



**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY FOR THE AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL
TERRITORY**

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

(Reference: [Annual and financial reports 2018-2019](#))

Members:

**MS T CHEYNE (Chair)
MISS C BURCH (Deputy Chair)
MR J MILLIGAN**

TRANSCRIPT OF EVIDENCE

CANBERRA

FRIDAY, 15 NOVEMBER 2019

**Secretary to the committee:
Mr D Leary (Ph: 620 50124)**

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

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Privilege statement

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Amended 20 May 2013

The committee met at 8.59 am.

Appearances:

Berry, Ms Yvette, Deputy Chief Minister, Minister for Education and Early Childhood Development, Minister for Housing and Suburban Development, Minister for the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence, Minister for Sport and Recreation, and Minister for Women

Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate
Kelley, Ms Rebecca, Executive Branch Manager, Sport and Recreation

Transport Canberra and City Services Directorate
Alegria, Mr Stephen, Executive Branch Manager, City Presentation

THE CHAIR: Welcome to the second day of hearings for this committee on the 2018-19 annual reports. This morning we will first hear from the Minister for Sport and Recreation, Ms Yvette Berry MLA, and her officers, regarding sports and recreation and sportsgrounds. I will start by asking whether witnesses have read and understood the pink privilege statement in front of them on the table?

Ms Berry: Yes, I have.

Mr Alegria: Yes.

THE CHAIR: I remind members that, according to standing orders, questions on notice and supplementary questions should be lodged with the committee support office within five business days following the conclusion of the hearing today. Responses to questions taken on notice should be submitted to the committee office within five business days of the proof transcript becoming available. Responses to questions on notice and supplementary questions should be submitted to the committee office within five business days of the question being received. Minister, is there anything you would like to open with?

Ms Berry: No. I note that everybody has been inviting us to, but we received instructions not to.

THE CHAIR: I think we are just being polite.

Ms Berry: Then politely I will decline.

THE CHAIR: On Wednesday one person slipped their opening statement into a response to a question, so some people are still preparing them. Minister, there has been a huge amount of activity in the sports realm over the past year. There has been a long history of it, but there has been really commendable activity in the last year. We have seen greater encouragement of women in sports which have been traditionally dominated by men, and I congratulate the government on this effort, but I am also curious about what we are doing to bring even more attention to sports that have been traditionally dominated by women. I understand that netball remains the most popular

team sport for women. I am keen to know what we are doing to continue to support something that still has such huge interest for women.

Ms Berry: The old saying is that you cannot be what you cannot see. Bringing elite sport, particularly women's sport, to the ACT is part of that story. We have had the Giants come to the ACT and play matches at the AIS, at the indoor arena. It always has sellout crowds; there are always mostly women and girls in attendance. It shows the popularity of women's sport, particularly netball, in the ACT.

We worked very closely with Netball ACT to make sure that our facilities meet the needs of that sport. In recent years there were upgrades to netball surfaces, courts and facilities across all of the city areas, in Belconnen, Charnwood, Calwell and the south-side courts. We are continuing to work with Netball ACT on growth areas. They have identified those as being particularly on the north side of town. Maybe somebody has some more detail about all the work that was undertaken on the local facilities here in the ACT?

THE CHAIR: I am curious about those growth areas as well, if you are able to provide that.

Ms Kelley: As the minister said, netball is one example of where we have been working really closely on improving facilities for participation. Sports like netball obviously have a female focus.

We can get you the extent of the specific projects, but they sit within a suite of other works we have done. We have done audits right across our sportsground assets around female-friendly facilities, which are also tied into the netball pavilions, to ensure that those environments are safe and meeting the needs of females in terms of the layout of change rooms, the inclusions within change rooms and those sorts of things. That has been a piece of progressive work. Now that we have that audit information, we will be working progressively with sport and recreation and our colleagues in TCCS to progress all the upgrade facilities through improvement programs.

Aside from facilities, other work within growth sports includes that again this year we will have our women's sport and recreation participation and leadership grant program. We have committed \$100,000 to that, as we have for the last three years. That will target new initiatives that sport is putting into place to encourage women and girls in their participation.

The things we had out of that last year included the elite coaching scholarships, a new initiative which has given opportunity to 13 new coaches. We are starting to look at the leadership of our organisations so that they are improving environments and opportunities for women and girls. Tied to that is the governance work. We have been working closely with our state supporting organisations towards a 40 per cent target for female representation on our boards and committees. We are pleased to say that over half of our state supporting organisations, our peak bodies, have reached that target.

THE CHAIR: That is excellent.

Ms Kelley: Over the course of the next 12 months we are working closely with them on their plans so that we can have all of them at that target. The benefit of that is that we have women within the leadership. Then the needs of women and girls within the participation environments, and the facility needs, are brought to the table more readily. That is something that we have seen, and it has been the experience of sports over the last three years as they have moved towards that.

Supporting participation further, we have an ongoing partnership with HerCanberra, so our promotion beyond the sporting realm is definitely progressing. Because we work particularly within adult female participation, we know that sport is perhaps not their activity of choice; it is walking, recreational activities, the gym and a whole raft of other activities on offer where we are seeing growth in participation for women.

For junior girls, sport is still very much a focus. That is the key difference we see across the board in participation between adults and children. Adults are less oriented to organised sport, whereas juniors are very organised sport focused. That is where we see the importance of our ongoing work with grant programs and working with state sporting organisations and the clubs to ensure that junior team environments for their junior girls are well in hand.

THE CHAIR: Where did you say the growth areas are for netball in particular? Or did you say you would take that on notice?

Ms Kelley: Gungahlin is definitely a growth area, and that is our key focus in terms of new facilities. We are working with Netball ACT very closely around their strategic facilities plan at the moment. They have identified that Gungahlin is a key growth area. At the moment the spill of participation is falling back onto Lyneham and, in some cases, Belconnen. We have had some really great conversations with Netball, and we continue to have those.

MR MILLIGAN: There were two studies done. We had the new ice rink sports study and the indoor sports feasibility study—one at \$75,000 and one at \$160,000. What concrete outcomes have come out of those studies that you have taken on board and acted on?

Ms Berry: First, with regard to the ice rink, there is now an expression of interest process for a new ice sports facility in the ACT, a twin-sheet facility. That process is continuing. There are a few more weeks to go for that process. I understand that there is some interest in that process, so we will look forward to finding out where that ends up. Again, we worked very closely with the ice sports community about what their requirements were, and the broader community, as part of that feasibility study. The second study, on indoor sports, was on particular sports that were identified in an earlier report about indoor facilities to meet the needs of higher participation in those particular sports. There was a narrow focus on a couple of sports so that future studies could occur. Conversations will always continue with sports, as we identified just now with Netball ACT, about where participation rates are growing, and meeting the needs of our sports communities.

MR MILLIGAN: With the indoor sports feasibility study, you selected only three different sporting codes to take part in that study. With such a demand out there in the

community for multipurpose facilities, why was that not part of this feasibility study? Everyone in the sporting community, associations and clubs, thought this study would include multipurpose, but when the report came out it was for single-use sporting codes.

Ms Berry: Prior to my appointment to the role of minister for sport, Mr Rattenbury at the time was the minister that conducted the original study into sports participation, which identified the sports that were experiencing higher participation rates and growth rates than others. That is how those sports were identified. They were not identified by me. They were identified by a study that was done previously, in consultation with the sports community, to understand where their growth areas were, where their participation rates were likely to grow and what the needs were within those sports communities.

Once those were identified through the previous study, the feasibility study into an indoor sports facility to meet the needs of those particular sports was done. That does not rule out work with any other organisations. We are continuing to talk with others, as we have done with the ice sports facility, Netball ACT and roller derby. As with any sports organisations in the ACT, we are continually working with them to ensure that we have appropriate facilities in place to meet the needs of our sports participation in the ACT, which, of course, is the highest in the country, and we are very proud of that.

With respect to the sports communities that we have been working with, particularly regarding the outcome of those two reports, it has been very positive. We are looking forward to having more to say about what the program will be in the future. Hopefully, early next year we will be able to provide more information about where that is heading.

MR MILLIGAN: This indoor sports feasibility study has recommended doing feasibility studies into multipurpose indoor centres, because it saw that there was an urgent need. When can we expect to see these studies from the government, and when will they commence? How much will be allocated to them and when will they be completed? Where will they be looking—Woden, in particular, Belconnen, Gungahlin and so forth? When will the government consider these feasibility studies?

Ms Berry: If studies are conducted at any time in the future, those would be decisions that the government would make, in close consultation with the community. Of course, there is a budget impact, so they would have to go through a budget process to fund the future studies that might be required. Of course, there is a lot of work happening right now, in working with Basketball ACT on a facility that will meet the needs of participation rates and growth within their sport.

With futsal, we have already identified, as you will know, Mr Milligan, in your electorate of Yerrabi, Throsby as the home of football, which will include futsal facilities, as well as football facilities for the football community and Capital Football. Also, it is about the broader community being able to make use of the facility. I refer to gymnastics as well, with a facility on the north side.

These discussions are occurring, as well as discussions on an aspiration in the ACT

around an indoor stadium and arena which has a lot of moving parts. It has been identified in the ACT government's infrastructure plan. The ACT government will continue to work with the federal government, the Institute of Sport and the Sports Commission about opportunities in that space as well.

MR MILLIGAN: Looking at multipurpose indoor sporting facilities, doesn't the government already know where these centres should be built? Is another study really necessary? Can't government just go ahead and build these centres?

Ms Berry: Again these would be decisions for the government to make as part of a budget process. They are not generally announced during an annual reports hearing. While working with the sports community, and understanding participation rates in growth, those would be the conversations we would be having. It is likely there would need to be, as with any big project, different kinds of feasibility studies or planning that would need to occur. All have a budget impact, so it would all need to be considered by the government more broadly.

However, we hear from the Woden community about an indoor sports facility in that area. I understand there is some private interest in building a facility within the Woden town centre precinct. We will continue to work with the sports community, and the community more broadly, on the needs within different areas of the ACT and on making sure that we can meet those needs across all of our sports, indoor and outdoor.

MS LE COUTEUR: In considering the locations, how much do you consider transport issues and, in particular, public transport, given, as you said at the beginning of your comments, a lot of the participants are likely to be children who, appreciably, cannot drive?

Ms Berry: A number of things are included in any identification of land, and transport would be one of them, but it would not be the sole issue that would be identified in any study of future sports facilities in the ACT. We are very lucky in the ACT. We have sports facilities dispersed across the city, so they are relatively accessible, and geographically so, because there is not a lot of distance from one side to the other. I do understand that getting to sports can sometimes be a barrier, so that is taken into account.

When you look at different sports, OzTag is a really great example of being situated in local areas and games being confined to particular spaces, rather than travelling across the city. It is a growth sport in the ACT, but it is still emerging as an across-the-city competition.

For families, a lot of the time—and this is what makes Canberra great—parents will offer to take kids from their various sports groups to games when they occur at other places across the city or across the region. In different sports—for example, rugby league—the game is not confined to the ACT and you will often travel outside the ACT. Those sports communities come together really well and offer to pick up and drop off kids on the team that need a hand.

MS LE COUTEUR: You talked about the expression of interest for the ice rink. It

sounded like it would come to government by the end of this year.

Ms Berry: Yes. I cannot recall the date.

MS LE COUTEUR: When will it become public?

Ms Berry: After the government has considered it.

MS LE COUTEUR: Clearly afterwards. Do we have any idea of time lines?

Ms Berry: I cannot recall the date when it is actually—

Ms Kelley: Given that the process has recently closed, we are not able to comment too much further on it, due to probity reasons. Certainly, the process is continuing, but we are not really able to give you a set time frame other than that it is a key priority project that is being progressed.

MS LE COUTEUR: My next question is about ovals. I have had a number of comments from people about unmaintained ovals, watering and things like that, but my question really is: what are the criteria for deciding whether it is going to be a maintained oval, a neighbourhood oval? This is probably becoming more of an issue, given the heat we are expecting in summer.

Ms Berry: You will recall that a number of ovals were decommissioned during droughts early on. I cannot recall the year—late 1990s, 2000s.

MS LE COUTEUR: I recall, and that is what I have been saying to people who have been saying, “What are the criteria? Why is my oval in this state?”

Ms Berry: The criteria for returning an oval to more formal use include our having discussions with the sports community about where the growth areas are, where they need facilities and where there are good connections with existing facilities. Higgins is a good example of good connections to existing facilities in Kippax. It is still connected with all the other sports facilities that are already in existence. The government’s decision to return that oval to more formal use was made after close consultation with rugby league, Oztag and cricket, to name a few, to ensure that that meets the needs of their sports, and also understanding the use of all other ovals.

A lot of our formal use ovals are used all day but into the evening as well. Lights have been put in. It means that our ovals for formal use are being utilised in a much more efficient way.

When it comes to irrigation—of course water being the most expensive item in ensuring that our ovals are available for formal use, and noting that next year possibly the ACT is going into water restrictions—TCCS works very carefully to ensure that the ovals are irrigated during particular times of the day to ensure that evaporation is managed as much as it possibly can be.

These are the kinds of issues that governments all across the country, in dealing with sports participation and climate change effects on our sports communities, are

understanding more: what are the kinds of sports facilities that we need? How do we make sure that participation remains high, that it can remain affordable and that we take into account that climate change is a very real issue that we are going to have to consider, particularly in sports?

Non-irrigated ovals and different kinds of turf—what is the formal term?—are the sorts of services we have to consider. For example, the one at Mawson, which has been delivered more recently, has the highest quality football turf that you can possibly put in. Everybody speaks very highly of that. We do not know whether that is the way forward. I think the whole country is still trying to figure out what is the best mix to meet the needs of our communities and to take into account the costs of irrigation, which are only likely to climb as we face those issues around climate change. Did you want to talk about them more?

MS LE COUTEUR: Before you do, most of my complaints have not been from the people who are playing formal sport; they have been from the rest of the community. One of the real issues is the geographic spread of places where people can play with the kids, run, have the dogs run around. I appreciate that you are consulting with the formal sports but they are not the people who are complaining to us about the ovals.

Ms Berry: It has been some time since some of these spaces have been irrigated and some of them need a bit more attention—maybe not completely turned on formally, but maybe there are some opportunities for those spaces to be better for the general community to have a kick around, take the dog for a walk and throw the frisbee. Did you want to talk to some of the work that TCCS are doing in that space?

Mr Alegria: Yes. Building on what the minister said, I think the neighbourhood ovals, as we call them, the informal ovals, have been around for, in some cases, over a decade. They are not necessarily new fields. However, I think from the community's perspective the condition of those ovals is really influenced by the seasonal conditions. At times they can actually look quite green and potentially at a glance look like a formal oval, but of course they are not. In contrast, at the moment they are very dry. They are not irrigated, so they are looking brown and dusty et cetera. Some of those community concerns may arise from just that contrast and it is purely a seasonal issue.

We do not actively irrigate but we maintain the spaces so that they can be used. Basically we mow them in accordance with the rest of the suburb mowing so that they can be used for those informal activities.

Going to your point about the potential for increased or enhanced uses, there are some examples around—in Griffith, for example—where community groups come and ask to enhance what was a sportsground many years ago. They have done a whole lot of landscape planning, planting trees, to basically make it more like a park with some open spaces rather than just a large, open space. We are very open to those community suggestions and we have some ability to actually help community groups with the planning and even with the implementation on the ground if that is the community's desire to try and enhance these spaces.

MS LE COUTEUR: Is it likely that next, year with water restrictions, there will be some ovals downgraded? That is almost alluded to.

Ms Berry: I think that is the management of the irrigation of the ovals. Obviously sprinklers are not going on in the middle of the day in the 40-degree heat. I do not think there are plans at this stage.

Mr Alegria: No. It will be very much a last resort because we know how much the community values the ovals. But we also know that, if things were to change in future, to restore an oval is a significant undertaking. It is not just a matter of turning the tap back on. Obviously if a short-term gain in terms of saving water was required we would look at it. But in the long term it is a significant investment to return that to the community as a formal area. It is a not a decision taken lightly. We understand that there is a risk of that. We are working towards what we can do with increased efficiency. There is a whole lot of work going on behind the scenes in that regard, but at this stage we do not have any proposals to do any more closures.

THE CHAIR: It was pleasing to hear that you are working with the community when they come to you saying, “We have got a proposal for our oval.” Is there an audit done of ovals across the ACT? Presumably there are some ovals in higher growth areas or where sports participation is trending up, as we saw in Higgins, where you might have a whole heap of community members come and say, “We have got this idea for the oval.” But you might also have this data that says, “We probably just want to hold onto this for the next three or four years and then look to restore it.” Is there thinking at that strategic level undertaken?

Mr Alegria: There is. The key point from an operational point of view is that we maintain the former ovals as fit for purpose. That is our number one goal. They need to be maintained in a useable, safe condition. That is basically where we direct our resources to make sure what we have is well maintained and well managed and available for use by the community.

The community proposals we get are relatively small-scale enhancements, as I describe it. There was the example of Griffith, where people wanted to just augment what is there. They are not necessarily always asking us for a full-on restoration. That has happened and we really deal with that in exactly the way you described, by looking at the demand.

We also look at the peak bodies because they are really the subject matter experts in what their sport needs into the future. We would be guided primarily by them in that big picture of the large investments needed in a new facility. We would really need to work with the peak body to make sure that that is a valuable use of the limited resources. What I am saying is that we can help with the small things, the tweaks. The big stuff really is a matter of working with the peak bodies and having a strategic approach to it as we understand the growth patterns of the city and so forth.

THE CHAIR: While you remain open to community groups approaching you for different ideas they might have about how an oval could look or be maintained, if they do that, before agreeing to it you would go through a process: is this the right direction for that oval?

Mr Alegria: That is right, yes. We need to take the community’s priorities into

account, of course. If we have to say, “How about we come to a compromise?” we will do so. We need to explain to the community what our rationale is in terms of the limited resources we have but also our priorities.

Sometimes the community—often, in fact, when they hear some of the deeper information about why we might have a particular view—get it. They understand: “That is reasonable. We did not realise it was going to cost over \$1 million to restore an oval when there is not that much demand. We get it.” I think it is just a matter of having that conversation with people and keeping it transparent.

THE CHAIR: There were some letters to the editor earlier this year about whether ovals could be used quite differently, with more hardy, drought resistant plantings and things like that. Is that something that you have considered for some spaces?

Mr Alegria: With sportsgrounds, generally our focus is on the playing surface, the pavilions and the things that contribute directly to the sporting use of it—the surroundings.

THE CHAIR: I mean the neighbourhood ovals.

Mr Alegria: We are open to any of those sorts of ideas. They are a really cost-effective way of enhancing a space without a big investment, and the community can drive that. We can facilitate it as a directorate and we can get the community to channel their energy into something. We are very much open to that kind of thing. Often that kind of thing can actually reduce the burden of maintenance. If we are planting some trees and mulching then we do not have to mow that section, for example. It can be a real win-win.

In fact, we have got—it is a different portfolio—the adopt a park program that is in progress at the moment where exactly this is happening, where we are calling for community grant applications. That is a forum or a means by which we can actually fund some of these small projects.

THE CHAIR: That is great to hear. My final question is on neighbourhood ovals. This might give you a heads-up for later questions on city presentation. I want to go to neighbourhood ovals, particularly given the drought conditions at the moment. I know that parks and conservation largely manages African lovegrass, but it seems to be everywhere across this city. In terms of our city presentation, it is in the middle of the road and next to car parks. The proliferation is extreme. It seems to me that neighbourhood ovals, given that they are not irrigated, are probably hotbeds for the spread of African lovegrass. Is there anything that we are looking at to try to control that, with ovals in particular?

Mr Alegria: With ovals in particular, generally no, because our focus on lovegrass is on trying to contain it within its existing range as much as we can but also looking at where lovegrass is adjacent to a conservation area, for example. We do not want lovegrass going into nature reserves.

You obviously understand the extent of lovegrass across the city. It is significant and it is a significant issue for us. We target our resources to where we can get the best bang for our buck. It may be on a neighbourhood oval, but, generally speaking, if a

neighbourhood oval was in the middle of a location that did not have a lot of lovegrass and it was feasible to control it, absolutely we would look at it. If the infestation on an oval was the same as it was through the rest of the suburb, there would not really be a strong case to specifically target that particular location for control. Of course, we always mow; that at least makes it a usable facility. The bigger issue of lovegrass is something that we are really trying to get a handle on and find new ways of controlling.

THE CHAIR: I am thinking of areas that are not irrigated, which lovegrass is attracted to and thrives in, combined with very windy conditions, which we have seen over the last month, and seeing those neighbourhood ovals potentially as a problem.

Mr Alegria: Do you mean in terms of a fire risk or just generally?

THE CHAIR: In general, in terms of contributing to the proliferation.

Mr Alegria: Neighbourhood ovals are a dryland, not irrigated, open space. We have many such dryland, non-irrigated spaces that are not ovals that have the same kinds of characteristics and the same kinds of potential weed issues. We do our best to distribute our resources to where we get the most effect.

THE CHAIR: We can talk more about lovegrass later.

MR MILLIGAN: Out of the 30-odd ovals where irrigation has been switched on in the ACT, how many have been repurposed to include different types of activities, in consultation with the community?

Mr Alegria: In a general sense, all of them are now available for informal recreation community use. The minister mentioned Higgins oval, which has been specifically targeted to be restored to formal sporting use. I mentioned the oval at Griffith, which has been subject to a community-level initiative to enhance that. Around the edges of ovals, Farrer neighbourhood oval now has a nature play space associated with it. That is building on the fact that there is that open space neighbourhood oval and it is a community facility, so let us locate an enhancement next to that facility: the nature play space. They are a few examples I have got, off the top of my head.

Ms Berry: As we have said, we are open to those conversations with the community. The adopt a park grants program is a good example of where people can engage with the government about that.

MISS C BURCH: Going to the elite sports funding review, which was completed in early 2018, what changes have been put in place for how elite teams are funded?

Ms Kelley: The key outcome initially was that we had more robust discussions with all our elite teams. Our first response to that report was recruitment to enhance our staffing resource to assist us in the management and leveraging of those agreements. We now have a new performance partnerships director within the team at sport and recreation to assist in our relationship management with those particular sports and to also make sure that we are getting government's return maximised where we can.

As part of the review, we looked at the whole framework that sits around those, in

terms of the government's objectives in funding those elite teams. That stems from economic returns around visitation, venue utilisation and the like. The key focus now is community outcomes and the community obligations that those teams have. That has been the key difference in the reporting that we now require of those teams and the seasonal plans or partnership plans that we have in place with our key teams, the Raiders, Giants, Brumbies, Canberra United and Canberra Capitals. We have extended that down to the suite of our sponsored teams, with CBR Brave, Cavalry and the lower 14 teams that sit there. The community outcomes are at the forefront.

As part of that, we are looking at things like the level of engagement with the community and their connection with their local state sporting organisation. If I use the Capitals as an example, we are working with them—in fact, it is part of the requirements for their funding—on a collaboration plan with Basketball ACT to work with clubs, coaching clinics and so on. The players have a visible presence in the community, and the community has a better feeling for the return the community is getting for the government's investment in that team. As I said, that is across the suite of teams.

We have a level of consistency across that reporting. Whilst they are all separate products and all very different, where we can compare apples and apples, we are trying to get to that state to be able to say that our highest expectation is what they are doing for the community and that those expectations are the same.

Ms Berry: In the ACT, because of our geographic ability to move across the city very easily, when our teams do go to schools, sports clubs or whatever, everybody has access to them, unlike in any other state or territory. We are not short of those kinds of opportunities in the ACT. For example, if the Capitals go to a school, the whole team goes. It is quite incredible when you can have a whole team move across the city, across schools, in a couple of days and everybody gets a chance to see their sports champion and aspire to be that elite athlete one day. We are very lucky in the ACT to have such community-minded elite sports teams that take the time to put their real marquee players, not just the bench players, out in our community and build those really important relationships.

MISS C BURCH: Is there a particular formula for funding, and does it differ from men's sport to women's sport?

Ms Kelley: There is not a particular formula, simply because the market values of each of the teams and the different leagues are all very different. So while I said we use an apples to apples comparison previously, it is very difficult to compare, because the value of the investment in the AFL and then having an AFL team here in the territory is very different at this point in time to having a team in the WNBL, because the cost and expenditure around the operational needs of those teams is very different. It is similar to bringing the NBL to town: each of those products has very finite costs that cannot be compared. So it is really a case by case negotiation that we have for those top performance alliance agreements that we have in place.

We are certainly hopeful that in the future, regarding the expenditure on operational costs around the women's teams, that gap will close. But at this point in time the sophistication of sponsorship agreements and the national league structures that are set in place are also very different. In terms of the licence fees, for example, to have a

team in an A league is quoted around the \$10 million mark just for the licence, whereas other leagues do not have a licence cost attached to them at all. So there is a lot of complexity around it. The level of funding for our performance sponsorship program which sits beneath, as I mentioned, the Canberra Cavalry and the ACT Chill—that is a tiered approach. There are set levels of funding within that program. We have three tiers. That sits around their number of home games, their travel, their community buy-in and the profile of the team. We have some set criteria that are applied to those applications each year.

MISS C BURCH: What funding is provided to the Canberra Demons?

Ms Kelley: There is no direct funding from the government into the Canberra Demons because, as part of the review, it was recognised that every sport has a pinnacle league with a number of leagues that sit underneath it. It is not sustainable or realistic for government to have a funding relationship with each of those tiers, because we would probably have multiple applications from every sport.

Within the review, our framework now sits around the prospect that if there is a proposal from a sport it is the pinnacle league that is considered within our funding relationship, whether that be the NRL, AFL, WMBL, W-League or whatever it might be. The Demons play in the NEAFL, which is considered a secondary tier to the AFL. That is where the difference lies in terms of the government's consideration of funding for them.

Our support of those teams really works through our state supporting organisations, where we have operational funding in place. We see that as assisting the suite of their business right from their high performance pathways through to club and all of their other operational needs. We have certainly had many conversations with the Demons, but that is currently where our policy is sitting.

MR MILLIGAN: What advice has government taken from the recent Commissioner for Sustainability and the Environment report about sport in Canberra? What advice have we taken from that report?

Ms Kelley: It was a very interesting read. As Minister Berry mentioned previously, climate change is very much on the frontier of future facility planning, so at this point in time there has not been any immediate response to that, other than that we know we have to really highlight it as a priority in the consideration of future facility planning. That may be around the types of infrastructure for sport. Certainly around indoor sport needs there is a likely trend for more indoor spaces, as we already know. That may continue to grow in the future simply because of climatic impacts.

We had a good consultation in the process of the development of that paper with the commissioner and we have certainly raised it in some of our discussions with the sports, particularly around the local comms group, the coalition of major participation sports, to ensure it is incorporated into their strategic facility planning as well. We have also raised it in national forums on community sport and recreation and with Australian sport and recreation officials. It is something that is discussed at that level as well.

MR MILLIGAN: Would the government be considering working with the

commission to promote a climate action toolkit, and would the government consider providing financial assistance for local clubs to help implement those strategies?

Ms Kelley: Those outcomes were certainly part of the initial discussions that we had once the paper was finalised. The concept of a toolkit, we think, is a really great idea. We have not actioned anything towards it yet, but certainly it is on a list of potential projects that we see as quite easy to progress. It would be fairly cost-effective to put that in place. So it is something that—stay tuned—we hope to have in place in the not too distant future.

MS LE COUTEUR: You have mentioned a participation innovation fund with seven initiatives in it for people who are under-represented in sport. Have you got any figures about what changes this has made in participation and, in particular, in terms of the less fit part of our community?

Ms Kelley: Unfortunately we have not got any results out of those programs yet, given that they were only funded this year. We have not got the acquittals back on those projects as yet, other than the anecdotal advice we are hearing from some of the programs.

The Salti program at Gungahlin Leisure Centre is a great example. Those classes are well subscribed to in terms of the frequency with which they are being offered and the level of attendance that they are getting. Some of the feedback has been that this is attracting a different level of participation at the pool that has not been there previously. Galvanised Fitness is another example of a program through that, FUNctional Families, which is about localised opportunities for—I do not want to say they are bootcamp in nature—fun-based, fitness-related activities the whole family can get involved in. In due course we will have further feedback on that, but we cannot give you a definitive, “Yes, we’ve had an increase in participation” at this point in time because we just do not have that data.

MR MILLIGAN: What is the reporting back to government on the success of these grants, and how are they proving that this is reaching those under-represented groups in the community?

Ms Kelley: We have the acquittal processes that sit around those grants and the reports that come in. With these particular grants we have a case study approach within our community participation team. Each staff member has five projects that they are the liaison officer for so that we are really having close contact with those organisations. Where organisations missed out on funding, we are maintaining dialogue with those groups as well. So in due course we will be able to have case studies put together on the stories around these great programs. For the data capture around participation we rely on the AusPlay data put out through Sport Australia. We are not expecting to see an immediate response in those statistics, but hopefully in due course we will start to see an upward trend, or maintenance of trend as well, which is as important, to show that we are not decreasing participation.

THE CHAIR: We will leave it there.

Appearances:

Steel, Mr Chris, Minister for City Services, Minister for Multicultural Affairs, Minister for Recycling and Waste Reduction, Minister for Roads and Active Travel and Minister for Transport

Transport Canberra and City Services Directorate

Playford, Ms Alison, Director-General

Corrigan, Mr Jim, Deputy Director-General, City Services

McHugh, Mr Ben, Executive Group Manager, City Operations

Oldfield, Ms Meghan, Executive Group Manager, Infrastructure Delivery and Waste

Hughes, Ms Cherie, Chief Operating Officer

Sturman, Ms Judith, Executive Group Manager, Transport Operations

Steele, Mr Peter, Director, Performance Analysis and Business Improvements, Transport Operations

Marshall, Mr Ken, Executive Branch Manager, Roads ACT, City Operations, City Services

Smith, Mr Jeremy, Executive Branch Manager, Infrastructure Delivery, City Services

Haraldson, Mr Anthony, Acting Executive Branch Manager, ACT NoWaste, City Services

Little, Ms Vanessa, Executive Branch Manager, Libraries ACT

Alegria, Mr Stephen, Executive Branch Manager, City Presentation, City Operations, City Services

Davidson, Mr Geoffrey, Executive Branch Manager, Development Coordination Branch, City Operations, City Services

Virtue, Mr Geoff, Acting Executive Branch Manager, Communications

Crowe, Ms Petra, Executive Branch Manager, People and Capability

Major Projects Canberra

Edgill, Mr Duncan, Chief Projects Officer

ACT Public Cemeteries Authority

Bartos, Mr Stephen, Chair

Addison, Ms Linda, Deputy Chair

THE CHAIR: We will now hear from the Minister for Roads and Active Travel, Mr Chris Steel MLA, and his officers regarding roads and infrastructure. Can witnesses confirm that they have read and understood the pink privilege statement?

