



**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY FOR THE AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL  
TERRITORY**

**SELECT COMMITTEE ON ESTIMATES 2022-2023**

(Reference: [Inquiry into Appropriation Bill 2022-2023 and Appropriation  
\(Office of the Legislative Assembly\) Bill 2022-2023](#))

**Members:**

**MR J MILLIGAN (Chair)  
MR A BRADDOCK (Deputy Chair)  
DR M PATERSON**

**TRANSCRIPT OF EVIDENCE**

**CANBERRA**

**FRIDAY, 26 AUGUST 2022**

**Secretary to the committee:  
Dr David Monk (Ph 620 50129)**

**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**

The Assembly has authorised the recording, broadcasting and re-broadcasting of these proceedings.

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Witnesses must tell the truth: giving false or misleading evidence will be treated as a serious matter, and may be considered a contempt of the Assembly.

While the committee prefers to hear all evidence in public, it may take evidence in-camera if requested. Confidential evidence will be recorded and kept securely. It is within the power of the committee at a later date to publish or present all or part of that evidence to the Assembly; but any decision to publish or present in-camera evidence will not be taken without consulting with the person who gave the evidence.

*Amended 20 May 2013*

## **The committee met at 9 am.**

### Appearances:

Steel, Mr Chris, Minister for Transport and City Services, Minister for Skills, Minister for Transport and City Services and Special Minister of State

### Transport Canberra and City Services

Playford, Ms Alison, Director-General

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

Marshall, Mr Ken, Executive Branch Manager, City Operations

Fitzgerald, Mr Bruce, Acting Executive Branch Manager, Infrastructure Delivery and Waste

Smith, Mr Jeremy, Executive Branch Manager, Infrastructure and Delivery

McHugh, Mr Ben, Deputy Director-General, Transport Canberra and Business Services

Childs, Mr Daniel, Acting Executive Branch Manager, Territory and Business Services

Davidson, Mr Geoffrey, Executive Branch Manager, Development Coordination Branch

Iglesias, Mr Daniel, Executive Branch Manager, City Presentation

### Major Projects Canberra

Edghill, Mr Duncan, Chief Projects Officer

### Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate

Konti, Ms Bettina, Deputy Director-General and Chief Digital Officer, Digital, Data and Technology Solutions

Holmes, Ms Lisa, Acting Motor Accident Injuries Commissioner, Acting Lifetime Care and Support Commissioner, and Acting Executive Group Manager, Economic and Financial Group

Tanton, Mr Graham, Executive Group Manager, Property and Shared Services

Vroombout, Ms Sue, Deputy Under Treasurer

Bain, Mr Glenn, Executive Group Manager, Procurement ACT

Mirzabegian, Ms Sanaz, Acting Executive Group Manager, Procurement Reform

Saddler, Mr Scott, Executive Branch Manager, National Arboretum and Stromlo Forest Park

Wickman, Ms Dani, Executive Branch Manager and Director, Territory Records Office

Whybrow, Mr Mark, Executive Group Manager; Finance, Procurement and Contracts; Digital, Data and Technology Solutions

Tyler, Ms Sam, Executive Branch Manager, Cabinet, Assembly and Government Business

**THE CHAIR:** Good morning and welcome to this public hearing of the Select Committee on Estimates 2022-2023. In the proceedings today we will examine the expenditure proposals and revenue estimates for Transport Canberra and City Services Directorate, Major Projects Canberra, Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate, and Justice and Community Safety Directorate.

The committee wishes to acknowledge the traditional custodians of the land we are meeting on, the Ngunnawal people. The committee wishes to acknowledge and respect their continuing culture and the contribution they make to the life of this city and this region. We would also like to acknowledge and welcome other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who may be attending today's event.

Please be aware that the proceedings today are being recorded and transcribed by Hansard and will be published. The proceedings are also being broadcast and webstreamed live.

When taking a question on notice, it would be useful if witnesses could use the words, "I will take that as a question taken on notice." This will help the committee and witnesses to confirm questions taken on notice from the transcript.

In the first session this morning we will hear from the Minister for Transport and City Services. I welcome Minister Steel and officials. I remind witnesses of the protections and obligations afforded by parliamentary privilege, and draw their attention to the privilege statement. I will need you to confirm for the record that you understand the privilege implications of that statement when you first speak.

As we are not inviting opening statements, we will go straight to the first substantive question. I will start. Minister, on 11 July 2022, in relation to the laneways in Hall, I wrote to you, and you responded, stating that community consultation with the Village of Hall and District Progress Association will be undertaken to help inform the future works. You went on to mention that you will need to ensure that there is money in the budget to allow for consultation to begin. I would like an update from you in terms of whether money has been allocated. Have you sought a consultant to go out there and do an assessment of the stormwater infrastructure there? When will that start, and when will the consultation start?

**Mr Steel:** We know there are a variety of different views on the management of stormwater in Hall. There are a variety of different stakeholders in the Hall area. Of course, we have heritage requirements in that particular township, which mean we are constrained in what we can do. Certainly, we are engaging a consultant to undertake a detailed flood analysis and provide mitigation options to improve stormwater conveyance and prevent gravel washout from laneways in Hall village. We are expecting those design options to be available in November. I will hand over to the team to provide some further detail.

**Mr Marshall:** I do not have a lot more detail on where the project is currently up to, apart from what you have already given, Minister. I can elaborate on some of the constraints that exist in Hall, in relation to its heritage status. That, of course, places some constraints on what works can be undertaken in sympathy with the village feel and heritage status of Hall.

That is an added complication that means, particularly in relation to the laneways, conventional urban drainage solutions are not necessarily applicable. The consultant will need to take that into account and design solutions that are both functional and sympathetic.

**THE CHAIR:** Who is the consultant that is coming in to do this assessment?

**Mr Marshall:** I am sorry; I do not—

**Mr Steel:** We can take that on notice.

**THE CHAIR:** Take that on notice. What form of consultation will this consultant have with the residents of Hall, plus the village progress association?

**Mr Steel:** We expect that, through that process, there will be collaboration and consultation with the Village of Hall and District Progress Association. We can confirm what is being planned on notice, if you like.

**THE CHAIR:** Okay. Did you mention earlier that the report of this consultation will be done in November this year?

**Mr Steel:** Yes, the options will be presented in November.

**THE CHAIR:** Obviously, with whatever works potentially may need to happen, that will be budgeted in—

**Mr Steel:** We will need to consider what the implications are, in terms of budget, what those options are and what the community's views are on those options as well, while noting the heritage constraints.

As an example of the heritage constraints, the heritage requirements state that existing laneways should be retained as trafficable areas for vehicles and/or pedestrians and should retain an unformed edge without kerbing. Typically, kerbing would be used for diverting water away from the street and residences. Obviously, there will have to be some other options that we will need to consider, because of the heritage aspects here. I appreciate that some residents do not believe that these heritage requirements should be in place, but that is what is in place, and we will need to work with those in terms of the options that we are looking at.

**THE CHAIR:** With this review, will it be highlighting what are the key issues, what is causing this problem, irrespective of the heritage status of Hall? Will this report say, "Yes, we recognise that there's a heritage listing for Hall; however, the issues are caused by blah"? Would you then consider whether or not that heritage status of Hall would need to be reviewed, to rectify the issues, if that is preventing any infrastructure from being installed?

**Mr Steel:** I would not want to pre-empt the outcome of the consultant's report and the options provided. At this stage our preference is to try and work with the Heritage Act requirements on us. Of course, we would consider any matters, and that would be a matter for the minister that is responsible as well.

**MR BRADDOCK:** I would like to ask a series of questions about street lighting. Firstly, why aren't there any accountability indicators in the budget for street lighting?

**Mr Marshall:** Certainly, there are accountability requirements, contractual requirements, imposed on the contractor. There is a comprehensive set of key performance indicators that the contractor is required to meet, along with a regime of enforcement mechanisms under the contract where those requirements are not met.

**MR BRADDOCK:** Is this the seven-year contract to upgrade the lighting to LEDs?

**Mr Marshall:** It is the same contract. The contract is primarily for the maintenance and operation of the streetlight network. Its procurement was outcome based, in that the submissions from contractors were assessed on a range of offerings in terms of key outcomes, one of which was energy consumption. The winning bid involved an undertaking to upgrade essentially half of the streetlight network to LED and, in the process, save a similar proportion of the previous energy consumption.

**MR BRADDOCK:** How much of the budget is allocated towards the infill program?

**Mr Marshall:** None. The mechanism by which the contract worked was that the existing government expenditure on maintenance and operation of the streetlight network, including its energy consumption, was stipulated as the contract amount—the contract sum, in effect. The tender offerings were assessed in terms of the outcomes that could be offered within that budget envelope, within that contractual cost envelope.

**MR BRADDOCK:** The ACT government will not be conducting any infill of street lighting until that contract comes to an end?

**Mr Marshall:** In some circumstances there are upgrades of street lighting that are undertaken outside that contract. It is not impossible for that to happen and it does happen from time to time where that is appropriate. The contract has now delivered on its undertaking in terms of upgrades, so that upgrade is completely in place now.

Because the cost of the power consumption becomes the contractor's responsibility, in effect, during the contract period, it was in the contract as interest to ensure that that upgrade was optimised to maximum effect. Of course, the contractor has brought to bear their full expertise and experience in ensuring that the lowest hanging fruit, in effect, was subject to that upgrade program.

That means the lights that are left that have not been upgraded to LED have been left on the basis of quite detailed analysis about the value of their residual life and their current performance. The payback benefits of upgrading those lights decreases as we now bite further into those upgrades.

**Mr Steel:** I think you are referring to new streetlights. You are not talking about the replacement of the existing streetlight network.

**MR BRADDOCK:** Yes, where a resident has identified an area that is dark or unsafe. How much is the ACT government contributing towards addressing those concerns?

**Mr Marshall:** We do have a program, as the minister identified, which addresses those requests from the public about infill lighting. In relation to a contract to maintain and operate the entire network of 50,000-plus streetlights, the monetary value of that infill

program is relatively small. It is in the order of hundreds of thousands rather than millions of dollars.

That program is continuous and ongoing. It assesses requests from the public based on a range of criteria, to prioritise them in terms of their contribution to safety and amenity around trip generators, their feasibility in terms of access to power from the existing network, and a range of other factors. They are prioritised and the highest priority projects each year are progressed.

**MR BRADDOCK:** How did the trial of the solar lights around Yerrabi Pond go? I notice that it has been expanded, so I am assuming it was a success.

**Mr Marshall:** Successfully. Yes, they performed well—well enough to justify and give us confidence to further expand that program.

**MS LAWDER:** I will just start by saying I know that some residents in Gordon were very excited to get an additional streetlight put in for safety and they are very happy with that. So it can happen. Thank you for that work. But on streetlights and logging complaints via Fix My Street, Access Canberra, I have had many residents contact me, and I will read you one example:

I have logged a number of Fix My Street requests over the last six to eight weeks. There are streetlights around the bottom of Upton Street and Allison and Madsen Place in Monash all to no avail. If you live in this area, please jump on Fix My Street page in Access Canberra. See if the power of numbers might get us some streetlights.

Why would it take six to eight weeks for streetlights to be fixed?

**Mr Steel:** It has been taking longer, and that is because of some of the workforce impacts that have been experienced from the contractor from COVID-19. I will get David and the team to talk about that and the benchmarks that we have set under the contract and the issues that they have had in meeting those.

**Mr Marshall:** In relation to Fix My Street enquiries, I can assure you that those are transmitted electronically immediately to the contractor. So the contractor is made aware immediately of any requests from the public via Fix My Street. In addition, one of the other outcomes of the network upgrade was the installation of electronic system monitoring, real time monitoring, capability. So, in most circumstances, via their own automatic surveillance of the network, the contractor will already be aware of outages recorded by the public. So there is no delay in the contractor becoming aware of those outages.

There are two reasons currently why the contractor is finding it difficult to meet the very onerous performance indicators required by the contract. One of those, as the minister has alluded to, is the same constraint that many sectors are experiencing at the moment in terms of access to equipment, resources and personnel in the current economic environment impacted by COVID.

Our contractor has been very active in engaging with subcontractor resources to try and offset their own difficulty in keeping boots on the ground in the current environment.



But that is definitely having some impact. At the moment I believe that the work in progress, so unresolved reported and unresolved issues on the network, is sitting in the 800 to 900 range, which is probably around double what we would normally expect to see. That means that the contractor is struggling to meet those KPIs. The contract provisions that relate to that obviously are being applied. There is discretion, of course, in the contract for circumstances over which the contractor has no control, and those will be applied as well.

The other factor, though, that is really important at the moment is the period of very prolonged wet weather. That results in an ingress of water into underground cabling. Predominantly around our city there is a great prevalence of underground power supply to our streetlight network and some of it is quite old and some of the protective casing around that underground cabling is not as waterproof as modern systems are. When we experience long periods of rain progressively the groundwater will find its way into those conduits and cause electrical shorting. Those faults can be very difficult to find.

Typically what will happen is that there will be a short in the circuit that will cause the circuit protection to trip for safety reasons and the light therefore goes out. The first time the contractors go to site they can do nothing much more than reset the circuit protection, which will bring the light back on. Then there is an iterative process of trial and error over sometimes extended periods of time while the contractor works back from there to find what the underlying cause is.

If the underground cabling has the same sort of protection on it over a significant length, there can be water ingress in a number of places on the circuit. It can take some iterations of rectifying one problem in order to cause the triggering of another subsequent problem before ultimately all of the contributing factors are eliminated and the light persistently stays on. So sometimes that can be a difficult process.

**MR PARTON:** Can I just ask a question on behalf of the one constituent who is watching the live feed from Chifley—and I think you know who I am talking about—who just wants to know with respect to streetlighting why the concrete poles are not being replaced along with the light fittings in places like Woden. Martin is of the belief that they do not meet standards and that, even with the new LED lights, several areas are still very dark. Is there any response to that, Minister, initially?

**Mr Steel:** Through the program we have not necessarily been replacing the poles; we have been replacing the luminaires. I will hand over to the team to talk a little bit about that.

