of traffic upon them but probably a plethora of other factors. That is an important consideration and why the single term “a backlog” is probably not quite accurate, because it is a shifting total system all the time.

Ms Fitzharris: Could I make a correction? I actually did table the response to the Auditor-General’s report in the last sittings, in October.

Ms Lawder: With regard to the white arrows on the footpath, I know that in some instances they had worn off and had to be re-marked. Do you have any data that tells us how many times you may go and re-mark particular footpaths? Do have evidence about that? And how efficient is it to go out several times to the same place to re-mark the footpath without actually fixing it?

Mr Marshall: It would not happen for the purpose simply of re-marking. What would happen is that that repair—

Ms Lawder: Would be reported again?

Mr Marshall: would have been identified, assessed and marked at the time that it was first inspected. The inspector would have made a recommendation about what treatment should be applied and also with what priority. That data would go into the asset management database. Depending on the priority, possibly some considerable time later for lower priority repairs, that repair would have been picked up from the

asset management system and packaged into a contract. At that point the officer responsible for delivery of that contract package would, potentially, revisit the sites that are now in the package about to be delivered and, if necessary, provide the contractor with more information, which might mean some additional marking on the ground.

MRS KIKKERT: My question is with regard to appendix 1 in the annual report. Can you please confirm that AECOM was paid \$133,100 for the Tillyard Drive study?

Mr Marshall: I believe that to be correct, yes.

MRS KIKKERT: This contract was for AECOM to complete stage one, stage two and stage three of the Tillyard Drive study. Since the study has expired and AECOM has been paid in full, I assume that the study has been completed.

Ms Fitzharris: Yes, and I expect to see that probably next week, which I know is a little later than we had originally intended. I expect to see some of the results of that next week. Then the community will be provided more information on it not long after that.

MRS KIKKERT: Can you explain the delay? A letter was sent out to the suburbs of Charnwood, Flynn and Fraser suggesting that stage two would be due in early 2017 and that stage three would be due in mid-2017. In answer to my question on notice to you, Minister, about why there was a delay on stage two, you said that stage two was not being progressed to date. That was in June; however, stage two was due in early 2017 and the study was to then be finalised in September. Can you explain the delay?

Ms Fitzharris: I think initially there were stages of consultation. Perhaps we can get the explanation for you.

Mr Marshall: There have been some delays in finalising the report, unfortunately. That has happened now, as the minister has mentioned. That report is now ready to be presented. The timing of the usual sequence of consultation is one impact. Another impact is that in this particular case there was an unusually strong consensus and an unusually strong alignment between the technical assessment of two particular measures with the community sentiment. The very strong message came through from the consultation in the early stages from the community that the points of greatest concern were the intersections of Tillyard-Lhotsky and Tillyard-Ginninderra. That aligned really well with Roads ACT's statistical analysis and forward planning. So those two projects have essentially taken priority in terms of any other recommendations from that report.

Ms Fitzharris: In relation to the explanation about the road network and the road hierarchy, this was a local area, which generally meant not the large intersections. When the consultation went out, I think you yourself, or some members of the committee, said, "Why isn't it thinking about the big intersection?" Making changes to large intersections on major roads is a significantly more complex and, obviously, costly thing to do. What I think Mr Marshall is saying is that when the consultation was done it was not about putting in a pedestrian island here or, say, some line

markings along the road. The consultation from the community clearly showed that it was actually about the intersections, the Lhotsky Street and Ginninderra Drive intersections. So it changed the nature of the work. I think that is why.

MRS KIKKERT: You also promised that the community, Charnwood, Flynn and Fraser, would also receive the results from this study. You mentioned that maybe next week you will receive the outcome of the study. Do you have a deadline for when the community will receive that information?

Ms Fitzharris: I am optimistic that we can do that before the end of the year. But I might take it on notice and in the next five days we can clarify the time frames.

MRS KIKKERT: Thank you. You also mentioned that changing an intersection is very complex and takes time. As you would remember, back at the beginning of the year I tabled a petition to upgrade a safety issue we have along Tillyard Drive and Ginninderra Drive. There were about 1,300 signatures of people who wanted safety in their neighbourhood. You responded by saying that there is going to be a feasibility study on that. How is that coming along?

Ms Fitzharris: It has all become one and the same.

MRS KIKKERT: So you have added that into the AECOM study of Tillyard Drive—

Ms Fitzharris: Yes.

MRS KIKKERT: because that was not included in the Tillyard Drive study.

Mr Corrigan: With those local area traffic management studies, often the solutions are quite small, as the minister was alluding to, and we can provide those, depending on the scale of them, within the existing maintenance budgets for roads. Mr Marshall was explaining before how you look at all the asset classes and how those resources are divvied up. When we get into these intersection upgrades, they fall under the capital program. They are significant capital works. Some intersection upgrades, like at Ginninderra Drive, could be in the order of over \$1 million, so there is significant—

Ms Fitzharris: Mirrabei Drive was funded in this year's budget. It was \$2.7 million. There are not available resources to do a capital project like that until we get through each budget cycle. I know there are always issues coming up. We can respond on smaller scale things within existing budgets. But things of roughly over \$1 million have to go through the budget cycle.

MRS KIKKERT: I understand the significance of that. That is why a lot of residents wanted to have a roundabout. Would that be a cheaper option? Was that something that you also considered to have at the intersection instead of traffic lights?

Mr Corrigan: I do not have information in front of me on specifically what technical options have been considered. That is really the subject of feasibility and then detailed design.

MRS KIKKERT: All of this information will be in what we will be reading next week, when it arrives?

Ms Fitzharris: Yes. Perhaps not all the detail of it, but perhaps the preliminary findings of the work that was done. Probably not the full solutions.

MRS KIKKERT: Would you please consider having a roundabout as a cheaper option for that intersection?

Mr Corrigan: For which intersection, Mrs Kikkert?

MRS KIKKERT: Ginninderra and Tillyard Drive, if it is not in the study.

Ms Fitzharris: Because the Lhotsky Street intersection is so close, it is pretty hard to consider them separately, and particularly because of the volume of traffic coming out of Lhotsky, heading off to Ginninderra Drive.

MRS KIKKERT: I understand. Will all of this information be available to the public some time before Christmas?

Ms Fitzharris: In terms of all of the information, in terms of the solutions, probably not, because we have not yet gone through that. The assessment and the high-level potential options will be in there but not the full solutions.

Mr Corrigan: The AECOM report will not give detail of the design.

MRS KIKKERT: As long as we see an outcome from the study that was promised to the public, that would be great, as well as the petition.

Ms Fitzharris: Yes.

MS CHEYNE: I have some questions about traffic flows from Gungahlin through Belconnen to the city generally. It covers a range of things, including our favourite new intersection, formerly a roundabout.

Ms Fitzharris: Which is doing very well, by the way.

MS CHEYNE: Yes. Why don't we start there? In the last annual report hearings we had a recommendation that the directorate report on crash statistics for the new intersection with the traffic lights at these annual report hearings. At the time of the last annual report hearings it was only six weeks in. Do we have some recent statistics about whether crashes are down?

Ms Fitzharris: I think it is about to celebrate its first birthday.

MS CHEYNE: Yes.

Mr McHugh: The crash statistics to date, to the end of October, recorded at the intersection are 41 crashes. With respect to the annual average over the previous seven years prior to construction, it is a reduction of about 50 per cent. We were

averaging somewhere close to 100 crashes per year at that intersection prior to the works being undertaken. If you extrapolate that data out, you will end up with somewhere close to 50 crashes recorded for the first year of operation—a significant reduction.

It is also important to put into context the growth in traffic volumes at that intersection. Again, comparatively, for the year prior to construction works, because construction works can divert traffic to other routes, there has been about a 15 per cent growth in traffic volume. Last Thursday we carried over 47,000 vehicles through that intersection, which is well and truly over and above the 39,000 or 40,000 that were travelling through there before construction works. So there has been a large increase in traffic and a large reduction in crashes.

MS CHEYNE: Has community feedback about the intersection changed over time?

Ms Fitzharris: Hugely.