Mr Steel: Yes.

THE CHAIR: I expect you are aware of the time frames regarding questions on notice. I understand from Ms Playford that you have a corrigendum that you wish to table.

Ms Hughes: Prior to the commencement of these hearings, and with the committee's agreement, I would like to distribute a correction to volume 1 of the TCCS annual

report. The correction relates to table 19 on page 79 of volume 1 of the annual report. The left-hand column was incorrectly titled “age groups”, rather than “diversity groups”. Also, in accordance with the annual report directions, the corrigendum to the annual report will be tabled in the November sittings of the Legislative Assembly.

THE CHAIR: We would like to see that, so that we have the correct information. Minister, I assume you have been told that you cannot have an opening statement?

Mr Steel: Yes; that is fine.

THE CHAIR: We will move straight to questions. I am very interested in roads and intersection upgrades, and particularly the interaction of ACT funding for those with federal government black spot funding. I am aware of some things, but I would like to get a picture of black spot funding across the territory and what we can expect in the coming years.

Mr Steel: I have recently received correspondence from the federal minister for transport and infrastructure in relation to the latest round of the black spot program. Under that program there are several improvements that will be funded. There is \$1.79 million for upgrades to Southern Cross Drive, from Kingsford Smith Drive to Coulter Drive, and the signalisation of intersections at Ross Smith Crescent and Chewings Street. In addition there are upgrades to Mawson Drive, from Athllon Drive to Ainsworth Street in Mawson, channelising a single lane each way for the left turns, converting Mountevans Street to a left in, left out only turn, constructing concrete blisters, improving the angle of storage in medians and reducing the speed limit to 40 kilometres an hour, as well as installing traffic-calming measures. We have received that feedback and we will work with the commonwealth in delivering those under our national partnership agreement on land transport.

THE CHAIR: Is that a letter that you have in front of you, minister?

Mr Steel: Yes. I am happy to table that letter from Michael McCormack, for the committee’s perusal.

MS LE COUTEUR: “Channelising”: is that part of the English language? “Channel” is not normally regarded as a verb.

Mr Steel: I am just reading from what the commonwealth has provided, Ms Le Couteur.

MS LE COUTEUR: You are definitely quoting from that?

Mr Steel: Yes.

THE CHAIR: We will let the minister table it and you can see for yourself.

Mr Steel: I am happy to have Ken Marshall come up and provide a technical explanation of “channelising”. We also have Jeremy Smith here to talk a little bit about the black spot program and the interaction with the ACT government. I will table that document.

THE CHAIR: Mr Smith, do you have anything to add on that?

Mr Smith: As Minister Steel pointed out, we have an ongoing black spot program. In the current year we have a number of sites which are being delivered under the federally funded black spot program. We work closely with the federal government. We identify the areas for black spots, we negotiate with the federal government and they subsequently approve, usually on our recommendation, those locations or come forward with some other recommendations themselves. We can talk about the current—

THE CHAIR: I am particularly curious about the Southern Cross Drive intersection upgrades, having recently seen the very good work done in Charnwood. I am also aware of how much that cost. Is \$1.79 million for the signalisation of two intersections from the commonwealth enough?

Mr Smith: Is it enough?

THE CHAIR: Yes, is it enough to complete that work? Where have they pulled this number from?

Mr Smith: The funding that we require to upgrade intersections is all dependent upon the nature of the intersections themselves. The more complexity to the intersection, the more intersecting roads, obviously the cost goes up. We require more services in the ground et cetera. What also changes funding profiles is physically what is in the ground. We may be dealing with a number of in-ground services—Icon, telecommunications, electricity and stuff like that. We generally have high-level concept designs which give indicative funding that we require, and we seek funding based on those. We do services investigations, work out what is in the ground, look at the actual nature and the layout of the intersection itself, and that drives the funding profile that we require for those intersections.

THE CHAIR: In your view, this \$1.79 million should be okay for those?

Mr Smith: It should be sufficient. We get more validity around the funding profile when we move through the stages of design. Should we get to that point where the profiles do not quite match, we identify those early and we work out a solution.

THE CHAIR: Will TCCS and roads be providing the federal government with more detailed plans of what you would expect to happen there, and will they give you the funding to go ahead and do that? How is it managed?

Mr Smith: With the funding, we identify up front the works that are going to be done. We identify the costs with those. We talk to the federal government; they agree to that funding. Should we require to change the funding profiles, a number of the federal programs are across a rolling number of years and we can seek to move some funding within those budgets.

THE CHAIR: I am curious about the design of these intersections. They are very close together. I have received quite a bit of feedback from the community that they

would like them to perhaps only operate during peak hours. I wonder what the scope is for us as a government to negotiate how that is actually delivered so that it meets what the community is asking for.

Mr Smith: The federal government will normally—I think this is where we are going—take the advice of the ACT government, as the road operator, as to how those intersections should work. If we identified a need for part-time signals or something like that, we would talk to the federal government about that, noting that part-time signals are problematic in themselves because they can cause confusion with motorists as to when they are on and when they are off. A lot of times, it is a lot safer to have the signals operating full time.

MISS C BURCH: Going to road resealing, of the over one million square metres of resurfacing that has been completed, how much of the resurfacing was tar versus blue metal chip and any other materials?

Mr Marshall: Typically the break-up of the program is an order of magnitude around 800,000 square metres of preventative spray seal treatment; the balance of the million square metres typically will be a range of other treatments, including asphalt repairs or asphalt resurfacing.

MS LAWDER: I am unsure about chip seal.

Mr Marshall: Chip seal or spray seal. The two terms are interchangeable. The preventative chip sealing is the majority of my area of the program.

MS LAWDER: Are you able to break up the 800,000 that you mentioned into how much is chip seal and how much is some other treatment?

Mr Marshall: That is all chip seal.

MISS C BURCH: Why was the program below target for the second year in a row?

Mr Marshall: The outputs this year are essentially on target. For the municipal target, it is marginally under, but it is a fraction of a per cent under, and that is offset by the territorial roads target being slightly over target in terms of delivery. The targets are four per cent for municipal streets and five per cent for territorial roads, the main arterial roads. The fine detail of the areas obviously depends on the sites that are identified for treatment, their exact nature and size. This program slightly overdelivered in terms of territorial roads and offset that with a slight underdelivery on municipal roads.

MISS C BURCH: On average, how long does it take for potholes to be filled in? Do you collect data on that?

Mr Marshall: I do not have that exact figure at hand. Typically, it would be days. In some circumstances, that may vary. I guess it is a question of the definition of a pothole. What is a pothole? There are big potholes; there are little potholes. There are potholes that are complex to fix. Sometimes they will involve excavation and asphalt repair, what we refer to as heavy patching. Obviously that style of treatment has a

longer time frame than a simple patch on a small pothole. For a small pothole I would expect the response time to be days, and typically we treat 3,000-odd of those per year.

MISS C BURCH: Do you have any performance measures for that?

Mr Marshall: We record output, so we have data on the number.

MISS C BURCH: But do you have performance measures on the time frame?

Mr Marshall: We have a nominated time frame in our maintenance operational plans. That sets the priorities for resource allocation to various types of maintenance interventions.

MS LAWDER: Can you take that on notice and provide that information about the average time taken to fill?

Mr Marshall: Yes.

MR MILLIGAN: Just out of curiosity, in newly developed suburbs, particularly out in Gungahlin and so forth, why has the government decided to build single-lane roads, despite data from the planning and population projections suggesting that these roads should be dual-lane from the beginning?

Mr Steel: From the start of Gungahlin, perhaps back in the 1990s, there were single-lane roads built, so this goes back a very long way, perhaps under a different government. We can provide some further commentary on that.

We have been duplicating a number of roads to align with the growth in population. Those include the Gundaroo Drive and Horse Park Drive duplications. Horse Park Drive has been completed. Stage 1 of Gundaroo has been completed; stage 2 is underway and we are looking forward to completion next year. Then we will get on with the work to duplicate the major road between Gungahlin and Belconnen. That was suitable for a number of decades while Belconnen was being built, but as Gungahlin has come on it will be necessary to improve that.

It is really about infrastructure in this city more broadly. As the population grows, we are going to have to upgrade infrastructure, whether that be water infrastructure or road infrastructure, to cater for the urban infill that we expect to have in the city and the growth in population. It is not just roads; it is a whole range of other infrastructure that we will have to invest in quite significantly to cater for a population that is growing to 500,000 by 2029.

MR MILLIGAN: Is the government bound by the plans that were put in place back in the 1990s? Can the government change that? Do you have to build single-lane roads? It is a bit far-fetched to be putting the blame on plans that were made back then as to why you have single lanes, isn't it?

Mr Steel: No. With new suburbs like Throsby, where we have built roads out the front on Horse Park, it has been duplicated from the beginning where appropriate. The population will be taken into account in the number of road lanes that we have in

suburbs, and we will continue to upgrade roads as the population continues to increase.

MR MILLIGAN: Why were major roads in Molonglo developed as dual carriageways before the suburb development was commenced, and not in Gungahlin?

Mr Steel: We have planned for the future of Molonglo, and John Gorton Drive is a major corridor for our city.

MR MILLIGAN: And you did not plan for Gungahlin?

Mr Steel: There are a range of different corridors in Gungahlin. This is the one major corridor in Molonglo, so having multiple lanes for this—also for the future accommodation of light rail, which has been planned for that corridor—is really important. That is the work that is happening on stages 3A and 3B of the John Gorton Drive extension. We are also doing the early planning work on stage 3C, the bridge, which will have multiple lanes and will, hopefully, accommodate light rail in the future.

MS LE COUTEUR: I understand from page 261 of the annual report that you have a strategic asset management framework and from page 29 that you have a strategic asset management plan for roads. Can you briefly explain what these two are, how they are different and why they are important?

Mr Marshall: I missed the first one. The second document you referred to was the strategic asset management plan for roads?

MS LE COUTEUR: Yes. Your annual report says you have a strategic asset management framework. That is page 261. On page 29 you have a strategic asset management plan.

Mr Marshall: Yes.

MS LE COUTEUR: Can you explain what these two are and why they are good things to have?

Mr Marshall: The framework defines the methodology by which we approach asset management, with a consistent approach across different asset classes. The asset management plan is the realisation of that methodology in a plan that is specific to an asset class.

For Roads, the strategic asset management plan looks at all of the asset classes for which Roads is responsible and identifies their current status and their future needs in terms of level of service and demand from the community; identifies their challenges in terms of operation and maintenance—identifies, if you like, the technical case for maintenance investment in those asset classes—and then looks at that portfolio holistically and balances the needs across the various asset classes to ensure that we optimise the investment in activities that are quite diverse across quite a diverse range of assets.

MS LE COUTEUR: The annual report mentions a strategic asset management plan

for roads. Do you have one for the path network as well?

Mr Marshall: The roads strategic assessment management plan covers all the asset classes within Roads ACT's responsibility: stormwater, streetlights, paths, road pavements—the whole range of assets that Roads ACT is the custodian for.

MS LE COUTEUR: In this annual report it appeared that it was roads, and roads only. You have got a bunch of asset management plans under that. Libraries would be in there?

Mr Marshall: No, libraries are not in the roads plan.

MS LE COUTEUR: But they are part of TCCS's bailiwick. I am probably not really understanding this because I did think it just appeared to be a roads thing.

Mr Marshall: I can speak in relation to roads and certainly—

Mr Steel: Jim Corrigan can provide some further detail on the plan.

Mr Corrigan: There are different asset management plans for different classes, as Ken Marshall has explained. The ones that we directly look after, we manage those. A lot of our library buildings and things like that are managed by our Property Group colleagues. They would maintain those sorts of plans for those facilities. It is not like we have an asset management plan for every single class of asset we manage. We have for the ones we manage. For the ones we do not, they are the responsibility of other agencies.

MS LE COUTEUR: You have one for roads, shared paths, then you have a separate one for footpaths. You said you have water assets and your—

Mr Corrigan: I am pre-empting Mr Marshall here. Roads ACT are responsible for all those civil infrastructure assets of the city. Their asset management plan covers all those civil assets: traffic signals through to streetlights through to footpaths.

MS LE COUTEUR: And there is one plan for the lot of them, or different plans?

Mr Marshall: No, it is one plan. Importantly it is one plan because part of the asset management planning function is to balance the priorities across the portfolio. It is a question of identifying needs in the various asset classes and then optimising our resource allocation to make sure that we best address all the demands across our whole portfolio responsibility.

MS LE COUTEUR: I am particularly interested in paths. You are saying you are doing it over your whole portfolio because there are different demands on roads and paths. How do you work these priorities out?

Mr Marshall: That is the process of asset management planning, I guess. The process is a technical analysis of what maintenance and operation demands there will be, what things need to be done and what those things are likely to cost, what level of service will be expected by the community from various asset classes, and then to look across

that quite diverse range of demands on fixed resourcing and make allocation decisions on—

MS LE COUTEUR: Given that you are looking at the whole lot together and given that the expectations for different parts of the assets you are looking after are quite different, how do you make those decisions? Certainly you get people complaining about specific classes of assets not being maintained. There are a lot of complaints about footpaths. Probably each bit costs a lot less to maintain compared to a road. How do you work this out?

Mr Marshall: An important stage in the asset management process is setting levels of service. I think that is the part of the process that you are referring to. That is the process of identifying what community expectations will be, what the risks are that are associated with the various classes of assets and establishing a level of service. That level of service talks about intervention thresholds, both in terms of time and technical details. For example, in the path area we will talk about what relative risk is proposed to users by displacements that occur. And then we will establish a level of service that balances that risk against other risks across the portfolio.

MS LE COUTEUR: Is your level of service criteria publicly available, if that is the word to use for it?

Mr Marshall: The asset management plan, I believe, is a public document.

MS LE COUTEUR: I would find it somewhere on your website?

Ms Playford: We can take that on notice.

MS LE COUTEUR: I was going to ask later—and this is if you have got levels of service—about a constituent who complained a few months ago about a shared path and was told it would get fixed. They put some pickets there. The yellow tops have come off and the orange mesh has degraded. The constituent was told that it would be fixed, which it clearly has not. Is that an acceptable level of service?

Mr Marshall: It is difficult for me, obviously, to comment off the cuff on a very specific case. Clearly there is damage to the—

MS LE COUTEUR: I appreciate that you cannot comment on a specific case.

Mr Marshall: This is a problem that needs to be fixed, clearly. As to the time frames that it has taken or will take, I would have to investigate the circumstances of that particular case.

MS LE COUTEUR: What would you regard as a reasonable time frame for something like that? It is a well-used bike path. I am told it is actually at the bottom of a hill and sometimes people are going fast.

Mr Marshall: This defect is actually with the barriers, not with the path itself. Our path maintenance operational plan would not have a time frame on that.

MS LE COUTEUR: Who would be looking after this?

Mr Marshall: I would be hoping that we would address a defect like that as an immediate safety priority. The way that our program generally works is that, when an inspection is done, the inspector will make a determination on whether the defect presents an immediate safety risk. If so, we would expect a response in days, rather than weeks.

Those defects that are not identified as immediate safety concerns would potentially be packaged for more efficiency in large contracts. The procurement process that ensures value for money for those rectifications can take a little longer. But this certainly I would have expected to be identified as a safety concern and addressed very promptly. That has not happened.

MS LE COUTEUR: Possibly the problem is, as you said, that this was in fact because it was the barrier, not the actual path, and the problem belongs to someone else.

Mr Marshall: It is possible that there is some complexity around it, but without investigating the specifics of the case I could not comment.

MS LE COUTEUR: Do you have a condition report for the whole path network, reasonably recent?

Mr Marshall: The asset management plan sets a strategy for how condition assessment is done on the path network. That process is informed by a risk management approach. There are identified higher volume and higher risk areas relating to the age of the assets and the frequency of use. They are inspected on varying frequencies. The outputs of those inspections are recorded in our asset management system and the recommendations of the inspectors are logged and tracked in that system.

MS LE COUTEUR: Also on this page there is a reference to your Assetic asset management system. What is that, for a layperson?

Mr Marshall: The asset management system to which I refer is a computer-based system that records the outcomes of inspections, the recommendations, the—

MS LE COUTEUR: It is a software product that records the stuff, basically?

Mr Marshall: Yes. Assetic is the provider of the system that is currently being implemented to replace our previous asset management system.

MS LE COUTEUR: I will ask some QONs about any expenditure on various bits of this.

MS LAWDER: I want to ask about streetlights. We have had a full year of the new streetlight contract. Can you give me a feel for how it is going against the KPIs or whatever you have identified in the contract?

Mr Steel: The streetlight rollout has been going ahead of schedule. The contractor, led by Electrix, has been able to roll out more streetlights. We will be replacing just under half of the streetlights across the ACT, and they are ahead of schedule thus far, which means that the savings that are being generated are higher than we expected. I will hand over to Ken to provide some further detail about that.

Mr Marshall: A little over a year into the contract, 27,000 lights or thereabouts have been upgraded to LED. As the minister has pointed out, that is ahead of the original schedule. The core maintenance task is now delivering customer requests for maintenance services within the very tight time frames specified by the contract in over 90 per cent of cases. The vast majority of customer inquiries are being delivered within the specified time frames. For example, for a simple single luminaire replacement, it is two days.

MS LAWDER: That is, for example, if someone reports it via fix my street?

Mr Marshall: That is correct.

MS LAWDER: Does that start from when they press “enter” or is there another process? Does it have to be referred to the contractor?

Mr Marshall: From when the request is transmitted to the contractor, which is essentially instantaneous, via the electronic systems.

MS LAWDER: When I press “go”, it goes straight to the contractor and the two days start then?

Mr Marshall: Yes.

MS LAWDER: Is that what is in the contract—two days?

Mr Marshall: For that particular defect rectification. There are different time frames for different complexities of work. For example, often the sensitivity of customers is around the more complex problems. If we have an underground cable problem, that can take longer to fix, because there is the process of finding the exact location of the problem, and it can also affect multiple lights.

MS LAWDER: What is the KPI for those cable kind of—

Mr Marshall: I do not recall the exact number of days, but the order of magnitude is 15 days or thereabouts.

MS LAWDER: How is the progress going against that KPI?

Mr Marshall: They are included in that figure that I previously quoted.

MS LAWDER: Are you able to break it down by the single maintenance request versus the more complex ones and how they are going against KPIs?

Mr Marshall: I would have to do that on notice.

MS LAWDER: Take it on notice?

Mr Marshall: Yes.

MS LAWDER: You are unable to say whether, for example, with the more complex issues, they are meeting the KPI at the moment. You are not able to confirm or—

Mr Marshall: I can say that in the vast majority of cases, customer inquiries are met within the required time frames under the contract.

Mr Steel: For the simple streetlight faults, the time has been greatly reduced from what was previously the benchmark, which has been a really great outcome under this contract. Also, through the introduction of the smart LED lights, when they go out we will actually know, without a customer necessarily having to inform us through fix my street or Access Canberra. One of the benefits and why we like to see LED streetlights rolled out throughout the network is that we know when they have gone out. We did not previously know unless someone got in contact with us or TCCS officers were actually seeing that occur.

THE CHAIR: Would you be able to take on notice, if it is not too much trouble, how many complaints we have received from the public in the 2018-19 year compared to the 2017-18 year about streetlights being out? Certainly, in my office, it has gone from being probably the number one or two issue to not being an issue. I would be very interested to see those stats.

Mr Marshall: We would be able to provide the number of requests for service that we have received. The number that become a complaint is a little more complex.

THE CHAIR: The request for service is what I mean, where someone has said it is out.

Mr Marshall: Yes.

MS LAWDER: There was initially a bit of a backlog. Has that backlog all been cleared now?

Mr Marshall: As of this week there were, I am told, 430 outstanding requests. To put that in context, typically we receive something like 300 a week, so that is a little over a week's worth. That is completely under control and reflected by the statistics of 93 per cent of customer requests being serviced within the contract required time.

MS LAWDER: If someone reports a streetlight out, if that street has been scheduled to have the streetlights replaced with the new ones, does the malfunctioning streetlight get replaced or do you say, "The whole street will be done in a few months, so we're not going to come and replace it"?

Mr Marshall: In some circumstances, if a light is scheduled for replacement anyway, that may influence the contractor's decision about how to rectify a defect, but the contractual time frames remain. The contractor may choose to replace the light rather

than repair it, but the time frame that is required is not affected.

Mr Steel: As of October, 30 per cent of the streetlights have been replaced in the ACT and there is a 32 per cent energy saving, which is three per cent more than we forecast by that time period.

MS LAWDER: On light towers, the ones that have the mobile phone things on them as well—is that what you call them, light towers?

Mr Marshall: That will do; telecommunications towers, I guess.

MS LAWDER: Are there many where people have reported that the lights are out on those towers? Is the same company responsible for those?

Mr Marshall: Some of those telecommunications columns are problematic from our point of view. Typically, the arrangement is that those columns will belong to the relevant telecommunications provider, and on some occasions they will host a streetlight which belongs to TCCS. That obviously complicates questions of access and questions of maintenance responsibility. Where issues are related to the column or are exacerbated by maintenance issues related to the column, that obviously requires liaison between TCCS and the column owner. That can complicate the repairs. Our preference is to avoid that arrangement where possible.

MS LAWDER: I am aware there are a number in Tuggeranong where the lights are out. I have been told that, for example, equipment has to come from interstate to assist with changing those lights. Was this not thought of when you entered into the agreement to have those telecommunications light towers?

Mr Marshall: It would clearly have been taken into account—the degree to which maintenance is complicated by the arrangements. That would have been weighed up against, for example, the objective of reducing the number of roadside hazards by reducing the number of columns. There is a balance that has to be made there.

MS LAWDER: Are they part of your system so that you know if the lights are out on those towers?

Mr Marshall: If they have been upgraded and are connected to the communications network, potentially yes, but not necessarily in all cases.

MS LAWDER: What percentage of them would be connected to your new system now?

Mr Steel: Thirty per cent of all streetlights, but we might be able to get a breakdown in terms of the telecommunications towers.

MS LAWDER: In some cases it has been quite some time and, with the lights in roundabouts, for example, I know there are traffic safety issues, but the light is important in those areas. It has been quite some time, according to some of my constituents. It seems a bit bizarre that you have to wait for the telecommunications provider to fix your own streetlight asset.

Mr Marshall: Without knowing the specifics of the case, it is difficult to say, but in some of those circumstances, clearly, there can be complicating factors that make a repair more difficult than other more standard repairs.

MS LAWDER: Could you take on notice how many you are aware of where the lights are out, how long each of those was out for and/or an average? I am aware of quite a few in Tuggeranong that are out and have been out for some time. If it is happening there, it may well be happening in other parts of Canberra as well.

Mr Marshall: Yes.

MS LAWDER: Thank you.

THE CHAIR: While I think of it, Ms Le Couteur, do you have another copy of that image that you can table, just so that we have it?

MS LE COUTEUR: Sure. I have it electronically as well. I can send it separately, if you wish.

THE CHAIR: Thanks very much. I have some supps on the lights. There has been some commentary—I think even a Facebook group started—about the impact of the emissions or the light emitted from the new streetlights and what standards they meet, and whether the light that is being emitted has been impacting local wildlife. Is there any comment you can give us about that?

Mr Steel: The new LED streetlights are highly directional so they have less light pollution emitted around the area of the light. We have been responsive to concerns raised by residents about light pollution. Treatments can be put on streetlights in particular cases to stop light being directed into a neighbouring property, for example.

We are keen to build on the technology that has been rolled out through the contract. One of the benefits that we may look at in the future is the use of dimming, actually dimming the lights in cases where they may not be needed, for example when there is no traffic going past and in the dead of night. Through the streetlight network that we are rolling out, we have the capability of potentially using that dimming technology in the future. That would not only provide energy savings but also reduce the need to have so much light at a time when we know that nocturnal species like it to be dark.

I will pass over to Ken to provide some further detail on the LED lights and the nature of the light that is emitted by the luminaries.

Mr Marshall: The selection of the light colour, in particular, was carefully considered in the contract negotiation phase. I think that is, to some degree, the difference that you are referring to that people are noticing. Light temperature is measured in degrees kelvin, in temperature degrees. That is because it represents the temperature of a body that emits that colour of light. Lower temperature bodies emit red and orange light; they are the lower temperature lights, a bit counterintuitively. A higher temperature light is the blue and violet end of the spectrum. People think of orange light as warm, but technically we refer to orange light as cool light.

Many of our older technology lights emit quite low temperature light, quite orange light. That is probably what people in some areas are used to. The selection of light colour for the new LEDs is a balance, like so many things are, between the road safety impact of accurate colour rendering, so that the world looks realistic in terms of the way colours are represented in daylight versus under street lighting, and energy efficiency. LED lights tend to produce light at a higher temperature and somewhat more efficiently than at lower temperatures, so there is a balance in terms of the power consumption of the light but, more importantly, there is a balance in the comfort of the light. People tend to like the more red and orange lights, and some people find very blue or very violet light quite offensive. There is a balance to be struck between those competing objectives.

THE CHAIR: But even if they are offensive, they are potentially providing greater safety in terms of visibility?

Mr Marshall: Our objective was to pick the point on that spectrum that gives the best balance. We settled on 4,000 degrees Kelvin, which is a slightly higher temperature than some of the old technology lights, but still somewhat cooler, so somewhat redder, than natural sunlight. That was on guidance from the industry, from our contractor, but also from national standards.

The Australian standard on street lighting recommends that streetlights should be no more than 4,000 degrees Kelvin, and that is the temperature, the colour, on which we settled in that process. We think that it gives a good balance of realistic colour rendering, so good visibility of line marking and road signage, at the same time avoiding the really offensive blue-violet end of the range, which typically people start to find offensive at about 6,000 or 7,000 degrees kelvin.

THE CHAIR: As the minister mentioned, there are potential opportunities to dim those lights in certain areas or to provide shrouding if it is affecting someone or an area?

Mr Marshall: Absolutely. There is a range of possibilities for interventions. Firstly, as the minister pointed out, LED lights are, to start with, more directional than the older technology, so there is less light spill, albeit in some cases possibly a different colour of light spill. There is less light spill than older lights, but we still have the ability to put shrouds and shades on lights to very selectively prevent light pollution from impacting on residences.

THE CHAIR: If we get people asking us about this, where do they go? Do we just write to the minister about this?

Mr Marshall: They could simply make contact with us through fix my street and we will send an officer out to investigate. We have a range of options that we can use to intervene.

Mr Steel: If you mean technology in terms of having a smart streetlight system and automatic dimming depending on whether a vehicle is passing through a street, that is a future technology. There is still quite a bit of work that needs to be done from a

national point of view on standards as to how that might operate. The technology that we are rolling out can be used with that dimming technology; we just need to work through how that might operate in a street environment: what streets might be appropriate for that type of technology to operate with the benefits of energy savings and also reducing the amount of light in the environment more generally.

MS LE COUTEUR: Are you aware of the research being done by XYX Lab with ARA engineers which is looking at data about women's safety; how safe women felt in public spaces? They said that women often find that brighter spaces are not perceived as being safer because the light drops away reasonably quickly from that area and it takes your eyes a while to adapt. Also, relevant to what Ms Cheyne was talking about, they said that the more a colour's light deviated from natural daylight, the less safe women felt. They found it, as you suggested, harder to work out what on earth it was they were actually seeing. With safety issues for pedestrians—be they male or female, but the work here has been done with women—is that something that you are looking at?

Mr Steel: I think that that report only came out a week or two ago.

MS LE COUTEUR: I appreciate that it is quite recent, yes.

Mr Steel: I am aware of it but I have not had the opportunity to look at it in detail. I am sure that the officials are in a similar position in that regard. It is certainly very interesting research and proves, particularly with perceptions around safety, that they are not necessarily influenced by the brightness of light. That is something we can take on board when we are looking at treatments.

We are still interested in the work that is being done by the Women's Centre for Health Matters on their survey of perceptions of safety, particularly around public transport. That includes lighting treatments around path connections, bus stops and the like. I think all of that work will inform the work that the department is doing around improvements to safety.

Mr Marshall: I think the choices that we have made, while that research was not available to us at the time, are, on the face of it, not inconsistent. The objective of the contract was to replace like for like in terms of light intensity. There is no increase in the level of lighting. The difference that people are perceiving is the difference in colour. The difference in colour moves us closer towards natural light; therefore we are getting better colour rendering and more realistic lighting.

MS LE COUTEUR: I am not necessarily suggesting that you are going backwards. All I am saying is that, given that we are putting in new things, we could go forward more. Thank you; I am glad you are aware of this report, and hopefully you will act on it.

THE CHAIR: I will go to my substantive, which is about car parking and traffic modelling. Last week I asked both EPSDD and SLA what is going on in the town centre of Belconnen. There is a major car park across from the Belconnen community centre and Access Canberra that is also a park-and-ride facility. It was supposed to be up for sale at the end of this year but I am told that it will be at the start of the next

calendar year.

Equally, it is about the capacity of the roads in the town centre to continue to withstand the number of households that are coming online with some of these developments. I am particularly referencing Chandler Street, College Street and Chan Street. Both of them referred me to you, and said that TCCS was doing work on car parking and the modelling there, as well as some traffic studies. I am keen to know about this.

Mr Steel: We work closely with EPSDD on parking policy, through a working group on parking which is looking at parking issues right across the city. Certainly, we know that in Belconnen a large number of developments are occurring in the town centre. While many of those developments will provide extra parking to the public, the sequencing of those projects means that at various times in the future there will be more or less parking available, particularly in that area around Chandler Street where we have the Belconnen community centre, the library, Access Canberra and, as you mentioned, the park-and-ride facility. I will hand over to Geoffrey Davidson to provide some further detail on the work that is being undertaken in relation to Belconnen.