**Mr Marshall:** I guess the primary purpose of the LED upgrade or the primary driver for the LED upgrade was energy saving rather than lighting upgrade. Specifically, the requirement that was placed on the contractor in terms of that upgrade was that the lighting standards that were in existence would be replicated, so that there would not be a requirement on the contractor to bring those lighting standards up to today's standards. That is a principle that we apply in maintenance more generally. Standards do progress over time and new installations are installed, obviously, to today's standards, but facilities that were built in the past were built to the standards of the past and in many—

**MR PARTON:** Is that not a little flawed, Mr Marshall, as an approach—that we are

just going to go with the old standards, whatever was there, because that will do?

**Mr Marshall:** It would be impossible to upgrade standards if every upgrade of a standard came with an implication that we would go back and revisit, re-prosecute and reconstruct all of the existing infrastructure. The freedom to make those improvements in standards is contingent on it not applying retrospectively.

**MR PARTON:** All right; thank you.

**DR PATERSON:** Minister, there has been a recent announcement around the food composting funding. I take it that that is a partnership between the ACT and the federal government. I was wondering if you can outline that partnership and what that project is.

**Mr Steel:** In order to rollout household collection of food organics and garden organic waste right across the ACT, we do need to have industrial-size composting capability in the ACT. We do not have that at the moment. That is why we did a lot of feasibility work and then have developed a proposal for a new, what we think will be an in-vessel large-scale composting and processing facility in the ACT, which will be located at the Hume Resource Recovery Estate.

We were really delighted that, on applying to the Healthy Soils Fund, we were able to get some commonwealth contribution to this project as well, because it is very much in line with the national waste policy actions to try and reduce organic material, particularly food, going into landfill, which is something that all jurisdictions have signed up to. This is also a critical source of greenhouse emissions in the ACT from the landfill at the moment, where that organic material, of course, turns into methane in an anaerobic environment. So, if we can compost that material and divert it, we can then help to reduce our waste emissions, which are the third-largest source of emissions. We think that could be reduced by up 30 per cent. So it is quite significant.

We will be going out to the market to build that new facility, and I will hand over to the team to talk about what we are hoping to achieve.

**Mr Fitzgerald:** I have read and acknowledge the privilege statement. As the minister said, we are looking to progress with the procurement of that facility later this year. We start with an expression of interest process to work with industry to decide what is the best solution for the site. We hope, as a result of that, that we will have a facility operational to coincide with the rollout across Canberra in the coming years.

**DR PATERSON:** What is the sort of end point when residents may expect to be able to recycle their food waste?

**Mr Steel:** It is contingent on this facility actually being operational. It will be determined through the procurement process about how quickly a partner can help us to design, construct, maintain and operate this piece of infrastructure. We hope it will be up and running as soon as possible, because we do, following the pilot in Belconnen, want to rollout this household collection to the whole of Canberra. Of course, that household collection contract is a separate contract that is also going out to procurement at about the same time.

**DR PATERSON:** How has that trial in Belconnen been received by residents?

**Mr Steel:** It has been very positive, and we have seen a significant amount of material that has been diverted from landfill—in fact, higher than some of the sort of benchmarks of other jurisdictions that have already implemented it. FOGO, which we have learnt a lot from. A significant amount of food organics material has been diverted as a result of going into their green bin and going out. At this point in time, it is being composted out at Corkhill Brothers at Mugga. But I will hand over to the team to talk further about the feedback that we have been getting through the pilot.

**Mr Fitzgerald:** Thanks, Minister. The feedback has been very strong. We are seeing that through, as the minister mentioned, the levels of waste that is being diverted, and we are also seeing exceptionally low contamination rates compared to other jurisdictions. We are at about 0.1 per cent at the moment, which, for a trial of this nature, is exceptionally low.

We have engaged a lot with the community around there. We have put a lot of effort into the education piece to support that. We are also learning a lot from engaging with multi-unit dwellings to understand their requirements. They are a unique element within Canberra, particularly when it comes to food organics and garden organics trial. We have over 1,000 multi-unit dwellings now on board, and we are learning a lot from engaging with strata managers and building owners corporations to understand what works and what does not, so that we can actually reflect that in a broader rollout.

**DR PATERSON:** Will those residents in Belconnen continue to receive this service until the waste facility is up and running?

**Mr Steel:** Yes; that is the intention. But, of course, it is a pilot and the purpose of this is to understand how households are adjusting and whether we need to make any tweaks to the scheme before we roll it out to the rest of Canberra as well. We are currently considering the first round of feedback and then we will look at whether we need to make any adjustments to the scheme.

**DR PATERSON:** Great. Thank you very much.

**MS LAWDER:** Minister, can you tell me exactly where in Hume the new facility will be located and what will be put in place to ensure the odour does not affect nearby suburbs? I say that with respect to, for example, a similar facility in north-western Sydney where residents have started a class action and a garden supplier in Melbourne who talk about the extreme smell affecting residential areas, and also the Cranbourne tip on Melbourne outskirts, which has just been closed through the EPA after years of attempting to manage foul and potentially dangerous odour plumes. We have already had, over many years, complaints about odour from the region of the tip, whether it is the green waste area or not, and I think residents are rightly concerned about what this new facility might mean for them.

**Mr Steel:** Yes, absolutely. It is important that we have these facilities available for the community because, at the moment, that organic material is going into landfill, where it does result in odour coming off the tip in the form of a range of different gases. If we

can divert that material—

**MS LAWDER:** Sorry; so are you saying the odour the residents are experiencing is coming from the tip?

**Mr Steel:** We know that there are emissions from the tip that are caused by organic material going into the tip. We want to try and reduce that as much as possible and we cannot capture it all through landfill gas capture. A large percentage is but not all of it. So we want to try and remove that organic material as much as possible and then process it in a way where those odour risks are managed.

That is why, through the feasibility study, it was identified an in-vessel facility would probably be the best solution. But we are going to test that with the market through the procurement process. What that means is it is effectively done in composting tunnel inside a building where the odour is tightly managed. The temperature, the aeration and the moisture are tightly managed within a vessel so that we do not have odour issues from the facility.

It is planned to be located at the Hume Resource Recovery Estate, next to the current materials recovery facility and the new materials recovery facility that we are building as well. I do not know whether Mr Corrigan wants to provide any further detail.

**Mr Corrigan:** I have read and understand the privilege statement. Ms Lawder, there are a number of levels to the questions you ask. We take this stuff very seriously. The minister has outlined how we will approach it. The location is just over where the MRF is now. If you go to along the Monaro Highway and then to Mugga Lane, it is to the north of that. That is the area that we are looking at for the actual facility itself.

We will go to market with an approach, and we will be pretty clear on the outcomes we are seeking. The minister mentioned design, construct, manage and operate the facility. So we will go with an outcome to make sure that there are no odours or that odours are minimised as much as possible—though I cannot say absolutely. The minister mentioned that it would be enclosed. That is the best way to do it.

You mentioned some examples elsewhere. I am not sure of the north-west Sydney one but, with Cranbourne, there are other issues there. That is an historic tip and there are all sorts of leakage of gas, water contaminations and things like that.

We are in the seeds of early stages now, which triggers an EIS. There will be an EIS component to that. Any waste facility in the territory over a certain capacity triggers an EIS. So we go through that, and that comes with all the consultation process there.

With the odours at the tip, the minister mentioned the odours that come out of the tip now. The company that is there now that mines the methane, tests the gas, electricity and those sorts of things. That is ongoing. Recently, we did a letterbox drop to residents in that part of Tuggeranong. So we were aware there were some odour issues in the last couple of months. It is because the company actually put more infrastructure in to capture the methane. They time it very well. You pick a very calm day, like today for example, and they actually might have to dig a trench and actually get that infrastructure in and they close it, all on the one day. They are digging through old landfill, and that

is what generated some recent odour issues. We were aware of that, and that is why we letterboxed drop—just to let people know. Ongoing, though, we do have monitoring equipment set up in the valley around the Mugga landfill to keep an eye on that.

The third part of it, as the minister mentioned, with the FOGO and the pilot and the trial, the materials are being taken to Corkhills. That also assists us with what is going on and what odour is potentially coming from that. So far so good on that, and we are keeping a very close eye on it.

**MS LAWDER:** What consideration has been given regarding the switch, as in Belconnen, as part of the trial, from fortnightly to weekly rubbish collection? Will that be part of the Canberra-wide rollout?

**Mr Steel:** As I said, we are considering the feedback from the community. We have seen how residents adjust to having a weekly collection of the green bins. I think it is about 100 litres overall more material, more capacity in the bins, collected every fortnight. We realise that, for some families, the larger ones, it has been a little bit more difficult to adjust. So the team has been working with them to provide them with tips and information about how they can adjust. We are considering what improvements we might make to the scheme, but we have not made a decision on that at this point in time.

**MS CLAY:** Minister, I am really, really excited to see that you have gotten federal funding for a new FOGO facility and a new materials recovery facility. That is great news for Canberra. The original MRF, the original materials recovery facility, was meant to be designed to take all of our standard household, packaging and supermarket waste, and the passage of time means it is not really doing that anymore. It will not take plastics that are small, it will not take leads, it will not take soft plastics, it cannot take any of the plastic replacements we are using like bamboo cutlery and paper plates with a bit of food on them and all of the things that we are substituting in like corn starch plastics and bio-starch plastics. I am wondering if, because we are building a new FOGO facility and a new MRF at the same time, we are going to be able to get to the situation where everything you buy in a supermarket can go into your household bin and get recycled in one of those two facilities.

**Mr Steel:** Obviously, that would be ideal. That is a larger piece of work. We operate in a market that goes beyond the ACT and so we do have to work nationally to do that. There has been, of course, the harmonised work around phasing out single-use plastics and those sorts of things that cannot be recycled at all in many cases or are not economically recyclable. But certainly, there are issues with some of the materials, and we do see contamination from time to time come through the MRF.

Soft plastics are potentially problematic in terms of getting into the plant and equipment. Those smaller items cannot easily be sorted. But the new facility will open up a new branch of different optical sorting technology and being able to sort a broader range of polymers so that we can get cleaner waste streams out of the recycle bins. Hopefully it will eliminate entirely the mixed plastic waste stream that we have by being able to actually sort that into a reusable waste stream that can go on for remanufacturing and the like.

But, of course, we need to think much higher up than the supply chain, before it gets

into the bin, and try and design out these problematic products from the beginning. That is certainly a conversation that I have on a regular basis with the various packaging industries and the beverage industry around what they can do. I was out at the MRF recently for this announcement with Minister Plibersek. The baled material is out there, and these are commodities that then are sold on the commodity market for a variety of different purposes, including being reused and remanufactured. One of the bales out there held the green bottles that you would typically see for Sprite containers and Mountain Dew containers. It gets a far lower price on the commodity market than PET plastic, which is clear plastic. We are also seeing some of the blue-tinged bottles, which are also potentially problematic as well.

This has certainly led to discussions with industry around why they continue to produce those types of bottles and the bottle lids being all different colours. The more colours you have, the more difficult it is to see those reused and remanufactured usefully. It is an ongoing conversation with about how we try and remove some of those problematic materials and see as much of this valuable resource go on to be actually reused again.

I might hand over to the team to talk a little bit about what is included in the MRF, but, on the FOGO facility, through the procurement process, will be trying to get an understanding from industry, who will be involved in designing and building project but also managing it on an ongoing basis, on what types of materials it might be able to take and the role it could play in helping to manage those alternative sustainable products and being able to potentially compost them.

We have not had an industrial composter in the ACT that would enable us to compost the industrial standard compost materials. Many of those alternative products cannot go into the household compost bin but they can go into an industrial-sized composter. There have been some issues with contamination there, and that is something that we have to talk with industry about, but this new facility will open up the option, I think, of potentially dealing with some of those compostable alternatives like compostable bags, for example.

Fruit and vegetable bags have been a topical discussion in the supermarkets. We cannot actually recycle those at the moment within the ACT. If we move to them, they would just be going into landfill, effectively or they would be contaminating the rest of our recycling stream. So we do need to have the facilities here to be able to process more of that material. We think there is a huge opportunity with the FOGO facility. I will hand over to the team to talk about the new MRF.

**Mr Fitzgerald:** The opportunity to explore a brand-new facility allows us that opportunity to seek out new technology types. We know that some of the facilities coming online across Australia are now delivering a much better product. We have purposely, through the procurement process that will go out, allowed for innovation. We have allowed for industry to tell us about the opportunities to increase the amount of waste potentially to then be recycled. As we work through that process with industry, we hope that we will get to a point where, with the optical sorting and with the technology improvements, we will have a much better waste product being delivered out the other end of the collection process.

**MS LAWDER:** I have a quick clarifying question for Mr Corrigan. You talked about

the new FOGO facility being sort of to the north of the current MRF. Do you mean further along John Cory Road or to the north of the current building on the same block? Where do you mean?

**Mr Corrigan:** For the recycle lane, you drive into the MRF. To the north of the MRF now there is the private operator, the skip bin—

**MS LAWDER:** ACT Skip Hire?

**Mr Corrigan:** The skip hire. It is in the area to the north of that again.

**MS LAWDER:** Okay.

**Mr Corrigan:** The Hume estate part of our waste asset. It is that whole estate there.

**MS LAWDER:** I wanted to ask a bit about income from waste taken to the tip. How much is it estimated to be collected in 2022-23 from waste taken to the tip? You can take that on notice.

**Mr Steel:** Yes, we will take that one on notice; thanks.

**MS LAWDER:** Sure. I have a couple of follow-on questions. Some you may be able to answer and some you might take on notice. I am interested to know, of that income, how much comes from the dumping of construction and demolition waste.

**Mr Steel:** We can take that on notice.

**MS LAWDER:** Is dirt, including beneficial reused material, drillers, mud, storm water waste, sediment from ponds, dredging spoil and contaminated soil considered part of construction and demolition waste?

**Mr Fitzgerald:** It is my understanding that, yes, it is.

**MS LAWDER:** How much income would be made from the dumping of that dirt in all its categories expected this year and also how much was collected last year, 2021-22, from dirt? I am also interested to know why it costs about twice as much to dump sediment from ponds and dredging spoil than contaminated soil containing asbestos?