Mr McHugh: Yes. From my perspective, with respect to the people that I have communicated with about it, it includes some family members that doubted the scheme, have embraced it, and thank me every time I see them for a family lunch. There was always going to be some learning; it was the first intersection of that type in this city. There are not many of them in Australia either. We are really happy with the way it is performing and the way the community has responded to it.

MS CHEYNE: Has it positively affected congestion?

Mr McHugh: Again, absolutely. What you would see with that growth in traffic is obviously not just natural population growth; a lot of that is traffic coming back through that main arterial route which might have been using alternative routes through the suburbs previously. So it has been beneficial from that perspective.

Ms Fitzharris: It is particularly beneficial for residents exiting Crace in the mornings, getting onto Ginninderra Drive, because that was pretty shocking. Now it is much better if you are exiting and heading onto the Barton Highway or through to Belconnen. It is considerably better. As an anecdotal bit of feedback, I got a lot of social media feedback about it at the start—quite considerable. It is the only thing I have probably seen where people have come back on social media a couple of months later and said, “Actually, I think I was wrong.” There was the usual sort of outrage peak of social media, then people were actively getting back in touch, saying, “Actually, it is really good.”

MS CHEYNE: I find that the traffic lights actually change quite quickly, too. You are not waiting for very long when you go through it. This might require Mr Marshall to come back. More generally about roads, I have had a few different pieces of feedback from constituents about road noise, particularly around major intersections and major drives: Coulter Drive, Ginninderra Drive, where we do have houses, and particularly Ginninderra Drive, with Bruce backing onto it, and quite a lot of units backing onto Ginninderra Drive. Do we have any studies in place or is there some kind of road surfacing that is less noisy? The Coulter Drive-Belconnen Way intersection is quite loud. Is there anything underway or in place or is this under active consideration?

Mr Marshall: There are surfacing treatments that can be part of the solution when noise is an issue. However, road noise is a complex question. The noise obviously can emanate from a number of different sources, including the contact between tyres and the surface. That is clearly the only source of noise that can be ameliorated by an alternative surface treatment. Specifically where you are talking about intersections, it is quite likely that the majority of the noise is in fact from acceleration and deceleration, engine noise; no measure on the road surface will make any difference to that. If the noise from those sources is causing an unacceptable impact on adjoining properties, the measures that you would have to start to look at are hard engineering structures.

Where concerns are raised with us about road noise, one of the potential measures that is available to us is to look at to what degree we think the tyre-on-road friction may be contributing to the overall noise level. Typically what we will do when we receive a request to investigate is put sound meters in place at the points that are designated by the standard and measure the sound pressure level to determine whether it is within acceptable ranges or not. We look at the existing road surfacing and if there is opportunity for us to make a reduction. We know roughly what level of impact we can have by changing surfacing treatment; we can then assess whether that is going to be material in terms of the neighbours' experience. If it is going to make a material difference, we would consider a lower noise surface treatment.

Typically that might mean a cape seal, a combination of spray seal treatment, which is what we basically use, covered by slurry surfacing. That effectively fills in some of the gaps between the aggregate; it produces a smoother, more asphalt-like surface, but at a reasonably mid-range cost.

MS CHEYNE: How many complaints from the public do you need? That investigation seems as though it could be costly, at least in terms of the time it takes. How much feedback do you need before you would start looking seriously at that?

Mr Marshall: We typically do not get huge numbers of complaints about surface emanating road noise. Generally we will take any question seriously and we will investigate.

MS LAWDER: They must all come through my office.

Mr Marshall: By comparison with some of the other topics, where we do get very large volumes of requests.

MS CHEYNE: This might seem like a strange question, but it was put to me and I wondered about it. I am thinking about Parkes Way—and William Hovell but mostly Parkes Way—and the GDE, which I know other members are familiar with from their travels to work. In places like Sydney, there are distributors: you would need to be in this lane if you were going to Belconnen and this lane if you were going to Gungahlin. I know that we have that in terms of turn-offs. Has there been any consideration of that in terms of managing traffic, particularly in peak hour: instead of cars moving in and out, actually having distributors, longer stretches of roads, to ease congestion to

and from Gungahlin and the city and also picking up Belconnen residents who use those roads. If this is an out-there question, I can put it in a letter.

Mr Marshall: In broad terms, the answer is that we do not have a particular strategic direction identified for introducing that type of treatment. However, we do monitor congestion on the network as a whole. We monitor crash statistics and use those statistics to identify problem areas. Then those problem areas, statistically speaking, are analysed in terms of the full range of treatments that might have an impact, based on the specific nature of what the investigation determines is actually causing the problem at a specific location. A treatment like that could well be considered if it is appropriate in specific circumstances.

THE CHAIR: We should be moving to ACTION. Ms Lawder and Ms Le Couteur, do you have any questions on roads? We could continue with this and then move to ACTION.

MS LE COUTEUR: I put what I had on notice. I have more for ACTION.

THE CHAIR: Ms Lawder?

MS LAWDER: Is the Ashley Drive duplication on track, on time and on budget?

Ms Fitzharris: Yes.

Mr McHugh: Yes, absolutely.

MS LAWDER: When is the expected completion date?

Mr McHugh: Ashley Drive has been making very good progress, as you would have seen. On those sorts of projects, about 90 per cent of the work happens below ground. It is just the last kerb and asphalt work which we are working on at the moment. There was a traffic switch for the southern section last week. There is another one we are hoping to implement before Christmas, with final completion in February, assuming we do not get a very wet summer.

MS LAWDER: There have been two accidents in the past week since that switch happened, on the corner of the one coming out of Richardson.

Mr Marshall: Clift Crescent?

MS LAWDER: Yes. Do you think that is related to the temporary arrangements or the design?

Mr Marshall: I think absolutely the temporary arrangements. That intersection will be signalled when it is completed, so those sorts of issues should be removed.

THE CHAIR: Ms Le Couteur, you can have a question on roads or you can switch to the buses. It is up to you.

MS LE COUTEUR: I will switch. My question is not on roads but on the active

travel planning site. First, is this the right time to ask about it?

THE CHAIR: Yes, that is fine.

MS LE COUTEUR: You used to have what was called an active travel infrastructure policy, active travel planning guideline and strategic active travel network plan. I was told in April that they were all drafted and were going to be restructured and then progressed in 2017. Where are they?

Mr McHugh: The active travel office has been established for about 18 months now. Only in the past six months has better resourcing been ramped up in that particular team. This task is being picked up by that group. There is a whole range of new functions being progressed at the moment, including a review of all of the different policies and standards. Some of those previously sat with the environment and planning directorate in their transport planning section, which has since come across to TCCS. We are starting to pull those documents together and ensure that we get those updated as soon as possible.

MS LE COUTEUR: I look forward to seeing them.

THE CHAIR: The directorate agreed on a recommendation made in the ETCS committee report on the 2016-17 annual report that there would be a report on the airport bus service. Can you please provide that report? Specifically, how is the service being received?

For our new witnesses, please check that you have read and understood the privilege statement, on the pink cards.

Mr Matthews: The airport service commenced in March 2017 and has recorded 11,000 passenger movements at the airport. If we were to count boardings and alightings, that figure would come to 23,000 in total.

The service operates every half hour during peak periods, and hourly on the weekdays and weekends. The standard ticketing fare applies, which makes us different from other jurisdictions. If anybody has ever caught the train out to the Sydney Airport they will know that they sting you, especially as a premium fare in that regard. People can either pay a cash fare, which would be \$4.80, or use their MyWay card, which would be an adult fare of \$3.06.

We are finding that approximately 65 per cent of the fares are done using the MyWay card, which is fantastic. It shows not only that it is being used by both residents of the ACT as well as regular visitors to the ACT but also that people are comfortable with paying the cash fare.

I can report that the 11A, which is the service that now operates through the airport, has seen a doubling in patronage, from 900 to 1,900 boardings per week, in comparison to the period immediately prior to the commencement of the service. It has been adopted and well used. It continues to grow.

The reliability of the service, which is the other point made in the annual report

recommendation, is very high: 99.7 per cent of services have been delivered as timetabled to the airport.

Ms Fitzharris: Next year there will be a rapid bus service to the airport: the yellow.

MR PARTON: I go to the ACTION network post-light rail. Is it possible for you to outline the expected ACTION network costs after implementation of light rail in terms of the difference between the status quo and what will be in place after that?