Mr Davidson: In relation to Belconnen, you are right; there is quite a bit of activity happening there, with urban intensification in that town centre. We work closely with both EPSDD and the developers. There is a range of requirements that developers or builders must meet when they are doing the developments. For the DA there will often be a requirement for mixed use developments and commercial developments to lodge a traffic impact assessment study. So that is considered.

With one of the sites that you are talking about on Cameron Avenue, with the DA there was a requirement for the developer to deliver some offsite works to deal with the traffic impacts and to provide for active travel connections within the vicinity of that development.

There is a range of ways in which we work with developers, builders, to address the traffic and transport impacts of their developments. That might include modelling. For that site some microsimulation has been undertaken to mimic the traffic and transport movements post the development. It considers what demand might be generated through the development on that site. There is also a requirement for replacement car parking where a development is happening on the site of an existing car park.

THE CHAIR: With the one on Swanson Court, the very large car park that is also a park-and-ride facility, how will that work? Where will the park-and-ride facility be?

Mr Davidson: Some previous work has been undertaken, so we have a short list of future park-and-ride sites. Some of it might be through repurposing of the existing car parks. For example, there are some car parks that are already in proximity to buses, and rapid buses in particular, so it can just be through signage to repurpose existing car parks to provide for a replacement park-and-ride provision for people. We work through with people to look at what the impacts might be and to implement either temporary or replacement solutions to deal with the impacts of those developments.

THE CHAIR: I note that you are speaking very generally.

Mr Davidson: Yes. I cannot tell you exactly with that one, but I could take that on notice and provide you with what we are planning to do in that space.

THE CHAIR: I would very much appreciate that.

Mr Steel: With the park and ride, we are currently developing a park-and-ride strategy, looking at the placement of new park and rides around the city. We are looking at places particularly where parking is not at a premium and are along those rapid routes, so that people can utilise park and rides.

The north Weston park and ride is one example. It is not in an area where people are having to go to work or do shopping. Those car parks are really just there for a park-and-ride purpose but they are on a rapid route in a convenient location. When we are looking at Belconnen, we will certainly be thinking about what the best locations in Belconnen for park and ride are, especially with the new rapids that are running through Belconnen. Is directly in the town centre the best place for a park and ride in Belconnen? Maybe it is; we just have to do that work. There is certainly the opportunity to have additional park and rides in other locations around Belconnen as well, closer to those rapid routes.

THE CHAIR: In terms of traffic modelling and road load, the Republic development is rapidly coming online; there is a new hotel at the Labor Club. As well as this car park site, there is another site nearby, next to the gymnasium and Chatterbox cafe. Also, the Morris Property Group have signalled that they are going to develop some national capital land. How much can the roads in that area bear? Can they bear all of that development, not just in terms of weight but in terms of traffic?

Mr Davidson: There are different layers of modelling that we have available. At the highest level there is the Canberra strategic transport model, which is a very powerful tool that was developed in the early 2000s. That tool includes land use data, population data and employment data. It is a very powerful tool for forecasting demand across the city. That allows us to help plan our capital works programs and optimisation of the network.

That tool was really important with planning for urban intensification. We then have other layers of modelling, and in the middle we have mesoscopic models that are commissioned for different projects. For light rail stages 1 and 2, for example, mesoscopic models have been developed to assess the operational impacts or the things that we need to do on the ground to look at the performance of individual intersections. At the very bottom layer of modelling there is the microsimulation, which is what has been undertaken to assess the impacts of the Republic development that you mentioned.

There are different levels of modelling capability and there are different uses for that. At the strategic level, it is very much about forecasting demand. With the other layers of modelling, that allows us to analyse the performance of the network, even at individual intersections, and we can start to run different scenarios to see what things we need to do to deliver through our capital works program or to optimise the

performance of the network to support the intensification.

THE CHAIR: We have run out of time, but are you able to take on notice what the impact of the Republic development is?

Mr Davidson: I can.

THE CHAIR: I am very keen to know whether there has been further work about the impact of all of those sites coming online.

Mr Davidson: Sure, thank you.

THE CHAIR: We will now suspend for 15 minutes for morning tea.

Hearing suspended from 10.47 to 11 am.

THE CHAIR: We will now hear from the Minister for City Services and Minister for Recycling and Waste Reduction, Chris Steel, and his officers. First up we have the ACT Public Cemeteries Authority.

MISS C BURCH: Minister, on 9 February the *Canberra Times* reported that the proposed Southern Memorial Park would start in a few months and would have 60,000 burial sites. When is it expected to be operational?

Mr Steel: The design is underway for Southern Memorial Park, which is on a site located on Long Gully Road. That work is underway. A master plan was conducted several years ago in relation to SMP. The timing of construction is really dependent on the design and also the staging of the site. With Woden Cemetery being at capacity in terms of new interments, it is our intention to have the Southern Memorial Park built, and that design work is underway through the ACT Public Cemeteries Authority.

Mr Bartos: Southern Memorial Park was the subject of extensive consultation around six years ago. A quite detailed master plan was developed for the site. A number of elements of that master plan remain valid. But as time goes on, communities' attitudes do change, so I think there will be a need to further test what the community is looking for on that site. Also potentially we need to look at what the trends are with the other cemeteries, namely Gungahlin and Woden, in putting together Southern Memorial Park as part of a portfolio of three different publicly owned cemeteries in the ACT. As the minister said, money has been set aside for further detailed planning work and that is now underway.

MISS C BURCH: When you say there may be a need to further test what the community wants from the site, what are you referring to? What different options are you considering there?

Mr Steel: This is an element of planning for it. I am not saying that there will be significant changes to the master plan, but in the event that there were we would probably want to go out and test those and have a further round of consultations. That is subject to the planning work which is currently underway.

MISS C BURCH: Why has the commencement been delayed?

Mr Steel: The announcement was in relation to funding that was provided through the midyear review to do the design work. That design work is now underway. The construction is dependent on that design work progressing. Of course this is something that the community would like us to do and we are keen to get on with the work.

We were out on site recently. It is a very large site. It does have some constraints, like yellow box grassy woodland, but there are opportunities to incorporate some of those natural elements into the cemetery design and provide for, for example, natural burials more than has been done in other cemeteries. Gungahlin is a great example of a grass cemetery and Woden is a great example of a garden cemetery. There is potentially an opportunity to do something a bit different at Southern Memorial Park as well as providing some of the more traditional elements that people might expect in a cemetery.

We have announced that we will be opening funding through the cemeteries trust for a crematorium at Gungahlin Cemetery, and we are still considering the provision of a crematorium at Southern Memorial Park as part of future plans as well.

MR MILLIGAN: What was the decision behind building a public crematorium alongside the private crematorium in Mitchell?

Mr Steel: Gungahlin Cemetery has existed in that location in Mitchell for many years. When we consulted with the community on their needs around cemeteries and crematoria in the ACT last year, what we heard from the community was that the current crematorium in the ACT was not necessarily meeting all of the cultural and religious needs of the community. There was also a very strong view put by the community, actually in an unsolicited way, that they would like to see a publicly run crematorium in the ACT. Consulting with the ACT Public Cemeteries Authority, a proposal was put forward to operate a public crematorium on the Gungahlin site. We are proceeding with that.

Further consultation will take place, particularly with some of the cultural groups whose needs are not currently being met on how we can make sure that those are supported with the new crematorium. For example, the Hindu, Sikh and Jain communities have particular needs in relation to performing last rites, with usually the eldest male child involved in starting the crematorium process and the cremation. We are hoping that we can cover off on that with the new crematorium. With Southern Memorial Park in the future, if a crematorium is provided there as well we will be wanting to try to meet those needs there that are not currently being met in the ACT and are seeing some people having to go interstate for funerals, which also causes a problem from a cultural perspective, because often at the moment people cannot get in within a certain time frame to have a funeral, and it needs to be done as soon as possible in many of these communities.

Mr Bartos: The ACT Cemeteries Authority has for a long time been of the view that in order to properly meet the needs of the ACT community it would be desirable for the authority to be able to provide cremation services. That is in part due to

community preferences, which are trending away from burials. The long-term trend in burials is on a gradual decline and cremations are on a gradual increase.

The ACT is massively underserviced in terms of cremation facilities compared with, for example, New South Wales, where there is a crematorium per 125,000 head of population. The ACT has only the one crematorium for our entire population and, as a result, that facility is under pressure. We are aware that there are time delays. Even though it is a privately-run facility and nothing to do with the ACT authority, we do on occasion hear about what is happening there from people who are unhappy with, for example, delays or with the problems of having that limited facility. It is limited simply by the fact that our population is much bigger than can be handled by one crematorium.

That is the basic thinking behind why the ACT needs this additional facility. Why is it being provided by the ACT Public Cemeteries Authority? That, again, reflects the community feedback that people wanted it to be provided by the Public Cemeteries Authority.

MR MILLIGAN: Did the government consult with the existing private facility in Mitchell prior to making this decision? Did you offer any support for that private facility to expand its services or whatever to cater for the religious needs and cultural needs of the community?

Mr Steel: That facility has been operating for some time and would be, I am sure, consulting with its own clients around their needs. But what came through the public feedback that was provided through the consultation process that we undertook was the real view that we should be running a public crematorium. We are the only jurisdiction in Australia that does not have one. So I think that it makes sense and is a fairly uncontroversial decision to make to be able to go into that space. The principles that we will apply with the new crematorium will be around competitive neutrality. That will be built into the model as we go forward and ensure that the two can operate simultaneously.

There also has been some discussion about another operator coming in, potentially led by the funeral director company InvoCare, as well. They have certainly indicated that they want to go into the market. As soon as we had made the decision we informed the privately operated crematorium in the ACT of that decision.

MR MILLIGAN: But did you consult with them before that decision?

Mr Steel: We consulted with the community around their needs.

MR MILLIGAN: Did you consult with the private facility though, with the private crematorium?

Mr Steel: Yes, and at the earliest opportunity we provided them with a notification of our decision.

THE CHAIR: And they did appear before the inquiry that you were on.

MR MILLIGAN: Yes.

Mr Corrigan: In addition to what the minister and Mr Bartos outlined with the community consultation, we undertook a market-sounding process as well around which of the various elements of the business would be of interest to other operators. We cast the net reasonably wide, and only a certain number of groups came forward. But we certainly consulted Norwood Park as part of that process, as well as some other operators. In addition there is another group who are looking also on the south side, on Mugga Lane. We are aware of that but we are not sure of the current status of that. We took a bit of time and we used a third party to help us with this and to look at some of the business models and things like that as well.

MR MILLIGAN: Why did you decide to build a second one on the north side, beside another crematorium, instead of building that public one on the south side?

Mr Steel: Obviously the timing of the southern memorial park was one factor as it will take some time for it to be developed while we go through this design phase and through construction of the various potential stages in the future. Gungahlin cemetery is already operating and has room for a site. But we also know that these crematorium facilities are actually quite flexible. They can be moved if the need moves as well.

Clearly there is a demand for services in Canberra. It is in a good location. It is accessible to the community in Mitchell and also has the variety of other services around it, both interment services for ashes and also for burials. The variety of services there complemented the crematorium, and that was why we have decided to deliver it there. Stephen can provide some further detail as well.

Mr Bartos: If I could add to that, as we indicated in response to Ms C Burch, southern memorial park is not built. It is in planning. At present the ACT Public Cemeteries Authority operates three cemeteries: Hall, which is subject to both environment and heritage restrictions; Woden, which again is subject to heritage controls; and Gungahlin.

Of those three cemeteries, the only one that is really suitable for placement of a crematorium is Gungahlin. Woden, for heritage reasons but also because of proximity to residential suburbs, is ruled out. Hall, because it is a very small rural and environmentally sensitive cemetery, is ruled out. The only practical option in response to the community demand for the authority to have a crematorium is siting it at Gungahlin.

MR MILLIGAN: On the Hall cemetery, what was the nature of the environmental issue and what was the financial impact on the development of that site?

Mr Bartos: At Hall there is a rare and endangered orchid that grows there. In one of the great ironies of modern environmental management, the reason why this endangered orchid has flourished at Hall is that it was used as the cemetery and the space was mown, which allowed the orchid to grow there.

MR MILLIGAN: By accident?

Mr Bartos: But it has now grown there. There are only a few other locations where this orchid is found in Australia. One of them is actually another cemetery in, I think, the Yass area. Because of that, the authority can no longer conduct burials at Hall. There are some reservations where there will be burials for people who have already reserved a plot. The use of that space for expanding into large numbers of further burials is effectively ruled out by the presence of that orchid.

MS LAWDER: Referring to page 20, volume 2, of the annual report, under table 4 it says:

The legislative arrangements for the management of PCT funds still leave the future outcomes for the Authority in some doubt. Without changes to these arrangements this will continue to be the case.

Can you expand upon what changes might be required and what the government is doing in response to this?

Mr Steel: We are bringing some changes forward later in the year that respond to our consultation. There will be some further detail provided once that is publicly notified. I will pass over to Jim to talk a little about what this means.

Mr Corrigan: The perpetual care arrangements exist for all facilities in the ACT. They are quite complex in how they are set up as well. With the feedback and advice of the cemeteries authority particularly, the PCTs are there to build the resources needed to manage the cemeteries now, the maintenance, but also in perpetuity going forward. In the ACT obviously, under law, all interments are perpetual. There is an unfunded liability there, and that is growing of course as each year we have to maintain all the graves that are there and we have got all the ones being added in and those sorts of things. There is a bit of complexity with managing those.

We have advised the authority and others, as the minister alluded to, that, in the review of the Cemeteries and Crematorium Act which is currently underway, the proposal is to simplify those arrangements a bit and allow a bit more flexibility in how the resources in the perpetual care trusts are moved around to meet certain needs. Relevant to that as well is that this is one of the reasons why a public crematorium—in addition to what the minister and Mr Barr were outlining about how it is good for the community—is also good for the authority as well because at the moment the authority's business is just in interments, graves. It allows them to expand as well.

MS LAWDER: Is there a potential that the charges will be higher in order to try to fund some of the liability?

Mr Corrigan: We could not answer that now. The charges are set as they are now. It is a complex area because there is actuarial analysis and that may be needed again. We did one some years ago but that was prior to the Woden cemetery decision and those sorts of things. This is a long answer to your question. We would not be able to predict that.

The charges have got to be sensible, and Mr Barr responded to this as well. You have got to keep them manageable, accessible for people. We cannot turn people away,

those sorts of things. It is a complex area. But the liability is there. It is growing. These mechanisms are being looked at: how the trusts are run, operated and managed and flexibility in them for public crematoriums, these things to assist addressing that liability.

MS LAWDER: Can you confirm that you have a very logical wish to fulfil the requirements of some cultural and religious groups with regard to burials? You mentioned its competitive neutrality. Your intention is not to undercut the private provider, which is almost next door, in the same suburb? Is that correct?

Mr Steel: Yes. The government has a competitive neutrality policy and the work that we are doing in developing this crematorium will be based on those principles. As part of that we have announced that the ICRC will have a role in providing recommendations around the pricing for cremation and of course the implications and how the cemeteries authority reports on the crematorium as well as part of its financial report.

This is based not only on just meeting the needs of cultural and religious groups in our community but also on the growing need in the community for these services. One crematorium for a city that is going to have 500,000 people in 2020 is not enough, and that is causing some real problems in being able to get in to conduct cremations and funerals.

It is about addressing the whole needs of the community and the work that the cemeteries authority has done. Benchmarking our approach with other jurisdictions basically shows that there is capacity for about three or four crematoriums in the ACT at the moment, and that may grow in the future as well.

THE CHAIR: I have questions that probably fall to Mr Corrigan. It is about a year since I first raised the issue of ashes that were missing at Norwood. I very much appreciate how seriously TCCS took this, but there was an audit carried out. Thankfully, despite other people coming forward, the ashes were found except for the very tragic case of Eddy Mol. I appreciate that you made that report public. There were quite a significant number of recommendations for Norwood. I am keen to know how Norwood is tracking with those recommendations.

Mr Steel: The independent audit made six recommendations which focused on Norwood Park. I will hand over to Jim to talk about exactly how those recommendations are tracking and the conversations with Norwood Park.

Mr Corrigan: In summary, it is going well. Norwood Park have been very responsive to this, which is great news. The very first recommendation was about providing letters to the families who initially came forward about their missing ashes. They have been closed out. Norwood Park has not only written to them but in two cases actually met and sat down with the families.

In relation to the discrepancies in their record keeping from the relocation of the children's memorial wall, we have asked them to investigate it. They are due to report back on that this month. We have written back to them. They know that. They are prepared, but we have not got it yet. It is mid-November. We have not received the

response yet, but we have been in contact with them about that, and they are working towards that.

That is the same recommendation around the review of the records when they wrote to all the families when they were relocating the wall in 1992. They are looking to that as well. That is all part of the November response. That will come back as the next group.

THE CHAIR: There was a public report that initially they had pushed back against that recommendation because they did not want to upset further families.

Mr Corrigan: Yes. We have noted that. They have raised a legitimate issue there. In 1992 when the children's memorial wall was moved, they wrote to all the families—I think was 80-something families—affected when that wall was relocated. A lot of the letters were “Return to sender”, so they were not able to contact the families. We said that it would be good to look through that, because we thought that at that time—and it was a previous owner of Norwood Park in 1992, some time ago—it probably could have been handled better.

We asked them to look into that. They came back and said that with other experience and in terms of other facilities' experience, when you go back over that amount of time and go back to a family, it resurrects all that grief. They said that they will look into it and come back to us as part of the response in November. But they have said that maybe it is not the wisest thing to do. We have noted that; we will look at that. It is a difficult one, and I think there is a bit of merit to what they are suggesting around that, about going back to 1992.

THE CHAIR: Equally, we want to avoid what happened with one family where they turned up and could not find their memorial because it had been moved and they did not know.

Mr Corrigan: It is a balance, yes.

THE CHAIR: That was pretty distressing.

Mr Corrigan: Highly distressing. The further discrepancies that our audit picked up, though, do not mean that more ashes were missing. There were only the three. As you know, two were located. Unfortunately, Mr Mol's son has never been located. That is a tragic outcome of this. We looked at the discrepancies and it did not lead us to believe that there were any more missing ashes. That is why we thought we would note that.

THE CHAIR: I still think that if someone thought that the ashes were somewhere, whether they were put there 30 or 40 years ago, and then a family member went there now and was surprised that there was something built there and they had been moved, reasonable attempts are still worth while.

Norwood was given three months to formalise policies and standard operating procedures for the management of ashes and to report back to TCCS given that they had none.

Mr Corrigan: That is complete. They have completed that. They have procedures and policies in place. The other thing we asked them to do was to have a complaints-handling procedure put in place. They have done that, which is good.

With the last one, we gave them a longer time frame. That was around the database itself. We gave them 12 months to consider the database and whether it is still supportable from a technical point of view. They have come back, and it is, but they are making upgrades as well. So they are onto that as well; they are meeting their time frames there.

THE CHAIR: What is the government doing to ensure that this does not ever happen again?

Mr Corrigan: With the review of the Cemeteries and Crematoria Act, with the outcomes of this investigation, we are developing some new clauses in the legislation about regulating cemeteries and crematoriums in the ACT, about mandatory and auditable record keeping, annual audits and things like this. I will not go into all the detail now, because that is still being developed. It is still going through for the minister to eventually table in the Assembly.

The proposed bill will contain a range of proposals to regulate cemeteries and crematoriums so that we do not have this occurring again. That goes from annual checking for the regulator to the authorities themselves or the cemetery owners themselves, self-checking all the time and auditing their own record keeping.

THE CHAIR: Page 52 shows the total cost or the total revenue for sales of the different services, product offerings. Is there a breakdown of how many burials there were, how many plaques were issued and how many memorials were set up? I am just curious. There could be lots and lots of plaques, but maybe plaques are more expensive than burials. Without the breakdown it is hard to tell.

Mr Steel: I might take that on notice. Having seen the long list of services that are offered by the cemeteries authority, I know that it is huge. We will see what we can provide in terms of a breakdown of those costs.

Mr Bartos: We can provide that. There is some information presented in the form of graphs and charts, but I do not think there is a table with numbers, from memory.

THE CHAIR: Presumably the stuff on page 52 has been populated from something.

Ms Addison: Yes, that is right, consolidated.

THE CHAIR: That must exist somewhere. We will move to the veterinary practitioners board and the animal welfare authority.

MISS C BURCH: Is the Animal Welfare Authority concerned about the increase in dog attacks that we have seen in Canberra on other animals in the ACT and about the welfare of the animals experiencing attacks?

Mr Steel: We of course respond to each individual dog attack and treat it very seriously. Those are investigated by domestic animal services and we respond in each case. Whether it is by seizing the animal and potentially resolving it, depending on the circumstances, by those animals being put down, we respond to all attacks. The new Canberra dog model is an important part of the work we are doing to try to minimise the number of dog attacks occurring in the community, with a focus on responsible dog ownership. That complements our strong dog laws that have been in place since December 2017, which have been working in terms of providing domestic animal services with the powers they need to be able to investigate these dog attacks. We are currently working on the implementation of the Canberra dog model, which has a range of different actions in it.

Ms Oldfield: If we look at the statistics over the past three years, and of course 2019 is just the year to date, the number of attacks is generally consistent. We might see an additional number of reports, but the number of attacks has remained—we have not seen a big increase in that. We do, as the minister noted, take the responsibility related to dangerous dogs very seriously. So we do what is appropriate, whether it is declaring the animal dangerous, sending it home under a control order or whatever the appropriate treatment is.

MISS C BURCH: Of all of the human-preventable animal injuries that we see in Canberra, would cats and dogs cause the most injuries to other animals?

Ms Oldfield: I do not have those statistics in front of me. I could take that on notice.

MISS C BURCH: Thank you. Why has the government opted for a management arrangement where a public servant has been made the Animal Welfare Authority with staffing provided from the directorate?

Mr Corrigan: Is it the governance arrangement you are querying? That is not an unusual governance approach to take. If the legislation sets up and says they can appoint an authority, the authority with those powers could be the Director-General or could be another public servant, and functions can be delegated to other officers. That is not an uncommon approach. Is it a concern that you are—

MISS C BURCH: I would just like to understand why that decision has been made. What was the rationale underpinning that decision?

Mr Steel: I suppose it is associated with the legislation that was set up.

Mr Corrigan: In the case of animal welfare, as with domestic animal services, whilst we have other providers like the RSPCA who will investigate animal welfare issues and things like that, at the end of the day the government deals with the really serious matters, particularly around dogs and things like that. That is an expectation the public put on us, and that is fine. We accept that that is the way it should be. As a consequence, that is the governance arrangement the government has chosen at the time. The relevant directorate of the public service will have that responsibility and delegate their officers to carry out the function.

MISS C BURCH: Do you think that it does not isolate the minister from making

difficult decisions?

Mr Steel: What it does is that it appropriately defines the decision-making process around what are operational matters that have to be dealt with at the operational level. As Jim has outlined, we are seen as a provider of these services as a last resort. We are working closely with the RSPCA on defining areas of responsibility, particularly in relation to domestic animal services's focus on dogs and the RSPCA's rehoming responsibilities in relation to cats, particularly, and other animals. We are improving the clarity of that corporate area of responsibility.

MS LAWDER: I notice that, for example, the veterinary board has the names and qualifications of the members but you do not have that for the Animal Welfare Advisory Committee. Is there a reason for that?

Mr Steel: Not specifically, but we can provide that to the committee on notice.

MS LAWDER: Can you also provide, with respect to the nine meetings which took place during the year, which of those people attended which meetings?

Mr Steel: Yes.

MS LAWDER: Thank you. On the RSPCA funding agreement, when is the current service funding agreement due to expire?

Ms Oldfield: We initiated the current service funding agreement in October of this year and it will go through the rest of the financial year. It is regular for us to have one every year with the RSPCA to, as the minister noted, work through and stay current with the RSPCA on where we see obligations best sitting between the two entities. As you are probably aware, the RSPCA is specifically listed as an animal welfare entity under the Animal Welfare Act. That is why our relationship with them is unique.

MS LAWDER: Is it usually a one-year funding arrangement?

Ms Oldfield: That is how we have been doing it in the past, yes.

MS LAWDER: For how long has that been the case?

Mr Corrigan: We will get specifics to you as a question on notice, but we have had a good working relationship with the RSPCA for a long time. That is where the government—

MS LAWDER: So it does not cause them some concern in terms of uncertainty of funding or—

Mr Corrigan: No, not at all. We have a great working relationship. Ms Oldfield was pointing to how we work with them. They manage animal welfare matters. We are very active in the domestic animal space. They regulate a range of people across the ACT. They keep an eye on us, which is good. We appreciate that as well.

MS LAWDER: Authorised inspectors—is that the right term?

Mr Corrigan: Yes.

MS LAWDER: You had four RSPCA staff and police officers and 44 ACT government staff. Is there any specific training or qualification required to become one of those inspectors?

Ms Oldfield: I can speak for the domestic animal services rangers we have and the responsibilities they have. We do have a very comprehensive training program for our rangers and our senior rangers that will give them the complete set of skills that they need. Through the hiring process we look for potential employees who have relevant backgrounds in that space, but we do have a very comprehensive training program.

MS LAWDER: Is that a mandatory training program, irrespective of what background you have come from, or—

Ms Oldfield: All new employees will go through a training program to make sure that they are fully aware of their responsibilities and obligations under the act and specifically focus on compliance and community safety as well as animal welfare.

MS LAWDER: In terms of animal behaviour, for example, is that compulsory?

Ms Oldfield: We do include an animal behaviour portion in our training program. We have recently done a bit of a revamp of our training program to ensure that we include all the required elements.

MS LAWDER: Is that compulsory?

Ms Oldfield: Correct.

MS LAWDER: So all staff would have completed that?

Ms Oldfield: Or will be in the process of going through that training, yes.

MS LAWDER: Is there a period from the commencement of their employment when they have to have completed this compulsory training—in three months, six months, 12 months?

Ms Oldfield: That is something that I would need to refresh on as to some of the specifics, but all employees will be required to have that training.

MS LAWDER: Thank you, if you could; and whether there are any staff outstanding who have not yet completed that training. Do you provide any training to the police in regard to animal behaviour, animal welfare?

Ms Oldfield: We work very closely with the AFP on matters as required. I am not familiar with their particular training.

MS LAWDER: So is that a no; you do not provide training?

Ms Oldfield: That is right.

Mr Corrigan: No, we would not, because there are different responsibilities. We work closely with them. We have an MOU with the AFP. We ask for their assistance when it is a really serious matter; sometimes we might have a dangerous dog, dangerous owner. Vice versa, the AFP will contact us if they have to. If, as part of their business, they know that there is a dog there, they will call on our people to help because our people are skilled at dealing with the dog; they are skilled at dealing with potential investigations, criminal issues and things like that.

MS LAWDER: Is providing that training done by one of your own staff or do you bring someone else in to provide that?

Ms Oldfield: It will depend on the topic. For something like dangerous dog training, CPR training or whatever it might be, we would have someone offsite come in to provide that training.

MS LAWDER: For example, with dangerous dog training, how do you provide that training? Internally, or do you bring someone else in?

Ms Oldfield: That is external.

MS LAWDER: Is it someone within the ACT or is it expertise from outside the ACT?

Mr Corrigan: We can get back to you on the details of the training program. It depends on the training provided.

Ms Crowe: We have recently undertaken a fairly comprehensive review of the training program for rangers, senior rangers, the administration staff and the investigators. I think your initial question was in relation to what qualifications investigators require. The position description now requires a certificate IV in investigation. It is a nationally accredited qualification. Hopefully, when people apply they can come to us with that qualification. However, if they do not and we are unable to attract people who have the existing qualification, we do require them to be able to complete the qualification within a certain period of time.

MS LAWDER: The more recent question was about the dangerous dog training.

Ms Crowe: With the dangerous dog training, domestic animal services have recently procured the services of a qualified professional from interstate, not a local provider. I do not believe that there are local providers in Canberra but I could be wrong on that. The recent new recruits and existing rangers in our group have recently completed training in dangerous dog handling.

MS LAWDER: Did you go out to tender for that provider?

Ms Crowe: We did a request for quote but the cost was less than \$25,000, if I am correct in—

MS LE COUTEUR: I am interested in the government response to the independent expert review into dog management in the ACT. The response occurred in September last year. Recommendation 5 talked about DAS reviewing its processes to ensure that they were customer service focused. The recommendation stated:

For example, particular focus should be placed on ensuring victims of dog attacks are kept informed about the progress of investigations and the outcomes of decisions.

Could you give us an update about how you are achieving this?

Mr Steel: As is noted in the response, we have released a TCCS licensing and compliance accountability commitment. That sets out the policy in relation to that. I will defer to the officials to provide some detail about how that is being operationalised.

Mr Corrigan: We have accepted the recommendation, we have modified our procedures and we are following that through. We will obviously continue to improve that. We have had a bit of a changeover of staff over the time. It is the nature of our business. It can be a tough part to work in at times. That was something that particularly came out when we did the original investigation. Two or three years ago it was quite a difficult period. We had some pretty serious attacks, and a lot of the feedback we were getting was that people were not being kept informed. We do that now.

That is in addition to any appeal procedures. As you know, in declaring dogs dangerous, seizing dogs or looking to euthanase dogs, there are appeal provisions in place. That is difficult because when we have seized a dog, that dog has attacked another dog. The owner of the dog that has been attacked is very distressed, obviously. We keep them informed as well because they may not be part of the appeal process, as is the case with the person we are taking action against. So we do that as well.

MS LE COUTEUR: The government's response to the same report also said that there was a new operating manual being prepared and presumably made available. Has that happened?

Ms Oldfield: It is in progress at the moment. It will be made available once it is complete, early in the new year.

MS LE COUTEUR: Will it become publicly available at that point?

Ms Oldfield: Correct.

MS LE COUTEUR: Has the recommended training for all rangers occurred? I understand that the rangers were also meant to have all of these skills and, in particular, were to keep people informed about what was going on.

Ms Oldfield: As Ms Crowe indicated, we have been undertaking a program for training of new rangers and refreshers for our existing rangers.

MS LE COUTEUR: Does that only go as far as a subset of rangers or all of them?

Ms Oldfield: That would be for all of the senior rangers and rangers.

THE CHAIR: That concludes the 45-minute session. We will have a changeover of officials.

Short suspension.

MS LAWDER: I want to start off with green bins. We have had a take-up rate of about 39 per cent. What was your projected take-up rate for green bins?