**Mr Fitzgerald:** We will take that one on notice.

**MS LAWDER:** Finally, if dirt taken to the tip is reused for capping or covering of the tip face, are businesses still charged to dump it?

**Mr Fitzgerald:** In the instance where waste is taken to Mugga 2, which is our inert waste location, all waste disposed of in that location is charged at the applicable rate.

**MS LAWDER:** Thank you.

**MR PARTON:** Minister, in the hearings yesterday, you clearly stated, somewhat indignantly, that at no point had you or the government ever indicated that stage 2A of

the light rail project would likely be completed by 2024. The Australian/New Zealand Infrastructure Pipeline website is still listing stage 2A of the light rail project to be completed in 2024. Where would they have got that information from?

**Mr Steel:** That is a question for them. But I did not actually say that; I said I do not think I said that it would be completed this term, which was a point that I think Ms Lawder had made to me.

**MR PARTON:** Well, 2024 is the end of the term.

**Mr Steel:** The point is that we have to confirm the exact time lines through the procurement process and the contract agreement. That is the point at which we will be able to make an announcement to the community about the timing of the project. But we have been clear about the milestones ahead for the project. We have got construction work happening on raising London Circuit very shortly with our contract with Abergeldie. That will take a couple of years. We have the contract in place for the light rail vehicles, with the first vehicles being delivered around the middle of 2024.

Then, of course, there is the work on stage 2A. We will submit a works approval application to the National Capital Authority. We do not run the National Capital Authority; they will take their own time to consider that, and we will have to work with them to be able to see whether we can get approval. We are still working on the procurement for the 2A construction with Canberra Metro, and we will have announcements to make about that once we have come to the end of that procurement process and been able to contract. We will then be able to provide the community with more concrete time lines about the delivery of the project.

But the community is going to see the project being constructed in the next few months, with the raising of London Circuit project and, of course, earlier works have already been underway. There is demonstrable work that is happening on the project, and I think that is very clear for the community to see.

**MR PARTON:** Minister, you talk about being definitive in your time lines. The Chief Minister was quite definitive just over three years ago, and this was pointed out by the PTCBR Group on their Twitter feed yesterday. I will quote their feed: “It is worth remembering that just over three years ago the Chief Minister said that 2025 would be a realistic estimate for the completion of light rail to Woden—light rail in its entirety to Woden.” Why did the Chief Minister say that?

**Mr Steel:** Obviously during the pandemic and over the last election we made it clear that we were not going to sign contracts before the election and that we had to go through a process, like we are going through at the moment, a methodical process, working through the milestones of the project and working through the design of the project. We have made good progress, but we were very clear that we were not going to sign a contract before the election. I would imagine that that statement came before that point. We are now in a different period. We are going through procurement, where we will be able to provide the community with more exact time frames about the delivery of stage 2A.

In relation to stage 2B, which we have split out from the broader stage 2 project, we



need to go through the process of developing a business case for that project, where we will need to consider the costs and benefits of that project before we make investment decisions and then go through the work on procuring that project. There is a long way to go on stage 2B, but certainly we are getting on with stage 2A, and that is obvious in the work that is underway and the contracts that we have signed already with Abergeldie for raising London Circuit and with Canberra Metro for the delivery of the light rail vehicles.

**MR PARTON:** Finally, given the massive policy divide between Labor and the Greens, as evidenced by the line of questioning from Ms Clay and the subsequent statements from Ms Clay in the media, how is it going to be possible for this Labor-Greens government to manage this project when very clearly the two power-sharing parties have completely different positions on it?

**Mr Steel:** I do not think that is the case. I think we are clearly committed to light rail and the Liberal Party is not. It is very clear that you do not support getting on with this project. You did not support stage 1, and no-one believes you support stage 2.

**MR PARTON:** I think it is about your commitment to the project, Minister. I do not think it has got anything to do with mine.

**Mr Steel:** We have shown our commitment by signing contracts and getting on with the work. The preliminary sketch plans are pretty much complete on stage 2A, and we are about to head into the works approval process. We are showing that we are getting on with this project. Everyone in the community is aware of that, and they will be seeing the construction happening in just a matter of months on the raising the London Circuit project.

**MR PARTON:** Good luck in cabinet!

**MS LAWDER:** As Mr Parton alluded to, Ms Clay, I think this morning I heard on the radio talk about 2030 as a date when light rail would make it to Woden. Is that a more realistic delivery date?

**Mr Steel:** We have to go through the planning approvals for 2B. Obviously, those are out of our hands, and we need to work through those with the commonwealth. We have always said that this is the most complex infrastructure project, major infrastructure project, in Australia, because of those extra planning approvals that are required, that are not put on any other project in Australia, because of the sensitive nature of the Parliamentary Triangle.

We have got to work through those planning approvals, and we have always said that a major risk for the project is getting through those. We now have a federal government that is supportive of public investment in public transport projects, which is fantastic. We will be trying to work with them as much as we can and with the National Capital Authority to make sure that we can move through that in a way which supports the timely delivery of the project.

But there is extensive work that needs to happen around an environmental impact statement process. All of that early feasibility design work that is required for the

environmental impact statement and all of the planning approvals will feed into an understanding of what is required in the design. Then that will feed into the delivery time frames, which will be confirmed through the procurement process for stage 2B in the future.

But we are getting on with stage 2A, which we knew was going to be a less complex part of the project. That is why we split it out in the first place. It does not have the same level of planning requirements on it. We are getting on with that work and signing contracts and getting construction underway to deliver it to Commonwealth Park. Also, as we move through that process, we are making sure that we also support the delivery of stage 2B. That is why we are retrofitting the vehicles with on-board energy systems—not just for stage 2A but also for the trip through the Parliamentary Triangle. That is why we are getting on with work on the 2B route when we are building a new Woden interchange, by building the light rail stop at Woden. We will look at what further opportunities there are to undertake complementary early works going forward, particularly around utilities for stage 2B.

**MS CLAY:** Moving back to wastewater, I heard a lot of feedback recently when I was working on a circular economy paper that there was a real need for some high-quality waste and recycling audits to be published. We used to publish these quite often. We had six out between 2009 and 2015, and I have not seen any since. These are the audits of what is in the bins, the sample audits of what is in landfill and the best quality way we can publish of what is actually being recycled and what materials are in those waste streams. Will we be seeing published audits soon?

**Mr Steel:** Yes; that work is underway, and I will hand over to the team to talk about it.

**Mr Fitzgerald:** The fieldwork for the audit was completed earlier this year. The analysis of the outcomes of that audit work are currently being prepared, and we expect a report before the end of this calendar year. In which case, we will present that to the minister. We will then work out the next steps from there.

**MS CLAY:** Is that the bin audits, the landfill audits and the recycling audits?

**Mr Fitzgerald:** That is the recycling and bin audits.

**MS CLAY:** I noticed in the budget paper that we have been tracking around 75 per cent resource recovery for a pretty long time, and on page 11 of budget paper H, we have got the line going up to 85 per cent by 2023. What is happening in the next year? I am sorry if I cannot get my head around it, because I have not seen what is happening in our waste stream. What is it that is going to change that will take us up 10 per cent in the next year?

**Mr Steel:** I will hand over to the team to talk to that.

**Mr Fitzgerald:** The projections allow for the increase in the FOGO trial. We have seen that there is a large percentage of food organics within the red bin and, as we bring on an additional FOGO facility, we would hope to increase that. It is an optimistic target, absolutely. We are also looking at ways to increase the uptake of other aspects like CDS. We are still seeing some loss through the CDS system. We are increasing our education

programs to make sure that people understand what can and cannot be recovered, to try and improve those recovery rates.

**MS CLAY:** That is great. It does look a little optimistic. Again, I am going on old data, but the 2015 data showed that around eight per cent of our landfill was food waste. It might be much higher now; I actually do not know. But that food waste would have been not just household food waste but also commercial food waste. So, unless that new FOGO facility, the day it is opened, is going to be capturing all of that food waste, it is going to be difficult to meet that target. I can certainly see how it would be going up, but it looked a little rosy.

**Mr Fitzgerald:** A lot of the initial targets were based on the inclusion of waste to energy within the initial plan. Obviously, that has not been a concept that the Canberra community has embraced. So we are looking at opportunities as to how we can realign some of our other services to try and improve that recovery rate. We are certainly keen to investigate the importance of circular economy within the Canberra economy. With all of those different aspects, there are opportunities for us to further increase that recovery rate.

**MS CLAY:** Thank you.

**THE CHAIR:** I note that the landfill fees are set to increase by 1.17 per cent for household/commercial industrial waste from 2023. I appreciate you think this will reduce waste, but will it not just lead to an increase in illegal dumping?

**Mr Steel:** Well, we have a range of schemes to support people to dispose of their waste as easily as possible. The bulky waste collection scheme is one of those, and it enables people to remove that waste through the scheme for free. So that is certainly something that has been in place recently. It is important—and all jurisdictions are doing this—that we look at waste levies as sending a signal to the community that we cannot just continue to dump material into landfill and that we do need to divert as much of this material away from landfill as possible.

The price signal plays a role, and of course that funding also offsets initiatives that we can take to also support people to dispose of that material and recycle that material as much as possible, through the bulky waste collection scheme and through other means as well.

We are not looking at increasing the levy as much as what had been proposed prior to the pandemic, so it is actually increasing at a lower rate. But it still will be increasing after a period where we did have a pause on the increase.

**Mr Fitzgerald:** There is also a need for us to benchmark against surrounding jurisdictions to make sure that waste to be disposed of in the territory is not cheaper than alternative options. We need to make sure that we still retain a competitiveness in that market and that we do drive better recycling outcomes.

**THE CHAIR:** What evidence is there that, as suggested, this will reduce the amount of illegal dumping?

**Mr Steel:** We have schemes in place to help people to manage their waste now that we did not have before. We are tracking over time the amount that we get in illegal dumping, but we hope to see that decrease over time based on the new legislation that we have in place and enforcement. We are going to be running a campaign on this very soon around illegal dumping in the community. What is also important is that we work nationally to make sure that we have product stewardship schemes in place to manage some of the bulkier consumer goods.

The commonwealth, to their credit, had been consulting on a range of different schemes, for furniture and so forth, and whether we should be putting those in place. We think that they should and they need to do it soon because, if those are not in place, then unfortunately I think we will see some of these materials continue to be dumped, despite the fact that we have the bulky waste collection scheme in place. If people pay at the point of sale the cost of the disposal of that product at the end of its life, then it means there is no disincentive going forward for them to actually dispose of it because they do not have to pay for the disposal—the product stewardship scheme applies.

That is why we want to see schemes rolled out for each different type of problematic waste stream as soon as possible. We expect, hopefully very soon, a photovoltaic panel scheme to be set up. We are seeing the battery scheme looking at expanding to household batteries. We need to see those types of schemes extended to other products as soon as possible because that is the best way of helping to manage those materials and helping to reduce illegal dumping.

**THE CHAIR:** Has the government done any investigation in terms of understanding why residents are dumping their goods? Is it cost prohibitive? Is it access to being able to get rid of their items? Should you not look at addressing the underlying issue here of why illegal dumping is occurring, and address that?

**Mr Steel:** We have, through the bulky waste collection scheme—

**THE CHAIR:** It is still happening now, though.

**Mr Steel:** providing people easy access to being able to dispose of bulky goods for free. I will hand over to the team if they want to provide any information on the littering and dumping issue.

**Mr Fitzgerald:** The reasons for illegal dumping are many, and we have not necessarily been focused on a single area. From what we see, we do not believe that it is necessarily through being cost-prohibitive. We have a number of different facilities across Canberra: the Green Shed and transfer stations that allow easy access to these facilities. It is something that we still continue to work through. We work through it with our bulky waste provider to understand whether there are opportunities to improve the service and, if there are limitations for people to access the service, how can we address those?

**MS CLAY:** Minister, I am very supportive of landfill levies and of product stewardship. These are a genuinely great environmentally friendly ways to go forward, but there is a bit of a problem with the regional pricing. I have heard fairly disturbing reports from industry, and not so much about illegal dumping; it is probably more about construction

waste and sometimes commercial waste. I have heard different reports that maybe there are a couple hundred thousand tonnes going across the border from the ACT. Do we have any system in place to track what waste is going across the border from the commercial and particularly from the construction and demolition sectors?

**Mr Steel:** I do not think we have a comprehensive system. I will hand over to the team to talk a little bit about that issue. We have been talking with the New South Wales government and the surrounding local councils about this.

**Mr Fitzgerald:** It is something the team are working very hard to understand. It is an area, particularly the commercial waste, that we know is heading across the border that we are trying to understand the quantities. With the national action plan, we are developing new systems with New South Wales to try and address those concerns and to properly quantify just how much waste is going across the border. We would like to see the figures that are coming through now that we will have a better handle on the volumes. The matter of waste is very complex and there are many different avenues for it to get across the border. We are looking at working better with waste transporters to get some of that data in real time, and some of our system improvements will do that, over the next 12 months.

**MS CLAY:** Is this the responsibility of ACT NoWaste or is this EPA?

**Mr Fitzgerald:** It is the responsibility of ACT NoWaste as the regulator.

**MS CLAY:** Thank you.

**Mr Steel:** I think part of the issue is that, when they pass over the border, it is the responsibility of the New South Wales government and the local councils that manage their own jurisdictions and the laws and bylaws that apply over the border. That has been part of the challenge with this and making sure that we have all three jurisdictions—New South Wales, New South Wales local government and the ACT—working together to manage these issues.

It is not just incumbent on the ACT government to manage this, because the reality is that the waste market goes beyond the ACT in terms of the management of waste. A lot of our waste from the ACT goes to New South Wales, particularly for re-manufacturing. We also take a lot of material into our jurisdiction at Hume for the MRF, which we manage on behalf of local governments right around south-east New South Wales, and, going forward, we will with the FOGO facility as well. So there is a shared responsibility around the management of waste across both jurisdictions, and we will need to work with them on this particular issue. But, if they are concerned about dumping in their own jurisdiction, they also need to put in place laws and processes and monitoring and enforcement to be able to deal with it, and they should not just be expecting us to do it.