Ms Fitzharris: I think we have talked broadly but it is probably fair to say that, with the introduction of additional rapid services next year, it will not be an apples and apples between now and then. But we can certainly talk about the specific costs. They were all factored into the budget before, in fact before the election as well.

Mr Edghill: The ACT government has previously spoken about redeploying the buses that are replaced by light rail elsewhere into the network. We will not see a reduction in bus numbers as a consequence of light rail being introduced.

In terms of the costs of the operation of the network, taking into account just ordinary business as usual—growth and so forth—the cost of the entire network should be broadly commensurate with the costs of the network prior to the introduction of light rail.

MR PARTON: How do you expect the patronage of light rail will affect the costs of the Transport Canberra bus fleet? Even if, indeed, there is not a reduction of bus numbers, will there be an effect on the costs of that Transport Canberra bus fleet?

Mr Edghill: With the investment in the public transport network, we are anticipating increased usage of the network. This means that costs on a passenger basis will reduce. But in terms of running a particular service, the costs are reasonably constant whether there is one person on the bus or 100 people on a bus. So the operational costs should not be affected.

MR PARTON: How far away are we from local routes in Gungahlin, Belconnen and the inner north being published in preparation for the light rail change?

Ms Fitzharris: There is consultation out at the moment in broad terms around the new rapid network. There are nine rapid networks: one light rail and eight buses. That has brought them all forward by two years, rather than being staged over the course of an additional two years. That work is underway at the moment.

I have said that once that is done TCCS will be going out and taking the results of that broader consultation with the community, with some additional technical work about the network as a whole—it is a very fine-tuned network which I am sure TCCS can talk you through a little bit more—and early next year more detailed work will be done on the actual routes. Right across the city, in particular from people who might have reason to connect with light rail or previously have had services along Northbourne, there will be interest.

MR PARTON: From the majority of those Gungahlin suburbs will we still have

buses travelling to the city or will they be going only to the light rail corridor?

Ms Fitzharris: They will be travelling to a couple of different places but largely into the light rail; yes.

MR PARTON: Will we have buses going to the city from Gungahlin or will we not?

Ms Fitzharris: Not along that exact same route.

MR PARTON: But will there be some that wend their way into the city?

Mr Edghill: We would not want to pre-empt the outcome of the community consultation process that we are going through at the moment. The minister is exactly right. The ACT government has previously stated that it would not be running buses in exact competition to the light rail network.

I am not saying it will or will not happen. One of the things that we are considering is the overall network. It is not as simple as changing the buses running on Northbourne at the moment. It could be the case that there are, but not running through Northbourne Avenue, or it could be the case that there are better outcomes for the community by routing them otherwise. We have not landed that at present.

Ms Fitzharris: It is a question people have been asking for four years. It is a reasonable question to ask. But it is also a very detailed process to go through because of the network itself.

MR PARTON: I can imagine.

Ms Fitzharris: From day one of light rail—even prior to Capital Metro Agency establishing, and even in the early work in 2011 that looked at the congestion on Northbourne and said, “What are we going to do about this Gungahlin to city corridor?”—it was always a part of the picture. Indeed, as it is in the main public transport policy document, *Transport for Canberra*, it is about an integrated network.

It is pretty finely tuned. We are now at the right time to be doing this consultation, the broader consultation, around how people would like to connect to the rapid networks now that they are locked in. It is a two stage process. There are then more detailed level conversations with people, particularly regionally. It is also important to understand where people want to go from and to, and how to get them there quickly.

MS LE COUTEUR: I would like to know a lot more about the consultation. I have just looked on the your say website. For the first time there is a mention of some physicals at Belconnen and Weston Creek community council. Before this there has not been anything.

Ms Fitzharris: Some physicals?

MS LE COUTEUR: Physical consultation as distinct from putting something on the website. On the website there is very little information. The published map of the new routes is also very pretty—I am not anti the new routes—but I do not think you can

work out from this where the bus stops are. I think it is artistic; it must be.

If you look at where the light rail is going to be, you know there will be more than one stop between Dickson and the city. This is artistic rather than purely informational. We are talking about major changes here. I am very concerned. How will the community find out about this and let you know how it can work for them?

Mr Edghill: It is important to note that the consultation occurring at the moment is not the end of the consultation. It is the first of a two phase consultation process. We very deliberately made the decision to go down the path of not putting a detailed network on the table and seeking consultation on that as step one because then we are open to criticism of, “Well, you have designed the network already and so what is the point of this consultation?”

MS LE COUTEUR: Yes. But that is not my question.

Mr Edghill: The first phase of the consultation is deliberately open. It is seeking feedback from all sectors of the community as to some of the conceptual and higher level strategic issues that may be in play with the redesign of the bus network. As the minister mentioned before, once we have that feedback and once we have digested it over the Christmas period and early New Year, that will enable us to develop a potential detailed timetable with some of the details that you are referring to. That will then go back out for community consultation and provide the avenue for people to comment on the specifics.

MS LE COUTEUR: My issue is not around what you are consulting about. I do not have a problem with that. My issue is this: if I were not working here as an MLA, how would I even know about it? It is not my problem; it is not out there in the community. You are talking about very significant changes in the public transport network. I am not trying to argue for or against them. That is not where I am going. I am trying to say that these are very significant changes, significant enough that I was proactively offered a briefing about it, but what about the rest of the community? There is a lot of the community for whom this is going to make substantial changes to their lives. How are they even going to know about it so that they can be part of this consultation?

Ms Fitzharris: We can talk more specifically, but in broad terms, there was consultation last year, and fairly extensive consultation, around: what do you want out of a public transport network? There were three things in particular, and this is all on the your say site. People wanted faster trips and more direct routes. They wanted more frequent and reliable services, and more services particularly at off-peak times.

Following up on that, the current work is asking much broader questions. I think the specifics will come next year. With respect to your question about how we are getting out to people right now, you would be fairly familiar with a lot of the techniques that are being used now.

Mr Matthews: We are doing a number of different strategies. You mentioned the your say website. Of course, that is a core resource. To have broad awareness around that website, we are doing a radio advertising campaign at the moment, letting people

know that the consultation process is underway and directing them to that website and to the survey that is on that website. Members might also know that if you go into the bus shelter across the road, there is an Adshel ad there which promotes this consultation. So we have included advertising at bus stops and bus stations across the ACT. We are doing in-bus advertising as well. If you are sitting on a bus and you see the rolling screens, you will see advertisements come up for the network consultation. Of course, we are also using our Facebook and Twitter accounts.

At a general level we are trying to spread the word. We are very keen for people to engage in the conversation. We agree that we want to continue to build that momentum. We think that, as we get to the pointy end of that process, people will become more and more engaged as it becomes more directly relevant to them about “my bus stop” and “my particular bus route”.

In addition we have already started a range of stakeholder meetings and community presentations. I attended the North Canberra Community Council this week. We have previously presented at the Gungahlin Community Council. We have Belconnen Community Council, I believe, next week. We have met with representatives of both the Woden and Weston Creek community councils. We have met with Pedal Power. We are engaged with ACTCOSS. We have had a meeting with the Council on the Ageing. I am starting to wear the rubber out on my shoes getting out and about. And that is what we need to do. We need to talk to all quarters of the community and get the range of different perspectives.

We have also held information drop-in sessions at both the University of Canberra and the ANU. So we are very keen to engage with young people and with students as well. They are very keen and active users of public transport and we are very keen to understand what they are looking for as part of a seven-day public transport system.

In each of those meetings we have left an open invitation to either come back and speak to other groups or, if people have suggestions about who else we should meet with and where else we should be, we have extended that as an open invitation as well.

Ms Fitzharris: And there will be another round next year.

Mr Matthews: Yes.