Mr Haraldson: Sorry, can you just repeat the question?

MS LAWDER: It appears that 69,000 households have opted to receive green bins, which is a take-up rate of 39 per cent. What was your expected take-up rate of green bins, projected?

Mr Haraldson: We have an updated figure on that: 73,981 registrations as of 31 October. They are available for everyone, though obviously it is an opt-in scheme, and not all households will require a green bin, because of composting and so forth. We are not trying to force these bins on people, because people have very good options already available to them to do some of that stuff and there is also the option of dropping this stuff off for free at the Mugga resource recovery centre. The take-up rate is 43 per cent at the moment, but we might be able to come back to you. I do not think that we had a specific target that we wanted to achieve other than making it available to the whole of the ACT, which we have now achieved.

MS LAWDER: I would expect that when you did the planning you would have had an idea in your head of what it might be.

Mr Corrigan: We will come back with the specifics. There was a pilot. We did the Kambah and Weston Creek pilot, and I think we had some targets in that, but we will have to come back with the specifics.

Mr Haraldson: Yes, we will have to come back.

Mr Corrigan: From memory, I think we are doing more. We are doing really well.

MS LAWDER: It appears, based on this, that it is 11.76 tonnes of green waste,

Mr Steel: It is 14,360 tonnes as of 31 October.

MS LAWDER: I think there must be a missing zero on my number.

Mr Steel: Yes.

MS LAWDER: It has been delivered to the green waste area at Mugga Lane. Prior to the green bins, where did the green waste go?

Mr Steel: The same place. Corkhill Bros operates a composting facility at Mugga Lane, and Canberra Sand and Gravel operate in west Belconnen. They are composting that material. It has a very low contamination rate, which has been great. Bin audits are being done, and have been done, which are contributing to a very good contamination rate, which means that that compost can go on to be used as a high quality product and sold into various markets, both here and interstate.

MS LAWDER: Has that 11,766 tonnes increased the amount of green waste going to the tip? How does it compare?

Mr Haraldson: It does increase slightly. If they could self-haul, it would go to Mugga Lane or Canberra Sand and Gravel, but a lot of that material which would have stayed in people's yards and potentially be put on gardens or put elsewhere is now going to the facility. There would be a slight increase. It would be hard to find—

MS LAWDER: Do we know what the previous year's was?

Mr Haraldson: It goes up and down quite a bit. Around 200,000 to 250,000 tonnes of green waste is processed each year. That can vary considerably. With 11,000 tonnes, you would not see the difference in that amount.

MS LAWDER: Will you be able to provide for the committee what the amount of green waste going there would be, perhaps over five or 10 years or whatever you have, so we get a feel for the trend?

Mr Haraldson: Definitely; we can. That is from a voluntary survey that our recyclers do. Corkhill Bros and Canberra Sand and Gravel would have filled that out each year for the last numerous years.

MS LAWDER: Is the current contract expected to expire in 2023?

Mr Haraldson: The current contract expires in June 2021. Sorry, which one?

MS LAWDER: Green bins.

Mr Haraldson: Yes, that is correct. They were the ones with our kerbside collection contract with Suez, which is the kerbside collection.

MS LAWDER: Is there any expectation that you will relook at Corkhill Bros' environmental authorisations, if that is the term, at the time of the next contract?

Mr Haraldson: The environmental authorisation is issued by the EPA. It would be up to them what gets changed.

MS LAWDER: Do you have any input into them at all?

Mr Haraldson: There would be some consultation on that. The contract with Corkhill for the green waste is to June 2021 with a five-year option. Part of our planning is whether to extend that or whether to just extend it to October 2023.

Mr Corrigan: Just clarifying, there are two contracts. Corkhill is contracted at Mugga to take green waste. The green bin initiative is led by JJ Richards. They subcontract to Corkhill Bros when they do the kerbside pick-ups. That contract is aligned to go to 2023, when the Suez kerbside for the red-lidded and yellow-lidded bins comes up. That is a big contract; we are planning for that right now because that is potentially huge. You are looking at a 10-year contract for all Canberra households. It may collect all three services.

MS LAWDER: My comment about the Corkhill contract was more related to a historical record of some odour from the tip and whether it is about turning the green waste and there is any way that that can be assisted.

Mr Steel: I thought you might have been heading there, Ms Lawder. From discussions with Corkhill I think they are interested in looking at other sites around the region to deal with some of this organic waste. Mugga is the prime site at the moment, but they may look at other sites in the future as well.

We are interested in having a discussion with the local governments around us about how we manage waste directly. The Canberra Region Joint Organisation has agreed to a waste management strategy, but now we need to get into the granular detail about how we meet the national waste policy actions, which have now been set, as of just over a week ago. One of the key actions or strategies is around dealing with food organic waste; halving food organic waste by 2030 is the strategy. We need to work with local governments in the region to deal with that. Part of that discussion is about the best place to manage this organic waste. That is a discussion I am very keen to have with local governments; we are trying to set down a date to more formally have that discussion.

MS LE COUTEUR: Could you just expand. When you say halving food organic waste—I think it was by 2030, but the date is not really the question—do you mean food organic waste going into landfill?

Mr Steel: Yes, sorry.

MS LE COUTEUR: Or food organic waste as a whole?

Mr Steel: Correct.

MS LE COUTEUR: I am getting a little excited here.

Mr Steel: Both would be nice. This is a nationally agreed action. I would like to see our government, in particular, do better than that. I put at the meeting that we should be setting a time line for banning waste going into landfill. They did not agree to that as an action. That is fine. They have set this particular target, which is a start and does not preclude any government from acting in a shorter time frame. But of course, in order to do that we need to work out where we are going to manage this waste. There are risks in terms of odour with food, much more so than with the green waste. That is something we need to consider, around the best location to process this material.

MS LEE: I have got a couple of questions on the container deposit scheme. On page

41 of the report it said its one-year anniversary was celebrated in June with 26 million containers recycled. How does that number compare to the number of recycled containers before the introduction of the scheme?

Mr Steel: We have just hit 41 million containers collected. We are getting a redemption rate of around 50 per cent including both the container deposit scheme and those containers returned in bins. But we really need to increase that. We really want to increase that number. As part of that we have got standard collection points. There are now 21 available across the ACT.

A new scheme was launched just this week to provide a direct collection particularly from businesses that often have hundreds of containers used in a night. It saves them time and money in having actually to drop this material off. There are different ways of exploring with the operator of the return and exchange for change to promote the scheme and get more people using it, particularly for hospitality businesses that are using a large number of containers. I am not sure whether you have any detail on the redemption rates before the scheme,

Mr Haraldson: There is no redemption in the ACT. Obviously there is no CDS but there is in New South Wales. We do not have that at hand but we can get that information. We do not know how many people in the ACT are using the New South Wales scheme. As to what is actually redeemed, are you asking what goes into the yellow bins and then goes into the recycling facility?

MS LEE: Yes.

Mr Haraldson: We would not have a breakdown of what the material types are in tonnages but if you wanted to bring that down to container types or how many containers I would have to take that on notice. I believe you cannot go to that level of granularity.

Mr Steel: The scheme eligibility for different containers is different to the overall amount of material going into the MRF, and that is actually something that we are looking at. It is consistent with the other jurisdictions in terms of the rules of the scheme, particularly in New South Wales. We are looking at expansion of the scheme to things like wine bottles. That has actually been the one that the states have agreed to work together on, whether we could expand it to wine bottles, which are not currently included.

MS LEE: If there is further detail on the breakdown, if you can provide that on notice? I understand if you cannot go to that finer detail.

Mr Steel: Yes.

MS LEE: Minister, you said that the 41 million containers was around 50 per cent of CDS and the yellow bins. Have you got a breakdown of that?

Mr Steel: We have got some updated figures. I was told 50 million two days ago.

Mr Haraldson: At the collection points it is 40 million but at the MRF there are a

further 30 million—70 million all up.

MS LEE: Those 40 million are the ones going through the scheme. Is that right?

Mr Haraldson: Just under 41 million. As of 5 November 2019, just under 41 million at collection points in the scheme, that is correct.

MS LEE: I just wanted to clarify that. Minister, you mentioned that you are now rolling out the collection points for some of the businesses that have that high turnover. Which businesses are they? Have you got a list?

Mr Steel: Return It, who are operating the scheme in the ACT, have rolled out a new app called return and collect which enables businesses to sign up and Return It will actually come and collect the bottles from a business. It could be on a weekly basis or it could be a one-off, depending on how long they need to build up a reasonable number of containers. For a small fee of a couple of cents out of 10c, they can have those containers collected and they can either get their part of the deposit back or they can donate to a charity.

They were trialling that model in, I think, two suburbs in Canberra and now they are rolling it out to everyone. There would not be a huge number of businesses that have signed up already but we are hoping more will. One example is Psychedeli, a cafe on Marcus Clarke Street in the city. Cafes are a prime one, and bars, those sorts of places that are using high numbers of containers every day.

MS LEE: I know that when it was being introduced there was some, I suppose, hope that some of the local community groups like Scouts might use this as a bit of a fundraising activity. Have you got any feedback on whether that take-up has happened and, if so, how that is going?

Mr Steel: Yes, absolutely. A whole range of organisations has been involved in the scheme. There are all the charities that are formally signed up to actually receive deposits and get donations effectively through the scheme. Then there are organisations that are collecting the bottles and deriving a revenue source through that, and then there are the individuals. There is one particular young man by the name of James who has been out there knocking on doors in his community asking his neighbours to provide him with bottles, and he has been going around and collecting those regularly and providing a bit of pocket money for him to buy a saxophone. There are some really great stories that are coming out of the scheme, and we are hoping more community organisations will get on board. You might have some further—

Mr Haraldson: We may have some of the numbers but not right here right now. As the minister has said, there is a number of organisations that get the actual redemptions but they also help with the collection points. They provide employees to assist with the redemptions as well.

MS LEE: Are you able to provide on notice a list of the charities that are signed up to receive the donations and the organisations, the groups, that have been collecting?

Mr Haraldson: Signed up?

Mr Corrigan: Yes, we can do that. We will have to go through Return It because Return It operate the scheme. It will take a bit of time.

MS LEE: On page 41 it says that the aim is to reduce the amount going into landfill. You mentioned that at the moment it is about 40 per cent out of 70 million.

Mr Haraldson: That is redemption. What that is based on is the number of eligible containers that are actually provided into the scheme by beverage companies. The bottles go in. Some go in our yellow bins; some are redeemed; some possibly go outside the ACT as well, over to Queanbeyan; either redeemed or leave the territory.

MS LEE: There has been a bit of discussion in the news recently that Australia will ban the export of recyclable waste starting next year. Can you give us an update on where the ACT is at with that?

THE CHAIR: That is probably a new question.

MS LEE: It is following on—

Mr Steel: I am happy to answer.

THE CHAIR: If you have got the information, go ahead. It might exhaust your time.

Mr Steel: You might be aware that the Council of Australian Governments made the decision to ban waste exports and they asked the meeting of environment ministers to set a time line for the ban and the phase-out. That was proposed by environment ministers on 8 November. The current time line is based on the material itself. What we are proposing, which will go to first ministers for decision, is that all waste glass be banned for export from July 2020; mixed-waste plastics by July 2021; all whole tyres including bale tyres by December 2021; and then remaining waste products, including mixed paper and cardboard, by no later than 30 June 2022.

The ACT is positioned very well on glass, and we are working on various ways to make sure we process that glass. We are working to do that in roads across the ACT. We are working on other ways to get rid of the glass. We are in a good position there, as are other states and territories.

The main issue in the short term is mixed plastics. This was probably the only portion of waste in the ACT that was actually going on to be exported. We have got to do some work—and that is part of the conversation that we need to have with our regional local governments—on looking at what capital needs there are in investing in the processing facilities at the MRF at Hume to be able to deal with this mixed plastic from a processing point of view so that once the ban comes into force for mixed plastics from 2021 we are able to process that here in the region.

There is also the further piece of work that we need to do around the end markets for that material. For example, the machine that may be required is a machine that shreds that material, washes it and sorts it into the different polymers, and then they can go

on to end markets.

MS LAWDER: Are you looking to find other destinations, or are you wanting to move more within the ACT for your waste recycling?

Mr Steel: That is, I think, the discussion we need to have with the governments, because we are going to be able to do some stuff here very well, but not everything. Partly that is because we do not have enough feed stock to be able to run a facility efficiently for some different types of waste products. So we have got to work that out. We have got a very short time frame to do that. Some of the stuff may end up having to go to Sydney, as it does currently. The paper and cardboard goes out to Tumut to be processed through the Visy facility there. That is reasonably local, but interstate. And we have just got to do the work on the mixed-waste plastics.

The commonwealth has a role to play here, particularly in providing some funding. There was certainly a call from states and territories that we want them to put some funding on the table, because they are really leading this export ban. It will require funding not only for the processing facilities but also for developing whole industries to use this material in Australia to re-manufacture it into useful products. That has not happened yet. We are hoping that the commonwealth will make an announcement about funding sometime soon.

We have just got to focus on the processing side at this point and on getting all local governments to agree on what our priorities are. We are also doing a review currently of the capital needs for waste in the ACT. That will help to inform the work going forward to address these new export ban timelines.

MS LAWDER: At the MRF which is near the Mugga Lane resource centre, it appears that the fence is expanding back further and further to accommodate the material stockpiled there. How long can this go on? How much can they expand?

Mr Steel: We funded in the budget a hard stand, basically a concrete platform for material to be stored before it is then sold on to markets. There was some recent changeover of machinery, some maintenance that was being done on the machinery in the MRF. While that was happening there was some material stockpiled because it could not be processed while that machine was being upgraded. So that was just a recent thing. I understand from speaking with Dave Singh, the managing director of Re.Group, this week that they have now got on top of that backlog.

MS LAWDER: Is that MRF a government-run facility?

Mr Steel: It is operated by Re.Group. We own the shed and they own basically the equipment inside.

MS LAWDER: I am just thinking in terms of the expanding area. Is there a lease?

Mr Steel: The land is ours—yes.

MS LAWDER: How does that work?

Mr Corrigan: It is a very important issue. The land is the territory's, and the shed, as the minister explained. They operate under a contract with the territory. That is why the government has funded a capital investment to look at the hard stand, a huge additional concrete area to store that material. The minister has outlined the export ban, which is a great start. In the ACT we are relatively small. Some of the other jurisdictions have huge challenges here.

I currently estimate that the mixed plastics are very difficult. A lot of the stockpiling you see at the MRF, the materials resource facility, at the moment is in mixed plastics, because there is no market for mixed plastics in Australia and there is pretty much none overseas. So it is negative: a lot of MRF companies are paying people to take mixed plastics from them.

What does that mean? Firstly, with our provider we are very fortunate. Re.Group do an excellent job. They are constantly sourcing markets. About 95 per cent of the products going through the MRF they can on-sell within Australia, so very little is being exported. The export ban will bite but initially we will be able to manage that. But, as the minister mentioned, mixed plastics is the biggest challenge across the entire country. We will keep working with Re.Group about what to do there.

If anyone wants to make a difference, please stop purchasing mixed plastic products. That is where we need to start. We need to start at what is actually being sourced initially and start to get the volumes down. You cannot underestimate it. It is a huge issue—

MS LAWDER: Are we holding our mixed plastic waste, or are we selling it on to—

Mr Corrigan: Re.Group sell, but they need to hold it because the markets are so small. They are moving product but they are actually paying for it to be moved. They are getting no return at the moment.

MS LAWDER: Is that then going to landfill?

Mr Corrigan: No. It is usually just shredded. It may be exported. It may be used for other facilities. It may be turned into a range of options.

Mr Steel: The real risk is that, if there is no commonwealth funding, stuff will go into landfill. That is why it is so critical that the commonwealth is involved in helping to establish those end markets. We cannot do that alone in the ACT. The commonwealth has to be involved in setting up brand-new markets to be able to deal with this material. We have got to process it to a point where we have added value to the product so it can actually be remanufactured into something useful but that is—

MS LAWDER: Is that splitting it into various types, or—

Mr Steel: Yes—shredding. We are looking at a shredding machine, washing machine and sorting process that can basically enable this stuff to be used: turned into street furniture or whatever it may be. Our focus has been on the processing side. But the commonwealth really needs to play a role in the end markets, because we cannot, as an ACT government, develop a new market for everything. We can help with some

things around procurement—a big part of the national waste policy is procurement—particularly with roads and so forth, which is good for the glass, but it is going to be difficult for the mixed plastics.

MS LAWDER: What are you doing and what will you do about encouraging people not to purchase mixed plastics?

Mr Corrigan: Education is a big one, on a range of levels. We are talking to our federal colleagues about this, about a national program, but certainly locally. There are two levels. It starts with what you consume in the first place. Secondly, the other big one is contamination. If we can get the contamination going down all the time, that assists greatly. So what people put in the yellow bin and what they do not is very important. For example, at the moment, as you would appreciate, it is lids off. Seriously: lids off. With a milk container, the lid is a different type of plastic, so it is contamination straight away. So if you take it off and get rid of it, then the milk containers all go off in one stream. It is things like that.

Mr Steel: There is an education campaign, “Recycle Right!”. We are working with the Canberra Region Joint Organisation to roll that out so that a single set of messages is being used across all of the jurisdictions in the region. That has been rolled out over the past few months and will continue. That is helping reduce contamination.

The CDS is also helping to reduce contamination. All bottles that go in there, all containers, are a clean waste stream and do not have the bottle tops on, because they are taken off, working with our fantastic lead staff. So when containers come through the CDS you can sell those on at a much higher price than if they were just put in the yellow bin, because they are clear of that contamination.

Contamination is really the big issue. That goes to paper and cardboard as well. We are thinking, with the export ban, in relation to mixed cardboard and paper how we can reduce the amount of contamination in that waste stream. It is under five per cent at the moment but we may have to bring it down even further if all of this mixed paper and cardboard floods on to the market as a result of the ban.

There are some real risks here. That is why the commonwealth really needs to play a big role in terms of financing this stuff. That has certainly been put to them.

MS LE COUTEUR: You talked about consumer behaviour as far as mixed plastics are concerned. But I think that that is only a very minor part of it. The problem is that we generally have mixed plastics because, taking the milk bottle as an example, you have the different thing on top. Is it not that if you can sell it somewhere in Australia, you can sell it everywhere, and we need to actually have some national regulations saying you just cannot produce mixed plastic packaging or too much single-use packaging? Is this not a government problem?

Mr Steel: Yes, it is. It is also an industry problem. Part of the national waste policy action plan is working with the Australian packaging company, an organisation that actually makes this material around designing out the problem of problematic and single-use plastics. The lids are a particular issue. They are usually two or four under the recycling codes. They are often quite different colours, which is a problem as well

in terms of recycling. So standardisation of these things is going to be important.

MS LAWDER: I have a document in front of me. It says the Australian Packaging Covenant is the lead organisation. Why is it the lead rather than the government? Surely, you should be saying, “This stuff just shouldn’t be for sale in Australia. We can’t deal with it. You actually have to stop doing it.”

Mr Steel: The action plan has different actions being delivered by different actors. State and territory governments are doing some things, the commonwealth government is actioning other items and APCO is actioning their own targets which have been formalised through this plan.

Governments do have a role to play in regulation and we have been consulting on the phase-out of single-use plastics in the ACT. Through that process we will be responding to the consultation around that shortly. I agree; governments do have a role to play in the broader regulation of this, but at this point APCO is working to the targets that have been set. If governments see that that action is not taking place, there is certainly a role for government to intervene. But that would need to occur at a national level, because these are national companies working across borders. We have obligations under the Trans-Tasman Mutual Recognition Act that we have to work through as well.

I agree that if they are actually not doing the work that is required under the national action plan then there is a role for governments to intervene and regulate in this area.

THE CHAIR: I have questions on this, given that it was very wideranging. On single-use plastics and the container deposit scheme, what is the deal with having to put the containers in plastic bags? I think people hate doing that; I do. Why are we doing it and are there plans to stop doing that?

Mr Steel: Obviously, people can take those materials to one of the bulk depots in any vessel that they like and have those processed. The express return points and the pods are not manned, so they have to be provided in some sort of vessel. A lot of people are using plastic bags. What Return-It is doing is making sure that every one of those plastic bags is going to be recycled. It is going to a company in Albury that is recycling these polypropylene plastics into street furniture, wheel stops and the like. They are making sure that any of those bags that are used through the scheme are being recycled.

THE CHAIR: Are there other vessels, when I go to an unmanned facility, that I could be providing my numerous Pepsi Max cans in?

Mr Steel: I think it is possible to provide it in a cardboard box. I have suggested to David Singh, the managing director, that they explore the re-usable buckets that are being handed out and used in New South Wales, across the border. They are a large bucket that people can use to collect the containers over a period of time and haul them down, in this case to a reverse vending machine. A bucket is a good one, because if there is any liquid remaining in the containers then it captures that.

THE CHAIR: I wonder whether there is an opportunity here for a swap-and-go thing,

like with our re-usable coffee cup scheme. Particularly when you go to the Mitchell or Fyshwick facility, they ask you to separate things and put them into different categories of bottles. We could be providing those sorts of things to people to be collecting their products in, delivering them in that way and getting an empty crate back in order to keep collecting.

Mr Steel: It is a good suggestion.

THE CHAIR: All right, chuck it in as a recommendation.

Mr Steel: I am happy for you to make that a recommendation, and we are happy to raise it with Return It and see what we can do.

THE CHAIR: On the different plastics used in products, I noted that earlier this year there was quite a dramatic change in conversation about the cleanliness of products in terms of their recycling and contamination. I will draw your attention to a conversation that Ms Lee and I had with an officer two years ago. We were talking about coffee cup lids. I said:

Just to remove all doubt, should we be taking the lid off or is it okay to leave it on, in terms of that contamination?

The officer said:

It makes no difference. It will come off at the other end, anyway. The sorting process will loosen it, so do not hang over your recycling bin, pull it out and take the lid off. It is okay; just put it in as is and we will figure it out at the other end. Both the lid and the cup will be recycled.

Ms Lee said:

That is just for coffee cups; it is not for regular bottles for recycling?

The officer said:

In relation to lids?

Ms Lee said:

Yes.

The officer said:

You can leave lids on or take lids off. It makes no difference. They get recycled, anyway.

Ms Lee said:

Bottles as well as—

The officer said:

Yes.

I said:

What about orange juice?

God knows why! The officer said:

Yes, or water.

Ms Lee said:

I have got into the habit of it now, but I do not have to do that anymore?

The officer said:

You do not have to do that anymore.

I appreciate that that is an amusing conversation, but my point remains that just two years ago there was very deliberate, pretty clear advice given that contamination did not really matter too much. There was also a conversation some time ago about “Don’t worry about your pizza box being too clean; it’ll all get sorted out”.

Mr Steel: Things have changed. The landscape is changing over time and the ban—

THE CHAIR: That is why I am keen to get your—

Mr Steel: will have a major effect on what—

THE CHAIR: Yes, and that is why I am keen to get that viewpoint, minister.

Mr Steel: It started with China sword. The China sword policy and the banning of imports into China was really around reducing contamination. You could still import, except if there were these contaminants. That has forced a major change in the waste industry around trying to reduce contamination as much as possible so that you can still access markets for the materials. The new recycle right campaign is very clear. One of the messages is “Keep it clean”. In terms of materials, you should wash out your bottles; you should wash out things before you put them into the recycle bin.

MS LE COUTEUR: We were told, “Don’t bother washing them.”

THE CHAIR: Yes.

Mr Steel: Obviously, it is within reason. If there is a pizza box, it can go into the recycling and it will be okay. We are looking at what we can do to reduce the amount of contamination in the paper and cardboard stream, because we think that there will be this pressure, because of the waste export ban, on reducing contamination. The recycle right campaign is very clear: keep it simple, keep it clean, and all the other messages in between. We are certainly asking people to look at those.

With the coffee cups, yes, they can be recycled in the ACT at the moment, but that may change as the acceptance of contamination comes down, particularly at the Visy mill in Tumut. If they are inundated with a whole bunch of paper and cardboard products from around Australia because of the ban, they will only be accepting the highest-grade products. There has already been a *7.30 Report* story, I think it was, on some of that material, contaminated paper and paper, being landfilled around the region.

Ultimately, we want people to not use these plastic-lined coffee cups at all. That is why the re-usable coffee cup scheme is so important. It is rolling out by the end of the year; all businesses can get involved. We are working with a partner, Green Caffein. I hope that the community can tag businesses, particularly cafes and restaurants that are using these plastic-lined coffee cups, and get them involved. It will be an ACT-wide scheme to swap and go, making it as easy as possible to use. It will be an alternative to the plastic-lined coffee cup.

THE CHAIR: That is a great initiative, and I commend my colleague Ms Orr for that, but I think the point that Ms Le Couteur was making, together with me, is that people do want to do the right thing if they accidentally have bought a coffee with a disposable cup, but, just like with bottles and things like that, where that information changes, people are willing to say that they understand that contamination was not a problem and now it might be a problem but—

Mr Steel: That is a policy conversation. The messages that are going out are very clear, with the recycle right campaign, and also Recyclopaedia, which has recently been updated.

THE CHAIR: It is excellent, but my point is that it might be useful to bring people a bit more along on the journey in terms of saying, when people go to the bottle page, for example, “You might remember we used to say this, but due to X this is now the most up-to-date, accurate thing that you should be doing.” That would make people a bit less confused. The coffee cup conversation has been bounced from here to here.

MS LE COUTEUR: Also to make people feel better. I can remember saying that we do not have to wash them anymore. We have had five or 10 years of conversation about this. We do not want people thinking, “I got it all wrong and I should have been washing it all the time.” You need to tell us that things have changed: it is not that we got it all wrong; the reality has changed.

Mr Haraldson: Yes. It is a very simple thing to do. We are always looking for simple things to do in recycling. One thing we are trialling at the Tuggeranong recycling drop-in centre is having slots where you put your cardboard into the cage. One of the big issues we have is that people throw whole boxes into these cages and sometimes they are full of polystyrene, plastic and all types of things. Really simple things like putting in a slot where you have to break your box and put it through is one thing we are trialling at Tuggeranong. But, yes, simple messages, and explaining those messages, like you said, are one thing we are aiming to do.

MS LAWDER: I want to go to the sewer trial in multi-unit developments. Can you give us an update of the outcomes of the trial?

Mr Haraldson: There was a trial undertaken. They found that there was some confusion around contamination, about what you can put in your recycling.

MS LAWDER: As we were just saying.

Mr Haraldson: Exactly right. The trials were conducted. I am just trying to think of who ran the trial.

MS LAWDER: My understanding was that it was to trial behaviour change interventions.

Mr Haraldson: Yes.

MS LAWDER: What did you try and what were the outcomes?

Mr Haraldson: Obviously, being annual report hearings, I want to make sure that it is accurate information.

Mr Steel: If we do not have information on hand now, it might be better to come back later or provide it on notice.

Mr Haraldson: There is a report to come out shortly. If it is not the end of this year, it will be early next year. That report will capture all the information that was found.

MS LAWDER: Could you provide a short summary, on notice, to the committee?

Mr Haraldson: Yes, we can.

MS LAWDER: That would be good.

THE CHAIR: I thank members and witnesses for a very wide-ranging discussion over the last hour and a half. It has been very useful. We will resume at 1.30, on Transport Canberra.

Hearing suspended from 12.28 to 1.31 pm.

THE CHAIR: This afternoon we are hearing first from Minister Chris Steel, in his capacity as Minister for Transport, and officers, regarding Transport Canberra. I ask new witnesses to confirm that you have read and understood the pink privilege statement. You know the drill about the five-day time frame.

MISS C BURCH: Minister, on the community communication about changes with network 19, what was the total media spend on notifying the Canberra community about cuts to weekend services?

Mr Steel: Is this in relation to the updated interim timetable that applied from 28 September?

MISS C BURCH: Yes.

Mr Steel: We made a decision to have an interim updated timetable while we recruit more bus drivers. In order to do that, we needed to communicate with the public about the updated timetable for the weekends so that they knew when buses were arriving. No changes have been made to the frequency of the routes or the span of services in terms of services starting earlier and ending late. No changes were made to the network plan itself in terms of the routes. The communication was really around the timing change for the local routes.

I am happy to hand over to officers from Transport Canberra and City Services to see if they can provide some further detail around the communication on that and what was done. Obviously, the hard copy timetables that were available had to be updated. They are available through libraries, for example. Online material also had to be updated as part of the communication on that.

Ms Sturman: I might ask Geoff Virtue if he can provide the costs. As the minister said, it was largely providing the normal information that we send out through timetables online to the public.

Mr Steel: I should clarify, though, that the new interim updated timetable had more bus services than were previously provided under the old network. It was just a reduction for the interim period while we got more bus drivers. There were 214 more bus services, I understand, than were provided under the previous network, network 18.

MISS C BURCH: And the media spend?

Mr Virtue: I will have to take on notice the exact spend, but we largely did radio advertising, some print advertising and online Facebook advertising. I do not have the exact figure in front of me, sorry.

MISS C BURCH: In the campaign advertising report to the Legislative Assembly, the report lists four expenses. This is going back to network 19 being rolled out. It lists four expenses for the new transport network campaign, with the figure listed as \$335,000, but the total of these four expenses only amounts to \$135,000. Can you explain the discrepancy there?

Mr Steel: Which page are you referring to, Miss Burch?

MISS C BURCH: Sorry, I do not have a page number here, but it is in the campaign advertising report to the Legislative Assembly.

Ms Sturman: We will take that on notice.

MISS C BURCH: Can you take on notice why there is \$200,000 not accounted for?

Mr Steel: Yes.

MISS C BURCH: Thank you.

MR MILLIGAN: As you are well aware, I have been campaigning on the effects of light rail construction on local businesses. The last commitment from this government was to conduct a comprehensive 12-month report. I am wondering where that is up to and what consultation has been underway.

Mr Steel: I am due to report back on this to the Assembly in the sitting week just coming up. We will be outlining the terms of reference for that work, which is due to be finalised next year.

MR MILLIGAN: What consultation has occurred with local businesses, how did you reach out to them, and what meetings were available for them?

Mr Steel: The commitment was slightly different from the terms of the Assembly resolution. We are coming back with terms of reference, and we will be continuing to develop that report, which is due by around the middle of next year, if I recall correctly.