**MS LAWDER:** Can you tell me what the numbers are or the trend has been in illegal dumping over, say, the past five years? Is it more, is it less, is it about the same?

**Mr Steel:** Do you want to comment on the data Daniel?

**Mr Iglesias:** Dumping in the urban environment is something that our crews deal with on a weekly basis. They do notice from time to time seasonal increases in dumping behaviour. What they have recently discovered is that mattresses and whitegoods have been the subject of dumpings in the urban environment.

In the last three years, in fact, our licensing and compliance team have been able to support our depots by pursuing compliance action on a small number of dumping incidents. It is a notoriously difficult activity to pursue from a compliance perspective, because, as you can imagine, the behaviour of dumping is something that is difficult to pick up.

We have issued 151 infringements in the last three years and issued 293 warnings in addition to that. As recently as last month, we issued a large fine for the dumping of a mattress and also for a fridge. In relation to numbers, the number of infringements and the number of warnings is probably not a good indication as to the volume of dumping, because it is such a modest snapshot of what might be happening out there.

**MS LAWDER:** The actual illegal dumping as opposed to the infringements—the trend for that?

**Mr Iglesias:** It is only anecdotal evidence, Ms Lawder, but it is a seasonal thing.

**MS LAWDER:** But, on a count, say, five years ago there were 120 cases, four years ago there were 150. The total number, the trend, over five years.

**Mr Iglesias:** I do not believe we have the data to be able to accurately report that.

**MS LAWDER:** Would you like to take that on notice?

**Mr Iglesias:** I will take that on notice, but I think that might be a challenge.

**MS LAWDER:** Thank you.

**DR PATERSON:** I was wondering about the bulky waste collection and how effective the uptake of that collection service has been?

**Mr Steel:** I will hand over to the team to talk—

**Mr Fitzgerald:** In our first 12 months of rollout across Canberra, it has been very successful. We have had a number of households across Canberra use the service. Currently, our recovery rate for the service is up around 39 per cent, which is exceptionally high for a service of this type.

We are also seeing, as part of that, a really good connection with charity organisations like GIVIT, where we are connecting with households in need to put those items back into use. So far this year I think, GIVIT made a total of 300,000 connections across Canberra for items, and that came from 100,000 requests. So that element of reuse in the community is very high and we are seeing that reflected in the bulky waste systems as well.

**DR PATERSON:** Great, thank you.

**MR BRADDOCK:** I would just like to talk about trees. I am wondering how we are going with the commitment to plant 54,000 trees and what the survival rate has been for those?

**Mr Steel:** Yes, so we assume that a certain number will perish as part of that; I think it is generally under five per cent that is expected. I will hand over to the team to talk a little bit about the process that they are going through to support the trees once they are planted. Obviously, on the numbers we report on that annually in terms of how we are progressing, in the tree report, but I will hand over to the team to provide any further detail on the planting program.

**Mr Iglesias:** I might just acknowledge the privilege statement, which I did not do the first time.

We were able to deploy 9,888 trees into the Canberra environment in 2021-22, which is a great result given the nature of the season that we had. The minister is right, there are a small percentage of trees that do not make it through but our team is incredibly passionate about working with the community and this is a really good example of a government initiative which has a really strong community buy-in. So not only do our teams—our in-house teams and our contactors—deliver the planting, but the community gets involved as well. They keep an eye on the trees, they tell us where there are gaps, they tell us where particular trees are not surviving very well so that we can amend our planting program. But there are any number of issues as to why trees may be successful or may not be successful and, as we go along in the planting, we try and adapt to that knowledge so that we can try and get a really high success rate.

We are challenged in the coming year, our target is 18,000 trees, so we are going up from a target of 10,000 to 18,000.

That is going to be a challenge, but we have known for a while that we are stepping up, so we have planned with additional contractors, we have recently completed some procurement that will identify a panel of contractors that we can call upon and have in housed some capability as well, as well as partnering with local community groups to help us deliver some of this planting.

So that will be spread across the Canberra area, the urban area, we are focusing on areas which have low canopy cover, where we can get the best bang for our buck by increasing canopy cover and by ensuring that we deliver those environmental benefits but also all the various benefits that increase canopy cover delivers to the homeowner. You know, thermal qualities, amenity, nature conservation and so forth.

**MR BRADDOCK:** My understanding then is your tree unit is responsible only for trees above three metres in height. Is that correct?

**Mr Iglesias:** No, no, so the ACT government is responsible for all trees on publicly owned land, irrespective of height. So the meterage that you are introducing may be a reference to the fact that we are wanting to increase the specific protection of trees of a specific height. And that particular height we are looking to set at around eight metres.

**MR BRADDOCK:** Okay. Well, what I am also concerned about is that it is not just all about trees, we also need to consider shrubs and ground cover. Are we making sure those are actually getting planted at the same time?

**Mr Iglesias:** Sure. We have any number of other programs that are complementary to our tree planting program, that also looks at that secondary layer, that shrub layer. We have found that the local community groups are particularly good at rolling that out for us. So we have over 80 community groups that we partner through the Adopt-a-Park program. That program, effectively, looks at all those little greenspaces in the suburbs and looks for opportunity to deliver those micro plantings that relate to shrubs and not just shrubs but also, vegetation such as forbs and grasses. They are particularly suited to that approach because people take ownership. Some of those plantings require a different degree of stewardship which is particularly suited to be taken up by local residents.

**MR BRADDOCK:** Do we have any performance metrics on those sorts of lower-level plantings?

**Mr Iglesias:** Not explicitly performance metrics, but we can get an idea as to how we are going by the activity of those groups. By the take up of grants, for example, that the minister recently announced in relation to the Adopt-a-Park program. Also, the continuing growth in the number of groups and the membership of those groups. So we have that indirect indication as to the sort of take up and the interest of the community.

**MR BRADDOCK:** Could you please provide me, on notice, some of that activity indicators that you might have, just the number of groups and the increase and so forth.

**Mr Iglesias:** So specifically, the number of groups involved in that activity?

**MR BRADDOCK:** I am interested in some of the lead indicators you have described, which may not directly equate to X shrubs in the ground but give an indication that there is increased activity in the ACT.

**Mr Iglesias:** Sure.

**MR BRADDOCK:** Thank you.

**DR PATERSON:** Minister, is the Molonglo library under TCCS in this hearing? Yes?

**Mr Steel:** Yes.

**DR PATERSON:** There is lots of excitement in Molonglo about this budget announcement. I was wondering if you could speak more about this project and how it will be rolled out?

**Mr Steel:** Yes, I was at the Molonglo community council last night talking about this project, which was funded in the budget, to run a co-design process for a new Molonglo library but also a combined community centre. So, ahead of going into formal design for that facility, we want to understand from the community what they would like to



see in a new facility which would be located in the Molonglo commercial centre in the future.

We have been conducting consultation across the community as part of the Imagine 2030 project that Libraries ACT has been running to understand what people's needs and preferences are as well as what they would like to see for the future of libraries going forward across the ACT. So we have that foundation that we are building on.

But we really want to go into the specific local needs the Molonglo community have and what sorts of facilities they would like. It is—when you are building a new library, a fantastic opportunity to actually do something a little bit different. We have a range of established libraries in the ACT which are fantastic; some are more successful than others in terms of the number of people that they get through the door—Woden being our most successful library in that respect.

There is, I think, a huge opportunity to potentially do something quite different in Molonglo and deliver not only library facilities but a range of other community facilities. And we need to understand what those needs are for the Molonglo community and what they would like to do in the library. But I will hand over to Daniel Childs who is representing the Libraries ACT today. Vanessa Little is on leave I believe.

**Mr Childs:** I acknowledge that I have read and understand the privilege statement.

In terms of the Molonglo Library co-design process, as the minister mentioned, the community is quite excited about this process. We envisage that this library will facilitate around 55,000 residents into the future and will go along the lines that we took with the co-design 2030 process. That was quite a successful process. What we did, as part of that, was visited the library branches, undertook quite a big analysis of policy documents, invited stakeholders and community groups into the process and gathered quite a lot of information which drew out some of those key objectives for the future of libraries.

Some of those objectives which we would like to see in the future are all about unlocking access to the libraries. That is about making them available to everybody—so being in the right location; being accessible to all ages, genders, ethnicity; and adding real value in that process. It is also about making sure that those libraries are great spaces for collaboration, bringing the community into the library and getting a lot of new membership and a lot of new people in there.

We want to make them accessible anytime, anywhere. So that is being online, being able to reach a library at any point in time. We are obviously seeing a big shift to digital media but the big thing is libraries these days are not about books in and books out. They are places that people come in and use them in a completely different way.

Woden Library is a good example of that. We have a dance studio, a podcasting facility—a recording studio. So it is really about saying libraries are not just about books these days, they are about engaging the community in different ways and adding value.

I suppose, another example of that, a recent one, is ACT libraries is three weeks into

the process of issuing rapid antigen tests to concession card holders. So libraries do not just provide libraries; they provide a community service. We have seen such a very good and strong take up of this program as well, which is a good example of cross-collaboration within government, utilising the services of ACT Health and filling the gap where we needed to continue to provide a service to the community when the commonwealth scheme finished. So I hope that answers your question.

**DR PATERSON:** Yes, great. Perhaps, if there is some more information on the uptake of those new facilities at the Woden Library? Have people been using the podcasting facilities and dance room?

**Mr Steel:** I think I have even listened recently to one of the podcasts produced. Yes, it is certainly being used but I do not know whether the team has any figures.

**Mr Childs:** We will look into that for you, yes. We will take that on notice.

**Mr Steel:** We will take that one on notice.

**MS LAWDER:** Thank you. With the announcement of the Molonglo Library, what area of the ACT is now the furthest from a public library?

**Mr McHugh:** I acknowledge I have read and understood the privilege statement. I think we would have to probably do some detailed analysis, geographical analysis, to pinpoint those areas for you, Ms Lawder, if you would like us to do that, we can take that on notice.

**Mr Steel:** Probably Kowen.

**MS LAWDER:** Sorry?

**Mr Steel:** Probably Kowen.

**MS LAWDER:** Thank you.

**Mr Steel:** Do you have something in mind? Do you have a concern about a particular area that you are thinking of when asking that question?

**MS LAWDER:** I am wondering about Lanyon, for example.

**Mr Steel:** Yes, okay.

**MS LAWDER:** With respect to libraries throughout the ACT, it would appear the nominal funding allocated to library services has increased at less than the rate of inflation to the current year, so that would appear to be a cut in real terms. How do you expect our libraries to continue to deliver their current good services plus what is in the Imagine 2030 plan on a reducing budget?

**Mr Steel:** The reason we are undertaking this process is to understand what the community's expectations of the libraries are going forward, so that we can make further investments in them. We have made substantial investment in Woden library in

upgrading that facility and we are looking at what we can do in Molonglo in terms of a brand new facility there. So the resourcing will be required in order to operate those facilities and provide the range of things that people want out of the library, but we want to consult with them first about what they actually want, before we make that investment decision.

**MS LAWDER:** On potholes, I had some correspondence from you, minister, about a potential pilot using an AI technology on garbage trucks to detect pot holes, and I think New South Wales are having a pilot of that as well. Can you give a bit of an update? Is that going to continue to take place this financial year and—

**Mr Steel:** So we have undertaken a pilot of using artificial intelligence technology to look at road condition and we are actually in the process of undertaking a new condition audit of roads. So I will hand over to Ken Marshall to talk a little bit about that audit.

**Mr Marshall:** I do not yet have an analysis of the outcomes of that trial to present or discuss to you, but in more general terms, I suppose, there is an underlying role in the program of road pavement condition assessment that sees a third of the road network inspected by various means on a rolling annual basis and that program increasingly, also, does include automated assessment and vehicle mounted assessment technology.

**MS LAWDER:** So is it a pilot? If so, is it finished or do you expect to roll this out throughout Canberra on an ongoing basis?

**Mr Marshall:** That would be subject to both the appraisal of the trial but also, given the particular technology that was the subject of the trial was a proprietary system and product, that would also be subject to future procurement processes.

**MS LAWDER:** And what recourse do motorists have if their vehicle is damaged through a pothole which has previously been reported as dangerous by themselves or someone else?

**Mr Steel:** Well, they can get in touch with the ACT government to let us know that the pothole is there through Fix My Street. That would certainly be something that we would encourage them to do so that we can get on it and fix that as soon as we can. But if you are talking about whether they can get compensation, I think that is what you are asking about, I will hand over to the team to talk about that.

**MS LAWDER:** Yes, yes.

**Mr Marshall:** Thanks, minister. There are, in some circumstances, grounds for users of public infrastructure to make a claim in relation to damages of various types. There are processes by which TCCS will consider those claims and, in some circumstances, some compensation will be paid. But those are, you know, subject to the specific details of each specific case.

**MS LAWDER:** So how many claims have there been each year, over the past five years, that have been approved for payment?

**Mr Marshall:** I would have to take the question on notice in order to give the statistical

details.

**MS LAWDER:** Thank you.

**THE CHAIR:** We now draw this session to a close. On behalf of the committee, I would like to thank Minister Steel and directorate staff for attending today's hearing.

If witnesses have taken any questions on notice, please provide answers to the committee's secretary within five working days.

We will have another hearing on TCCS this afternoon at 1.15 pm and we will start with Mr Parton, if he is down here, for a substantive then.

**MR PARTON:** There's every chance!

**THE CHAIR:** Every chance. Otherwise the committee will now adjourn for a short break and reconvene at 10.45 am.

### **Hearing suspended from 10.28 to 10.45 am.**

**THE CHAIR:** Welcome back to the public hearings of estimates 2022-2023. In this session, we will continue to speak with Minister Steel, this time in his capacity as Special Minister for State.

Witnesses are to speak one at a time and directly into the microphone for Hansard to be able to hear and transcribe them accurately. I remind witnesses of the protections and obligations afforded by parliamentary privilege and draw your attention to the privilege statement. When you speak for the first time, please mention that you understand the privilege implications of that statement.

As we are not beginning with opening statements, we will go straight to questioning. I would like to give the first substantive question to Ms Lee.

**MS LEE:** Thank you, Chair. I have a couple of questions about the Government Procurement Board. What can the board do, or what options does the board have, if an entity ignores advice from the board?