MS CHEYNE: I will draw from an experience I had this morning on my bus trip to work. About six months ago rear entry and exit became a thing. I know that we talked quite extensively about it at estimates, in terms of removing the no entry signs from the rear doors because that was causing some confusion. Now it seems, at least from my experience over the past few weeks, that rear doors are not opening for entry or exit. For example, this morning when I got off just across the road, I was sitting at the back, because I am a back-seat bandit, and that is where I choose to sit; I am an able-bodied person. I was one of two people to get off and it would have been much quicker for everybody if I had been able to get off from the rear door, but the rear door did not open. So not only did I take quite a while to get to the front door, but also people were waiting at the front door. Because the first person who had been sitting up close to the front door got off first, these people started to get on. The lovely bus driver said, “No, you have to wait. There’re still some people getting off.” That seems

to me to be quite inefficient, just from that one experience. More broadly, I am wondering how the rear entry and exit policy is going.

Ms Fitzharris: In general terms, it was a new policy, so it is fair to say there has been a transition period with that. I am very firmly of the view that passengers should be able to get off from the rear door. There may be some instances where it is not safe, if there are roadworks. But I am very firmly of that view, and I think it is an important part of making our bus network something that people want to use.

As you say, it is much more efficient. It helps with on-time running. Rear boarding is probably likely to change, with boarding only at major interchanges and bus stations. That is a bit more challenging. But in terms of rear exiting, that work internally, looking at the implementation of the policy when it first came in earlier in the year, will be clarified internally very shortly—likely next week. Duncan might be able to give some more details.

Mr Edghill: Indeed. If there are three things within Transport Canberra, and particularly within transport buses, that we are keenly aware of, one of them is financial management of the organisation, and the other two are the customer experience and safety. Certainly, we are very keen to use the back doors as appropriately as possible, while satisfying both the customer experience and the safety elements.

There have been some teething issues as we have introduced the new policy. It has been in place for a while now. We did have some minor issues where there was a question as to whether some of the sensors on the back doors were actually working properly. We decided on a temporary basis to pause the use of the back door for entry whilst we undertook a risk assessment. We also had WorkSafe involved in that.

Those issues have been resolved. Happily, as the minister has just mentioned, we are looking to re-implement the policy next week. In broad terms it means we will have exiting from buses at all stops, provided it is safe to do so, of course; if the bus pulls up and there is a puddle or something out the back then the bus driver might exercise their discretion not to do it. We will also allow rear-door entry in two circumstances: firstly, where there is supervision; and, secondly, at our major interchanges and bus stops through the network, which is where the greatest—

MS CHEYNE: What do you mean by “supervision”?

Mr Edghill: For example, if there is a bus out the front of Canberra Stadium after a Raiders game and we have transport officers shepherding people on and off, in that circumstance, yes, of course, they will open the back door; also at the major bus stops and at the major interchanges where the greatest number of people to get on buses reside.

MS CHEYNE: I can appreciate with respect to rear entry, while mostly I have seen it to be efficient, sometimes it has been inefficient, with more people getting on through the rear door than through the front door; and at the front door people have had to wait because of the rear-door people. That has actually been more time consuming, so I can probably appreciate that.

With respect to the safety issue with the rear doors that you have now resolved, just for me to get that right, is that just in case visibility, for whatever reason, is compromised and a driver might accidentally close the door when someone is there? Is that just to make sure that the doors sense that someone is there and spring open instead of catching them in the door?

Mr Edghill: Precisely. We had a couple of minor incidents, not of people trapped in back doors or anything like that, but where the door has brushed a passenger on the way out and the way in. In an abundance of caution we said, “Let’s check the sensors across the entirety of the fleet and undertake a risk assessment.” Now that has—

MS CHEYNE: Every single sensor has been checked on every bus?

Mr Edghill: Correct.

MS CHEYNE: How many buses are there?

Mr Edghill: 423.

Mr Matthews: 432 apparently.

MS CHEYNE: So that has been very thorough. People can exit with confidence that they are not going to get their arm trapped, as happens in a lift or something?

Mr Matthews: The important point to make is that passenger behaviour is important in that as well. As you mentioned about a lift, if you go to stick your hand in the middle of a lift then it will get caught in that lift. We want passengers to do the right thing as well and to behave appropriately. As part of the rollout of this revised policy, we will be doing some more public education work. As you mentioned before, a lot of it is about what passengers are used to. It took a while to teach people to tap on and tap off using their MyWay card.

The most efficient way to get people on and off a bus is mostly for people to exit through the rear door and for people to enter through the front door. But in major bus stations where you have rapid services with high volume, boarding through both the front and the rear can significantly cut down the time that it takes to get people onto the bus. As passengers become more familiar with that as an experience then that will become easier for everybody to manage. But it is important that members of the public act safely and appropriately, and that we support our drivers in that regard, too.

MS CHEYNE: This policy is essentially being reissued or relaunched next week. I recall that at the time it started it was done without any real fanfare. Will there be something a little bit more public about the launch this time, just to bring to people’s attention exactly how it works?

Mr Edghill: Yes. Originally—and it was part of the process of introducing something new—it started as a trial on certain routes, of course, with little fanfare. David was talking about the public education around it. There will be educational materials that you will see on buses as a consequence of the policy relaunch.

MS LE COUTEUR: Are you are going to require supervision for boarding people from the rear, as you were talking about?

Mr Edghill: No.

MS LE COUTEUR: It is what you said.

Mr Edghill: It is probably the other way around. If there is supervision there, of course we can open the back doors as well.

Ms Fitzharris: It is not a supervisor standing at the back door allowing people to get on.

Mr Matthews: Unsupervised at the major bus stations, as the minister said. So rear door exiting across the network, unsupervised boarding at the major bus stations or, if it is supervised, where appropriate. Duncan gave the example about the Raiders. The passenger experience is that they should be able to use the rear doors to board at the major bus stations—if they are using the MyWay card, obviously; if they have a cash fare, they will need to go through the front door as well.

MS LE COUTEUR: Some bus drivers have told me that they have real problems with trying to see out the back because of the wrap which goes over the windows. Is that one of the reasons we are having to do this? I personally would like to have rear boarding everywhere, not just at the bus interchanges. I am often running late.

Ms Fitzharris: So you are behind the bus stop rather than running towards it.

MS LE COUTEUR: Yes.

MS CHEYNE: I have had the same experience.

MS LE COUTEUR: I did have one bus driver very sweetly wait for me who recognised who I was and said they had to wait for me. But normally I have to run. I am not that well known.

Mr Edghill: You are exactly right. It is that balance between the customer experience and what is safe in the circumstances. As we have just discussed, we have seen one slight refinement of the process over time. It may well be the case in 12 months or 24 months. We are continually looking at the policy, but for the moment it is as we have described.

MS LE COUTEUR: Will you look at the bus wrap visibility one. It does seem to be an issue. Sometimes, again, when running, there are people who are waiting at the front but are going on a different bus. I am at a stop where there are a lot of buses. They will have to call out to the bus driver that there is someone coming, even if you are fairly close to the entrance. The bus driver simply cannot see.

Ms Thomas: I think it is important to put ourselves in the shoes of the drivers in this instance. If you think about a blind spot on your car, people running for a bus at the

very tail end of the bus are really difficult to see, regardless of whether there is a wrap there or not. It is very important that the team focuses on safety and makes sure that we are really confident about that. It is always important to have customer experience, but people diving into the bus, running late, at the back of the bus is a difficulty for any driver. It does lend itself to people trying to wedge their arms in the door and trying to do all the last-ditch running and diving in.

We need to be really conscious about the environment that bus drivers are in and what they need to do on a day-to-day basis. As well, for me, boarding at the back is about having efficiency in unloading lots of customers at interchanges where we do not want to have a large dwell time just because we are only opening one door. That is really the large driver behind all of that.

The other part that adds to this is that, as we make the network more frequent, the chance that someone has to wait a long time for a follow-up bus to come along becomes less. The desperation for people to leap onto the bus at the last minute is made far less by the fact that a bus will be there every 10 minutes or every 15 minutes rather than every hour. All of these things plan to the system working as a whole rather than just a specific policy on rear door boarding.

MS LAWDER: Mr Matthews, you mentioned educating people about tagging on and tagging off. Are you able to provide the number of times people did not tag off versus the times when people do?

Mr Matthews: We would need to take that question on notice. Obviously tagging on and tagging off is important from a passenger perspective because it caps the amount of fare that they are going to have. If a passenger does not tag off, that is to their disadvantage. We would have to take that on notice in terms of identifying the occurrence of that, the regularity of that.