MR MILLIGAN: So the terms of reference will be tabled?

Mr Steel: Yes. We have to report back to the Assembly on that by the latest sitting week of this year.

MS LE COUTEUR: I want to ask about light rail stage 2, which I imagine will surprise nobody. Currently the R4 bus services running between Woden and the city are timetabled at 16 to 19 minutes, but routinely go a lot faster than that. This week I was on one that only took 12 minutes. The stage 2A business case says that the light rail will take between 25 and 30 minutes, which is a substantial increase. Can you please go through why.

Mr Steel: There is further work that is being done as part of the design for stages 2A and 2B that will further refine the timing of the trip between the city and Woden. With the R4 route, one of the major problems—it is a fantastic service—is that there are no bus stops between the southern Curtin stop and Albert Hall. That means that everyone along the route—north Curtin; Hughes; Garran; Yarralumla; Deakin, including that whole Deakin employment precinct; right through around Barton—cannot access this bus. It is a fantastic service, but there are no stops available, and it would be very difficult to put in stops for those buses. As you are aware, the buses run close to the median.

What we are looking at with light rail stage 2B is the potential of running light rail services on the median strip with access from various overpasses that occur along Adelaide Avenue. That will provide access for people in those suburbs that have never had access to a rapid transit service before. We are also looking at going around State Circle, which is the designated transport route under the National Capital Plan, to get to Civic, to provide access to the important employment hubs around the Barton area and Parkes, as well as the national attractions around there for visitors. It will provide those benefits in a way that the R4 did not. That planning work is underway to further refine the timing of the route. I am not sure if there is anything you want to add further?

MS LE COUTEUR: So your answer, to be brief, is that the reason is State Circle and extra stops?

Mr Steel: Yes. There are going to be several extra stops in between. R4 has hardly any stops on it.

MS LE COUTEUR: The R4 has five, as distinct from the R5, which has a lot more. The light rail is proposed to have 11. How much of the extra time is down to the extra stops?

Mr Edghill: As the minister explained, stage 2 of the light rail system is not exactly a like for like comparison to the rapid bus, just as it is not a like for like comparison with the Woden to city bus on the green rapid, which takes about 40 minutes. The predominant extra time would be through the additional stops that you have along the alignment. The alignment is a bit different, too.

One point I would add to the minister's comments is that Woden to the city is just one destination origin point across the entirety of the network. When we are looking at the network and planning it, we are not looking at Woden to the city being all that is important, because Woden to Dickson, which would be a single-seat journey, has different travel times again from what exists today.

MS LE COUTEUR: Yes, appreciably. So we do not know how much extra time? Is that the answer to my question?

Mr Edghill: Yes. The travel time difference would be a function of stopping speeds and alignment.

MS LE COUTEUR: We do not have any idea how much time an extra stop would add?

Mr Edghill: Typically, there is at least a 30-second dwell time. You can see that on light rail stage 1. When the train comes in, there is a deceleration period, it stops and allows people to alight the vehicle and then it accelerates again. Each of those adds up to the time it takes to move through that particular point of the system.

MS LE COUTEUR: There is a note on page 15 of the business case which says that the wire-free operation will add between two and 2½ minutes to the journey time. Why is wire free extra?

Mr Edghill: It can slow the system a little, for a couple of reasons. If I take a step backwards, as we are designing it we are of course designing it as if there were a requirement in stage 2B to have wire-free elements. Then we would design it to minimise that.

MS LE COUTEUR: It was a requirement. Are we thinking that this is something that maybe will not be a requirement? We talked last week about 2A, and it is apparently going to be built wire free. I am surprised that we seem to think that 2B might be wire free.

Mr Steel: It is really a question of where it stops, I think—where it starts and ends—and how far down Adelaide Avenue the wire-free requirement ends. That is really a conversation that we have got to have with the National Capital Authority. I had that conversation this week with them as well. We have just got to work through that issue with them. That is around heritage issues in the triangle. We are expecting an environmental impact statement. We will have to be prepared for stage 2B, which is why we have split the projects.

MS LE COUTEUR: But there will be at least some wire-free running, I think, in 2B?

Mr Steel: Yes.

MS LE COUTEUR: That is fairly clear. It is not quite what Mr Edghill was alluding to. That was why I was so surprised.

Mr Edghill: I was simply trying not to pre-empt the outcomes of 2B when there is still quite a bit of planning that we need to do with the National Capital Authority to work through it. But, typically with a wire-free system, where there are gradient changes you might be going uphill a little more slowly than with a wired system. That is to ensure that you are conserving the batteries or the super capacitors to get from stop to stop.

The battery technology is not novel. It is in place in a number of areas around the world at the moment. The technology is always improving. It is a little difficult to be definitive about travel time for stage 2B when it is obviously still some years away from actually being in operation. But, as a conservative estimate, wire free has the potential to be slightly slower because you need to go a little slower up the hill.

MS LE COUTEUR: You are going slower rather than having to stop longer at the stops?

Mr Edghill: That could potentially, depending upon the extent of wire-free running and the dwell time at the stop location, come into it. But the way that we are looking to design the system is that, from a user perspective, the dwell time at a stop is the same as it would be for a wired system.

MS LE COUTEUR: You talked earlier about the additional stops. Has the business case looked at how much patronage there is likely to be at those stops and whether or not the time impact of that is going to be worthwhile from the point of view of the whole system?

Mr Steel: The business case that was agreed by government was in relation to stage 2A of the route. The government will consider a business case for stage 2B in due course, once that is appropriate. At this point the focus really has been on the three stops in the 1.7-kilometre route between Alinga Street and Commonwealth Park.

MS LE COUTEUR: I understand that the shorter Capital Circle route was expected to be about two minutes faster but more expensive. Have we any idea how much more expensive it would have been? I appreciate that this is a ballpark figure, but presumably you have looked at that ballpark figure, given you have made choices?

Mr Edghill: With that, very significantly, is my recollection that to get around Capital Circle there is a tunnel involved. Unfortunately, the vehicles do not fit through the tunnel without us effectively having to redo Federation Mall and completely change the tunnel. That adds a significant amount to the cost of the system. It is important to note also that when we are designing the system it is about not just pure travel time, which shapes the design of the system; what is also important is how it actually shapes land use in the corridor and what it actually connects to.

A Capital Circle alignment is really close to Parliament House but is just that much further again from the cultural institutions and employment centres down towards the lake and a little harder to get to. State Circle provides a better balance between travel times and actually taking people to where they want to be in that part of the world.

MS LE COUTEUR: I must admit I have always felt, given that our purpose in life in Canberra is Parliament House, that there actually should be a stop at Parliament House from a symbolic point of view. Parliament House is on a hill, which does not make it easier. Tunnelling underneath would probably be incredibly expensive.

Mr Edghill: Tunnelling would be incredibly—

MS LE COUTEUR: There might be some security issues as well.

Mr Edghill: Tunnelling would be exceptionally expensive; you are right. There are security issues there. The planning regime for stage 2B is reasonably complex as we need to get approval from both houses of parliament. The other challenge is to get the alignment for a tunnel right. You would be under foreign embassies and, as well as getting Australian government approval, you would need foreign government approval. It becomes very complicated.

MS LE COUTEUR: I will leave it at that. The other option that has been talked about is an express service. The buses do not stop everywhere. Could we do the same with light rail?

Mr Edghill: I am not sure, in a light rail situation, if I am aware of any other instances of that around the world—for two main reasons. The first one is that it is built as a turn-up-and-go service. Without even looking at any of the signs on the station you get on it and you are confident that it is going to stop where you want it to stop.

The other challenge, of course, is that typically light rail is built without overtaking lanes and it becomes quite a complex operational matter—and I am not sure if it has ever been done anywhere—to time it so that without duplicating tracks all the way through, which would cost a lot of money, the all-stop service pulls up at a stop at the same time as the express service is ready to go around it. It is, I think, operationally probably a bridge too far.

MISS C BURCH: Talking about stage 2A, minister, you said the business case has been approved. What contracts have been entered into so far for 2A?

Mr Steel: The government is currently in negotiation through a sole-source procurement with Canberra Metro. We are just working through that negotiation at the moment. I will hand over to Duncan to provide us with some further detail about that, if he can.

Mr Edghill: Certainly. No contracts for the main works have been signed, but there are contracts around some of the advisory services that we need to progress the negotiations and design of the system. There is a very small arrangement that we have entered into with Canberra Metro to progress design services. The reason for that is that we are at a phase where we would be paying to progress design anyway but it makes sense for Canberra Metro to be involved at this stage, because ultimately we want Canberra Metro to be bearing what is called the interfaced risks in the project. Canberra Metro, because we are negotiating on the basis of stage 2A matching the operating terms of stage 1, whatever ultimately gets built, need to bear the risk of it actually working as against the design; hence the reason for involving them.

In terms of the broader process, we are working through, effectively, an early contractor involvement arrangement with Canberra Metro, which means that they are undertaking design activities. In the first half of next year they will provide an interim bid to us at different points. Assuming that value for money and appropriate contractual terms are achieved through that process then, subject to cabinet approval, as was the case with stage 1, a contract for the main works would be entered into around the middle of next year. That is the point at which Canberra Metro effectively will be in the construction phase at that point in time.

MISS C BURCH: You said there were a couple of contracts around the design work. Can you perhaps provide on notice a list of the contracts that have been entered into and the value of those contracts?

Mr Edghill: Certainly.

MS CODY: Minister, I note you made a very exciting announcement that we are going to get electric buses soon. Why are we buying them from China?

Mr Steel: We have—

MS LE COUTEUR: Are we buying them? I thought we were leasing them.

MS CODY: Why are we getting them from China?

Mr Steel: That is correct. We are leasing this bus. We undertook a trial, starting in 2017 for around 12 months, of what ended up being two Australian manufactured vehicles from Carbridge Toro and a Volvo hybrid bus. The outcomes of that trial were useful in informing our transition to zero emissions vehicles but there were some reliability issues with the Carbridge Toro 100 per cent electric vehicles. They missed a number of peak services.

We have decided to lease a new vehicle, an E12 Yutong. Yutong are the largest bus manufacturer in the world. They have 120,000 buses on the road. There are 100 of these electric vehicles on the road in Paris alone; they are in over 100 cities in the

world. We are leasing this vehicle for 12 months. There is the option to extend that lease or buy the vehicle. It is an opportunity for us to see what this vehicle is like.

It is wholly manufactured in China. For example, with the Scania Euro 6 buses that we have purchased in the past, often the chassis comes from overseas but the actual body is built in Australia by one of our Australian body manufacturers. Bustech or Volgren are the ones that have been doing them most recently.

This particular E12 bus is a single piece built all together to reduce the weight, which is a bit of an issue with electric vehicles because of the battery weight. It has been manufactured as one piece. Once we have gone through the process of developing a zero emissions transition plan, we will then go out for procurement for further buses. We have funding to purchase 84 buses over the next few years. As part of that we hope to buy a number of electric vehicles. We have to do the work to support that procurement. As part of that we will go out for procurement for electric buses, which may open it up to a range of manufacturers.

Recently we have heard the news that BYD, which is a Chinese electric bus manufacturer, has teamed up with Volgren, the bus body manufacturer from Australia. They may be producing a bus that is partially manufactured here, locally, and that will be a really interesting thing for us to consider as part of the future procurement.

Yutong did suggest that, if there are enough orders in Australia for their buses—I do not think that would be from the ACT alone, somehow—they would be interested in what the opportunities are in terms of establishing a manufacturing base in Australia. BYD certainly is already starting to do that. I think that is an opportunity. The Victorian government may be starting a piece of work.

MS CODY: That is correct.

Mr Steel: We have not yet reached the stage where we are going to scale up, but we are doing the work that we need to do to be able to do that. That is around infrastructure at the depots to charge vehicles, including not just the actual chargers themselves but the electricity grid infrastructure, substations and the like.

There is also the work on skills. With the diesel mechanics that are working in our bus depots, we need to make sure that they have a just transition, that they are learning the skills to work on the electric buses. That is why it is so great to have this E12 bus in operation now, while we still go through this zero emissions plan, so that we can start that work and start to operationalise the use of an electric bus here in the ACT. I want to see all of our diesel mechanics get the skills that they need to transition to work on these vehicles.

MS CODY: That was going to be my next question, minister. You must have been able to read my mind.

Mr Steel: They are concerned about the future. We need to reassure them that we want to make sure they are supported, that they have the skills they need to work on electric vehicles—not only buses; if they end up moving out of the bus industry, they could work on electric trucks, because every other sector is moving in this direction as well.

MISS C BURCH: Minister, the electric bus model that was being trialled previously had significant reliability issues. How is this model expected to be better?

Mr Steel: This is the bus that is being used around the world in hundreds of cities and it is the largest bus manufacturer. It has just been trialled in New South Wales. I think there are still some on trial. What we have heard out of those trials is that it is a very good vehicle. We are hoping that it will fit in well within our fleet within the ACT.

MISS C BURCH: Are there any technical differences with the model? I think you mentioned battery weight before?

Mr Steel: The batteries can be reconfigured, and we probably will reconfigure them during the 12 months. It is really a trade-off regarding the number of people that can go in the vehicle. You can take out batteries, fit more people in and increase the capacity from 57 to 65 passengers. We will probably trial that and see how it goes. We certainly think that it will work quite well. It has a range of about 400 kilometres. Our buses do on average about 350 kilometres a day. There is an opportunity—

MISS C BURCH: Is that a greater range than the current electric model?

MS CODY: With the current ones, what was the range on them?

Mr Steel: The previously trialled ones did have a similar range, but effectively we were having some operational difficulties in keeping them on the road. Part of that was lack of spare parts and those sorts of things; also there was the quality of the bus build. Those manufacturers have since improved their models of buses, because it is now some years since. I do not want to suggest that they do not provide good services, because they are running buses out of Brisbane Airport quite effectively. But these are commuter buses. There are literally thousands of them on the road in China and they are working quite efficiently.

The challenge that we have at the moment is with our electricity grid. This bus is based at Tuggeranong depot and will be charged out of there. Charging stations have been set up by a local company, Electromotive, which is fantastic. It will take about six to seven hours to charge, which will be overnight, which is just enough time to get it charged and ready to go again. It should charge in only four hours. That is because the electricity grid infrastructure is not supporting it. That is why this piece of work that we are doing on the zero emissions transition plan is so important: so that we have all of the infrastructure there to scale up and to be able to charge 200 buses at a time at each of the depots.

MS CODY: And be able to have the spare parts, the mechanics and the additional—

Mr Steel: That is right.

MS CODY: This is still just a trial, this particular bus, and it will be monitored as a lease?

Mr Steel: I would call it an experimental phase. We have done a trial. Now we want

to operationalise this and really get it working.

MS CODY: There are no guarantees that you are going to buy this exact bus in the future?

Mr Steel: No, there are not. We will consider at the end where we go, whether it is an extension or a buy-out of the bus. We need to go through a procurement process for the 84. Under the target that we have set for transitioning to low emissions buses, 100 per cent by 2040, we really cannot purchase any more diesel buses from 2025.

It helps to have a bus on the road to try to gain the knowledge while we go through the planning; then we can start purchasing, ramping up and getting the infrastructure needed to support that scale-up. It will be a challenge. All the other transit agencies are going through this. We hosted a conference this week in Canberra, which the bus was also down for—it is our bus now—and everyone was looking at the bus. We have heard from all the transit companies around Australia that are going through a similar process, and New South Wales made a commitment in this regard as well.

THE CHAIR: Minister, some sectors of the community have been questioning why we are not using trackless trams instead of light rail on these trunk routes. What are the differences between them, why are we going with light rail, and is “trackless tram” a fancy word for a bus?

Mr Steel: Yes, it is. There are different models around; they have been around for some decades. Adelaide has had the O-Bahn for some time; it is effectively another name for a guided bus. Caen in France have been running a guided bus system for some time; they are replacing theirs with a light rail system. They have been used for some time. There are some emerging versions of this technology in China, but it is not really proven. Some cities are looking at it from a cost perspective: can this reduce the cost of putting in place a mass transit system? A lot of these claims are speculative; they are not based on fact. There is no really good example of how this is working effectively to replace light rail. It could be a potential replacement for a bus rapid transit system.

I will hand over to Duncan Edghill to talk about the potential constraints and why we are not considering it in the future expansion of mass transit modes in Canberra.

In relation to light rail, light rail is seen as the gold standard. That has been recognised by even advocates of trackless trams like Peter Newman from Curtin University. We want to see a single-seat ride from Gungahlin through to Woden and beyond on light rail. We do not want to have to shift modes in between along that north-south spine of the network. That is why we really made the decision to go with light rail. We want to expand and build on the success of light rail. It could be seen, particularly for those on the south side, as being a second-rate option to go with something like a bus guided system or a bus rapid system. We already have buses running between town centres.

THE CHAIR: Does the bus guided system have the fixed infrastructure element that light rail has?

Mr Steel: That is a very good question. I will hand over to Duncan to talk about what

some of that infrastructure would require and why we are sceptical about the idea of the trackless tram technology.

Mr Edghill: The trackless tram technology is pretty novel. It is operating in one city in China and, as far as we are aware of, there is one supplier of vehicles.

THE CHAIR: China is a big proponent of light rail, so it is just experimental, perhaps.

Mr Edghill: Yes, exactly. From a customer perspective, even if we wanted to go out there and buy something tomorrow, we would be bottled into one supplier and there is only one place that has used it before.

Some of the academic comments around trackless trams have been that they are heaps cheaper than light rail. I am a bit sceptical about that. You can look at the light rail stage 1 business case, for example, and there is a good example of where we have got the cost of the system broken down into different components. The tracks and the track slabs themselves are only a minority of the cost of the light rail system. The remainder of the costs come with shifting the utilities, building a depot, getting your systems right—your safety systems, your signalling system—your landscaping, the rolling stock et cetera.

The issue with a trackless tram, if you are going to do it properly, as though you are doing a light rail system, is that you have to incur the majority of those costs anyway. There are a lot of costs associated with moving utilities for a light rail system. The reason you move the utilities is not because you want to protect the utilities; the main reason you move the utilities is so that you are not stopping a mass transit system every time you need to look in a manhole. If you are building a trackless tram system that has the same degree of robustness as a light rail system, you are still incurring those costs.

From a safety perspective, there are some challenges that I think have not been resolved with trackless trams. With a light rail vehicle, under emergency braking situations, the tracks keep it straight. I am yet to see what happens with a trackless tram when you slam the brakes on. It is not like a rigid bus; it has the potential to fishtail around a bit. Another element that has not been demonstrated anywhere in the world is how a trackless tram system would play out. With light rail systems around the world, it is fairly straightforward. People use it. Typically, you build more tracks and the system gets built out over time.

With a trackless tram, if you are building a dedicated roadway for the system, probably two things arise. The first one is that there is the risk that the temptation is really great for it to become another road. “I have four people in my car. Can I ride on that great stretch of bitumen also?” All of a sudden, it loses some of its right of way and becomes more of a transit lane. The other issue, and this is a particular issue for Canberra, is from a planning perspective. With light rail stage 1, the NCA was quite comfortable with us building a light rail system in the middle of the Northbourne median. Had that been a question of whether we could build a road down there for things that look like trams where the system itself looks like a road, I think that our chances of even getting planning approval would have been very slim.

All forms of transport have a role and a purpose. When you have something that can be moved fairly easily, or you can put cars and whatever on there too, the other really important element from a light rail perspective is the land use benefit that you get. Light rail is not just a transport project; it is a city shaping project. What makes it a city shaping project is that people who are investing in new facilities all along the alignment do so knowing that those tracks are going to be there for the next 100 years plus. You do not get that same degree of certainty with the trackless tram system and you are not going to get that same degree of land value uplift.

That is a long way of saying that the vehicles maybe look like a tram, but the system does something very different. And, given that it is operating in one place in the world, with one supplier, as a public servant I would be quite sceptical about recommending it at such an early stage of its development, if indeed it develops in any meaningful way.

THE CHAIR: Minister, did you say that there is a bloke who advocates for trackless trams but admits himself that light rail is the gold standard?

Mr Steel: Yes.

THE CHAIR: Who is that?

Mr Steel: Peter Newman from Curtin University, an academic. There are various views on this from different academics. Yale Wong at UNSW has recently pointed out some of the myths around trackless trams, which I think is quite useful. In doing so, we do not want to totally dismiss it; it is an emerging technology. We may see more of it in the future, but at this point in time light rail is the gold standard, and it was at the time that stage 1 of light rail was decided. It is being rolled out in cities around Australia and the rest of the world. It is something that we here in Canberra need to build on, to get the benefits of the single-seat connection between Gungahlin and Woden, and down to Tuggeranong, hopefully, in the not too distant future.

Miss C Burch: I would like to go to ticketing systems and get an update on how that is going and when we can expect the new system to be rolled out.

Mr Steel: The MyWay system is becoming older as time goes on. While it has been a very good system for some years, I think it is reaching about 10 years since it was implemented. So we are considering what options. We certainly outlined that in our action plan on weekend reliability, as well as the potential of a new ticketing system not only in being a replacement for MyWay but also in potentially integrating the broader functions of NXTBUS and other types of technology we currently have that are becoming obsolescent over time.

We have recently gone out to the market to get a sense of what might be available. We are also aware that Queensland is currently going through a process of looking at a new ticketing system as well. I understand that New South Wales, through their provider, Cubic, has also been making some improvements to its ticketing system. So we are interested in what is happening in other jurisdictions. We have not arrived at the point of making a decision about a transition at this point, but we know that over

time we will need to move to a new ticketing system.

Miss C Burch: I understood from the former minister at estimates that it was a bit more advanced than that. She advised, I believe, that we would leapfrogging the New South Wales system. Is that still going to be the case?

Mr Steel: I think that will be the case, in the sense that their system will only get them thus far. So if we end up transitioning to a new system in the future, it will have better capabilities than New South Wales's. That is where Queensland is heading with their new system, which is also being developed with Cubic, which runs ticketing systems through cities throughout the world, particularly in North America.

There is an opportunity with a new ticketing system to have more capability. The issue with MyWay cards is that the value is stored on the MyWay card itself, and that causes some problems: if you lose the card, you lose the value. We really want to move in the future probably towards more of an account-based system. It could be a card that is attached to the account, where the value is stored in the account, so if the card is lost there is no issue. You could have a phone app that connects to the account. It could be a credit card that connects to the account in order to purchase tickets across the system. But—

Miss Burch: So you do not have any kind of time frame as to when we are likely to see it?

Mr Steel: The government has not made a decision about transitioning yet. We have gone through the process of going out to the market on a ticketing system, but we have not actually made a decision about where we are going to go at this point in time.

MR MILLIGAN: What is the directorate doing to ensure that customer satisfaction will grow to meet its target of 80 per cent, from only 62 per cent satisfaction recorded for 18-19? What is the directorate doing to improve customer satisfaction?

Mr Steel: The customer satisfaction survey was, I think, conducted around the time of the changes to the bus system just after April. So it was coming at a time where there was massive change for everyone, regardless of what the changes were, and people were getting used to that. So we are expecting that to pick up over time. What we are doing is listening to the community. We have now had six months of operation of the new network. We have already made 135 changes or tweaks to the system since then, based on feedback we have had from the community through working with individual schools and parent committees and feedback from Transport Canberra customers. That has resulted in changes and we will make further changes based on feedback we get and based on the data we have from the system as well, using MyWay cards in particular to see how people are using the new bus network, the new Rapids in particular, and how the local routes are running. That is how we are hoping to improve satisfaction over time.

MR MILLIGAN: What are some of the tweaks or changes that you have made since you received the results of the survey recently, up to today? If you did that survey again, would it still record 62 per cent satisfaction, or do you anticipate that it will have increased?

Mr Steel: It will be undertaken again next year, so we will find out. That will be an opportunity for us to reflect on the changes that have been made and what further improvements we can make in relation to customer satisfaction. I should point out that customer satisfaction on light rail was extremely high for all the metrics, over 90 per cent, which is fantastic and justifies our vision of extending light rail city wide. That is our long-term plan for the future of transport in Canberra. That is very promising in the survey results as well. Of course buses will remain an important part of the system, particularly in linking people with the mass transit modes, corridors and so forth.

Ms Sturman: People voting with their feet explains how successful I would say the new network has been. We have seen a 6.4 per cent rise in patronage, when population growth, which transport growth is normally aligned to, is only just over two per cent. So it is really important to look at where we have come from since we started the new service. The research was carried out, as the minister said, very close to when people were still getting used to it. We know from the UITP conference earlier in the week that other states have the same learning curve when they put such big changes into networks. Those changes are put in predominantly to ensure future-proofing for reducing congestion going forward into the future. We know that the change will initially drive concerns, because it is such a big change. Do you want to know some specifics?

MR MILLIGAN: Yes, if possible, if you have them handy.

Mr Steel: There are a couple of route changes to note. Route 18 was extended to Canberra racecourse to improve connections for passengers with light rail. That was based on feedback that the Mitchell Traders had provided directly to me in a meeting that I had with local member Michael Pettersson. Two bus stops were added on Anthony Rolfe Avenue and several bus services were changed to add additional stops to Ashley Drive. We have been looking at putting on articulated buses, particularly where there is crowding on specific routes, in getting used to how the new network has been operating. We are putting on DDA-compliant buses where needed on specific school services.

It is probably worth reading out the P&C association's newsletter, where they say:

We feel that TC are listening to us and striving to improve services for school students. Extra services and some timetable tweaks have been made which should have eased crowding and timing problems, for example at Melrose High, Amaroo School and Red Hill Primary.

So they have certainly been acknowledging the benefits of some of changes that have been made because we have been listening to the community. Peter Steele can provide some further details on some of the other tweaks that we have been making as we go along.

Mr Steele: We have made some other changes since the introduction of the network, and particularly listening to the community about capacity on the network. Some really key ones that come to mind are introducing additional Rapid 4 services,

southbound during the pm peak. We were able to introduce nine extra services between 4 pm and 6 pm, which added quite a significant amount of capacity between the city and Tuggeranong. One of the other really highly used routes on the network is route 32, running through the south of Belconnen. We introduced some further services in the pm peak, again, to increase the capacity on that. In the morning on that service as well we were able to introduce high-capacity vehicles, our articulated vehicles, to make sure that we have got more capacity in the high-demand areas.

THE CHAIR: On satisfaction rates with light rail, out of the many journeys that have taken place, how many complaints have been received about the light rail experience?

Ms Playford: We might have to take that one on notice.

THE CHAIR: I am just curious as to the level of detail. Is it people complaining about the aircon or the speed or something, or is it route frequency or things like that?

Mr Steel: I think the major issue we have, which we have certainly acknowledged and is a good problem to have, but still a problem, is the overcrowding of light rail vehicles, because it has been such a popular service. The government is looking at that. That was discussed in the Assembly not long ago around the work that we have committed to do around working with Canberra Metro on options to potentially increase frequency on the routes to deal with some of those crowding issues at peak times of the day, particularly 6 pm to 6.30 pm and the end-of-school period, 3 pm to 4 pm, which is a really busy time for the service.

MS LE COUTEUR: I would like to ask about our favourite subject, weekend bus services. Have you seen a reduction in patronage of the existing local services now that they have been dropped to one bus every two hours?

Mr Steel: We may be able to comment specifically on the breakdown of the routes but overall what we have actually seen on the weekends is a massive increase, compared to year on year, for each of the weekends. We are still getting our head around why people are really wanting to use buses and light rail more on the weekends than they ever have previously. We think it is partially because it is a seven-day network. It is not a different route map for the weekends, which I think has improved simplicity.

There is also a frequency of services now on the weekend. Seventy per cent of people use frequent rapid routes and because there are now 10 of them, effectively—nine rapid bus routes and light rail—people now have a frequent service throughout the day on the weekend, and much later than was previously provided as well. Coming into the Christmas season and new year, that is going to be a real benefit for people who are going out and so forth.

We have seen a massive increase in the number of students using services of a weekend. My theory—and this has yet to be tested; we probably need to do a bit more work on it—is that students are becoming used to using the bus system. They were previously using dedicated school bus services. They have now adapted and got their head around the broader network and they are using it on the weekend to go and see their friends, to go and do their recreational activities.

I will ask whether we have the breakdown. I am not sure in relation to specific local bus routes—

MS LE COUTEUR: Locals versus rapids, is the question.

Mr Steel: Yes.

Ms Sturman: I think what I can say is that 70 per cent of our weekend travellers actually travel on the rapid services. The lion's share was already travelling on those rapids. That was why we made sure that we continued to offer them. I do not know whether Peter has got anything on local services. I do not think we have got any information here.

MS LE COUTEUR: You have not got any data on that?

Ms Sturman: We can take that on notice and bring it back.

Mr Steele: I think we can take on notice the breakdown of how that has changed. Certainly what I have heard from the community about the change in the weekend services is that, knowing that the rapids are more reliable, they are coming back to them as well. The rapids, since the change on 28 September, are actually carrying more people than they were before, and that might be partially in terms of change. What we do not know—and we would like to do more work on it—is: are the people who are getting dropped off to those rapids to make that connection using their bikes or are they walking?

MS LE COUTEUR: Minister, you mentioned that the weekend service might make a difference over the summer season because of the increased timespan. Are you thinking that we will still have the Nightrider service that used to go even later than the rapids are? We have had that for many years.

Mr Steel: I might pass over to Transport Canberra and City Services. Because the service spans are going much later now there will not be as great a need for extra services. But I will hand over to the team.

MS LE COUTEUR: Is it in your thoughts? Is it in your plans?

Mr Steele: You might remember that in the past couple of years that Nightrider, the old operating model, which was give the driver five bucks and they would take you anywhere around the city, started to transition to running what we were calling the late night rapids. For a couple of years we had some engagement with Uber to provide a bit of a last-ride service. Part of that was part of our longer term strategy of looking at how the network is changing and how the services we offer are different.

Light rail has been a catalyst for it, as has moving the buses and rapid services to run later in the evening. We do not think that there is space in the area for that old type bus service, running a big bus around that late at night.

Certainly, because the buses and the light rail are running later—until about 1 o'clock,

and I think the last one running back is 1.30 on the light rail services—there is a lot more service for people to use generally as part of the network. I think letting people know more about that is our real focus. That Nightrider model that we used to run has had its day, particularly with the introduction of Uber into the network.