**Mr Steel:** I might hand over to Sue Vroombout, but I know that the chair of the procurement board is with us as well, Bettina Konti, so she may want to make some comments as well.

**Ms Vroombout:** I will hand that to Glenn Bain first and then Bettina.

**Mr Bain:** Thanks for the question. I have read and understood the privilege statement. Options exist, both formal and informal, for escalation, where matters come before the board that do not meet their expectations or with which they have a problem.

As a matter of course, all proposals that come before the board receive feedback from the board—good, bad or indifferent, if you like—and suggestions for any improvements are included in that feedback quite often. That feedback is sent to the relevant

directorate and the relevant proponents via the secretariat which comes under the auspices of Procurement ACT.

It goes to the procurement delegate, whoever that procurement delegate might be—the person actually signing off on that procurement proposal. Where there are causes for concern that either have not been addressed as a result of previous advice, or it is at a level that warrants some higher executive thinking on the matter, the board can, and from time to time does, speak directly with a relevant director-general, for example, or further through the executive chain of the relevant agency to make those points known.

There is also a formal mechanism whereby there is a link to the Special Minister of State, but there is no sort of guidance at this stage on how or when that might be used. That is a discretionary matter.

They are the formal and informal mechanisms available, but, certainly, Ms Konti as the chair of the board, may be better placed to explain their interpretation, and actions along those lines.

**Ms Konti:** Good morning; I acknowledge the privilege statement. Mr Bain has outlined exactly the way government procurement works. We receive procurement proposals from proponents. We read and have discussions with them at a weekly meeting of the Government Procurement Board to provide advice and recommendations to proponents about how they can get better procurement outcomes, and the extent to which their procurement aligns with the Government Procurement Act. Where there are some recommendations that are important for us to ensure that the procurement delegate understands, sometimes those conversations go offline also.

I would note for this committee that often the Government Procurement Board is not aware of how that advice is taken on. There is not a mechanism through which we follow up and understand what has happened to the procurement advice we have provided.

**MS LEE:** Thank you for that. You might need to take this question on notice. Can you please provide to the committee the instances in the past five years where you had to escalate to the Special Minister of State?

**Mr Steel:** We can take that question on notice, and for the previous minister, who was under a different title.

**MS LEE:** Thank you, Minister. Are board members, by virtue of their membership of the board, as distinct from being members of the public service, under obligations of disclosure—for example, under the Public Sector Management Act or Public Interest Disclosure Act?

**Mr Bain:** As you have quite rightly pointed out, Ms Lee, the majority of board members are in fact public servants as well, so there are commensurate obligations in that sense under both the Public Sector Management Act and, indeed, any of our other integrity measures.

As far as being subject to that same disclosure regime, the non-public sector members

of the board are actually engaged as part-time orderlies, if you like. I do not know the exact answer, but I will be happy to seek some advice as to the extent to which that cap means they are captured by the same regime.

**MS LEE:** So you will take that on notice?

**Mr Bain:** I would be happy to do so.

**MS LEE:** Thank you, Mr Bain. This might also need to be taken on notice as well: in the same period, for the past five years—and I understand the chair has confirmed that you are not necessarily aware of what happens to the advice that the board gives—can you please provide to the committee where there has been an instance where the board has raised significant issues with a procurement and the proponent has gone ahead anyway. Is that something that you can provide on notice?

**Mr Bain:** It may be difficult to discern, but I could certainly attempt to do so.

**MS LEE:** Thank you. And—

**DR PATERSON:** Chair, she has had multiple supplementary questions, and there are lots of us here.

**MS LEE:** Just one final question.

**THE CHAIR:** Are there any other supplementary questions from anyone else on this substantive question?

**MS LEE:** One final supplementary.

**THE CHAIR:** One final supplementary, Ms Lee.

**MS LEE:** Thank you, Chair. There was a letter from the board chair to the minister on 14 September 2020 which sought his advice and “okay” to conduct a survey of past proponents. Can you let us know what the results of those surveys were, and will you table them for the committee?

**Mr Steel:** That is one we will have to take on notice.

**MS LEE:** Thank you, Minister.

**MR BRADDOCK:** I have a line of questioning about community facilities. I am interested in how your responsibilities integrate with the other parts of the ACT government that are also involved in providing facilities for community groups to be able to access. Can you please let me know how that happens?

**Mr Steel:** Yes. The ACT Property Group manages a wide range of different properties which, historically, form part of their portfolio and have been handed over from agencies. Former school sites make up a part of that, which obviously accommodate a large number of community groups and community hubs.

There are also a wide range of community halls and other buildings that are managed by ACT Property Group. ACT Property Group tries to match tenants with spaces in those properties. We have a long waiting list at the moment. The last time I looked it was about 57 organisations, from memory, wanting to move into those properties and lease them.

We also work with associations like the Weston Creek Community Association. They manage a number of halls across facilities and provide a booking service for people to use those facilities. We have arrangements similarly with YWCA in relation to facilities and locked community facilities that are managed by ACT Property Group in Molonglo, and others. Typically, the remit of ACT Property Group is around the management of existing properties. I will hand over to Graham Tanton to talk a little bit further about that role.

**Mr Tanton:** Thank you. I acknowledge the privilege statement. Thank you for the question. As the minister has stated, the ACT Property Group manages roughly over 230 properties across the ACT, which is a very diverse portfolio used for a variety of needs and concerns for the organisation at different levels, both from peppercorn through to commercial properties as well. We manage that portfolio. As the minister has said, it is quite tightly held at this point in time in regard to vacancy rates. There is a wait list, as the minister provided.

We are always looking at the portfolio, having discussions with colleagues in other directorates, noting that none of those facilities are ex-school facilities or old government buildings.

But we also work closely with, say, education and other organisations just in regard to what they are doing in those areas. There will be ongoing consultation where we meet with officials from other organisations to really work through and get an understanding of what are the needs and if there are any concerns about certain groups, especially community groups, because some of them are looking for different areas. So we try and work out what is happening in the different areas and we are going through that process on an ongoing basis.

**MR BRADDOCK:** So when we determine the charging policy, are we considering the fact that often those groups are dependent on ACT government grants, and hence you might just see it as a circulation of money to the group coming straight back to the government in the form of lease charges?

**Mr Steel:** Yes. Look, that is a consideration and one of the reasons why it is important to have some charges for those groups that are earning revenue, noting that some of these community groups actually do not have any revenue sources from either the federal government or the ACT government.

What we are charging does, at the community rate, ensure that we have got the funding to maintain the properties that they use, which is important. Also it provides an incentive for them to use the space that they do have efficiently. So if we do not charge community groups, there is, I guess, a risk there that they will just hold on to the space that they have because they are not getting charged for it. And they will not necessarily book it out to other community groups who may actually be in bad need of some space,

or look at how they can make their footprint more efficient on that site.

So we do have those conversations with groups around how they can reduce their rental by perhaps being a little bit more compact by opening up some of their meeting rooms for multi-bookings. I was at Holt community hub earlier in the week, which has Carers ACT and involved sharing places, and they have got a hall there which is managed by Weston Creek Community Association.

There is a discussion there about could some of those meeting rooms be potentially booked out for the use of other groups. So we need to make sure that the framework supports the efficient use of what is a scarce resource: the space that we have in our community properties. So that is the reason.

Of course, they do get funded through a range of other grants which often take into account grants and other funding arrangements, which takes into account that they must be operating, and pays for premises as well. For those groups that have no revenue sources, they are the ones, typically, where peppercorn rent might apply, because we understand that they really do not have any revenue-generating capacity.

**MR BRADDOCK:** What about spaces that belong to other NGOs in the ACT—for the example, I will use Scouts ACT, where they do have a number of spaces across the ACT, where they could almost be working in collaboration with the ACT government, both working towards achieving their goals. Is consideration made there or are conversations held?

**Mr Steel:** I do not know whether there has been a specific discussion.

**Mr Tanton:** No, we have not at this point. Obviously, there is that opportunity for us to do that. At the moment we are focusing on looking at our portfolio and looking at the sustainability of that portfolio as we move forward. That is definitely something that we can investigate as we move forward, noting that they are the owner of those sites in many cases.

What we are also looking to do, as the minister alluded to, is looking at those sites where there is potentially one user—how can they be utilised so that more people have access to those facilities and the like—to open up to a broader range of community organisations. At this stage we have not had in-depth discussions with other owners, but it is definitely something that is worth investigating further.

**MR BRADDOCK:** I am just worried about the geographical spread of the facilities across the territory, and particularly where new-built areas like Gungahlin or Molonglo might be, let us say, deficient in spaces. Is it possible to get some figures as to what the spread of your available spaces are and be able to see if that is the case?

**Mr Tanton:** Absolutely. I am happy to take that on notice and come back to you on that one. As I said, there is quite a broad range of facilities, especially in some of the more, I will call, mature suburbs in Tuggeranong, North, Belconnen and Inner South. I am happy to provide you with that on notice, absolutely.

**Mr Steel:** You will probably see it is reflective of the historic property that has come



into the portfolio from a range of different users, but it is typically in those older areas where there are larger numbers of community facilities with Property Group.

The new areas obviously require investment in new community facilities, zoned spaces to be identified through the planning process and state development plans. That is why we have looked at what the opportunities are. But obviously it is other directorates that have responsibility for actually building those new community facilities. Over time, those may be provided to Property Group to manage, or another organisation. The Molonglo community facility that we were talking about just before the break might be managed by Libraries ACT; but certainly we will have to look at those areas. In Gungahlin, there is talk about work on a new community centre there, and that is something that Property Group may have a role in, but those arrangements would have to be worked out in the future.

**Mr Tanton:** I might just add to that. We are actually in discussions with the other directorates who are responsible for delivering those facilities in regard to what we are hearing from our customer base, so to speak, for those community organisations, what they are looking for in facilities. We are working in a sort of co-design with the other directorates who are obviously designing and planning for those facilities, so that we can get a good mix and we can make them sustainable—get the most bang out of those facilities. That is an ongoing process.

**DR PATERSON:** Thank you. I was wondering how the government is going to meet its requirements for end-of-trip facilities and EV charging in the existing ACT properties and facilities portfolio?

**Mr Steel:** This probably fits more into the Transport Canberra and City Services space, but we are looking at providing guidelines for use of public land where companies want to come forward and establish chargers on public land. Obviously, the EPSDD has been managing the charging rollout with the ACT government contribution—the program of around 70 chargers—and the rollout of those across the ACT. Some of those are on private land. It is possible that, in the future, companies may come forward and will want to do that on Property Group properties.

What we have been doing at some of our particularly large office blocks is making sure that those facilities are available, particularly for the government fleet. I will hand over to Graham to talk a little bit about that and the end-of-trip facilities as well, particularly in our new and refurbished government buildings, which are state of the art.

**Mr Tanton:** Thank you, Minister. As the minister mentioned, in the newer buildings that we have—220 London Circuit, also the Dickson new site and the Allara Nara precinct—just on co-design, in regard to end-of-trip—so people can book in the showers, they can ride their bikes, electric scooters or the like—those facilities have been upgraded.

We have also, in the city precinct at this point, looked to put in, roughly, 50 to 80 EV chargers for the electric vehicle fleet. That is a large commitment that the government has made. They will also be going into Dickson as well as part of the fit-out there. We will be looking at making sure that the fleet capability has got the electric vehicle charging there as well.

Related to part of the budget commitment the government has put in, we will be looking at upgrading the heating and cooling system at 255 Canberra Avenue, looking to reduce that footprint as well.

Then we have the no gas transition guidelines for ACT government property leases. For those properties, we are looking at either leasing or new buildings. There are guidelines that look to help directorates and government make those decisions when transitioning or looking at accessing or replacing existing plant and equipment from gas to electric. That is an ongoing process and that will look to the commitment the government has made for transitioning off gas by 2040. There is a lot going on in that space. It is quite complex as well. There is a lot going on.

**DR PATERSON:** Minister, my question is in relation to the motor accident and injuries scheme. I have been engaging with some family members who have experienced a death on our roads, and some of the stories about their engagement with the scheme have shown challenges in dealing with the bureaucracy in times of great stress. I think there is means testing of payments. One family has had to go to ACAT to dispute part of the claim, and other bits and pieces. I am wondering what we can do to relieve the stress and distress for these families at this time and support them.

**Mr Steel:** I will hand over to the Motor Accident Injuries Commission to talk a little bit about the process. The intent of the scheme, which is only still fairly new in its operation, was to try to provide support to a greater range of people through the no-fault scheme, but also to streamline the process to be able to get support in the event of an accident or injury. Rather than the previous scheme, which was a little bit of a lawyers' picnic, where it was sometimes necessary to go to court on a much more regular basis in order to get compensation, the intent of this scheme is to support people to get that much more quickly and get that support straightaway. There are, of course, processes that have been established that are necessary as part of that process and there is also an advisory service to assist people who have an injury, to be able to support them through that process as well. I will hand over to the MAI commissioner.

**Ms Holmes:** I have read and understood the privilege statement. We are certainly aware that some people, including the instance that you talked about, have had some difficulties navigating the scheme. We are always looking to improve how the scheme operates. In particular, some of the issues relate to the need to get information from investigatory bodies, such as the registration of the other vehicle involved. We are continuing to have conversations with those bodies as to how we can streamline the process, particularly for the particular circumstance that you have spoken about.

The other thing to note is that whilst there is a 13 week application period, there is the ability to put in a late application for up to a year. It is not onerous in terms of a reason for a late application. It could be simply that you were having trouble finding that information. But we are certainly looking at how we can step in and help that particular instance that you are referring to.

I will also commence to make a comment about means testing. Under the defined benefits, the income replacement, it is about providing a reasonable level of income replacement for someone so that they do not have any income at all. There is a cap; the

cap is currently \$2,470 a week. So it is still a fairly high cap which is in place. So it is about providing a reasonable level of income replacement so that people still do have some income coming through.

**DR PATERSON:** Thank you. And just a supplementary on the Lifetime Care and Support Fund, for people who have been injured on a no-fault basis at work in the ACT. One of the 2022-23 priorities is to collect feedback from participants on their expectations and experience of this scheme. Has this been done before and how will it be undertaken to ensure equal access and inclusivity?