MS LAWDER: That would be good. And also the total revenue captured through MyWay versus cash tickets?

Mr Matthews: I think we are up to 92 per cent of transactions on MyWay.

MS LAWDER: But what revenue does that equate to?

Mr Matthews: You are looking for the dollar figures, Ms Lawder? Okay. We will give you that information.

MS LAWDER: Thank you. I have a substantive question on rapid buses. Do you keep a bit of an update on the implementation and expansion of the rapid bus system, for example, how the green and black rapids are performing? Yes? Good.

Ms Fitzharris: Green has been very popular.

Mr Matthews: I guess members would be aware that we introduced a new timetable on 7 October. I am very pleased to report that since that new timetable we have seen a three per cent increase in passenger boardings during weekdays. So we have seen an increase in patronage. Also, very importantly, on weekends we have seen a

10 per cent increase on Saturday and a 10 per cent increase on Sunday. That is fantastic because it means that we are moving to the seven-day public transport system that allows people to use the buses all day for seven days and reduce their reliance on cars.

In terms of the new services that are being introduced, the green rapid has carried over 55,000 passengers since it was introduced; it has an average patronage of 2,100 boardings each weekday. That is a 15-minute service through the heart of south Canberra. The weekend frequency has also increased, because the equivalent of weekend service 935 has been increased in frequency from 60 minutes to 30 minutes. So again we are seeing an increase in weekend patronage.

For all services into Narrabundah, we have basically seen an average increase of 200 passenger boardings a day on weekdays and 300 passenger boardings on the weekend. That would include all those services and shows that people are responding really well to the green rapid, and indeed the black rapid.

We are still in the period of the two-month free travel period, so the data that we are getting at the moment is from manual collections by drivers. Once that free travel period ends on 8 December, we will revert back to the MyWay data and over time we will get more refinement in that reporting. But the initial use and response from the travelling public is very positive.

MS LAWDER: Minister, you announced an additional five new rapid routes to come in in 2018.

Ms Fitzharris: Yes.

MS LAWDER: How were those chosen, and what modelling was used to choose those five new routes?

Ms Fitzharris: That work was undertaken last year and was part of the policy that we took to the election last year. The detail of that we can talk to.

Mr Edghill: In simple terms, if you look at where those rapid routes are, they are in trunk areas of Canberra, for want of a better term.

Ms Fitzharris: Town centres and—

Mr Edghill: Connecting town centres and also connecting areas of potential future growth, particularly through Molonglo and the airport services, for example.

MS LAWDER: Will any routes be removed to make way for those new rapid services? Will they replace something else or will they be in addition?

Ms Fitzharris: For example, the black rapid is a version of a previous route between Belconnen and Gungahlin. It was slightly adjusted. It became a rapid, importantly, because its frequency changed quite considerably. So yes, in some ways, but it is often an improvement and increase in the frequency of existing routes.

MR PARTON: In regard to some of those new routes, focusing specifically on the 200 red rapids, the information that I have from some drivers is that the timing points are way out of whack on a few of these services, particularly on the 200 red rapids between Gungahlin and the city, that on most services they are giving buses 35 to 40 minutes to do the journey due to the roadworks but it is not taking that long at all; it is taking 25 to 30 minutes max. As one driver told me, it is like a conspiracy to make the buses look bad so that the tram time between Gungahlin and the city of 24 minutes looks good. This driver suggested to me that before tram works it used to take a bus about 17 to 18 minutes. The suggestion was that some of these timing points were a long way out of whack.

Mr Edghill: I like the conspiracy theory.

MR PARTON: There are always conspiracy theories.

Ms Fitzharris: You can probably put it in that category.

Mr Edghill: I do not want to give this too much credit. As an overarching statement, with the introduction of the October 2017 network, the feedback that we have received from some people who have been in the network for a very long time is that it is probably the smoothest introduction of any network that we have had in Canberra in memory.

One of the issues that we were facing with the previous network was that there probably was not enough time on some of the runs to account for the fact that there are roadworks. It is as much an art as a science as to how much you need to build in. The timing that has been built into some of the services is meant to take into account not just the disruption that is here now but also that there will be other roadworks and whatnot occurring between now and the introduction of light rail.

If the traffic disruption is less than anticipated, overall that is a good thing for us, but one of the side effects is that there can be a bit too much time in the runs for some routes. There are ways that we can address that by slowing down, dwelling a little longer or, depending on the nature of the service, if there is another frequent service right behind it, if there is a bit of early running that is not necessarily the worst problem we face in the network.

Mr Matthews: We are aware of that issue, Mr Parton, and we are managing it. Your intel is pretty good on that.

MR PARTON: Excellent.

Ms Fitzharris: But it is not, I suggest, any kind of conspiracy.

Mr Matthews: No. That is not correct.

Ms Fitzharris: I must say—and maybe we will get to this in light rail—that as someone who travels the route every day the light rail construction is on, I think it has been managed extremely well and has probably not had the impact that I was expecting. Partly that has been because of the opening of the Horse Park Drive

duplication, the earlier one. The second stage is really good, and there is now quite a significant proportion of Horse Park Drive that is duplicated.

MS LE COUTEUR: My question is about the transport results and transport share, modal share. We have seen the results from the census. The 2004 sustainable transport plan had a public transport mode share of 10.5 in 2016. I believe we are only at 7.9 per cent. What went wrong, and what can we learn from this? Maybe that is a long question. If you want a really short one, we could go to page 19, on patronage.

Ms Fitzharris: As I think Ms Thomas noted earlier, the transport planning functions within the government now sit with Transport Canberra. Both the policy and the implementation and delivery of the transport system are within Transport Canberra. It is due for a refresh, and the early work for that is well underway. There is a household travel survey. We have combined our efforts with Queanbeyan-Palerang council. That is underway at the moment. There will be a couple of hundred lucky people out there who have been asked to fill out detailed surveys.

MS LE COUTEUR: I will stick to page 19 then. At the top of page 19—

THE CHAIR: We are running out of time. You can get one question in, Ms Le Couteur.

MS LE COUTEUR: That one was not answered, though.

THE CHAIR: I am sorry; we do have to close. Thank you everyone. Any questions we did not get to can be put on notice as supplementaries.

Hearing suspended from 12.57 to 2.31 pm.

MR PARTON: Let us get rolling with light rail. I will start with Mitchell. What further engagement have TCCS and Canberra Metro had with the Mitchell Traders Association?

Ms Fitzharris: Since when?

MR PARTON: This has been in the public space for a little while. In the last six weeks to two months, what engagement has there been?

Mr Edghill: There has been ongoing engagement with the Mitchell Traders Association. As to the precise dates, I would have to defer to my colleague. I have personally spoken with shopkeepers and business owners at an event there, and through our engagement with the Canberra Business Chamber there has been ongoing engagement with businesses in the Mitchell region about disruption minimisation with the traffic works which are happening there and on other matters. My colleague Scott can talk to some of the specific engagements.

Mr Lyall: As you might be aware, the Mitchell businesses have got together and formed the Mitchell Traders Association. As Duncan just mentioned, Transport Canberra has a partnership with the Canberra Business Chamber. There is a business link program. The project manager from the Canberra Business Chamber has been involved with us in several meetings with the chair and other members of the traders association that has recently been formed in Mitchell. There have been offers of assistance of various kinds as to how the businesses there might be able to cope with what, in their view, is the impact on their businesses as a result of the construction.

MR PARTON: What sort of assistance are we talking about?

Mr Lyall: At a simple level it is additional signage. We have placed additional signage, the variable message boards that you would be familiar with, around the roadworks. They can have several phases of different text. There is a big sign up there saying, "Mitchell, open for business," and whenever any of the intersections are being closed we give people advance warning so that they know that the businesses are still there and how to still access the businesses. That is at a fairly simple level.

Through the business link program there are offers in detail. I cannot personally provide you the detail of the programs that are offered to the businesses, but it is about how they can continue to market themselves if they feel they are being impacted, how they can continue to attract business or even approach the constructors, Canberra Metro. For example, there is a Subway store there. The guy has been pointing out when smoko occurs and those sorts of things, because for some there is actually an increase in business, depending on the nature of the business, obviously. When you have suddenly got a couple of hundred blokes working in the area around the corner from a Subway, that is an increase in business for someone like him.