MS LE COUTEUR: Light rail, I assume, have had no problems with weekend staffing and service cancellation?

Mr Steel: I am not sure of any issues with service cancellations in light rail.

Ms Sturman: That is right. Light rail actually has provided an extremely high-performance level well above the contract level. It is in excess of 99.9, I think it is, at the moment. We are holding our breath because it has been exceptionally good.

MS LE COUTEUR: What are the main differences in the workforce arrangements between the buses and light rail which may be leading to the bus staffing problems?

Mr Steel: They are on different enterprise agreements, for a start. There are different conditions and different pay levels attached. That is part of it. But not all the issues are in relation to the industrial arrangements. That is just one part of the work that we are doing to improve reliability on the weekends. We will, of course, talk with the Transport Workers Union about those issues in relation to buses in the lead-up to the next enterprise agreement negotiations.

It is actually about recruiting more bus drivers so that we can have the services operate on the weekend and deliver the services that we need to. Once we have got enough bus drivers so that we can be confident that we can increase services on the weekend from where they are now, we will do that. That will be in the new year, once we can get more bus drivers. We have got 11 in training at the moment. I think we have had about 66 through since April. But we have also had some 32 drivers retiring.

We have got a little more work to do to recruit a few more drivers. Once we have got them on board then we will look at increasing services over time on the weekends to obviously increase the frequency of those local routes.

MS LE COUTEUR: I guess the obvious question is: given that it took over a year of planning for network 19 and given that you did all the planning in advance, why did you not recruit the bus drivers in advance? Why was this not part of it?

Mr Steel: We did some recruitment in the lead-up, I understand. I was not the minister at the time. The government did recruit about 60 bus drivers in the lead-up to the commencement of network 19. I will hand over to Judith to explain some of the factors that contributed to that not being enough.

Ms Sturman: When we actually planned the services for network 19 we also found that we could very positively have more services than we had originally anticipated. Whilst we were recruiting drivers, the actual dynamic of how the drivers opt for weekends comes into play obviously very specifically for weekend services. We had to actually look at how many drivers we had, how we went into service and the likelihood of the rate of drivers to opt in to those weekend shifts.

We also have casual drivers that we cannot 100 per cent rely on. They are casual because they can choose if they want to work or not. There were a number of dynamics that could have worked in our favour but we saw, from a relatively stable start, those numbers drift. It was at that time that we started to look at how we actually address that. Probably our main reason for addressing it—and we were recruiting still—as the minister alluded to, was that we have an attrition rate. It includes retirements but it also includes drivers who move into other positions like trainers, which we have within our workforce.

We looked at what we should do. When we looked at the customer feedback, reliability was probably the most significant issue for our customers. It was not so much that they wanted a bus every half an hour or 20 minutes but they just wanted a bus to actually arrive when we said it would arrive. That was probably the key driver behind the interim timetable in that period whilst we built our workforce up and had confidence to then go ahead and build it up again.

Mr Steel: We are now at 99.9 per cent reliability for the weekends. But once we have got the extra drivers on board, we will step up the frequency.

MS LE COUTEUR: What are you planning to do over the Christmas holiday period, given that presumably the drivers, like many other people, will take leave?

Mr Steel: Yes, that was the other issue during this period as well. A lot of the drivers had banked a considerable amount of leave and were taking some of that leave. We have quite a diverse workforce and there are various festivals, including Diwali and so forth, over the period that have contributed to some issues. That is about better workforce planning. That is the work we are undertaking now. We have worked very closely with the bus drivers on developing a Christmas timetable which runs for three weeks. I will hand over to Peter to give you some further detail about that.

Mr Steele: We will be introducing a reduced timetable, commencing from 23 December and running for three weeks. If you look at the ridership through Canberra, every year there is a vacuum, where everybody disappears. We work with the drivers as well to understand, in our operational part of the business, how much leave is required through the business. We also balance the service that is required.

There are things that we do in that network. Maybe in the third week we start to see more people coming back to work, so we can deploy bigger buses if we need to. There will be some information coming out about that shortly.

Mr Steel: There is usually always a Christmas timetable.

Mr Steele: Yes.

Mr Steel: Every year. It is not a new thing.

MS LE COUTEUR: I am not questioning that. There is always a Christmas timetable; it is whether it would be more reduced than at other times.

Mr Steele: As part of the seven-day network, it will be quite considerable, more considerable than others have been in the past. Christmas Day itself, where we offer free travel, will include all the services that we see on every other day of the week. It will be quite expanded on Christmas Day, if anyone wants to use public transport.

MS LE COUTEUR: I am afraid I will not be able to take that up myself, but thank you.

MR MILLIGAN: Regarding your latest round of recruitments, how many new bus drivers did you recruit on 28 October? How many went through that process?

THE CHAIR: Was that your “come and try” day?

Mr Steel: Sixty-six since the new network started. There are 11 in training now and we are continuing a rolling recruitment campaign. Every time one group finishes, we have another starting. But 32 have left during that period as well, so there is an attrition rate there. Overall, we are increasing numbers. We just have not got quite to the mark that we need to, to be able to step up weekend services.

MR MILLIGAN: Quite a few of them leaving, isn't it?

Mr Steel: It is an ageing workforce, and I think that that is part of the challenge that we have in planning for the workforce for the future. As the city grows, we will need to expand bus services: more buses, more drivers and more depots. We know that we have an ageing workforce. That is something that we have to factor in, going forward, and that is why the rolling recruitment program that we have instituted as part of this action plan is so important, to beat that attrition and get new drivers into the workforce, particularly women, if we can.

MR MILLIGAN: Out of the new recruits who are coming through, how many have indicated that they would be willing to work weekend shifts?

Mr Steel: Some work has been done on screening potential recruits. We have had over 450 applications from people who want to become bus drivers. During that process we have been screening recruits for their interest in working weekend shifts. I will hand over to Judith to explain a little bit more about how that has worked.

Ms Sturman: During the probationary period the drivers are encouraged to work weekends. We have a large proportion of those drivers that do. Also those drivers, as they are brought on board, will be looking to cover as many shifts as they can. We have full-time staff who have fixed shifts that they do every day. New drivers come in and do more available shifts. Whilst the whole workforce is encouraged to opt into weekend work, the newer drivers are more likely to cover those weekend shifts.

The other thing that is probably worth noting is that after Christmas we are creating more opportunities for schools. We are overlapping schools, so that we can increase our recruitment and driver throughput into the system as well. That is another thing that we are doing as part of the action plan.

MISS C BURCH: You say that during recruitment you are screening them for their

willingness to work on weekends, and that they are encouraged to do so during probation. But presumably there is no requirement for them to work weekend shifts and continue to do so post probation?

Mr Steel: There is not, but the way that the system is operating at the moment is that the new drivers—if they are not casuals then they actually start as part timers before they become full time—a lot of them, actually want to work more hours. With the weekend timetable at the moment, there is quite a lot of competition now for taking those shifts. That is a good thing to make sure that we have all the shifts covered over the weekend.

It is about having enough drivers in the mix to create the demand for those shifts. A lot of the drivers do want to work, including the ones who are full time, more than five days a week in order to bring in more income. It is about having more drivers in the mix to be able to compete for those shifts.

MISS C BURCH: I understand that 20 per cent of permanent drivers were not opting for weekend shifts. Has that figure moved at all?

Mr Steel: I think it was slightly higher than that. We will get the exact figure for you.

Ms Sturman: It was around 80 per cent. We have not gone back and checked that figure.

MISS C BURCH: It says approximately 19 per cent of permanent drivers are not working any weekends—

Ms Sturman: That is correct, yes. That was at that moment in time. We have not gone back and looked at that and got that figure again.

Mr Steel: I think it is actually showing that a lot of the bus drivers actually do want to work extra shifts on the weekends. A lot of them have gone to extra lengths to make sure that we can cover shifts. That is the work that happens every week that Transport Canberra does through the depots to call drivers to come and do shifts. A lot of them having been putting in the effort to do it, and I want to commend them on that. But we just did not have enough of them around. We are getting to the point where we do, and that is promising.

But the weekdays have been very reliable. Throughout the process, from the start of the new network on the 29th, the weekdays have been very reliable, and we are hoping that that will continue. We need more bus drivers to work the weekday shifts as well as the weekends as well, as we expand services.

MISS C BURCH: Finally, you said that you expect to be able to increase weekend services in the new year. Is there any more specific time frame than that?

Mr Steel: No, there is not. Once we are confident that we have got enough drivers to be able to step up the shifts, then we will. We have just got to do a bit of further work, more training over the course of the new year, and then look at an appropriate timing for the step-up in services and exactly where that step-up occurs in terms of the time

of day, looking at the data around when people really need that frequency. We have heard from the bus drivers that they would like to see that in the mornings, on Saturday morning, in particular. That is a period where people want to go out and about and shop and so forth. Once we are confident, we will increase the number of services on the local routes. But the Rapids have always remained the same; and that has not changed.

THE CHAIR: I have a supp on recruitment. Page 31 of the annual report said that there was a recruitment campaign specifically about encouraging female drivers to enrol for positions which resulted in more than 100 responses. What was the conversion rate of those responses into positions and actually-recruited people?

Ms Sturman: It was actually very low, which was quite disappointing. We had about six who actually went through in the end to become drivers. However, having said that, we are currently at a 10 per cent rate of female drivers in the current campaign. From the beginning of the network, we have had 16 women drivers. That is really good. Most schools have some women drivers. We are still trying to encourage that. It is very clear that there is an opportunity for women, especially, to work at weekends; that is quite often the time when they would like to do something for themselves, and there is still an opportunity out there.

THE CHAIR: Did you ask the people who did not go through, or even the people who did go through, what was the reasoning for going either way?

Ms Sturman: No, we did not do that. We do have a social media campaign at the moment—

THE CHAIR: Yes, I have seen it.

Ms Sturman: with the kids asking questions, which is really good. Obviously, we feature a female driver in that process. There is probably a lot more that we can do. I would agree that there are opportunities for more promotion of women choosing to be drivers.

THE CHAIR: To borrow from a phrase Minister Berry used this morning, you cannot be what you cannot see. I commend you for trying to put women front and centre. This is a job that does not need to be gender based by any means. I encourage you to continue to do that.

Mr Steel: We recently had a come-and-try day, which was fully booked out in terms of registrations from the public, for people to go out and drive some of our buses around.

THE CHAIR: How did you go, minister? Are you any good?

Mr Steel: It was easier than you would think. That is part of it: making it more accessible for people. It can be quite intimidating. Even I was intimidated by the thought of driving an articulated bus around, but it is easy. It almost drives like a car.

THE CHAIR: Did you pass?

Mr Steel: You just have to be careful of the back wheels not slipping over the median.

MS LE COUTEUR: It is just the people around you.

Mr Steel: But that is another way of encouraging people to come forward. I think that we got some recruits out of that process as well.

Ms Sturman: Yes.

THE CHAIR: I want to go to ticket vending machines. We have them in Gungahlin, city, Woden, Tuggeranong, all the light rail platforms and Canberra Airport. Something is missing. It might be Belconnen. I have ears there; there is no ticket vending machine in Belconnen.

Mr Steel: I am happy to look into what we can do there.

Mr Steele: Ms Cheyne, we are trying to get in touch with Westfield, and we have been for some time.

THE CHAIR: But why Westfield? I understand that Westfield is the more popular bus station, but we have a Belconnen community bus station that is not dictated to by Westfield.

Mr Steele: At the last check, about 80 per cent of all passenger movements in Belconnen take place at Westfield. That design was to support a lounge-type feel. There is currently an ex-bus terminal that does not get a lot of use. What we would really like to do is replace that with a ticketing machine. We think that that would add the best bang for buck in terms of putting the ticket machine into Belconnen. The community station would be an option, but we are trying to pursue, and are continuing to pursue, installing one at Westfield. We have made several attempts to reach out to them through different areas, and we will continue to work to try and get that done.

THE CHAIR: What is the issue here? Are they just not picking up the phone?

Mr Steele: I think it is a complex management issue, between who manages Westfield itself locally compared to if it is managed out of an office in Sydney. A colleague of mine is working more closely on that. But we are not just getting there to get the works approved to go in there and do it.

THE CHAIR: Is there a time frame in which we say that enough is enough; we will just go and install it at the Belconnen community station instead? I think something is better than nothing, particularly for an integrated network. It has been raised with me several times now.

Mr Steele: I would hope we could get it into Westfield, but I agree that there could be a time when we just put it where we can and need to put it.

MS LE COUTEUR: I have recently had a representation from a post office asking why they cannot do MyWay cards like they used to in the not that distant past. Post

offices and newsagencies used to be a lot bigger network. Are there any comments there? Was it just too expensive?

Ms Sturman: Yes. That is to do with the equipment. Because we have an ageing product, there are only a certain number of terminals that we are able to use across the city. Therefore, unless somebody relinquishes their agency and we go out to seek another agent, we are tied down to the number of terminals that we have on hand at the moment.

MISS C BURCH: Given that there is still no time frame for the new ticketing system, has any consideration been given to increasing the number of terminals? I also hear from quite a few businesses who say that there are not MyWay agents in the area and they want to become one. They cannot understand why they are just being told that they cannot.

Ms Sturman: We now have linked 16 TVMs across the city, which is obviously a massive increase on zero. That provides another mechanism by which people are purchasing tickets and topping up their MyWay cards. That is more in the future as to how people would prefer to do that, because they can do that at any time of day. It is easy. We have provided that as another mechanism.

MISS C BURCH: The feedback I have received from businesses is that they have customers coming in and saying that they cannot find another way to top up and asking why there is not one in the area. Is there any move to consult with businesses like that to see if there is demand for it?

Ms Sturman: Unfortunately, it does come down to the hardware, and we would probably want to invest more in TVMs for a solution that is available to more people and is easier to position where we know that people need it.

MISS C BURCH: What is the cost of the hardware? What does one terminal or whatever cost?

Ms Sturman: It is not so much the cost; it is it being manufactured and available to us which is the key issue.

Mr Steel: It is a legacy system. The TVM is an option to expand. The airport is the latest one. When people arrive in Canberra for the first time and do not have a MyWay card, they can get a ticket to use public transport there, straightaway. We are making representations to the airport about how we improve wayfinding to that ticket machine and also to public transport more broadly. But it is good that that has gone in; it will improve accessibility significantly.

While the government has not made a decision on a new ticketing system yet, we still are in the process. It is just that we have not got to the point of making a decision. It is certainly something that we are very keen to do; it is just a matter of working out what the best opportunity is to transition.

THE CHAIR: Are you still considering just being able to use your credit card? Is that still a live option?

Mr Steel: That would be linked with an account-based system, a brand-new ticketing system.

THE CHAIR: I am curious about Ms Le Couteur's question. I certainly take the point about an ageing system. What is the point in expanding when we are hoping to transition out of that? With the new system, just what will the reach be?

Mr Steel: It is not so much what is the point—that is part of it—it is also that the technology is not available because it is a legacy system or it will become a legacy system over the next 12 months. The hardware is actually just not available—that is my understanding—very easily, anyway.

MISS C BURCH: They are just manufacturing the systems.

Mr Steel: That is right. Sydney did add the credit card technology to their system. They were able to do that. I am not sure that that is possible under MyWay.

Ms Sturman: What Sydney have done is not account based. It is purely being able to pay with your credit card. They have not taken that further step where it is an account-based system. They can only actually process full-priced cards. I think we would get a lot of complaints—

THE CHAIR: And you do not get the benefit of the data as well?

Ms Sturman: We are very lucky that our system actually does collect a lot of data that other systems do not. That is a really important aspect of our ticketing system also.

Ms Playford: I also note that the Sydney system is only for adult full-fare paying customers. The concessions still need to be done on an Opal card, in the traditional way.

THE CHAIR: It is actually quite complex.

Ms Playford: Yes. It is not something we would want, I guess, going forward.

MISS C BURCH: The flexibus service, I know, is something Ms Le Couteur is also quite passionate about. Minister, you have said previously that you are looking at options for a new booking system. How is that progressing and when can we expect to see some movement there?

Mr Steel: I will hand over to Judith to provide an update about how we are going.

Ms Sturman: Alison and I went to New South Wales not so long ago to experience their on-demand service. We had a very informative presentation of their team services that they are running at the moment and, I would, say testing. They have different reasons for running those systems. Some of them are replacing a large bus because the demand is not there. Others are actually door-to-door systems.

We realised that to jump into a solution right now without exploring what others have done and to take their learnings but then also understand what Canberra needs—Canberra is very distinctly different from some of the states and has different requirements—would not be appropriate. That is the process that we are in at the moment. We have taken a step back to make sure that the process that we go through is thorough and we ensure that we target the right groups of people at the right time. There will probably at some stage be some sort of trial after that feasibility has been carried out. We are not sure what the timing of that is, but we would like to think it would be early next year.

MISS C BURCH: In the interim is there any move to expand the flexibus service?

Ms Sturman: Unfortunately, the flexibus service has limitations because it is also the bus service that provides the special needs transport. For us to move away from that would mean that we would need to understand what we are moving to. We currently carry around 350 people a week through flexi travel. I think that would be a much larger number if we were to go and explore fully what other options there could be and also understand what people actually wanted, as it is a more confined system that we have got at the moment.

MISS C BURCH: What are the actual limitations at the moment?

Ms Sturman: The limitations are the time periods. In effect, the flexible travel was born out of the fact that there was a period during the day when the buses used for special needs transport were available. And we used them and they became flexible transport. But it is not how we want to go forward. We need to go forward with a solution that provides a lot more availability through the whole day to the community.

MS LE COUTEUR: You said you were going to do some sort of consultation before you went further. Where, who, what? How are you consulting and with whom?

Ms Sturman: We sat down and had a meeting with ACTCOSS and what we were looking at was how broadly to engage so that we can start from a point where we have engaged all the bodies that we believe would have an interest in this and for them to provide us with data so that we can start to map and bring somebody on board, probably to map for us where the most likely place to start is and also what the principles of the system would be. There are an infinite number of questions. Is it door to hub or hub to hub? There are so many variations and so many drivers for different types of systems that we are unsure exactly which one would be our priority to go forward with initially.

MS LE COUTEUR: You have not really even worked out what problem you are trying to solve? Would that be basically it?

Ms Sturman: No, not at this stage. That is correct.

MS LE COUTEUR: There are quite a few possible problems you could be solving that are not being solved by the rapids?

Ms Sturman: Yes.

Mr Steele: As it happens, I was at Pearce today speaking with the Women's Centre for Health Matters and this was one of the things that they raised as well. They will be providing us with some feedback in that space. On Monday coming we will be meeting again with our colleagues from the Office for Disability in CSD to speak more broadly about transport issues. We are continuing to engage with quite a range of stakeholders across the city. And that will all help inform how this work continues going forward.

MS LE COUTEUR: That is, of course, one of the other obvious matters. It would be good if you did not overlook the people who basically are not old and frail but who cannot use the car, for various other reasons. It may be someone who has got to push a pram for a really long distance. They do not own a car and having to push a pram means that they basically do not get out. A lot of us do not drive.

Mr Steel: We will be consulting with the community bus services that we already have in the ACT, through the regional organisations that run both buses and fleets of cars as well. They may have a slightly different view about how those services should run and whether they should be separate or not to a flexible, on-demand bus service.

As you say, there is a range of different problems that we are potentially trying to solve, network coverage being one. The difficulty is that we cannot have a bus running down every street and not everyone can walk the short distance sometimes to a bus stop. The specific example comes to mind of, I think it is, Pethebridge Court in Beasley Street in Pearce. It is very close to a rapid bus stop but it is a little too far away to walk.

MS LE COUTEUR: They used to have their own bus stop. That is obviously in our electorate. I know the location very well.

Mr Steel: That is probably an example, for people who are not mobile, of potentially a better option.

MR MILLIGAN: How do ACT government schools get to participate in the school crossing supervisor program? What programs do they need to go through? How do they qualify? What are the steps involved?

Mr Davidson: The school crossing supervisor program was established at the start of this Assembly as an election commitment. There are currently 25 schools participating in the program. When it was rolled out, the initial criteria for selecting those schools were based on pedestrian and traffic volume within the vicinity of the school. Then there are other considerations as well as to the safety of that crossing. It was expanded last year to another five schools. The main criterion for the expansion program was to help students in accessing the new bus network.

MR MILLIGAN: Are there any particular targets that you are aiming to achieve here in relation to the number of schools with school crossing supervisors?

Mr Davidson: One of the things with the school crossing supervisor program is that if we go back to, say the 1970s and 80s we had really high rates of active travel to

school. Approximately 75 per cent of kids were walking and riding to school. That figure today has dropped as low as 25 per cent across the ACT. There are many reasons for that. Some of it is convenience. But a key barrier that was identified by parents and school communities was road safety. The school crossing supervisor program is helping to improve the safety of the school zones and also to address any real or perceived issues of safety within those areas. It has also been subject to an evaluation, which is currently being finalised. Some of the early results of that evaluation show that it is improving perceptions of safety within the school zones.

MR MILLIGAN: If there is meant to be some infrastructure to install one of these school crossing and the supervisor, has the government got a budget that they are prepared to inject or contribute to for any infrastructure that needs to be put in place?

Mr Davidson: Over recent years there has been over \$6 million invested in improved infrastructure within the school zones. That started back in 2015 with an active streets pilot at four schools in Belconnen. A range of infrastructure improvements were rolled out through that program. That resulted in a five per cent increase in kids walking and riding to school during the course of the program, compared to before those infrastructure improvements were rolled out.

The current funding is \$2 million for expansion of the active streets program. That will mean that we can reach over 40,000 kids across the ACT. The infrastructure improvements will be things like improvements to crossings, new crossings, footpath connections and other minor works that help kids get to school safely.

MR MILLIGAN: In relation to crossings, though not at a school, over in Crace, between the shopping complex and Goodwin and the local residents there have been calls for the government to install a wombat crossing. Information came back that suggested that that was not necessarily the right approach to take. What could you do in that sort of situation? What sort of infrastructure could you put in place that would provide safety for the local community?

Mr Davidson: There is a real coordination effort that is required. One of the key things the TCCS has done is establish a dedicated schools program where we have a dedicated officer who goes out and meets with schools when they have concerns. Sometimes those concerns have been reported by parents. It might be the school community or it might be the school themselves that have called on TCCS to come and have a look at their situation and identify things that can be done to improve safety at their school. Sometimes they will have their own ideas about the things that need to happen. We will have experts go out and have a look at the environment there. It might be that there are other alternatives that address the safety concerns. Sometimes it can just be through, for example, education resources, and there are a number of those resources that we make available to the schools.

MR MILLIGAN: Goodwin is not a school; it is a retirement village, and we have the town centre there, so—

Mr Davidson: Sorry, I misheard you.

MR MILLIGAN: That is okay. Has research or analysis been done on what other

options are available for a crossing in that type of situation?

Mr Steel: I think that if you want us to provide some feedback on that specific crossing we perhaps can on notice. Otherwise I can have Jeremy Smith come up and talk about the general—

MR MILLIGAN: Either way. We can take it on notice.

Mr Steel: On that specific issue? We are happy to—

MR MILLIGAN: On notice is fine, thank you.

MS LE COUTEUR: I would like to ask about the future of the city public transport interchange. It has overflowed now to the western part of the city as well as the eastern, and the Jolimont Centre is also very overflowing at times. In particular it would be wonderful to see some enforcement of the taxis stopping where they should, rather than where they do. Have you got an estimate of how long it is going to be before even the current expanded Transport Canberra bus interchange is full?

Mr Steele: When we introduced the new network and expanded over to the other side of the city interchange on Alinga Street there was quite a lot of work done to look at the volumes of buses moving through there. One thing that is distinct from modelling and actually a running service is that the modelling may not always catch if buses bunch and all come in at the same time. So we are doing a bit of learning on that at the moment, looking at how we can make buses move through that area better and getting a real feel. It has been designed to allow growth, particularly on the Rapid services, into the future.

As you might be aware, there is quite a lot of work going on along the city precinct. We speak with our colleagues in the CRA about some of the things that they are looking at, such as the underground bus station project, and where else the buses might move eventually in the city. And of course the impact of light rail stage 2—2A even—will change how the buses move through that area. So we will continue to assess it as we move through the introduction of different changes.

MS LE COUTEUR: My understanding on 2A is that the buses will still go into Civic. There will not be an interchange at—

Mr Steel: At West Basin, no.

MS LE COUTEUR: So it presumably will not make a huge amount of difference actually.

Mr Steel: No, but with stage 2B coming along, I think that will affect—

MS LE COUTEUR: Stage 2B will make a—

Mr Steel: But there will still be buses coming to the city integrating with the light rail services, and as the city grows that may still increase. So we have just got to continue to remain visual and do that modelling.

MS LE COUTEUR: So you do not really have an idea of when the current system will give a bit of—

Ms Playford: I think we are in the context of all the different things that are happening in the city. There is a body of work looking in more detail at the traffic modelling. Mr Davidson answered some questions this morning around Belconnen and the different levels of traffic modelling, and definitely the city is very much a priority.

Mr Davidson: We are just in the final stages of procuring a mesoscopic operational model for the city and the inner north.

MS LE COUTEUR: What is mesoscopic? It sounds like microscopic.

Mr Davidson: This morning we spoke about the different levels of modelling at the very top level. We have the strategic model, which allows us to forecast demand for the network. In the middle we have the mesoscopic model, which allows us to look operationally at how the network is performing. But we can also run different scenarios. We can make changes to how the network operates and then that allows us to assess the impact on the network based on those changes.

That is a model that is in the final stages of being procured. It is not that we have not had it before; we have. There was a mesoscopic model that was developed for other projects, including the city and gateway framework that was developed and also, importantly, the light rail project. This is really providing us with what will be a single source of truth on which we can base future modelling and assumptions in the city.

MS LE COUTEUR: When you say mesoscopic and network, are you only talking about your public transport network, or are you talking about all traffic movements?

Mr Davidson: It is a transport model. It covers public transport; it covers all movements on the network.

MS LE COUTEUR: Does it include human beings?

Mr Davidson: It can do, yes. With any model, it depends what data you put in, and they can be data hungry. But, yes, you can model pedestrian movements as well.

MS LE COUTEUR: One of the bigger problems I observe is people crossing Northbourne Avenue sometimes—including me—very unsafely. You can see something that you want to catch and you know that if you do not do it very quickly you have got a quarter of an hour to wait—quite an encouragement towards unsafe crossings. What are you doing about that?

Mr Steel: We are considering whether timed pedestrian crossing signals might be an option to clearly get across the message that there is only a certain amount of time to cross. That is one of the potential treatments on crossing Northbourne, potentially at the Alinga Street end further down near London Circuit.

MS LE COUTEUR: That is where I was talking about.

Mr Steel: There are a lot of people crossing there to the light rail station as well. That is just one of the treatments there. I am not sure if anyone wants to comment on any other.

Ms Playford: We will obviously continue to educate people around the safety issues. We recently released another video, which shows some of the near misses.

MS LE COUTEUR: That is kind of a different issue: people on the light rail track. These are not people on the light rail track; these—

THE CHAIR: You are talking about people getting hit by cars.

MS LE COUTEUR: I am talking about people trying to cross Northbourne Avenue, sometimes to get to the light rail. Those are probably the people who are really going to be running. They know that if they miss that they have a quarter of an hour, so they do not want to miss it. But it is a different problem from what you are showing in those very entertaining and sometimes quite worrying videos. Are you looking at a 40-kilometre speed limit? I do not think it would be a total solution but are you looking at that as a possibility?

Mr Steel: There is a 40-kilometre speed limit on part of Northbourne.

MS LE COUTEUR: There are lots of roadworks but I do not think there is a standard one.

MR MILLIGAN: Not a standard 40 kilometre; it is all 60.

MS LE COUTEUR: I appreciate that there are so many roadworks but—

Mr Edghill: It is not just a transport issue. This is where it also strays into EPSDD around the functioning of Northbourne Avenue. The City Renewal Authority, I am sure, has ideas too.

There is quite a lot that will change with the city road network with the introduction of light rail stage 2A and with the project to raise London Circuit, the southern portion of it, to be activated with Commonwealth Avenue. In addition to that you also have another planned development: the punch-through of Edinburgh Avenue at Vernon Circle. In the not too distant future, we know, the way traffic moves through the city is going to change.

We do not have an answer today but it is a very big part of our planning in conjunction with light rail stage 2A. That is the immediate trigger but Transport Canberra and City Services are leading some of the thinking around what is happening with the entirety of the traffic network in the city. Likewise Major Projects Canberra is looking at other areas of the city around how utilities function and so forth. So across government there is quite a lot of work at the moment going into how the city moves and operates when we have these new investments which are made and new development which will occur.

MS LE COUTEUR: Why is the CRA doing the work on a new public transport interchange depot? Surely it would be you guys?

Mr Steel: I think it was an idea about what could potentially happen in the future if we got to the point where we needed extra space. But it is not something that either the CRA or TCCS is looking at in the short term. It was an idea that was presented.

Ben, could you provide some further details on the traffic safety issues?

Mr McHugh: There is a trade-off with every decision you make about the transport network. It is all based on time and it is where the time gets allocated. In the city precinct there is a network of traffic signals that all talk to each other. So if you make a decision about the timing at one particular location, it can have a flow-on effect on a whole range of other parts of the network. Obviously there is prioritisation in terms of providing for public transport.

At that particular intersection at Northbourne in particular, you have buses crossing Northbourne Avenue and you have light rail approaching, so the decision comes right down to where we allocate seconds in that system. For pedestrians, absolutely, it is a priority to let them cross safely. The light median arrangement of Northbourne also provides a particular challenge, because you have your pathway and then you have to stop and start again. So when you put all those things together, obviously it is very complex to make sure that you are giving the right amount of time to the right user group.

MS LE COUTEUR: In terms of this mix, are you looking at the interstate transport situation? I mentioned Jolimont. It seems to have kind of reached capacity. And we are expecting rapid growth in Yass, Goulburn and even Queanbeyan, some of whom hopefully will be coming in by public transport rather than driving. Are we looking at how we are going to cater for the end of their trips?

Mr Steel: There is some thinking going on about the City West layover that is part of the ANU exchange precinct and what the future of that location might be. That has been, I think, used as a layover for interstate transport through the city in particular in the past. Where a potential other location might be that provides better access, and if that were redeveloped in the future, that is certainly on the cards. We will continue to do the traffic modelling we need to do for the broader city precinct and work out what future changes might be needed in relation to the city interchange.