**Mr Steel:** I will hand over to the Commission.

**Ms Holmes:** We do a survey about participants under the Lifetime Care Scheme every year. It is a very important mechanism for us, in terms of getting the feedback from our participants as to how the scheme is working for them, is there any improvements that we can make? So we certainly report every year in our annual report the outcome of the survey that we have done for that year. The survey that we have just finished for the financial year just gone, once again, we have had a very positive response from our participants in terms of the supports that they are being provided under the scheme.

**DR PATERSON:** Am I able to ask how many participants there are in that scheme?

**Ms Holmes:** Currently we have 30 participants under the Lifetime Care Scheme.

**DR PATERSON:** Okay, thank you.

**MR PARTON:** Minister, you recently participated in a negotiation with the remaining race codes to arrive at an MOU on funding for the next five years. Who handled the negotiations on behalf of the government? Did you lead the process as the minister?

**Mr Steel:** The Justice and Community Safety Directorate officials were involved in that negotiation, and I also met with the racing clubs as part of the process as well.

**MR PARTON:** Minister, were there any non-executive members of the government who participated in those negotiations and, if so, who were they?

**Mr Steel:** Not directly, no.

**MR PARTON:** My understanding is that Ms Clay, as a non-executive government member, participated quite robustly in the process. She is a government member in this chamber. Would you not characterise that she did participate in the negotiation of the MOU?

**Mr Steel:** No; but of course, we are a very collaborative government and we discuss a range of different policy issues with our non-executive members, as we do with the executive members. But the direct negotiations were between JACS officials and the racing clubs, and I also met with them as part of the process.

**MR PARTON:** Yet, Minister, the racing codes—the two that remain here—are genuinely of the belief that Ms Clay did participate in those discussions as a member

of government. Why would that be?

**Mr Steel:** That is a question for them. I have said that the direct negotiations were undertaken by JACS officials.

**MR PARTON:** Can you guarantee funding to the racing codes after the current MOU, Minister?

**Mr Steel:** We have signed an MOU for five years to provide them with funding and also to work on a range of animal welfare issues throughout those five years. Following the end of that five years, I imagine we will look at what the opportunities are beyond that and also the performance of the racing clubs against the MOU KPIs. This MOU is more extensive than previous MOUs in terms of the level of KPIs that are expected of the industry.

We are really looking forward to working through the new governance framework that has been outlined and the range of issues that have been mentioned in the MOU that will be the subject of discussion through the new joint racing industry and government committee. Those include, amongst other things, long-term opportunities for financial self-sufficiency for the ACT racing industry. Those discussions will be ongoing throughout the five-year period, and we are looking forward to engaging with the racing clubs through that forum.

**MR PARTON:** In closing on this line of questioning, are you flagging that, given the current policy divide between Labor and the Greens, the racing codes really will need to establish financial self-sufficiency because there will not be any funding coming after this current MOU?

**Mr Steel:** No, that is not what I am saying.

**MR PARTON:** Thank you.

**MS CLAY:** Minister, I would love to have a bit of a chat about Stromlo Forest Park. I can see in the strategic operational priorities for CMTEDD in the 2022-23 plan that we have consultation with key user groups on the Stromlo Forest Master Plan. Can you tell me which key user groups those will be?

**Mr Steel:** Yes; there are a lot of them, and I do not have them all in my head.

**MS CLAY:** Feel free to tell me that you are going to take it on notice.

**Mr Steel:** I will hand over to the team to talk a little bit about that and the charter. I do not know whether Scott Saddler is on the line.

**Mr Iglesias:** Yes, Scott is on the line.

**Mr Steel:** Scott might actually have information to reference.

**Mr Sadler:** Thank you for the question. I acknowledge the privilege statement. As the minister just stated, there have been a large range of consultations done with the user

groups of Stromlo Forest Park. We have had three consultation meetings with all the user groups. I will take it on notice, but there are around nine to 10 user groups that we have consulted with.

**MS CLAY:** Sorry; I cannot see you, and I was not sure that was it. So nine or 10 user groups?

**Mr Saddler:** That is correct.

**MS CLAY:** We have heard a bit of feedback from the actual users. There is quite a few thousand out there, and it is a fairly disaggregated sport with a lot of community-based people who just sort of show up and use it. There are events and there are people who belong to special groups, but there is also just a lot of people who use it. How are we making sure that we consult with the broader community? Are we doing like a YourSay or a user consultation?

**Mr Steel:** There was, of course, the master plan that was undertaken for Stromlo Forest Park. That involved quite extensive consultation with the community in the development of that plan. I will hand over to Scott to talk a little bit about the ongoing engagement that we have with those groups and the mechanisms for that.

**Mr Saddler:** Thank you, Minister. Yes, we have ongoing meetings with all the user groups. As I have previously stated, we have those about once every three months. Since the National Arboretum has taken over Stromlo Forest Park, some 14 months ago, we have had four public consultations with the user groups. That is where we are currently at.

**MS CLAY:** Thank you. It is a little hard to hear you online, but you are doing a good job. I think what I heard was about consultation with user groups. I am actually after consultation with individual members who may or may not be in those groups and may or may not be represented—for example, the 4,000 or 5,000 people who ride bikes. Is there consultation with those people?

**Mr Steel:** There was as part of the master plan process. But, obviously, there is a range of elements to the master plan that will be developed over time, and I think there will be opportunities to engage with them through that process. If it involves development, then of course the development and planning notification period and necessary consultation with the community would have to occur.

**MS CLAY:** That is great. The master plan was developed quite a while ago. Is there any work going to update it and would there be some YourSay user consultation coming as part of that?

**Mr Steel:** There is not a specific refresh of the plan. Scott might be able to talk about some of the initiatives that are being progressed through the plan.

**Mr Saddler:** Thank you, Minister. As per the National Arboretum's master plan, we extrapolated eight projects out of that particular plan, and then we have taken those particular plans to shovel ready and had them costed. We are about to embark on the same format with inside the Stromlo Forest Park—that is, to extrapolate those six or

seven projects that we have discussed with the user groups and then try to get them shovel ready and costed within the next 24 months.

**MS CLAY:** And that is on the Stromlo master plan or the Arboretum master plan?

**Mr Saddler:** That is on the Stromlo master plan.

**MS CLAY:** Great; thank you.

**MR CAIN:** Minister, I refer to the human resource information management solution project. I note that its history is that, in 2019-20, \$4.5 million was allocated and brought over to 2021 and then topped up to \$25 million in 2020-21. I note that in budget paper B for this budget, at page 74, it says regarding intangible non-current assets, there is a decrease from the projected outcome, due in part to a revised completion date for a number of ICT projects, including replacement of the human resource information management system. As this project was originally slated for a June 2021 completion, firstly, why was that project not completed in June 21; and, secondly, when will it be completed?

**Mr Steel:** I am pleased to say that the HRIMS learning has been launched. This is not just a new payroll system; it includes a new learning management system.

**MR CAIN:** Excuse me, but I am having trouble hearing you with the mask, I have to say.

**Mr Steel:** I will try and speak up. I am pleased to say that the HRIMS learning system has been launched. The HRIMS does not just include a new payroll system; it also includes a new learning management system. I will hand over to Bettina Konti to talk about the revised program and the work that is being done to deliver the payroll system.

**Ms Konti:** Thank you, Minister. The work that has been funded in this budget is to take a bit of a review point to understand at a big level of detail the amount of technical build that has been delivered for the HRIMS program. We know that there is some work that we still need to do in and around understanding what the HR processes and practices in the directorates are that we are going to need to harmonise in order to be able to deliver one solution for the whole of the ACT public service. We are also taking a checkpoint on the original business case to review and understand whether the extent to which the original benefits are still valid.

**MR CAIN:** The minister said that the system had been launched. Are you saying that it is still being worked on, or is it completed—

**Mr Steel:** The learning system. Can you hear me?

**MR CAIN:** Pardon? The learning system is being launched or—

**Mr Steel:** The learning system has been launched.

**MR CAIN:** Right; the learning system has been launched. So the project is still being—

**Mr Steel:** The project is ongoing. We are looking at the program at the moment for delivering that.

**MR CAIN:** Okay. Sorry; it is not always easy to understand what is being said. What is the current time line for the completion of this project? Are you able to table this for the committee?

**Ms Konti:** This review checkpoint that we are doing as part of this budget round will go back to government for future budget consideration in order to determine how the human resourcing information management solution will be delivered. To perhaps explain a little bit about what the total scope of this solution is, the minister has mentioned that the learning management system component of HRIMS has been delivered. That is up and running and live.

The other elements or components of this solution include payroll. Payroll is actually the ability to move from our current HR21 payroll system to this new system. There are 19 enterprise bargaining agreements that are caught up in payroll. ACT government, with its two levels of government, has probably the broadest range of different employment types that it needs to cater for. In addition to payroll, recruitment, onboarding and performance management are other aspects of the system that are being considered as well.

**MR CAIN:** Can you confirm how many staff are currently working on this project and their designation? For example, is there a project manager for this project?

**Ms Konti:** There is an executive branch manager, a program manager and two or three other ACT public service staff. In addition to that, we have also had a system partner on board to help us develop this phase.

**MR CAIN:** And is that—

**THE CHAIR:** I will just go to Dr Paterson for a supplementary.

**DR PATERSON:** Minister, how confident are you that the ACT government will either get or is getting value for money out of this new system?

**Mr Steel:** Obviously this is an important system to replace some of the ageing legacy payroll systems, in particular, across government, going forward. That may enable us to generate savings in the longer-term in the management of those systems through efficiencies. We are trying to make sure that the solution delivers what we set out to deliver, and that is part of what is happening at the moment, working with Deloitte, the delivery partner, to see where we are at in the process in terms of what is being delivered, and then setting a program, going forward, to deliver a project which is value for money.

**MR CAIN:** Minister, can you confirm what has been allocated for this project in 2022-23?

**Mr Steel:** Do you have that information at hand, Ms Konti?

**Ms Konti:** Yes, we do. In 2022-23 there is a total of some \$6.5 million, which breaks

down into \$3.695 million for phase 1, for this work phase of work for HRIMS, as well as \$2.897 million for the reversal of the workforce savings. That is how that amount breaks down.

**MR PARTON:** I might just wrap my time up in this session with a couple of additional questions on the MOU with the racing codes. Minister, the MOU requires the Joint Racing Industry Government Committee to outline proposals to limit the use of whipping in at least three ACT race meetings annually. Surely, you are fully aware—because it would have been discussed at length during negotiations—that both codes are administered by New South Wales bodies and that both codes run under the rules and regulations of New South Wales bodies and that such a proposal will have to be agreed to by those bodies, because otherwise it will be completely impossible to do.

**Mr Steel:** I think we should have those discussions with them. It is a live discussion that was had in Victoria, where they actually ran a trial. I do not see any reason why we cannot have that discussion with the racing clubs about what is possible in the ACT to improve animal welfare outcomes in their industry and look at what the opportunities are to demonstrate what is possible in this area. So we are going to have that discussion with them. I appreciate that they have their own rules and racing frameworks that they work to. We want to work with the industries to look at what is possible under this. That is why we have got the governance framework in the MOU to have those discussions.

**MR PARTON:** Minister, thoroughbred trainers are leaving the ACT in very big comparative numbers and skipping across the border to New South Wales, some only as far as Queanbeyan. They are saying that they cannot survive here for a number of issues, some of which are related to the level of funding that comes from government. Are you concerned by this?

**Mr Steel:** We want to talk with the industry about what the economic opportunities are and the future of the industry. Part of the value of having the MOU framework is to establish the governance and to be able to have those discussions through the new committee that has been established. We are looking forward to continuing those discussions throughout the five-year period, as well as providing them with funding over the period to be able to deliver racing through both the Harness Racing Club and the Racing Club.

**MR PARTON:** Finally, has there been any consideration given to, at some stage, a redistribution of a portion of the POC tax back to racing codes?

**Mr Steel:** That is a question for the Treasurer. But we, of course, have had previous inquiries by the ICRC that have provided recommendations about future funding. We have taken the position through this MOU of providing them with direct funding that is not linked to that particular source of revenue, noting that that source of revenue comes from a much broader range of gambling activity than just racing in the ACT. It comes from racing in other states where people are placing bets here and it comes from a range of other types of sports as well.

**MS CLAY:** Minister, the Independent Competition and Regulatory Commission looked at the structure and the funding of the industry back in 2011 and they produced a report on this. They had a lot of things to say. Amongst them they said that, if



government wishes to fund the horse racing industry, government might consider doing so on a temporary basis, as a bridge. That was over 10 years ago. Have you seen much activity from the horse racing industry in response to that review that was conducted a decade ago, suggesting that they should be self-sufficient?

**Mr Steel:** We have seen them develop a master plan for their current racing club site at Thoroughbred Park. That is something I know that they want to discuss, and it is referenced in the MOU. So that is something we will be discussing with them. Certainly during my time as minister that is something that I have seen that they are actively working towards in terms of what they can do to improve their financial position, going forward.

In relation to the ICRC report, the government's response to that report was that indexation will continue to be set at the CPI minus 0.5 per cent, rather than the one per cent adjustment recommended by the ICRC. So whilst, of course, we took into account that report and took the general principles from it, we did not always agree on the exact recommendations that they provided.

**MS CLAY:** Mr Parton asked a number of questions based around some animal welfare KPIs in the new MOU that has just been signed. We have an industry that is operating under a New South Wales code and we also have ACT legislation that recognises animals as sentient beings. Have you had a think at all about what will happen if those two come into conflict? I am personally more interested in the ACT's animal cruelty regime than I am in the New South Wales' racing codes operating rules.

**Mr Steel:** It is an ongoing discussion that we have. Obviously, the Animal Welfare Advisory Committee, which advises me as the Minister for Transport and City Services on matters relating to animal welfare, including the development of codes of practice relating to horses and horse racing, provides me with advice from time to time. Since the legislation was amended to include strengthening animal welfare protections and also the recognition of animals as sentient beings, I asked them to go away and update and provide me advice in relation to each of the existing codes. They have obviously got a big work program. There are a lot of different codes of practice that apply. So they are working through that and will no doubt have advice, going forward, about what they think is the best approach when it comes to promoting animal welfare in a range of different settings but also in the racing industry.