There is this ongoing offer. To date, to my knowledge, not many of the businesses have taken up the offer through the Canberra Business Chamber. From our point of view, access to all of the businesses has always been maintained, so we do not believe that the construction has had a significant impact on the businesses.

MR PARTON: Obviously they see it in a different way. Has there been any consideration at all by the government to giving hardship payments, rent assistance or anything of that nature to businesses in Gungahlin or Mitchell?

Ms Fitzharris: No.

MR PARTON: Do you believe that you are adequately addressing the Mitchell Traders Association's concerns? If they were in the room, would they believe that you are adequately addressing their concerns?

Ms Fitzharris: About the disruption during the construction?

MR PARTON: Yes.

Ms Fitzharris: We will continue to talk with them. I have met with representatives of the Mitchell traders. In the past I have visited a number of Mitchell businesses as well and have had one-on-one conversations with them, including previously to encourage them to get involved. More recently Transport Canberra, the Canberra Business Chamber and Canberra Metro themselves have met with them on a number of occasions.

They took the opportunity to organise as a group, which was a great effort by them. I guess they are alert to the issue now. They are taking a very clear interest in the impact of the road closures in particular. More recently there has been another closure of an intersection, and another one is about to open up. There are very detailed conversations with them now about that.

The good thing about the Mitchell Traders Association is that, prior to their forming, even if there were letters sent out, which there were during consultation stages, there was no central active point for getting out to the Mitchell traders, other than the government's efforts individually. It has provided an opportunity to go to in through the Mitchell traders, who say, "We've got our own active membership. You can reach them through us." That has been a benefit and I think it will continue to be.

I think you will start to see the disruption shift away from Mitchell in the early stages of next year, once that work is done. It is clear, and we have acknowledged, that there has been disruption along Flemington Road, but we think it has been well managed. If there is more we can do—between the government; Canberra Metro, which is delivering the project; and the Canberra Business Chamber, which is contracted by the government to help local business do a range of things, including accessing light rail contracts to participate in the project itself—to understand the impacts on business and the opportunities for business, we will.

If you look at the work that has been done up in the town centre with local businesses you will see that there has been quite a lot of very active work, particularly by Canberra Metro, in promoting the local businesses. They promote them quite heavily through social media. For example, in Gungahlin village and the town centre, which is adjacent to the light rail stop, they will go in and have a chat to the owner of a local businesses and say, "Have you met Dan? He owns this business. He's a great guy.

Why don't you come in and give his business a try?"

MR PARTON: I just want a clarification. Mr Lyall suggested in one of his answers that it is pretty much the government's position that access to Mitchell has not been hampered and that there is no—

Mr Edghill: That is perhaps better categorised as: we are keenly aware of the need to minimise, wherever possible, the disruption that may be caused not just in Mitchell but across the entirety of the project.

MR PARTON: But the government's position is that there has not been a great problem created here for Mitchell traders?

Ms Fitzharris: No, and I have said it on a number of occasions. We have always said that with any infrastructure project, particularly one of this scale, there will be impact. It is the nature of investment in infrastructure that there will be an impact on local residents and local businesses.

MR PARTON: And people have just got to wear it?

Ms Fitzharris: No. But we manage it really well. We let people know well in advance when disruptions are occurring. We work with them to provide messages to them, to their customers and to their staff. We provide forward warning. You can sign up to get SMS updates, you can get email updates, we can hand out letters and there is doorknocking with nearby residents and businesses when there are major intersection closures. Media releases go out from the directorate all the time. Canberra Metro's website, its social media feed and TCCS's website and social media feed have all of that on there. A number of the radio stations, I know, will actively let their listeners know when those disruptions are occurring. We are doing everything we can to provide the information as far ahead as possible. When it happens there is signage on the road and there are temporary traffic management plans in place.

I am on that corridor every day at different times of the day, and I do that pretty deliberately to keep an eye on how it is going. Ms Orr probably lives right on the corridor as well, so she has seen every day as well that there is as much as we can do. If there is more we can do, based on feedback from the community, it is an evolving process. We have always said and understood that there is disruption and have been very grateful to the community for their patience. But that is the nature of infrastructure projects.

THE CHAIR: You recently reported that the first light rail has left Spain. When can we expect to see that? Obviously, it is very important in building a light rail network that we have the light rail carriages. When can we expect to see those in Canberra?

Mr Edghill: The light rail vehicle is presently off the west coast of Africa. You can actually track where the vehicle is.

THE CHAIR: Can we do that on your website?

Mr Edghill: Yes. There is social media that goes out once a week with the link

showing where you can log on and find where it is. The first light rail vehicle will be in Australia in mid-December. As to the precise date, there is a bit of variability in terms of the waves and how quickly the boats go.

THE CHAIR: Where does it arrive in Australia? Which port?

Mr Edghill: Port Kembla.

THE CHAIR: And then how do we get it into the territory?

Mr Edghill: It comes on a couple of trucks, but before it is loaded onto the trucks—it is like coming back from holidays or importing stuff into Australia—it has to go through a customs and quarantine process. So it is a bit outside our control as to precisely when it will get to Canberra. Once it clears the customs and quarantine process, it is transferred down here, I think, over two evenings.

Mr Lyall: Just in one night.

Mr Edghill: One night. It happens at night time. We need to have the special permits in place and whatnot to take an oversize vehicle from Port Kembla down to Canberra.

THE CHAIR: And it will go straight to the stabling yard?

Mr Edghill: Kind of. It comes in and it is rolled down a long ramp onto the main line, so onto Flemington Road. Then it is shunted from Flemington Road over the little bridge to the depot area, and it is put into the stabling yard there.

THE CHAIR: I know the roadworks are happening—I am hearing them every night at the moment: it is all right; it has not actually been that disruptive—but when will we start to see it going up and down, the testing?

Mr Lyall: Late March is the expectation. The overhead wiring will be energised to allow from the depot to the north, which is the area that we use for testing and commissioning.

THE CHAIR: I think the minister or someone said before that the focus would probably be moving to Northbourne from Flemington. That will obviously help with some of the impacts that Flemington has had. When do we expect those works to—

Mr Edghill: They will ramp down over time. What you see on Flemington Road at the moment is that the track slabs have been laid—I think over seven kilometres of track slabs—and a couple of kilometres of the rail has been inserted into the track slabs. The construction of the stops is underway. Essentially, once we transition, if you like, across the project from the rail into the stops, and then the stops, the overhead wiring and the poles are constructed, the focus is more on some of the landscaping activities which need to happen. There is not a single date.

THE CHAIR: I was going to ask about that. When can we start to see the trees going back up? My understanding is that trees will be put into the Flemington Road part of it too.

Ms Fitzharris: Yes. There will be trees going up. Most of Flemington Road has never had trees on the median.

THE CHAIR: Yes. I am very excited about getting trees. Everyone always raises it with me: when are the trees coming back?

Mr Edghill: The trees will be next year, obviously. The precise timing of the planting will depend upon the weather conditions and whatnot at the time. We want to make sure that when we put the trees back in we give them the best chance of success. But certainly the trees are all back in ahead of the system being up and operational.

THE CHAIR: That is good.

Ms Fitzharris: Can I just make a point on Mitchell and disruption to Mitchell. It is the case that it is more significant at Mitchell than it is, for example, along other parts of Flemington Road, because there is a considerable amount of road widening that goes into that project. Whatever solution was going to be put up to fix Flemington Road and Northbourne Avenue, and all parties had policies on this leading into last year's election, there was always going to be a significant amount of work done around Mitchell for road widening at the time.

In any scenario, based on last year's election, there would have been work underway around the Mitchell area for road widening purposes. It is important to understand that the work in Flemington Road further north is largely in the median and at the intersections, whereas in Mitchell, particularly in the northern part of Mitchell, a lot of the work has been done around road widening, which is a slightly different nature of the route than where it is just happening in the median.