Ms Playford: I understand that the CRA is also doing some work to consider that side of the city and those issues around movement and place and future redevelopments. We work closely with the CRA, but they are doing some thinking around those issues at the moment.

THE CHAIR: Could one of the solutions with crossing Northbourne and Alinga Street be like what they have got deployed near the mall in Brisbane with Queen Street and maybe George Street, where all the signals go at once and people can kind of cross over the middle? I appreciate what you said before, Mr McHugh, about everything having a flow-on effect, but is that something that is being actively

considered?

Mr McHugh: It is; often referred to as scramble crossings.

THE CHAIR: Thank you for that technical term.

Mr McHugh: It is. I have just returned from Tokyo, where they have the world's biggest scramble crossing and it is a tourist attraction. Scramble crossings, again, become part of the trade-off. In fact we have tested some scenarios around the city in our modelling software about how they would perform in certain locations, and they actually result in a larger delay time for pedestrians, so you get a better go when it is your go but you have to wait longer until you get a chance.

They work well in confined intersections where the crossing distances are short. To get from one corner to the other, often diagonally, is where people want to make the movement. If that is a short distance, the time required to clear that distance as a pedestrian is short and you can run the cycle time quickly. On big intersections where that is a longer distance to walk, the cycle time for the whole intersection increases and then the wait time increases, so it can actually encourage inappropriate pedestrian behaviour and more jaywalking in certain locations. So they work well in certain spots, and we have tested that and Northbourne unfortunately, due to its geometry and its scale, is not suitable.

THE CHAIR: That is good to know. With the city interchange stops, something I have never understood with the new network is that R2, R3 and R4 heading west leave from stop 3419, which is across the road from the GPO, but coming into town the R2 and the R4 are near the GPO at stop 3418 but the R3 is at stop 3409. I know I am being very specific but I am looking at your very helpful map.

I have had constituents, particularly people who are elderly, state to me that the Belco Rapids being on the Melbourne Building side of Northbourne and the lengthy wait and then walk times across Northbourne has discouraged them from taking the Rapid anymore, because they are not in the central city interchange part. What is the reasoning for all three of the Rapids heading west being on that Melbourne Building side? Could one of them at least reflect what we have with the one heading into town with the R3 and be located on the Sydney Building side?

Mr Steele: When we designed the network, we put a lot of thought into how common trips can be joined together. On the inbound trips, the 4 and the 2 stop on the GPO side. I think that is platform 2. The reason why they join there is that the 2 and the 6 both proceed to Barton. So the idea is that you can get the 2 or the 6 to get to Barton, so that is why they are grouped together, and the 4 is the direct bus to Woden.

The 5, which is over the other side, also takes you to Woden but it is indirect, so we do not want people to get on one bus or the other. The reason why the 3 stops on the other side is that the 3 and the 5 both go to Russell. You could get either bus to go to Russell, so that is why they are paired together.

On the outbound to Belconnen, given that the 2, the 3 and the 4 all go to Belconnen, we have grouped those together. There is also the spacing of the stops through the city.

On the inbound we have the ANU stop and the Marcus Clarke stop, which is kind of the major stop on the western side. We have the city and we also have the London Circuit stops that are just behind us here at the Assembly. That is how we can consider that spacing.

I do know that since the network started we have had considerable feedback around this matter. You can assess how we do the groupings and we do them from a logical standpoint, like these two buses go to a point. Where we are getting now with six months of the network in is that we are starting to see how people are actually using it and talking more to the customers, spending some time out on the interchange. We have our CSAs in the interchange who spend a lot of time and do a really great job speaking to customers and getting us some on-the-ground information on what actually what is happening.

These are the kinds of things that we will consider as we continue to refine the network. Are these connections working correctly? Can people move where we want them to move? How do we improve this? The drivers give us feedback that it is not quite getting through to people that you could get any bus to Belconnen. They are waiting for a 2 or a 3 to go past to get on the 4. So how can we get that messaging out to our customers to say, “This is a common corridor. If you are going to Belconnen from this stop, any bus will take you there”?

THE CHAIR: I just think that particularly for people who are coming into the city then going perhaps to the Canberra Centre the distance between the Melbourne Building and here is actually quite significant for them to be leaving the Canberra Centre, particularly if they are on the Dendy side or something.

Mr Steele: Some customers I have spoken to in the interchange find that getting off at the Assembly stop is now better for them, because the Canberra Centre is just a direct walk up that part of Ainslie Avenue. So there is a bit of education in that space. It is not to say that we cannot continue to improve, but it works both ways: we can help our customers understand our thinking and why we have done what we have done, but then we can also reflect on that and see if there are improvements that we can put in as we review the network, moving forward.

MISS C BURCH: You talked about constantly making tweaks to the network. When is the next planned larger scale network change?

Mr Steel: Well, we have already made about 135 or 136 tweaks to the network and we will continue to make changes based on feedback. We are at the six-month mark now and Transport Canberra has been out engaging with the community councils. I think that we have already been to Gungahlin and the inner south, and the other councils are to come before the end of the year, just to go back and have another conversation with those communities about what some of the issues are that are coming up with the new network. Based on that we will look at what further changes we need to do, but we are constantly making changes. The 130-odd changes that we have made already have not been done all at once; they have been staggered and based on conversations that we have been having directly with schools or school representative groups. We will continue to have those conversations and listen to the community on an ongoing basis.

Short suspension.

Mr Steel: I have a clarification to something said in the last session. I understand that the Carbridge Toro buses that were trialled in 2017 were manufactured in Malaysia.

THE CHAIR: Thank you. We will now hear from the minister in his capacity as Minister for City Services and his officers regarding city services, libraries, city maintenance services and Capital Linen Service.

MISS C BURCH: I want to go to the better suburbs project. Some 54 citizens authored the better suburbs statement 2030, which was tabled in the Assembly in September 2018. How successful was this exercise?

Mr Steel: It was useful in the sense of trialling in one area of government what a citizens jury or deliberative democracy process might look like. We have since reported back in the budget on the recommendations that were made by that group. That has been really useful. We provided that document to them to give them a sense that we are moving on the actions that they wanted us to prioritise in city services. It was a prioritisation exercise, in many ways, engaging them about all the different decision-making processes that the directorate has to look at across a whole range of different areas.

Those recommendations are now being acted on in different ways. One is in relation to the tree canopy target. They recommended that we have a 30 per cent tree canopy target, and we have adopted a 30 per cent tree canopy target, in a different time frame, but still the same target.

We have significantly increased resourcing, particularly in relation to water infrastructure, which was their top priority amongst all the priorities in city services. That has been a major focus. We have demonstrated that the government is investing more in that area compared to previously, through that project and in a whole range of other areas across the city.

Food organics is another one. They wanted us to look into a food waste avoidance and food organics collection system. We have now got funding through the budget to start the process of developing that.

It has been a useful process in engaging the community in the sorts of work that our directorate has to do and putting them in the place of some of the staff in terms of coming up with recommendations. It is an ongoing process; we have not finished. We have reported once on the outcomes under the better suburbs statement and we will continue to work on those actions going forward.

MISS C BURCH: Are you looking to roll out similar processes in any other areas?

Mr Steel: Not at this point in time. We also had a process that was connected to the better suburbs statement around a play spaces forum. As a result of that, \$1.9 million was allocated to playground refreshes; upgrades of playgrounds, particularly nature plays; and play space reviews. Those reviews are largely ongoing with the suburbs

involved. There are five suburb play space reviews being undertaken throughout the city. That is another way of engaging with the community, looking at all the different play spaces within a suburb and working through a prioritisation process. Is it about upgrading all the existing playgrounds with small upgrades or is it about prioritising building one new playground in a particular space?

That has been, at times, a challenging process to work through, particularly in Higgins: it caused a few issues in pitting some parts of the community against each other, which potentially was not a useful thing. But it seems to have worked quite well in other suburbs where that has been going on. It is something that we have learnt from, and we may use various elements of deliberative democracy in other things that we do.

We have kicked off a co-design process on Woden library, which is helping us to work on what we do with the half a million dollars' worth of funding that we have been able to appropriate to upgrade particularly the mezzanine level of Woden library, but also potentially other parts of the library, into a new community space. Over the course of November, we have had a couple of workshops with the community on that co-design process, and we are hoping to continue various elements of co-design and look at other parts of the library system and other libraries going forward.

THE CHAIR: In terms of modern libraries, there is a pretty not modern library in Belconnen, in the town centre. How appropriate is it for a modern library to continue to be in a building like that? I appreciate that it is a heritage-listed building, but is it fit for purpose?

Ms Little: The Belconnen Library is not yet on the heritage register; it is nominated. We have two others, Woden and Dickson. Like any building that age, it was built for a time. A modern library would have more flexible spaces, but any changes to it or any idea of moving would be a decision for government.

MR MILLIGAN: I noticed that on 5 November you did a sod-turning exercise for a footpath in Mitchell. I am not really sure that that warrants a whole media announcement and so forth, but we will move on. I am just wondering why the footpath and the cyclepath link were not constructed during the first stage of light rail and what other cost the government has incurred in going back there now to install them all.

Mr Steel: Going to your first point, as Minister for Roads and Active Travel, I want to make sure we have a greater emphasis on active travel. It is a significant path: it is one of the missing links in our whole system; it always has been. There has never been a path link between EPIC and Mitchell. That was part of the new announcement. That was a new announcement that we were constructing that section of path as well as reconstructing the path from Well Station Drive down to Sandford Street. Of course we should be highlighting the fact that we want to build new paths in our city; it is a great thing to be doing and our government will do more of it.

In relation to the process around stage 1 of light rail, there was a path connection between Well Station and Sandford-Morisset. Because of the construction, that had to be removed and replaced with a temporary path by Canberra Metro. That temporary

path, for a range of reasons—safety reasons and so forth—had to be removed at the end of construction of light rail. That is why we are now getting on with the work in replacing that path.

The section from about EPIC—I think it is Randwick Road, technically, because there is a stub of a path from EPIC—is going to be much easier to construct because of the gradient and just the nature of that section. That is going to be done first, and work is well and truly underway on that section.

The second section, which we are hoping to complete early next year, is the more difficult one. There are significant utilities along that alignment; there are light posts in the way of the potential path; the gradient is quite steep. There is going to have to be a fair bit of work undertaken. That is why it has taken a bit longer than anticipated to get started on those works, because of the design that was required as well. I will pass over to Jeremy to explain more about the difficulties with that section.

Mr Smith: As Minister Steel has highlighted, the Flemington Road shared path has been broken into two segments. The eastern part between EPIC, or Flemington Road, and Sandford Street is much easier: the services in the ground do not require moving and there are just one or two service pits that we need to change the height of, so it has been a lot easier for us to achieve ground there.

As Minister Steel highlighted, from Sandford Street up to Well Station, there was the temporary path that Canberra Metro installed. They had to remove it for safety reasons, due to the gradients of the path itself. It was only ever intended to be of a temporary nature. We have a number of areas where we need to do work. There is a swale drain running through that area; we need to overcome the drainage issues around there. We have an intersection with the Mitchell resource centre. And we have an intersection where we need to cross Flemington Road. All those things combined make that component of the design much harder. A number of the services in the ground may need relocating as well.

We took what we saw as the smart opportunity to deliver the first piece of the path, making that connection between the light rail stop and Mitchell, while we progressed with the complex design on the western side.

MR MILLIGAN: Is any new infrastructure that has been part of the first stage of light rail construction being relocated or moved? Is all the infrastructure that is there part of the first stage of light rail? Or does all that existing work, infrastructure that was already there, need to be relocated?

Mr Smith: We will not be relocating anything. With the piece between Flemington Road and Sandford Street, we will be raising the level of a couple of bits, but nothing will be moving.

MS LE COUTEUR: This is a library question. It is a follow-up from the question on notice which I lodged last month about access to ACT libraries for a person with vision impairment from regional New South Wales. In the response it was made quite clear that there would be no exceptions made for this person because this would mean that resources paid for by the ACT community would not be available to the

ACT community when they needed it. I am struggling to understand how the resources required for one vision impaired person were going to make such an impact on the ACT that we cannot help him.

Mr Steel: I think this is the fellow who lives in Gundagai. Is that correct?

MS LE COUTEUR: Yes. The New South Wales government has now put in an extra bus service, as he explains it, recognising that we are a regional centre. He came. He is vision impaired. He wanted to borrow a talking book and he could not. Surely the cost to the ACT of being a good neighbour would come into it. You could fine him if he did not bring it back.

Ms Little: There are a number of issues that arise out of the gentlemen's request. It is a little like if we offer it to one person, then we have to offer it to the next person and the next person and the next person. We have some contractual reasons why we cannot make library membership available to people outside the ACT and the immediate region. And they are to do with our electronic resources. We actually sign contracts to say that we will only make those electronic resources available to people who are within our own jurisdiction.

I have had experience with one vendor who had reason to think that we were breaking their rules. They have, in fact, sent us a letter claiming that they might take legal action against us. There are some contractual reasons why we would not allow it either.

I am due to meet the gentlemen involved in a few weeks time and I am going to try to assist him to access the services that he is very entitled to in his own region and also nationally. He is entitled to use the vast library of Vision Australia and he should also be able to use the services of his own library region. I have agreed to meet with him to assist him.

MS LE COUTEUR: He told us it was going to cost him an inter-library loan every time he used the services of his own library, because his own library did not have them, which obviously, at nearly \$20, is unreasonable.

Ms Little: Yes, I have investigated it. Clearly I have networks around the country. The gentlemen involved has the resources of the entire Riverina library service at his disposal, not just the Gundagai Library. There are a couple of issues that I am happy to help him work through with the Riverina library service. Again, we have researched how he would be able to use Vision Australia's collection, and he would have those vast resources available to him as well.

We are not walking away from the gentleman at all but we have to be mindful of our contractual obligations with our electronic resources and also we have to be very mindful that if we gave membership to somebody who was 200 kilometres away then that might open up the floodgates for lots of other people. He can have services and we are happy to help him.

MS LE COUTEUR: Thank you very much for your cooperation on this. I am sure he will say the same when he sees you. It is well beyond the call of duty here, even if he

is 200 kilometres away.

MS LAWDER: I have a library question too. Firstly, just briefly, I visited your moon exhibition in the Heritage Library. I know it was more technically in the current financial year but the preparation was in the last financial year. How was the feedback on that?

Ms Little: The feedback was very good. I am afraid I would have to take on notice how many people came to have a look at it. But it was very good. It was a very early opportunity for us to use that new facility. I know that the staff really enjoyed working with the people from the celebration committee in putting it together.

MS LAWDER: I was interested in your integrated library management system. The annual report says it is due to go live in 2019. This is on page 39.

Ms Little: It is going live next Thursday.

MS LAWDER: You have been through all the testing?

Ms Little: Yes. We are in a period at the moment when there are reduced services, and that is unfortunate. We have had to turn off the old system and we are preparing the new one. Of course we cannot have people using the old system and changing it as we are transferring the data over. We are in what library people call offline mode at the moment. You can still borrow and return. But we are only keeping records of those and then we will upload that data to the new system. Libraries will be closed next Wednesday for the cut-over and the change and then we will reopen on Thursday with our fabulous new system.

MS LAWDER: It is a manual process in the interim and then you will upload it?

Ms Little: When you borrow, you will use your card and the offline system records your card number and the RFID chips of each of the items. But that is all it records. When they are about to go live we will load that all up so that all those loans and returns are put into the system so that it is totally accurate.

MS LAWDER: What is it that you are getting in the new system that is—

Ms Little: So much more. You are going to be able to register from home. We are going to be able to link families so that if you have got a couple of kids with a borrowers card you are going to be able to go into your own account and then see what they have got out on loan. You do not have to go into everybody's account.

When you go to borrow at the kiosks and the system sees that you have borrowed a series of romance novels or something like that, it will give you suggestions. Yes, it is so much more. If you have a good read subscription we will be able to link your membership to the good reads. You will be able to get the suggestions for good reads through the system. Yes, it is 21st century.

MS LAWDER: I noticed recently that you announced that you were waiving fines. Does the new system allow for fines or are you doing away with them all together?

Mr Steel: It opened up the opportunity, I think, to explore the issue of removing fines and also dealing with the backlog of debts that we had. As a result we have made a decision to both wipe the existing debt and not charge any new fines on an ongoing basis. We could, of course, under the new system charge fines but we have decided not to. And that is based on the experience of other jurisdictions: City of Sydney Council, in particular. I was speaking with Councillor Linda Scott last week about their experience and she was saying to me they actually had more items returned when they got rid of fines than when they had them. We are not expecting a huge number of items to go missing.

This is now in place, effectively just before this new system starts. And we are hoping to see more people come back to our libraries, particularly users that are disengaged and brand-new users, because there is not that fear of having a fine hanging over your head. There were about 4,000 fines. How many were there?

Ms Little: I would have to take that one on notice.

Mr Steel: There were a significant number of fines and a fine debt that has been accumulating. And what we know from the system is that the majority of the people who do have fines do not come back. We are hoping to actually re-engage with them and see more people borrowing.

MS LAWDER: What was the quantum of the fines waived: \$10,000, \$1,000, \$100,000?

Mr Steel: The largest loan fine was \$4,000.

Ms Little: The total quantum was \$1.86 million, remembering though that some of that data was actually taken from the system before the one we have got now. It is actually 15 to 16 years old. But the vast majority of it was under \$50.

MS LAWDER: You could have imported or uploaded them into the new system but you chose, as a policy decision, not to do that?

Mr Steel: That is right.

Ms Little: Yes.

MS LAWDER: Have you had things returned since that time?

Ms Little: The unfortunate thing is that we are in offline mode at the moment. We do not know. We will know, because we are gathering bar codes at the moment on the system and then we will upload it all. We will know more when we go live with the new system. But all my colleagues have said that they receive a whole lot of stuff back and they get a whole lot of new users, or returned users, because they do not have a fine anymore.

MS LAWDER: It was not an issue about having to import or upload into the new system: extra work, extra money?

Ms Little: No, not at all. It was a much-welcomed policy decision.

MR MILLIGAN: With any of the books that had not been returned where people had received a fine, could people just go off and buy the book, bring it back to the library and say, “Will you accept this and not worry about the fine?” That would be if the fine was more than what it would cost to buy the book.

Ms Little: When somebody receives an invoice from us because they have kept the book for so long that we deem it lost, if they come and pay for that book, then—

MR MILLIGAN: Instead of the fine?

Ms Little: Once you have kept something out so long that we deem the book lost—it is not just overdue anymore; it is actually lost—you receive an invoice from us, which is the value for the replacement of the book and an administrative fee. Sometimes people come and pay that and then they find the book. We say to them, “You have paid for the book. Keep it.” It is more work for the staff to put it back onto the system again. We have already bought another copy; we buy them through specialist library suppliers, who supply them to us already covered, catalogued and with the spine label. It is just so much more work for us to do it.

MR MILLIGAN: How did that one account get to \$4,000?

Ms Little: It would have been the number of items.

MR MILLIGAN: I was a publisher before coming here and I am just thinking that I have never published a book that was that expensive.

Ms Little: It was a number of items. I have corresponded with that member, and that member has chosen to ignore my correspondence.

MR MILLIGAN: I wonder why!

MS LE COUTEUR: Will you write and ask him or her back?

Ms Little: Probably not.

MR MILLIGAN: They have left the ACT. They have left the country. They have moved to Queensland with everyone else.

THE CHAIR: Maybe they are creating their own library.

Mr Steel: There were 24,286 memberships that had a library fine as at 28 October, quite a significant number. Hopefully, all those will come back.

MR MILLIGAN: Most people like their books.

Ms Little: That number does include the executive branch manager of libraries. They did pay their \$3 fine.

MS LE COUTEUR: I also owe about \$1.80.

THE CHAIR: I do not have more questions on libraries, but Mr Alegria might like to come back to talk about weeds and African lovegrass.

MR MILLIGAN: Again!

THE CHAIR: Yes, again. It is a scourge on our fair territory.

Welcome back, Mr Alegria. I did warn you!

We touched on this earlier today. I appreciate that TCCS is very aware and recognises what a serious problem this is. What are TCCS officers and rangers—particularly those who are out in the field mowing, slashing and, particularly, doing stuff by the road—doing to minimise any contribution that they might make to spreading this awful thing?

Mr Alegria: African lovegrass in particular?

THE CHAIR: Yes.

Mr Alegria: As I alluded to earlier, we recognise that it is a big problem. Also, because of the nature of lovegrass, it is inherently difficult to stop it spreading because the seeds are so fine and tiny that they are easily spread by even the passage of a passing vehicle on a median strip. They are also prolific seeders, as you probably know. As soon as any rainfall happens, they will pop up seed heads. That is when you get that kind of dark, black effect, with all the seed heads coming up. They can seed anytime the conditions are right, not just at a particular point. It is challenging.

In terms of the way we respond, we work from basically clean areas, as we call them—areas without a lot of lovegrass—into the more contaminated areas. We are not going from a really contaminated area back out to a clean area. That is really important basic mower hygiene. That has been really effective. An example would be the more rural areas of the ACT, with the roadside mowing; we work from the depths of Namadgi, for example, back into town so that we are not dragging anything back out into that area. That is the park service's responsibility, but that kind of principle is what we also use in town.

We also have wash-down facilities and blow-down facilities for the mowers, which are located strategically around. And we do the basic mower hygiene of making sure that the mower is clean before it goes out into a new area, particularly where it has been used in a contaminated area. As I say, it is inevitable that there is going to be some impact. Seeds can be lodged throughout all the nooks and crannies of the machine, but we do our best to make sure that hygiene is maintained.

The other part is that if we notice an outbreak somewhere it has not occurred before, that is an opportunity where we could potentially go in and control that particular area to basically keep a buffer zone.

They are the main avenues. In terms of control in general, we are trialling some different methodologies of control. There is no shortage of products that can be used to actually kill the plant, but the secret is to find a regime that also gets rid of the seed bed and to provide an alternative cover of vegetation to prevent further incursion. That is where we are looking at combinations of different chemicals with different ways of acting. We are also looking at burning. And then it is re-establishing a desirable grass cover that means that the lovegrass is not as likely to come back in.

THE CHAIR: Do we have a map of where all the known lovegrass hotspots are?

Mr Alegria: Yes, we have maps.

THE CHAIR: Are you able to share those with the committee?

Mr Alegria: Yes. As you know, in some areas it is very difficult to get rid of all the lovegrass and we have to try to manage it by, for example, mulching. You will notice that along Drakeford Drive, for example, where we have tree canopy cover or shade, the lovegrass is much less prevalent. Where we have deep mulch, it cannot get through the mulch. They are some of the treatments we can do. Rather than just always trying to attack the weed itself, we can create an environment that is not conducive to it being there in the first place. That is really effective and it has the other benefit that planting trees is desirable and mulching is great for water retention and visually. Those sorts of treatments have a dual benefit as well as controlling the African lovegrass.

THE CHAIR: The annual report mentioned WEEDit units. What are they?

Mr Alegria: The WEEDit unit is a technology that has come from the agriculture sector. It is a vehicle-mounted spray unit that is designed to automatically recognise green vegetation. It is used along the edges of roads, primarily, where you have weeds growing in gutters and on the edge of the kerb.

As the unit is driven along, it recognises that there is something green and it puts a dose of herbicide directly on it. The benefit is that it is fast. You can be driving along at a slow but reasonable speed, and the operator is not exposed to any safety hazards, because they are in the vehicle with all the warning signs. It has meant that we can get through that kind of program—controlling weeds in kerbs and gutters particularly—really efficiently and quickly. Obviously that has benefits in terms of the maintenance of the hard asset as well when we are not having weeds gradually breaking it up. It has been a really effective technology. We have been using them throughout the suburbs and it has proven very safe and effective and good for our staff.

THE CHAIR: Will we be expanding?

Mr Alegria: We have enough units now that do the job. We need to spray once or twice a season; we can cover the requirements there with the units we have. If we needed more, they are relatively inexpensive to buy so it is not a financial issue if we do need to expand.

THE CHAIR: In terms of environmentally friendly weed killers—this is probably a

contradiction in terms—you touched on these newer technologies and taking lessons learned from the agricultural sector.

Mr Alegria: Yes, exactly. The beauty of the WEEDit unit particularly is that it only sprays where there is something to spray and it does not spray any more until it sees something else. You are eliminating any overspray. We have made some really big achievements, particularly in the pesticide realm. I think a few years ago we used hundreds of kilograms of neonicotinoids. Now we are down to literally two kilograms of that particular product, which is bad for bees. We have quite dramatically reduced the use of that, for example.

We are always looking for ways to minimise the herbicides that we need to use at the moment and to make sure that we only use as much as we need to use to get the job done, basically. That is really important to ensure that we are only doing what we have to do to keep things under control.

MS LE COUTEUR: Are you still using Roundup?

Mr Alegria: Yes.

MS LE COUTEUR: I read that 500 workers at the Blacktown City Council stopped working over the council still requiring them to use Roundup. Are the issues that have caused that problem an issue for you?

Mr Alegria: There is a growing community concern about glyphosate, which is the active ingredient in Roundup. We have written to the APVMA, the Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority, basically the regulatory body at the commonwealth level. They actually register all such products for use across Australia and they provide authorisation for jurisdictions and companies to use those products.

We have written to them specifically about glyphosate and asked them about their review process, in light of community concern, and they have assured us that using glyphosate in accordance with the label is safe and they do not have an intention to review the safety or the risk of glyphosate. That gives us some comfort from that expert body.

MS LE COUTEUR: We have not had any staff claiming that they have been injured as a result of—

Mr Alegria: No. In light of that concern, we wanted to reassure the community and staff how we are managing the products. We have actually gone and reviewed recently all our guidelines about weed control and we reminded staff that spraying is really the last resort. If we can do it a different way—if we can mulch, if we can mechanically remove and it is feasible to do so—we do that as a preference. Where we have to spray, as I mentioned before, we spray only the minimum amount needed to do the job.

We have reviewed all our safety protocols as well and we have actually gone beyond the label requirements. For example, we are now asking staff to wear safety glasses with a shield on the side, which is not required on the label, but it makes common

sense given that the product could irritate the eyes. They are some of those things where we are really trying to go above and beyond to make sure that staff feel safe and comfortable and that they are aware of what is required in using that product and other products.

The glyphosate product is a relatively short-lived product. Once it is in the environment for any length of time it basically becomes benign. It is not a residual product. Of the herbicides we use, it is probably one of the least toxic.

THE CHAIR: Are there guidelines on when weeds can be sprayed, particularly in terms of wind speeds?

Mr Alegria: Yes, absolutely.

THE CHAIR: I am conscious that three days ago there was a comment on a Canberra notice board group that there were some workers near the dog park in Holder who were spraying during quite significant wind gusts. I am wondering if that is normal practice or if it might have just been a bit out of step with your guidelines.

Mr Alegria: I am not aware of that but certainly the label specifies the conditions under which you can spray or what you can spray, what species, and also the conditions under which you can spray. There are ways of mitigating wind by the type of nozzle you use. You can put a shield on it that prevents any overspray. There are ways of working but certainly, if it is excessively windy, then we would not normally expect that people would be spraying, no.

MS LAWDER: If I recall, in November 2015 I presented a motion in the Assembly about the weeds budget being more specifically aimed at the rapid spread of African lovegrass, at which point the minister for the environment said it was not really necessary. Yet here we are with African lovegrass with its own little section in the annual report. What could we have done differently four years ago?

Mr Alegria: My understanding or my experience is that we have actually received generous funding in recent years for weed control. For example, the former better suburbs initiative provided extra initiative funding for weed control, which we have used for the purposes that I have described today. I think the lovegrass issue particularly is probably one that would have been tackled several decades ago if we had our time over again. The situation from 2015 to now may have deteriorated somewhat but probably not materially. I think that the extra funding and the initiatives that we have put in place to try to control it have been as successful as they can be.

MS LAWDER: Are you saying no matter what we might have done four years ago we would still be at this same point?

Mr Alegria: It is difficult to say what might have happened. It depends on what the scenario might have been but I am just saying that we have been able to put up a case to government to receive extra funding for weed control and we have been granted that. Now we are doing our best to make that as useful as possible.

MS LAWDER: We mentioned at that time the mowing equipment spreading it

throughout the suburbs and around Lake Tuggeranong, I recall specifically. It seems like it is suddenly a whole new part of the annual report.

Mr Alegria: I guess the annual report was simply trying to highlight the fact that we are continuing to do these trials and trying to find more innovative ways of controlling it, in recognition of the issues that it brings. It is going to be an ongoing issue. We will probably be talking about it next year and hopefully we can report back on some of those trials and the success that we have had.

THE CHAIR: Just to round up what I was talking about before, I will send to you the link to this thread on the Canberra notice board group. There are quite a few examples put forward of weed spraying practices that do not seem to accord with the guidelines you just mentioned. It might be worth a reminder to staff.

Mr Alegria: I am happy to hear it.

MISS C BURCH: I would like to go to the dog compliance team.

Mr Alegria: The compliance targeting team?

MISS C BURCH: Yes. In May this year, minister, you announced the new six-person compliance team. In what sense is this team new?

Mr Steel: They are additional positions that were created in addition to the existing investigations team that we have within transport and city services and in addition to the domestic animal services rangers that we have. Their primary focus was to educate, engage with the community and potentially issue warnings and fines in relation to mainly lower level offences associated not only with the Domestic Animals Act but also the Litter Act, the Public Unleased Land Act and other pieces of regulation.

MISS C BURCH: Is this team separate from the dog enforcement team? Does that still exist?

Mr Steel: Domestic animal services has primary responsibility for investigating dog attack incidents.

MISS C BURCH: In a question on notice on 25 September, you said that as at 18 October the new compliance team had had 1,436 engagements and issued 97 formal warning notices and 27 infringements. Can you tell us what proportion of those are relating to animals and what proportion of those are relating to the other areas that the team covers?

Mr Steel: I have some updated figures. Since you are specifically asking about animals, I will go to those. There have been 1,068 engagements to date, as at 8 November. Those relate to dog control matters. In all cases, the dog owners were educated about their responsibilities, particularly in relation to dog control and responsible pet ownership. That included 17 warning notices issued and two infringement notices.