**MR PARTON:** Minister, you mentioned in an answer to Ms Clay's question the bold plans that Thoroughbred Park have to diversify and create a sustainable income stream. Given that harness racing in the ACT does not have the means by which to create such an income stream, does that mean that, particularly given the massive policy divide between Labor and the Greens in this space, the future of harness racing in this city is looking extremely shaky?

**Mr Steel:** No, I would not say that at all. I visited the Harness Racing Club and talked with them about what the future potential opportunities are. They obviously operate from Exhibition Park at the moment. They have a training track and their racing track. From time to time that racing track is used for music festivals and a whole range of other things, and there is a bit of conflict sometimes that arises around trying to schedule the race meets with all the other activity that is happening in the general community at

Exhibition Park. That is something that we will continue to talk with them about, as well as what the opportunities are.

The Canberra Racing Club has been interested, I think, in talking with their fellow Harness Racing Club about what the opportunities are, as part of their master plan as well for them to have potentially new facilities. That is something that we will take up with both of the clubs as part of the discussions and also as part of the discussions on the master planning work around the future of EPIC and what activities happen there and new facilities being built.

I actually think that there is a real opportunity here for the racing industry, and particularly the harness racing industry, to renew their facilities. Whilst the training track provides a reasonably good facility, it is ageing—that is the reality of it. The conflicts with other users are also a problem that could be managed through potentially looking at new facilities down the track—excuse the pun. So we will have those conversations with them as part of this process.

**MR BRADDOCK:** I found it quite curious that, while the ACT is growing population-wise and the government, of course, is having to expand with that, I have not been able to find any increases or new policy proposals for the ACT Archives. I only checked as far back as 2016. I would be interested to know how we are making sure that the ACT government's archives are being stored and appropriately funded to do so.

**Mr Steel:** I am very glad that you asked that question. I might hand over to the team to talk a little about that. The Heritage Library has moved into new facilities at 255 Canberra Avenue, having moved from the top of Woden library, which freed up room to do community spaces. There has been a necessity to provide new facilities for some of these entities that are involved in taking care of these types of records. I will hand over to the team at the Territory Records Office.

**Ms Wickman:** I am aware of and acknowledge the privilege statement. Thank you very much for the question. We have not pursued funding for the centralised storage of archives in some time. There was, as you have noted, a proposal in 2016. The way that the archival regime is established in the ACT is that the ACT government and agencies retain responsibility for storing their records. The Territory Records Office has a role in setting the standard by which they do that. There are facilities to store archival records. There are good quality facilities at Mitchell, which are managed by Shared Services. Many agencies and directorates store their archival records in that place. We set the standards and they maintain storage areas for themselves.

**MR BRADDOCK:** What about the digitisation of existing paper-based records that you have in your possession or from the agencies? It is quite a labour-intensive process. Surely, we would have needed some extra resources by now to address that?

**Ms Wickman:** There has been some funding in previous years for the Community Services Directorate to digitise some of their case files. That has formed the model that we are going to draw on to provide advice to others that might look into digitising large quantities of records. We do small amounts of digitisation in response to particular requests from the public for records, and we have established the means to make those available. That is small but growing, and we are very excited to have that in place. There

are pockets of interest, and we work with agencies who are interested in hard-copy records. As I said, we are in the process of turning the CSD's experience into a model that other parts of government might use in the future.

**MR BRADDOCK:** Which agencies are not interested?

**Ms Wickman:** I would not suggest any of them are not interested. I know that there are some who have particular groups of records that they would like to see made digital.

**MR BRADDOCK:** Sorry; just stirring.

**DR PATERSON:** Minister, the threat of cyber attack is very real in the world today. What is the ACT government doing to protect itself and the community online?

**Mr Steel:** Yes, it is a modern phenomenon that affects everyone and all organisations, including particularly governments. Whilst we are a subnational government, we are not immune from the interest of state-based and non state-based actors in this space.

We have been undertaking threat risk assessments in this space which will help to inform future measures to try to improve our cyber capability and to strengthen our systems against the risk of cyber intrusion. There are two people from two different agencies who can talk to this—the Chief Digital Officer, Bettina Konti, and an officer from the Justice and Community Safety Directorate, who can talk about the broader environment.

**Ms Konti:** Thank you very much for the question. This is an area where the ACT government have a significant focus at the moment. In the 2020-21 financial year, there was an amount of funding provided to our organisation in digital data technology solutions to implement some cyber incident response uplift, in the form of a security information and event management system. That will enhance our ability to detect and respond to cyber threats.

In the 2021-22 financial year, further funding was provided which will result in, effectively, an injection of resources to our cybersecurity centre team, to enable them to not just be able to help all directorates with their security assessments and security risk management plans but start to move from almost a back-of-the-house activity to moving that up front, into an active consideration of any new investments in technology. We call that security by design.

We have completed a whole-of-government threat and risk assessment. We have worked with all of the directorates to prioritise the recommendations that have come out of that, and we are moving forward on implementing a number of those.

There was a major cybersecurity policy revision towards the end of December 2020 and the beginning of 2021. We are also very aware that the Australian government are revising their cybersecurity strategy. The ACT, as one of the jurisdictions, is in lock step with them and ensuring that we are considering our uplift, as the Australian government are considering their uplift, and we are continuing to raise the bar of an acceptable cybersecurity posture.

In addition, we have a regular technology leadership group that meets on a fortnightly

basis, and cyber is a standing item on that agenda. We published a data governance and management framework, which, among other things, has steps to identify roles and responsibilities for data and data security, and making data safe and secure.

Government recently signed off on best practice design and delivery guidance, which looks to provide guidance to all directorates around the key things that we need to consider when we are making decisions about technology investments. That is where cybersecurity by design comes in, as well as active consideration of any new technology investments to have threat and risk assessments conducted with them.

In recent years, we have introduced application whitelisting to our Windows 10 and Windows server 19 environments. We have configured and logged Microsoft Office macros. We will have achieved a level of user application hardening by June 2023. Also, by the end of this financial year, we will have procured and deployed a privileged access management product.

That is a snapshot of the kinds of activities that we are working on in this space to protect the information that ACT government collects and holds on behalf of the community.

**DR PATERSON:** Over the past 12 months, say, have there been any significant cyber attacks or cyber threats identified?

**Ms Konti:** There has been one since that we have identified, but it was not successful in accessing any information—some development servers in CIT.

**DR PATERSON:** Do these threats come from overseas—for example, with that example?

**Ms Konti:** That threat was not considered to be one of that nature, no.

**Mr Steel:** There are also some instances where they are third-party applications, where non-government companies that we contract with have been affected by a range of different cyber threats. Do you want to comment on those?

**Ms Konti:** Yes. There was a ransomware attack that one of our rostering systems, Kronos, was subject to. This is a third-party provider that ACT government uses that is incorporated overseas. That led to us needing to shut down our connections to that third-party provider, and required some manual payroll and payment processing from the directorates and the shared services HR area during the time. I think it was late last year, in late 2021, that it occurred, and it lasted for around two weeks.

**DR PATERSON:** Going back to the one cyber attack that occurred, that sounds like it was local-ish—Australian, at least. Does that get referred to police to investigate? Is there a person at the end of all of that?

**Ms Konti:** With things like this, the first thing we do is to determine whether anything has been accessed. The security incident management processes that we have are to, firstly, prevent the access; secondly, look to investigate what was taken and the mechanisms for that; and, thirdly, if we do need to gain any assistance, we will usually

go to the Australian Cyber Security Centre first. But if we think that there has been any criminal activity, we make referrals to the police, if required. But that is not required or necessary in all cases.

**MS CLAY:** Minister, I would like to get an update on the work that the ACT government is doing to get ACT government buildings off gas and onto electric, and the work we are doing to make our ACT government offices more energy efficient.

**Mr Steel:** As Mr Tanton mentioned before, we have established a policy for that and have been making some investments in the budget. I will pass over to him to explain a little bit more about what that means, going forward.

**Mr Tanton:** Thank you for your question. As part of the guidelines that the minister mentioned, and that I mentioned previously, there are a set of guidelines for ACT government agencies with regard to the renewal, procurement or leasing of new properties, or construction of new properties. It also looks at the existing properties which may have gas-fired units or plant and equipment in them, with a view to replacing that plant and equipment, having regard to the time of life of the life span of that equipment. It could be something as simple as a hot-water boiler, at a small scale. It is then about looking at the HVAC side of things. When things are coming up for renewal, we are not just replacing like with like. They are required to look to transition, if it is on gas, to electric.

That sets that process in line. With ACT property assets, each of the directorates is required to keep an asset list of those properties that have gas-based assets in them. When they come up for replacement, that is a need, and there is a requirement for them to start to plan to move that equipment to electric.

Likewise, as I mentioned with leasing, any new properties that may need to be leased will need to be electric. Obviously, there are some exemptions in that policy in regard to having a curriculum where you need laboratories which need to have gas for teaching. There is a process for exemption, but that needs to be signed off at ministerial level, in and around that.

Looking at some more of the facilities that we are currently running, as I mentioned, we are looking at upgrading 255 Canberra Avenue, which is quite a substantial building complex on Canberra Avenue. We will look to replace the current gas-fired HVAC facility there, and to improve the actual efficiency of the building. It is quite an old building and it is very cold, and it does take up a lot of gas. We will be transitioning that, as part of that budget.

**MS CLAY:** I am really pleased to hear about the energy efficiency, especially with the government announcements this week about seven-star energy efficiency in the residential sector; that is really good. We have some really old office buildings, like Callam Offices, and I imagine they are causing a bit more trouble than procuring the new buildings. Callam Offices, I gather, also has heritage considerations. Can you run me through some of the challenges and how you have dealt with energy efficiency for something like Callam?

**Mr Steel:** That one is a unique building. I really like the design; I think it has been

recognised in the heritage protections that apply to it. But it also has some challenges; there is no doubt about that. The tenants include Woden Community Service and Major Projects Canberra. Major Projects Canberra had to move out for a period of time, because of some of the issues with the lift, and access to the site. I understand that they are back in there now.

We received some funding in last year's budget to do some work in Callam Offices. We are also, more broadly, considering the renewal of our properties across the portfolio for Property Group. Part of that discussion is focused on what we can do to support having more usable space for community groups and the broader community, as well as other tenants, including government tenants.

As we go through that renewal process, it is about looking at whether we can achieve some of our climate goals. Newer buildings tend to be much more efficient and much cheaper to maintain. We will certainly be looking at the opportunities there. We are looking at two regions first—the properties in Woden and Belconnen. Some early analysis has been done, some scoping. We have formed a working group across agencies to look at what the opportunities might be to renew the portfolio. We will then look at the rest of the territory as we go forward. It is at a very early stage at the moment.

Certainly Callam is part of the discussion in Woden, with respect to the future of that building. It is managed by the government at the moment. I am not sure that there would be a high level of interest in it from the private sector, to be honest. Some funding has been allocated to look at how we can make some energy improvements. We have to work through getting a decision about where we want to head on that one. I will hand over to Graham to talk a little bit about Callam.

**Mr Tanton:** Callam, as you mentioned, has a set of unique characteristics. It is one of those buildings that everyone grew up with, when it was being built back in the early part of the 70s.

**Mr Steel:** Speak for yourself, Graham!

**Mr Tanton:** I am showing my age somewhat! With the design, as you mentioned, it is heritage listed. We do have funding to look at replacing the gas-fired system in that building. It is quite a large gas-fired system. There is a lot of perspex; there is a lot of window space in that building.

We are running through the scoping of that replacement. With respect to looking at the replacement, it does set up a set of triggers and consequential impacts in regard to substation renewal. We are also looking at other code areas. Once you go through a certain amount of redevelopment of an older building, you often have to bring other parts of the building back up to a certain standard.

Whilst we have a set of funding there which will go to replace it, some consequential upgrades that may need to be done to the building could mean that it is not really viable to be upgraded. We will then come back to government. We are doing that feasibility at the moment, and trying to get an understanding of what that will look like, before we look to commit funding—that funding that we have—to something that may cause a cascading effect. It is a complex one, and it is something that will come out more as we

go through some of these older buildings.

**MS CLAY:** Obviously, we do not yet know for Callam, because we are working through it. With respect to some of these more complex buildings, Minister, it might end up being a renewal—build something new—instead.

**Mr Steel:** Potentially, yes.

**MS CLAY:** I definitely understand that. When we get to that point, will we be using an ISCA rating or any other tool? We have used an ISCA rating on light rail. Will we use some kind of tool to make sure that we are minimising the embedded emissions in a new build? We have a report from the Commissioner for Sustainability and the Environment saying, “Yes, we understand new buildings can be built and lower emissions on an ongoing basis.” They often have quite a lot of embedded emissions in them.

**Mr Steel:** Whilst an ISCA rating may not necessarily be obtained for each different type of development, depending on the scale, through the business case process we would have to consider what the emissions impacts might be of upgrading a new building as opposed to building a new one.

We are only in the early stages of scoping out that work regarding what we do with our current portfolio. We will need to have a think about what those impacts are. On the other side there are also opportunities, potentially, to look at whether the private sector could play a role in a building that has a heritage overlay—Callam, in particular, if we are talking about that. It needs to be used for something. We have to work through whether that is government use or future private use. It will be there, the existing building structure, for decades to come, with that embedded carbon.

**MS CLAY:** Do those business cases take into account embedded emissions as well?

**Mr Steel:** We will consider that. It depends on the actual size of the development, but we will certainly have a look at what the climate impacts are. One of the issues we have with some of these ageing properties is that scope 1 and 2 emissions are creating problems. It is not just a focus on scope 3 emissions when we are looking at the processes that we have. Sometimes quite poorly built forms of buildings that are not efficient are creating emissions because they are difficult to heat.