MS CHEYNE: From social media, no less, there is going to be potentially—I guess it is weather dependent—a pretty major diversion this weekend around Mort Street and Dickson. How do we choose when that sort of major work is undertaken? And is the weekend the best time, particularly in a place like Dickson, which is reasonably popular of a weekend? Is that the best time to be conducting those major works that result in diversions like that? What sort of analysis and work do we put in place apart from communicating on social media?

Mr Edghill: There is a balance of a few factors as to when the work happens. One of the overarching principles is that we try to minimise disruption as best we can, particularly traffic disruption. One of the general reasons why we have intersection shutdowns over weekends is so that we are avoiding weekday morning and afternoon peaks. That is why there are some night works which occur.

But we have regard to a number of factors. One is: when can we do it to minimise disruption? Certainly we will have regard to what other activities or events may be on in Canberra at or around that time. Ideally we try to avoid clashes. Another factor which comes into it is just the sequencing of the works in intersection disruption. We try not to affect a single place over successive weekends if we do not have to. Where we can balance the works happening across the network, we will.

Of course, the other major factor dictating when and where works happen is when they need to happen in order to, hopefully, build the system and get it up and running. Partly the timing around that is within Canberra Metro's control, but they also need to work closely with utility service providers, in particular in timing when that work can take place. Some of the work, for example with some of the utilities, is coordinated by Canberra Metro but is actually undertaken by the relevant utility companies. So part of the timing depends upon the availability of the utility resources and so forth.

MS CHEYNE: It sounds incredibly complicated logistically. How many people do you actually have working on that in terms of liaising with the utility people, deciding when to do the sequencing of the works and then communicating that to people? I guess there is a separate but related question: do weather events like the one we are experiencing right now, or have just experienced, or might continue to experience based on what I can see out of the window, have an effect on that sort of scheduling?

Mr Edghill: Yes. Obviously, as with any construction project, if you have events like we had a few moments ago, it is not safe in some instances to have the workforce out there. That comes into one of the real-life instances that might affect some of the timing.

In terms of the number of people who are working, I think the direct current workforce at the moment is about 480 people. It is difficult to provide a precise number as to who is involved in it, because items like intersection closures, for example, are complicated, as you pointed out, and it is everybody from the crews who are actually on the road doing the work at the time through to management and engineers who are doing planning work. So it is difficult to give a precise number, other than to say that they are big events as part of the construction project, and they get a lot of attention from both Canberra Metro and Transport Canberra.

MS CHEYNE: Thank you. I know that things are pretty much on schedule and tracking very well. But if we have weather events like this as we lead up to summer, could that potentially delay the project and, if so, what contingencies have been built in to speed things up? I saw a few days ago storm event after storm event after storm event, which obviously impacts safety. What contingencies are there to make sure we are still on time? Have storm events been factored into the planning?

Mr Edghill: Canberra Metro maintain their own program and they maintain their own float. At the outset of their planning they take into account that sometimes the weather will be good and sometimes the weather will be bad. Even where the weather is bad, there are mechanisms within the contract that they can take in practice to accelerate or shift around parts of the program. Typically, not everything on the program—far from everything—is on what we call the critical path. There is an ability to shift things forwards and backwards as it is being built.

One of the overarching points I would make is that one of the main things about the delivery model which has been chosen here, the PPP structure, is that we do not start paying until the service is operational. I do not want to say that is unlike every other project undertaken in the ACT before, but it is different from what we have undertaken before.

MS CHEYNE: It is a bit of a motivating factor.

Mr Edghill: It is a motivating factor to ensure that they are as efficient as possible when they are on site.

MS LAWDER: Regarding light rail stage 1, is there any element of the project that is running over time?

Mr Edghill: As I was just discussing, it is a complex program. I would not describe elements as running early or running late within the program; it is more that, where we have, say, rain events or where there are opportunities to bring works forward, there are elements that are moving within the program all the time. Does it look exactly the same as we expected on day one? No, because we probably never expected it to look exactly the same as that. It is a moving project as it progresses.

MS LAWDER: Have there been any issues or delays with the laying of the tracks?

Mr Edghill: The laying of the tracks is underway at the moment. There are no issues with the laying of the tracks that I am aware of which would give us concern for the overall program.

MS LAWDER: Generally speaking, it is progressing on time and on budget?

Ms Fitzharris: Yes, and consistent with that.

MS LAWDER: Have there been any variations to the contract?

Mr Edghill: There have been some minor modifications so far. I could not give you the precise number. Again the minor variations and modifications have moved both ways. Some of them might be where we have asked for additional enhancements to certain areas, but there have also been other areas where there were works, for example, that may not have needed to be undertaken or could be undertaken more efficiently. They are pluses to us, if you like.

MS LAWDER: What has been the cost of any variations overall?

Mr Edghill: We are well within the project's contingency at the moment. The project's total value was \$707 million, inclusive of a territory contingency amount. I do not think it is necessarily appropriate to provide exact dollar figures against some items of work, given that Canberra Metro's pricing is involved in it, but we are well within that budget.

MS LAWDER: Have there been any contractual disputes with the consortium?

Mr Edghill: Between the territory and the consortium?

MS LAWDER: Canberra Metro.

Mr Edghill: No. In terms of the strict dispute mechanisms under the contract, have they been triggered? The answer is no. Having said that, of course, it is our job as

contract managers to ensure that we are having robust conversations with Canberra Metro as we go and sometimes we will have a difference of opinion with them over various matters. Are we in a position at the moment where the dispute clauses in the contract have been triggered? The answer is no.

MS LAWDER: Are there any financial penalties for when delays take place? If they are not financial, what are the penalties?

Mr Edghill: On Canberra Metro? Of course, it is a little bit more complicated than the shorthand I will give now. If there were to be a delay, if there were to be rework needed or if there were to be something else which falls within Canberra Metro's realm of responsibility, because of the nature of the contract, it is not a traditional D and C where there are liquidated damages at the end; the way that it works, effectively, is it is a financial penalty on Canberra Metro. We do not start paying for them. They have a 20-year concession period and if they did happen to run late for something which is their responsibility then they enter that 20-year period. Effectively, they are getting paid less for the work than otherwise would have been anticipated.

Ms Fitzharris: The important point around the nature of the contract is that the ACT government is not paying any money, and does not pay any money until the service starts operating, in very simple terms. If there is a delay, hypothetically, that was caused by Canberra Metro, it would not be something that the ACT pays for. We would not start to pay Canberra Metro until they have it operating satisfactorily under the terms of the contract.

MS LE COUTEUR: I would like to do something different and move to light rail stage 2. Earlier this year there was the first consultation about it and a consultation report was released. What is the next thing that will be happening, from a community point of view, with light rail stage 2?

Ms Fitzharris: I hope that before the end of the year there is another update on some of the work. It is a bit like with stage 1. It has always been the case that there is an awful lot of planning work that needs to go on and very detailed technical engineering—a whole range of work that is done by Transport Canberra and the consultants engaged by Transport Canberra. I hope to be able to give another update before the end of the year about what we have learnt about that since the last update, which was in September, I think. In the meantime there is also the considerable work underway to present the business case to the government, which we have said will happen by the end of this year.

There will be an update, hopefully again by the end of the year, that looks a little bit like the update from last time. It will say, "These are the updates on light rail stage 1." We will obviously have, significantly, the first light rail vehicle leaving the factory. We will have the first permanent track laying and we will also have an update on some things that we have learnt and refined since our initial community consultation. I expect that to be before the end of the year.

Again there will be ongoing opportunities for consultation and engagement, as there were with the original stage 1, and stage 2 consultation earlier this month, similar to the work underway on consultation on the bus rapid network. That will involve a lot

of information online, the ability to provide a range of different information online, and Transport Canberra out visiting a lot of different locations right across the city. An important part of stage 1, and notably stage 2 consultation, is that there were information stalls not just in the Woden area or the inner south, which the new route will travel through, but also in Tuggeranong, Weston Creek, Belconnen and in Gungahlin as well.

MS LE COUTEUR: There are little flags around the inner south and Woden. Would it be fair to assume that is where it is going? We have been observing these.

Mr Edghill: Without exactly knowing which flags we are talking about, I suspect that there are other works that happen in Woden that you might attribute to us—

THE CHAIR: It could be NBN.

Mr Edghill: but it could be somebody else.