More infringement notices have been issued in other areas of legislation. The reason for that was that the Canberra dog model actually changed the rules, so we needed to provide a period of time for the community to adjust, particularly in relation to the off-lead areas that had changed. I expect that we will be seeing more warnings and infringement notices issued now that there has been a period of months in which the changes to the off-lead areas have been enforced.

MISS C BURCH: When is an infringement issued as opposed to a formal warning infringement?

Mr Steel: I will hand over to Stephen to talk you through how the team operates.

Mr Alegria: In essence, as is the case across the city ranger spectrum of compliance, we take an approach where deliberate, wilful or repetitious behaviour would be subject to an infringement.

MS LAWDER: Sorry, could you just speak up a bit?

Mr Alegria: Sorry. We take an approach where deliberate, wilful, repetitious or obviously serious behaviour would be subject to an infringement. Where a person has not been involved with the officer before—where they have demonstrated that they are ignorant, perhaps, or they are not aware of laws, and they have demonstrated a willingness to overcome the issue, whether their dog is not registered or whatever it may be—generally we would provide a warning notice. The idea is that people change their behaviour.

MISS C BURCH: Would I be right to assume that formal warning infringements, I think they are called, are issued when an offence has been committed but it is considered to be lower level?

Mr Alegria: They are not infringements; they are warning notices. They are captured in an electronic system, but they are not actually infringements, so nothing is payable. There is simply an electronic record that this person has been found doing this. If that happened again, the ranger could look up the system and say, “Hey, we warned you about this two weeks ago. You have done it again. Sorry, you are going to be infringed.”

MISS C BURCH: Does the team have targets that they have to meet in terms of the number of engagements, warnings, infringements, anything like that?

Mr Alegria: We do not have direct targets as such, but we certainly have areas of focus. We use intelligence from our other field staff, for example, and from the community. For example, we have had lots of engagements at Tuggeranong dog park; we have had feedback from the community that there were people there who were not being responsible, so we have targeted that. But no, we do not have specific targets for engagements, other than to say, as the minister said, that this team is entirely engaged in proactive work. They are not responding to requests or issues; we have a whole team of city rangers who do that. This team is designed to go out and actually target and be proactive; in that sense, their entire workday is spent doing that.

MISS C BURCH: I understand that it is an offence to have a dog that is not desexed without a permit.

Mr Alegria: Yes.

MISS C BURCH: But there is an exemption for dogs under six months of age? Is that correct?

Mr Alegria: That is my understanding, yes.

MISS C BURCH: Is it standard practice to issue formal warning notices for dogs under six months of age that have not been desexed?

Mr Alegria: They are not required to be desexed, so there would not be an offence.

MISS C BURCH: There is no offence there?

Mr Alegria: No.

MISS C BURCH: So you would not issue a formal warning notice?

Mr Alegria: Not on the face of it. We would obviously take the opportunity to remind the person that their dog needs to be desexed on time.

MISS C BURCH: Can you take on notice how many formal warning infringements have been issued for dogs under the age of six months?

Mr Alegria: Yes, certainly.

MISS C BURCH: Thank you.

MS LAWDER: We spoke this morning a little about training of staff. Have the new six-person compliance team all completed that training on their understanding of the legislation et cetera?

Mr Alegria: Indeed they have. They have all either done or are currently literally doing, as we speak, a certificate IV in investigations which provides a complete picture of the legislation that they are working under, the administrative requirements of their role as well as interactions with people—just the normal human management stuff—occupational health and safety and so forth. That has been a really strong focus.

In addition to that formal training, because we have got the city ranger team in place as well, who are mostly relatively experienced, we have actually got a mentoring system going for those relatively new staff to make sure that they have got that mentoring available to them.

MS LAWDER: How many in your team would go out at once? Is it a two-person team that would go out together, or three or six?

Mr Alegria: We have got six ranger staff, as the minister said, who are dedicated to

this and we try to cover as much of the day as we can. We try to cover 7 till 7 during peak times so that we can get to people walking their dogs early, walking their dogs after work. It is not really a 9 to 5 job.

It depends on the nature of the work. We are doing mostly proactive work. We are not necessarily dealing with the high-end dog attack-type stuff, which is the domestic animal services' role. The team work as required, depending on what their task is for the day. Generally it is two up but, as I say, it is spread out over weekends and during the day.

MS LAWDER: Would there be instances where there are three people out?

Mr Alegria: There may be, yes. For example, if we decide that we are going to go and target Weston Park and the dog park it might make sense to have three people go and they can split up and do their thing and it might be a—

MS LAWDER: What powers do they have under the legislation? If I am walking my dog and they say, "Stop. Have you got dog bags? I want to check if your dog has got a chip." What is the power if I said no and kept walking?

Mr Alegria: You would have every right to say, "I am not interested." That would lead to them suspecting that you were committing an offence and to ask you to provide ID and go through the process. I have not had any feedback about that. With the feedback I have had—

MS LAWDER: Are you saying to ask you for ID or to scan your dog's microchip they must get permission or suspect you are committing an offence? Is that what you just said?

Mr Alegria: That is my understanding. For example, if they could not see that you had a dog poo bag on your lead they would be within their rights to say, "Could you please show me your means of disposal?" If your dog obviously did not have a collar or was running in an off-lead area, again that would be a reason. But they are not coming into this with a got-you approach; they are coming in with the intention to educate people. In the course of that conversation, if they find that there is potentially an offence then they will take that action.

MS LAWDER: In issuing a formal warning notice, what is the quality control if I say they should get a warning for this? Who else checks that?

Mr Alegria: Under administrative law, each authorised officer has discretion. They can exercise the discretion that they see fit. However, part of the requirement that we have in overseeing the program is that they have to have a reason for that discretion and they have to document that reason. They need to be able to say, "I spoke to this person. I noted this offence. However, because of these reasons I elected to take"—whatever action they took, whether it is no action or a warning notice or an infringement, so long as it is a documented approach that has got a rationale behind it. It cannot be the person's personal values or their personal opinion. It needs to be based on what they are seeing in front of them.

MS LAWDER: How many appeals do you get, people saying, “I did not do that,” or, “That is not right”? How many formal warning notices may be withdrawn, for example?

Mr Alegria: None, to my knowledge.

MS LAWDER: I am aware of at least one instance where a formal warning notice, which I have a copy of here, was issued in relation to a five-month-old dog. That raises questions for me that there may be other instances of incorrectly issued formal warnings.

Mr Alegria: There may be.

MS LAWDER: I ask again: what quality control do you have for checking these things?

Mr Alegria: As I say, we rely on the training and the professionalism of the officers on the spot to do that and, as I say, we capture that information in the system. If people are not infringed as such, I am not aware that they have any particular recourse. But if there is a case there that we can look into, I would be happy to.

MS LAWDER: I think the interaction was quite positive at the time. To my knowledge, there was no indication of an offence; it was just, “Can we check?” Then this person was quite unpleasantly surprised to get that warning for a dog that was five months old.

Mr Alegria: I am not aware of that particular case but in some cases, while the rangers can scan the microchip number in the field and get the number, they do not currently have the ability to immediately check the dog’s status. We need to then go back and subsequently check is it registered et cetera. There can be a delay. The owner, for example, may say, “Yes, it is all registered and everything is fine.” We could go back and check the microchip number and it is actually not. That would be a situation where there might be a delay.

MISS C BURCH: Just to clarify, the machines they are using in the field give you the microchip number but nothing else?

Mr Alegria: Yes, at this time. We are working on a way of having a link back to the main system in order to actually be able to check that live, yes.

MS LAWDER: It is a bit disappointing that what is a positive educative process can lead to an upsetting result.

MR MILLIGAN: I notice that there have been a number of surface upgrades to a couple of different areas in the Woden skate park. I am just wondering: are there any plans by the government to do bigger, proper upgrades to these areas? They are good for a temporary fix, a little bit of patching, but are there any plans to properly upgrade different areas at the Woden skate park?

Mr McHugh: Like all our assets, obviously we continually monitor and maintain

them. Looking at the recreational facilities, we are always engaging with the community and considering future need and our future demand, like we do with all other assets. I am not aware of particular plans for upgrades at that location at this stage but we would be more than happy to take that conversation up with those interested.

MR MILLIGAN: And send any inquiries through?

Mr McHugh: Yes.

MS LE COUTEUR: I have questions about bushfires and the risks to street and park trees. I admit to being influenced by the events of the past week and being more concerned about this. As we all know, the ACT government is now planning to plant a lot more trees to get to the 30 per cent canopy target. I note that the renewed municipal infrastructure standards do not actually—and I have gone to your MSI 25-plant species and there is a list of criteria, which all seems fine, to minimise future management problems and identify plant species best suited to the ACT climate—mention fire as one of the issues. Is this something that you are actually considering, given that we plan to plant a lot more of these things?

Mr Alegria: As you suggest, it is a catch-all list that applies across the city. However, when we are planning for individual locations, for example at particularly the urban edge, we liaise with other directorates and the ESA to make sure that what we are proposing meets the fire standards. For example, in the urban edge we would not plant trees with stringy bark with that potential for bark shedding to become a fire risk and so forth. We take fire very much into account in the planning process, notwithstanding that that list may contain species that would be suitable elsewhere but maybe not on the urban edge or in fire-prone areas.

MS LE COUTEUR: Do emergency services have any input into the list of species or do you just consult them on occasion?

Mr Alegria: That list of species was really underpinned by the Fenner School at ANU who did a big study looking at a whole range of factors around, particularly, projected climate change, predicted drier conditions and so forth. It is a very well-informed list. As I say, when it comes to the site-specific selection then certainly fire is a consideration. We have some level of understanding of that within our own directorate but we also liaise with our colleagues in ESA as well to make sure that we are compliant with the bigger picture about asset protection zones and all those strategic approaches that are outlined in the bushfire management plan. We are joined up in that regard.

MS LAWDER: I want to ask a few questions about playgrounds. There are 509 playgrounds, a couple more than last year. Could you quickly tell me which playgrounds have been added and/or removed in this year?

Mr Alegria: I am not aware that any have been removed. We have recently completed the nature play spaces around town, including at—

Mr Steel: Farrer, but we have not launched Phillip. Phillip is very close to being

completed; Glebe Park is underway as well. They are additional play spaces. Then we are expecting that, as part of the play space reviews that are occurring in five suburbs, there will either be upgrades to existing playgrounds or potentially new playgrounds added, depending on the outcomes for each of those communities.

Mr Alegria: It is very likely that some of those new playgrounds will be in a new suburb where they have been constructed by the developer and handed over, but I would have to check on exactly which ones are in that category.

MS LAWDER: Is there a priority list for playground maintenance?

Mr Steel: Yes, there is.

MS LAWDER: Is that publicly available?

Mr Steel: It can be if you would like it to be.

Mr Alegria: There are two things there. First, the day-to-day maintenance is informed by our inspections and the safety audits that we do. We do a big safety audit each year and we do safety inspections every week or every two weeks, depending on the type of playground. That work happens in a continuous fashion. In terms of refreshers and upgrades, as the minister alluded to, we had a significant program in the last financial year, and have in the current financial year, for upgrades to 20-odd playgrounds, plus significant upgrades to another five, plus some nature play. There is a whole program around play space maintenance and upgrade.

MS LAWDER: Can you provide the committee with a list of all the playgrounds by address and the level of maintenance they will receive in the 2019-20 year, or provide a link?

Mr Steel: There is probably a list of all the playgrounds we can provide in a link, but we might have to take on notice the upgrades.

MS LAWDER: This is one of my favourite topics. Are there any plans to remove metal slides from playgrounds and upgrade them?

Mr Alegria: No, there are no plans to proactively do that. As playgrounds are upgraded or as equipment needs to be replaced, we look at what is fit for purpose. As you know, the slides are generally located in an orientation that means they do not get too hot. However, we know that there is community concern about that. We do not have any plans to wholesale replace.

Mr Steel: There have been some new shade sails installed at playgrounds around Canberra as well, so you are not having to fry an egg on a slippery dip.

MS LAWDER: Excellent. On the equipment replacement, what is your stock level of playground equipment? Or do you only order it as required?

Mr Alegria: Yes. We do not hold a stockpile of parts and pieces of equipment, simply because our playground asset base is anywhere from 30 or even more years old to

modern and each playground has a whole range of equipment. It is just not feasible to hold stock. That does sometimes cause a delay in repairing an item, because we need to source it from a supplier. Unfortunately, there is no other way.

MS LAWDER: One example given to me was Jamison, which was closed for some time, waiting on parts. Do you have a record of that, the amount of time that equipment was out of use?

Mr Alegria: I recall that that was an issue some time ago. I am sure we would have had a record of how long it was out of order and what the reason was. I cannot recall right now.

MS LAWDER: So you do not have a plan or proposal to keep a stock of replacement parts.

THE CHAIR: I have a specific question on playgrounds, about Delany Court in Melba, which is directly on the site of the new Icon Water trunk sewer. You knew we would be talking about this. I understand that TCCS and Icon have been talking about what to do with that playground site while the sewer is installed. There has been a bit of community consultation that Icon Water has been doing about that, about whether it gets moved temporarily and then put back or whether it gets moved permanently. I am keen to know where that is up to from TCCS's perspective.

Mr Alegria: My recollection is that the playground will be reinstated in its current location at the conclusion.

THE CHAIR: You do not think there will be further community consultation on this?

Mr McHugh: We have been in contact with Icon very recently to ensure that any community consultation on the outcomes of the play space itself is done via TCCS as the asset owner and that Icon communicate around the impacts of their work only moving forward. That allows us to bring that conversation back into our strategic approach to managing playgrounds and does not deal with it in an isolated fashion.

THE CHAIR: But your view, Mr McHugh, is that it should be returned to its—

Mr McHugh: That is the direction that has been provided at the moment: reinstated in its current state.

THE CHAIR: That is consistent with what the community is telling me it wants.

I would just like to talk about mobile billboard compliance. I am specifically talking about truck advertising, which is prolific in Belconnen, particularly in terms of it appearing to be on public unleased land. I am curious as to how this complies with current legislation; whether this company—I believe it is largely one company—has been seeking permits to use this land; how TCCS has been engaging with this company, and the company's responses; and what we might be able to do further. My understanding is that what they are doing is not compliant with what they should be doing, but I am keen to hear the perspective from officials.

Mr Steel: I think you are referring to the mobile billboard truck that I think all of us have seen around the city at various times.

THE CHAIR: Yes; I am talk about truck advertising. The company is Big Impact, if people are wondering. They proudly display on their website all of the locations in Canberra they like to turn up in.

Mr Alegria: I am not aware of whether that particular company have applied for any permits. I am aware that under the current legislation, the Public Unleased Land Act, it is an offence to use public land without approval. We have been taking a pretty strong approach to that. In Fyshwick, we issued three recent large infringements to a company for exactly the kind of actions that—

THE CHAIR: What is a large infringement?

Mr Alegria: Each time, \$2,200. That is significant. That is a corporation infringement, which is more than an individual would be infringed for. It is significant.

THE CHAIR: If I chucked a car on some public unleased land and said, “For sale,” that would incur a different infringement?

Mr Alegria: In theory. It is about a \$440 infringement for an individual.

THE CHAIR: For a corporation it is—

Mr Alegria: Significantly more.

THE CHAIR: \$2,200.

Mr Alegria: Yes. We have taken that action.

In relation to the Belconnen one, we are aware of that and we are looking into whether we need to take some more action there or whether there is a case for their business to be given a permit, which would seem quite unlikely. We would have to look at all the conditions around particularly the safety aspects of it and the amenity impacts. Given that we do not allow corflute signs in medians, I think it would be very unlikely that we would permit an advertising truck in that location.

THE CHAIR: Do you think that these corporations are just accepting the fines almost as the cost of doing business?

Mr Alegria: It is hard to say. I would struggle to think that a \$6,600 set of infringements would be a viable business proposition going forward. I have not had any indication that things have not been successful in prevention and behaviour, but it is certainly something to think about. If we felt that they did consider that to be part of business as usual, we would need to consider whether we need to take further action or potentially change the regime.

THE CHAIR: What further action can be taken?

Mr Alegria: For example, we could seek to increase the infringement level.

THE CHAIR: Would that require legislative change?

Mr Alegria: Yes.

THE CHAIR: That is useful to know. Please target Belconnen.

MISS C BURCH: I want to ask about public toilets. Of the 69 public toilets which are cleaned, how is it decided which toilets are cleaned and how often?

Mr Alegria: Toilets are on a cleaning program. Generally they are cleaned daily, depending on their usage. In the city, they are cleaned twice a day, or as required if there is an issue. Some of the lesser used toilets might not be cleaned as frequently as that. It is really a usage level. We do respond, if we have to, if there is an incident where there is something that we need to clean up.

MISS C BURCH: Do you have any kind of performance measure as to the level of cleanliness?

Mr Alegria: I guess the level of service is about the frequency of cleaning. Obviously, we expect the staff to make sure they are stocked, that there is no obvious mess around, and that things are as clean and hygienic as they can be. We understand that we have some pretty old toilets out there which often look a bit uninviting, but nonetheless, we do our best, particularly noting that we have a lot of stainless steel, which is relatively easy to clean. We do our best with the assets we have.

MISS C BURCH: Which local and group shopping centres does TCCS provide cleaning for?

Mr Alegria: We provide cleaning services for all the public land around local group centres and the city. It does vary. Some areas—for example Lanyon shops—are privately owned, mostly; we do not service there. Most local shops have significant public areas, so we go to those.

MISS C BURCH: Which suburbs do not have public toilets?

Mr McHugh: Quite a few. Would you like that question taken on notice?

MISS C BURCH: Yes, that would be great; thank you. And what plans does the government have to build more public toilets, particularly in established suburbs?

Mr Steel: Not at the moment. We do not have any future plans. We have done some upgrades over the years. There were some improvements at Kambah woolshed, at the district park there. That was probably the last one that was done.

MISS C BURCH: There are no future plans?

Mr Steel: No, not at this point.

Mr Alegria: The other way we try to tackle that is by working with private developers. Where there is an upgrade to a shopping centre, we encourage them to provide facilities in their complex to serve their customers. That means that we do not necessarily need to directly provide a facility. There are some examples out there of where that is a work in progress.

Mr Steel: The other one is Kambah village. The toilet block has been demolished and will be rebuilt.

MS LAWDER: I have a general question relating to the annual report. From about page 25, there are a few pages of performance analysis. There are a few relating to transport, but there are very few objectives or information relating to city services delivery; there are no real metrics. There is customer service satisfaction and reduction in waste to landfill, but where do we find measures and performance information about footpath repairs and all those things that people care about?

Ms Playford: The strategic indicators are the ones that are on pages 28 and 29. The accountability indicators are on pages 285 and 289. The accountability indicators form part of our financial statements; there is a bit more detail and some different ones there.

MS LAWDER: So you think that with the city services strategic objectives, there is enough to cover the huge breadth of services that city services covers?

Mr Corrigan: That is an interesting question. Our accountability indicators in the budget papers and the financial statements in the annual report cover quite a bit. They give pretty good indicators of what we are doing and what we get up to. We have turned our mind to what other indicators we could use. What is an indicator of a successful, great-amenity city? That is why we exist. We could look at traffic congestion, for example, and things like that, but they are not here now. We are always turning our mind to these things. We know what standards we want to set, but we have this common set in the budget papers and that is what we report on.

Mr Steel: There is a larger piece of work being done, led by CMTEEDD, around wellbeing indicators for the city, which this directorate contributes to significantly.

MS LAWDER: Do you think that will cover things like the number of services that have been refreshed, renewed and fixed? Will that be in the wellbeing indicators?

Mr Steel: It may be picked up under some of them, but part of it is about looking at how we measure the indicators and where the gaps are in data. We do not always have data to be able to measure these things, but there probably are some that we can pick up.

Ms Playford: Yes, and the wellbeing framework will give us a good basis to do a review of our strategic indicators and accountability indicators at that time.

Mr Steel: There are also the various strategies that have come out at the end of this year, the climate strategy being one. A large number of targets are now being set over that strategy. The new infrastructure plan is another one. There is a range of targets

that have been set for us that we need to track progress towards. That goes to transport as well, with the zero-emissions bus target of 2040.

MS LE COUTEUR: What is the future of the Woden experiment?

Mr Steel: The physical landscaping will remain in the square. It was an upgrade to the square and infrastructure. I think the only non-permanent parts are the programming elements and the pods. The pods have actually been one of the really successful parts of the experiment in terms of providing a meeting space, providing shelter from the elements in the square and a place for the community to go until we have got a new community centre, until we have got a new library community space.

We have not determined what will become of the pods when the experiment finishes in February. It is possible that they may be moved to another location in the city to provide a similar benefit. But the physical landscaping and everything will remain in place.

The programming may still continue with various organisations that have contributed—Tuggeranong Arts Centre, Woden Community Service and the like—but certainly at the end of the experiment we will be looking at how it has gone and what the opportunities are to do more in the square, because I think it has been quite successful in attracting people to use what is quite a difficult space at the best of times.

MS LAWDER: We did not quite meet the target for the removal of abandoned vehicles. I know that there have been some recent changes to the legislation. Have you noticed any improvement in meeting the target times yet?

Mr Steel: I think it is probably too early to tell but certainly the new legislation will help us to be able to deal with those vehicles as litter in a much more timely way. The question has been asked about who actually notifies TCCS about this. It does come from the public through fix my street but it also comes from rangers being out and about in the city and seeing this occurring. Certainly the intention of the Litter Act was to remove these vehicles as soon as possible and I think that that is what we are hoping. I do not know whether it has been used yet but you might be able to elaborate on that, Stephen.

Mr Alegria: We are working with ACT Policing to get them to work more collaboratively with us so that, for example, as they have the power to put the removal notice on the vehicle, and if they are willing to do that as part of their initial assessment, that action starts the clock ticking immediately and it means that that time frame commences then, rather than having a second visit from one of the TCCS rangers to actually do that. There are some opportunities there for synergies and also through the amendments to the act.

The reduced holding period for vehicles is potentially enabling us to actually look at other models of how we can dispose of the vehicles that do not require such a lot of effort and churn from staff, particularly, so that we may be able to find a way of moving the vehicles more quickly and efficiently through using those laws. We are confident that we are going to improve on the accountability indicator and we are working through that as we speak.

MS LAWDER: Are they all abandoned vehicles? Does someone ever come back to try to claim them? What is that percentage? Do you charge them a fee?

Mr Alegria: We do. I would have to get back to you on notice with the percentage but if we cannot identify the owner and it is impounded and the owner subsequently does contact us we generally ask them to pay the towing fee, an impound fee which from memory is a relatively small amount per day, and an admin fee. There is a cost to the person to retrieve their vehicle.

MS LAWDER: And you will be able to provide that to the committee?

Mr Alegria: Yes.

THE CHAIR: Do you have data on how many requests are made through fix my street to deal with an abandoned vehicle and then the vehicle is not actually abandoned, it has gone, it is not still there?

Mr Alegria: I would have to check whether we could get to that level of report.

Mr Steele: The data would be there. It would take a process to analyse. It is not an automatic report.

THE CHAIR: I do not really want to get staff doing too much other important work, including on mobile billboards.

Mr Steele: It is not an automatic output from the report.

Mr Alegria: We know how many vehicles are reported and we know how many vehicles we end up dealing with. Maybe the difference is that.

THE CHAIR: How else can we be analysing the space or the area? I think rangers seem to rely so much on feedback from the community. Are there enhancements that we can do there? I appreciate that your rangers are being increasingly proactive and it is a no wrong-door situation; everyone is alerting everybody else. I think some people drive past an abandoned vehicle for three weeks thinking someone else has reported it and they finally go, "Maybe someone else has not reported it," and they do it themselves.

Mr Alegria: You can tell if it has been reported because it will have the sticker on it. Going back to the source of the problem, a car is someone's property and everybody has an obligation to manage their own property in a way that is appropriate. There is a sense that vehicles somehow are different, but it is the responsibility of a person abandoning a vehicle to deal with their car, to deal with their vehicle. That is almost a community education matter. If you do not want your car anymore, if it is broken and you cannot fix it, you can call up a company and they will come and take it for free.

It is getting people to take responsibility for themselves a little. I think that that will be helpful in actually reducing the number of vehicles out there. People may think, "It is all too hard. It is a great big thing. What am I supposed to do with it? I do not want it

anymore.” I think people accepting responsibility is quite important, understanding that they have an obligation to actually manage that piece of property.

THE CHAIR: Sharps in suburbs, I appreciate, is a function that you carry out and how important that is to community and community safety. You have not quite met the target but your result is still incredibly high. I appreciate that this is largely to do with sharps on unleased land, but what happens if someone calls you about a sharp that is in their front yard and it is centimetres between the nature strip and their front yard? Is that something that the compliance team can deal with or will they be referred somewhere else? If so, what do they do?

Mr Alegria: We would take a pragmatic approach to it. We are not necessarily resourced to deal with things on private land but we are not going to ignore something if a canister has been thrown into someone’s yard or there is a repetition problem. We will try to help in that situation. It is really a case-by-case basis. I would like to think that we would not just say no automatically. We would listen to the customer’s complaint and try to work out a resolution for them, whether it is the ranger attending or whether it is some advice. You can get standard containers from chemists. It may be possible for the house owner to safely deal with that themselves. Certainly we would take a helpful approach. But we do not want to necessarily be seen as having a service for such things on private land in general.

Mr McHugh: A special case.

Mr Alegria: Yes, special.

Mr McHugh: I can provide some advice on the abandoned vehicle numbers, which was the previous question.

THE CHAIR: Yes, please.

Mr McHugh: In the 2018-19 financial year there were 2,451 reports of abandoned vehicles, which resulted in 468 vehicles being collected. There is a big difference there in the number of reports versus the number of vehicles. You could assume that some vehicles may be reported multiple times, but there is also the potential that some of those vehicles are not there when we get out to do the inspection. We will look into that data a bit more to see if there are any indicators there that might be more helpful.

MS LAWDER: I want to ask about microparks. How do you assess the success or popularity or otherwise of microparks?

Mr Steel: I guess it is a question of what a micropark is. There are various types of parks that we have around the place, some of which have been around for some time. We have also done a piece of work looking at future locations for microparks in the ACT, in each of the town centres. I will pass over to Jeremy to have a chat through that.

Mr Smith: As Minister Steel said, we have recently undertaken a study on microparks around the territory. That has identified a number of findings. We are working through that report at the moment. It recommends a number of different

approaches to microparks, depending on the demographics of the people you are looking to attract, the money that you want to invest in those microparks, and their locations. TCCS will work through that. Then that will eventually form a strategy as to whether to invest or not, and where they may be and what they may look like in the future.

MS LAWDER: How do you assess the cost-benefit compared to a traditional park, about whether your money would be better spent on traditional parks and playgrounds?

Mr Smith: Part of that report was a cost-benefit analysis of whether there is benefit in putting in a real park or a larger park rather than a micropark. That will be part of the assessment within that body of work that we will have a look at.

MS LAWDER: Are microparks temporary, permanent or a mixture?

Mr Smith: They can be either. There have previously been experiments in Canberra. In particular, there was one in Civic, where a temporary micropark was installed about 18 months or two years ago. That was installed to be a bit of a place-making activity, to draw people into that location. Then that was taken out. You can have permanent fixtures within microparks themselves as well.

MS LAWDER: Are you able to expand on how you measure that benefit?

Mr Smith: There are a number of different ways we can measure how place making works. Whilst it is not a micropark, I will talk about the Woden experiment. That is being seen as a place-making activity, bringing people into the location. Alongside that experiment, we have had some monitoring going on, both by the place managers and by the design team that we engaged to design that. Through that, we will measure, pre the installation going in, the numbers that we observe around the town square, and then post and during that we can look at the numbers and the general trends as to whether people are staying or still moving through. We look at weekends, weekdays, et cetera. That gives us a good idea as to whether those types of things are happening. We can then feed that into our strategic planning moving forward.

MS LAWDER: What has been the response to the Woden experiment?

Mr Steel: Very good. There are some figures around that, which we might be able to provide on notice, about what the response has been. While we have not come to the end of the experiment, we do have some interim analysis that has been done on the response from the community. I am happy to provide that on notice.

MS LAWDER: When you have finished the experiment, will part of that be a report about the future of the Woden town square?

Mr Steel: This was an interim piece of work that looked at how it was going after a certain number of months. Once we get to the end of this experiment in February, we will evaluate what the future of the temporary measures will be. The permanent capital improvements will continue in the square; they were a major part of the experiment. There are the improvements to landscaping and the play space. All of the

elements will be remaining except for the pods and the programming. The question is what happens to those elements after February. We will make that decision once we have had an opportunity to evaluate.

MS LE COUTEUR: On the same page as the Woden experiment, you have better suburbs. I particularly want to ask about participatory budgeting. On page 47 it says:

... a trial of participatory budgeting was also a part of this forum, where forum members determined the allocation of \$1.9 million to play space improvements
...

Can I just be clear? Is that all the participatory budgeting actual output of this forum? That is what it appears to be. I just want to work out if that is in fact the case.

Mr Steel: No. What we did at budget time is release a document which was reflected on the budget, the recommendations that had been made through the better suburbs process, and what outcomes we had actually achieved through the budget to deliver on those, noting that this was never going to be recommendations delivered in just one budget. These were quite ambitious recommendations, as they should be. It is something that we will be able to reflect on in each budget cycle going forward.

We have provided that detailed document. We discussed it at estimates. It reports back on what we are doing in relation to water infrastructure. We have put in a significant increase in terms of our water infrastructure expenditure through the budget. That was their priority, and we reflected that in further spending in that area. It was not just that very small element. That was where they had—

MS LE COUTEUR: That is certainly how it reads.

Mr Steel: That was certainly one element where they had more direct control over a particular line item. The recommendations were used to inform the budget process, and we reported on those at budget time through a detailed report which looks at each of the recommendations and what we have achieved through the budget to date. In relation to trees, for example, we got funding to plant 17,000 more trees. That was a key recommendation: planting more trees, getting a canopy target of 30 per cent. We also made a policy decision to go with a 30 per cent canopy target. Progressively we will use that better suburbs statement to inform budgets going forward and other further policy work.

THE CHAIR: I thank officials and Minister Steel for appearing today. A proof transcript will be sent to you for comment. If you have taken any questions on notice, the committee secretary will be in touch. You are all aware of the time frames, and we very much look forward to the responses to questions taken on notice.

The committee adjourned at 5.00 pm.