MS LE COUTEUR: I have recently got it, and NBN has a defined timetable and you can see when NBN is coming.

Mr Edghill: We are doing survey work on Adelaide Avenue. But in terms of—

MS LE COUTEUR: It is not just Adelaide Avenue.

Ms Fitzharris: It could be anything. It could be Icon or Actew; it could be NBN; it could be some other utilities work. It could be a whole range of different things. It is really hard to know.

MS LE COUTEUR: People have been making assumptions about the ones that are labelled with various things—not light rail stage 1. It is clearly not NBN saying, “NBN under here.” Given that the light rail vehicle is already on track, I asked a question on notice about advertising. I actually thought that the—

THE CHAIR: I am sorry to interrupt but this sounds like a substantive, not a supplementary. Is it to do with stage 2 of light rail?

MS LE COUTEUR: Only insofar as whether stage 2 will have heritage carriages, which I am hoping it will.

Ms Fitzharris: No, there are no carriages in stage 2.

THE CHAIR: I think everyone has a lot of questions so we might keep going.

MS LE COUTEUR: The issue with this is that I asked a question on notice which I thought was clear, but my constituents do not. Maybe I will write another letter to you, minister.

MR PARTON: Will the business case be published publicly, once it is complete, for stage 2?

Ms Fitzharris: That is a decision that the government still needs to take but you could expect that the unprecedented levels of transparency that accompanied stage 1, including publishing the business case, which I think was one of the first times that that had ever been done in Australia, will continue.

MR PARTON: Have any further technical constraints or issues been identified with stage 2?

Ms Fitzharris: We are going through the process of all the technical issues. Some will be constraints; some will be opportunities. That is exactly the work that is underway at the moment and will be contained in the business case.

MR PARTON: When did the technical constraints of the Canberra Hospital route 2b that negatively affect the potential southern expansion become apparent?

Ms Fitzharris: There are a couple of points on the potential for it to go from Woden to Canberra Hospital. The Canberra Hospital link was never in the original light rail network master plan. There were a couple of issues around accessing the hospital via public transport, whether light rail or buses, that we looked at. One of the issues is, broadly speaking, what happens to the city-wide network if the light rail route stops in the Woden town centre or goes east to the Canberra Hospital. The previous projected route, which was to continue down past Mawson for a route to Tuggeranong, would be much harder if there were, effectively, a spur line to Canberra Hospital. The walking distance between the corner of Yamba Drive and Hindmarsh Drive to get to the main areas of the Canberra Hospital is actually not that much further than walking from the Woden town centre to the Canberra Hospital through Eddison Park anyway. In terms of technical constraints—

Mr Edghill: Very much on the point that the minister mentioned already, a comment that came through the consultation process is, “How would you go south from that corner on Hindmarsh Drive if you were to stop there?” I think it is a fair comment. It is certainly simpler, thinking about the expansion of the network, to go straight down Callam Street and then Athllon Drive to Mawson for future stages of light rail.

MS LAWDER: Has the ACT government approached any stakeholders about the use of Parkes Way for stage 2?

Ms Fitzharris: What do you mean by “the use of Parkes Way”? The route clearly shows it is going over Parkes Way. The major stakeholder in that area, or the major partner, is the National Capital Authority. They are very intimately involved, as they were during stage 1 but even more so through stage 2. Transport Canberra also has responsibility for our road network and road planning. It is looking very closely at Parkes Way, because it is clearly an important part of light rail stage 2 as well as being an important part of the city to the lake project.

MS LAWDER: On the use of Commonwealth Avenue Bridge for stage 2, question on notice 484 talked about the average weekday traffic modelling. What traffic modelling are you using for Commonwealth Avenue Bridge for stage 2 of light rail?

Mr Edghill: One of our advisers undertakes our traffic modelling for us. I think it is

called Zenith—I forget the other words. That is the particular model that they use. It is a model that looks not just at one particular street but effectively models what happens to the entirety of the Canberra road network as a consequence of making such changes. That is the transport model that we use.

THE CHAIR: How many trees are going in on Flemington Road?

Ms Fitzharris: We will have to take that on notice.

THE CHAIR: That is fine. Will they be all along Flemington Road, or are they going in in parts?

Ms Fitzharris: It is all along Flemington Road. They are a slightly different species to those on Northbourne Avenue, partly because of the nature of the road. We will take that one on notice in terms of the specifics.

THE CHAIR: Thank you.

MS CHEYNE: Am I right that there was a tender process for an integrated ticketing system?

Mr Edghill: Yes.

MS CHEYNE: Is it still underway?

Mr Edghill: That is underway, which is very exciting. It is a two-stage process. A request for EOIs went out. We have received bids back from the market. They are being evaluated as we speak. The procurement documentation foreshadowed that we would then shortlist between two and four parties to take through to a request for proposal stage. We are in the process now of finalising the shortlist of bidders to take through to the next point.

MS CHEYNE: Is it likely that the ticketing system will help us to integrate with New South Wales?

Mr Edghill: Yes. One of the unfortunate points about our federation is that each state has invested in its own separate ticketing system, and at present they are not interoperable. One of the advantages we have by moving to a new ticketing system is that we can move from a card-based system, where the information is stored on the actual card and to link into it you need to have systems which are talking to each other, to an account-based system, which means that the “smarts” are not happening in the card itself but in a database behind the scenes, in which case the thing you use to swipe could be any number of things and it talks to the computer in the background. That is why you might not need a MyWay card; people might just use their mastercard or their visa card and pay the same amount, or you could have tokens or use your phone. The advantage of an account-based system is that it provides a much greater ability to interlink with other jurisdictions in time. The token you are swiping is feeding back to a central database, so it provides a greater degree of flexibility in what we can do across public transport systems.

MS LE COUTEUR: I asked this question on notice and I thought the answer was good, but my constituents are still concerned. It is about advertising on rolling stock. Has the government retained control over this, or has it been handed over to the consortium?

Mr Edghill: We have retained control, so it will not happen unless we agree to it.

MS LE COUTEUR: It will not happen just on stage 1, or on all of them? Are you just saying no to it on the rolling stock? What is the situation with the stations?

Mr Edghill: It is likewise at the stations and on the rolling stock. If there is to be advertising it will have to be a positive future decision of the ACT government to do so. In terms of future stages, we would have to do the contracts for them, but I could not imagine it being any different from the arrangements in that respect that we have got for light rail stage 1.

MS LE COUTEUR: I want to clearly summarise this: the government has control of both the rolling stock and the stations?

Mr Edghill: That is correct.

MS LE COUTEUR: And current government policy is no advertising?

Mr Edghill: We have not agreed any advertising with Canberra Metro to date. That is where we are sitting at the moment.

MS LE COUTEUR: That is slightly different. This is where we are getting the degree of paranoia here. So we do not have a policy; we just have not done anything yet. I am sorry to be so picky, but this is the question I am getting.

Ms Fitzharris: In terms of the rolling stock itself, we have had preliminary discussions around what that could look like. We have not yet made a decision. I would be surprised if we were to make a decision at some point where it would cover any windows on any of the light rail vehicles. There were some early images put out of what light rail vehicles might look like with, for example, a Floriade-style wrap on them, like with the buses. But to my recollection none of those even had that wrap on the windows.

Mr Edghill: That is correct. We are not engaged in any conversations with Canberra Metro about advertising on rolling stock or—

Ms Fitzharris: It is not essential as revenue. There is no revenue projected about any of the advertising in the contract itself.

MS LE COUTEUR: But the government has not got a clear future policy on what will happen, so it is really unknown. Right now there is not any; that is the situation.

Ms Fitzharris: I have not had any recommendations otherwise put to me, but I did note some of the findings of the billboard inquiry around moving billboards.

MS LE COUTEUR: As you would imagine, it is the same constituents.

THE CHAIR: We will leave it there. The *Hansard* transcript for the hearing will be available on the website within the next week. I remind members of the committee that supplementary questions should be lodged with the committee office within five business days of the uncorrected proof transcript becoming available. Witnesses' responses taken on notice should be submitted to the committee office within five days of the uncorrected proof transcript becoming available, and responses to supplementary questions should be submitted to the committee five days after the questions are received.

The committee adjourned at 3.15 pm.