**MS CLAY:** I live in a 1969 house; I understand.

**Mr Steel:** Yes.

**MR CAIN:** Minister, you would be aware that on 18 April 2019 a contract titled “Provision of SAP Implementation Service for HRIMS” was executed, for a start date of 1 May 2019 and completion date of 1 May 2022, originally for a value of \$19.8 million, supplemented by \$600,000 in November last year, for a total value of \$20.4 million. The contract deliverer was Ernst & Young. Can you confirm that Ernst & Young completed the scope of their contract before the end of the contract and for the full value of that over-\$20 million contract?

**Mr Steel:** I will hand over to Bettina Konti to provide what information she can in relation to both the work with SAP and Ernst & Young.

**Ms Konti:** Ernst & Young were the program implementation partner for the HRIMS program once it was first stood up and originally funded. Throughout the COVID period we had noticed that the HRIMS program was moving very slowly. That was through a combination of factors, not least of which was the impact of COVID on our workforce. Ernst & Young were continuing to do the work required.

We got to the point where we talked to Ernst & Young about the rate and the pace with which this program was moving forward. There were issues with being able to staff the program from the directorate's side and from our own program side. We looked to find ways in which we could continue to progress the program with less reliance on ACT government staff that were being prioritised for other types of work.

**MR CAIN:** Can I cut to the chase a bit? Can you confirm that Ernst & Young completed the project under that contract and were paid over \$20 million?

**Ms Konti:** I can confirm that they were paid, but where I was coming to was that we made a decision to pause the program in order to lessen the ongoing moneys that we were paying out on a monthly basis. The technical build of SAP for the payroll program and the integrations to the 14 other third-party systems are not yet complete—

**MR CAIN:** Excuse me; were Ernst & Young paid \$20 million at the contract end?

**Ms Konti:** I would have to take the exact amount on notice; yes, they were paid.

**MR CAIN:** They were paid over \$20 million in the contract or not?

**Mr Steel:** She has just said that she will take that on notice.

**THE CHAIR:** She said that she will take it on notice.

**MR CAIN:** Thank you. Are Ernst & Young currently engaged on the HRIMS project, and what is the value of that engagement, if any?

**Ms Konti:** They are not currently engaged on the HRIMS project.

**MR CAIN:** How much has this project, to date, cost the ACT taxpayer?

**Ms Konti:** We might need to take that one on notice, unless Mark Whybrow, Executive Group Manager, has that information to hand.

**MR CAIN:** Thank you. Could you briefly describe the nature of the work that Ernst & Young were contracted to provide?

**Ms Konti:** They were to design and build the HRIMS system, encompassing all of the scope that I went to earlier in the hearing.



**MR CAIN:** I have a question, Minister, regarding the Better Regulation Taskforce recommendation on procurement. The report of May 2022 found that there would be value in looking more closely at standardising procurement practices across the ACT government. Is this underway?

**Mr Steel:** We have a procurement reform project which commenced in February 2022. It identifies elements of the procurement framework that require improvement. The objective of the project is to ensure that government procurement is efficient, effective and meets the policy objectives of ACT government. That includes recommendations that have come out of the Renée Leon review of Procurement ACT, recommendations of various Auditor-General reports and recommendations of the Better Regulation Taskforce. I will hand over to Sue Vroombout from CMTEED to talk a little bit about that project and how it relates to the Better Regulation Taskforce.

**Ms Vroombout:** As the minister identified, as part of the procurement reform project we are bringing together a range of recommendations from audits and other pieces of work, including the better regulation work. As part of that, we are looking at the recommendations that came out of the Better Regulation Taskforce, including improving our engagement with suppliers; making our systems and processes easier for them to access and use; and improving our templates and our suite of documents—again, to make it easier for suppliers to use and access our systems. We have also put in place an e-training module for suppliers, to enable them to better understand how they can use and engage with us through the procurement system.

**MR CAIN:** What is the time frame for this review?

**Ms Vroombout:** It is a three-year program of reform, with a range of different elements. This element in relation to suppliers is part of that three-year program. It is an early part of the program of reform. The reforms, in total, will be progressively rolled out over that three-year period. I will hand over to Sanaz Mirzabegian to talk in a little bit more detail about where we are at in relation to the supplier engagement part of the reform program.

**Ms Mirzabegian:** I acknowledge the privilege statement. In response to your question, certainly, as Sue Vroombout indicated, the work that the Better Regulation Taskforce has conducted has been reflected in the reform program. I confirm, as Sue Vroombout also stated, that those parts relating to better engagement with suppliers are one of the early items for implementation. We are hoping that implementation in relation to setting up some better resources for those suppliers will be completed by 31 December this year. The reform also has a streamlining project, which will see the provision of better standards, processes and practices, and templates to assist those suppliers to engage with the ACT government.

**MR CAIN:** Are you able to provide for the committee a copy of the timetable and the stages of that timetable for this review?

**Ms Vroombout:** Certainly, we can, Mr Cain. It is already reflected on the Procurement ACT website, but we can provide you with the information that is on the Procurement ACT website, which maps out the elements of the reform program and the timetable for each of those elements.

**MR CAIN:** With this three-year review, what is the expected end date?

**Ms Mirzabegian:** 30 June 2025.

**MR BRADDOCK:** I am interested in the level of resourcing that is required to clear cabinet records after the period of 10 years has passed. How many resources does the government devote to that task?

**Mr Steel:** I will hand over to officials from CMTEDD to talk a little bit about the resources required for the current policy.

**Ms Tyler:** I acknowledge that I have read the privilege statement. The team within the cabinet office review documents. Currently, a SOGC, part of a Senior Officer Grade A and I are involved in that process. With the way that we do an executive document review, each directorate is also responsible for reviewing documents, depending on where that document was generated. Each directorate has some staff—I do not have the number of staff for each directorate—who are also reviewing documents. The principal officer under the Territory Records Act is the Head of Service. That has also been delegated to each director-general, as well as deputy directors-general in the Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate. There are resources across the board, across government, who are reviewing these documents.

**MR BRADDOCK:** What proportion of cabinet records are released, on average?

**Ms Tyler:** I will take that on notice.

**MS CLAY:** Minister, do you have an update on modern slavery in procurement?

**Mr Steel:** Yes, we can certainly provide an update there. It is fair to say, though, that because we have stood up the procurement reform program, that is the focus of the resources in Procurement ACT in delivering that program at the moment. Whilst we have, of course, other priorities in our commitments around modern slavery, the circular economy and how that relates to procurement, this is certainly a focus at the moment—the procurement reform program. I will hand over to Mr Bain to talk a little bit about that. I know he is involved very deeply in this matter of procurement reform.

**Mr Bain:** I have been involved in this. Notwithstanding the prioritisation advice that the minister has just given, there is an awful lot of work going on, within Australia and throughout the world, on how we are addressing modern slavery elements.

I have been lucky enough to have been invited to a leading practitioners working group under the auspices of the OECD. That working group has put together, for presentation at a meeting in October, a due diligence paper, which goes a long way towards setting some standards, guidelines and frameworks, with very well thought-out indicia, to look through our own due diligence processes for suppliers.

While we are not concentrating specifically on this application to the territory's procurement framework at the moment, a lot of it is picked up in what we have already done through initiatives such as the Secure Local Jobs Code work, the ethical treatment

of workers evaluation and, more broadly, by the charter of values.

**THE CHAIR:** On behalf of the committee, I would like to thank Minister Steel and his directorate officials for attending today. If there have been any questions taken on notice, would you please provide answers to the committee secretary within five working days. The committee will reconvene at 1.15 pm.

### **Hearing suspended from 12.15 to 1.15 pm.**

**THE CHAIR:** Good afternoon, and this is our final session for today. Once again, we have here the Minister for Transport and City Services: welcome Minister and welcome officials.

Please be aware that the proceedings today are being recorded and transcribed by Hansard and published. The proceedings are also being broadcast and webstreamed live. When taking a question on notice, it would be useful if witnesses could use the words: “I will take that as a question taken on notice.” This will help the committee and witnesses to confirm questions taken on notice from the transcript.

I also remind witnesses of the protections and obligations afforded by parliamentary privilege and draw your attention to that privilege statement. The first time you speak, please mention that you understand and acknowledge the implications of that privilege statement.

We are continuing from the session we had this morning. Mr Parton will ask the first substantive question, and then we will go to Ms Clay.

**MR PARTON:** Thank you, Chair. Minister, on the recent announcement that the government has procured five additional CAF Urbos 3 LRVs—not four, as I had been suggesting, but five. Can I ask: what was the cost per unit of each of those vehicles?

**Mr Steel:** I will hand over to Major Projects Canberra. There are commercial-in-confidence sensitivities here that we need to respect. I will hand over to Duncan Edghill, who can talk about what we can say about the contract, which is just over \$180 million not only for the five LRVs but also for the retrofitting and the depot modification—both capital and those extra availability payments as an augmentation of the existing PPP.

**Mr Edghill:** Thank you, and I have read and acknowledge and understand the privilege statement. As the minister noted, the total value of the contract is in the vicinity of \$180 million. That comprises both a design and construction component and an ongoing operating component for the remainder of the stage 1 PPP. The D&C component was approximately \$130 million.

**MR PARTON:** Chair, if I could just intervene. I am not really hearing anything. I can hear that Mr Edghill is answering the question, but I cannot really decipher what he is saying. I am not sure what we do in this instance.

**THE CHAIR:** Yes.

**Mr Edghill:** Can you hear me now, Chair, or not at all?

**THE CHAIR:** I can hear you. Are you close enough to the microphone or can you—

**MR PARTON:** I do not know, I do not—

**THE CHAIR:** If you can start speaking, we will see how this goes by turning the volume up.

**Mr Edghill:** Yes, thank you very much and I will try and speak louder too. Is that any clearer?

**MR PARTON:** I think so. I am going to try. It could just be that I am an old man!

**Mr Edghill:** I am too, so I understand!

As the minister noted, the total value of the contract is in the vicinity of \$180 million. That is comprised of an amount relating to the design and construction component, and then there is also an operating and maintenance component, which is matched to the remaining term of the stage 1 PPP contract.

The value of the D&C component is approximately \$130 million. Under the contract, the per unit price is something that we are not able to disclose. It is confidential information to CAF, but I can note that of the work that is being undertaken, \$130 million relates to that design and construction for the five LRDs, the retrofitting of the existing fleet and the depot modification works.

**MR PARTON:** Given the prevalence of cracking issues in some other jurisdictions that have emerged with the CAF Urbos 3, has the government sought any additional protection such as insurance to in some way cover if an instance of that is to occur in Canberra?

**Mr Steel:** There are already extensive protections under the existing PPP contracts to make services available. I will hand over to Duncan Edghill to talk a little bit about those discussions with CAF in relation to the five—as far as he can.

**Mr Edghill:** Thank you. I think it is important to note at the outset that, notwithstanding the light rail vehicle is the same model, they are not exactly the same model. It is a little bit like a 1990 Ford Falcon is not the same as a 2000 Ford Falcon; there are differences in the way that they are designed, built and constructed.

Certainly, the light rail vehicles that we have here in Canberra, particularly around the bogies, have a different design and construction associated with them. We do have protections under the contracts with Canberra Metro, and that contract should now be on the website for everyone to see.

Importantly, as well as those legal protections and the fact that it is a different light rail vehicle, we would note that we have had our technical specialists involved in what we are doing here. I do not want to speak for TCCS. We have had our own inspection regime in conjunction with Canberra Metro.

The other point I was going to make is that there are operational differences between here in Canberra and the operating environment in Sydney, where that cracking occurred. Taken it all together, the ACT government and, on our advice, Major Projects Canberra have recommended to move forward with the light rail vehicles with CAF.

From a Canberra perspective, they have been performing fantastically, and I am probably taking some of the TCCS space here. In terms of actual our experience with the CAF vehicles here in Canberra, it has been very, very good.

**MR PARTON:** All right. When stage 2B is completed, how many more LRVs will be required to fulfil the schedule when that occurs?

**Mr Steel:** I do not know whether you want to comment on that, Mr Edghill, in terms of what advice you have on that?

**Mr Edghill:** Thank you. The ultimate number of LRVs that are required for stage 2B will be a function of a few things. It will be a function of the exact length of wire free running into stage 2B. It will also be a function of the service parameters that the ACT government wants to implement for stage 2B. It is also a function of how much resilience and spares, and so forth, that we would like to have in the network.

Approximately speaking, another 11 light rail vehicles, potentially—but that number is subject to all those design features that I just mentioned. Taking it from a very high level perspective, if there are 14 LRVs for stage 1, and you are, effectively, doubling it, if you have periods of wire free running and so forth, that number—that very high level—I think makes a degree of sense.

**MR PARTON:** Thank you, Mr Edghill, and thank you, Minister.

**MS CLAY:** Minister, I am interested in the multimodal network plan. I see in the budget paper we have got some funding set aside for it, and I think it was due to be complete in October. Can you tell me what that plan is and when we will see it released?

**Mr Steel:** It is a planning tool that is being used by transport planners. I will hand over to the team to provide some information about how that tool will support better transport planning in the ACT, looking at all modes of transport.

**Mr Marshall:** I acknowledge the privilege statement. The multimodal network plan is a key component in the operationalisation of the transport strategy. It is an approach that TCCS is an early adopter of. It is an approach that has national and international recognition as an appropriate response, but it is one that has not been rolled out widely in other jurisdictions.

It aims, essentially, to take a much more holistic view of the attributes that a future transport network will need to have in order to realise the objectives that are outlined in the transport strategy and other strategic documents. Importantly, it takes that holistic view of the network—rather than individually planning for, for example, a public transport network, an active travel network and general traffic, and then stitching those planning processes together. It seeks to look holistically at the network and at what the

demands are expected to be of the various modes in operation on various components of the network, as we look to give effect to those objectives of the strategy. It puts us in a position to characterise what the infrastructure of various components of the network will need to be to balance those demands of various modes.

That then allows us to do a gap analysis between the existing infrastructure that is in various parts of the network and identify what augmentation, alteration or upgrade of infrastructure will be necessary across the network over the period of the implementation of the transport strategy.

**MS CLAY:** That sounds really interesting and quite worthwhile. Is it based on targets for mode shift into more active public transport, or is it predicting current trends?

**Mr Marshall:** It is certainly aimed at giving effect to the stated objectives in the strategy, which certainly include, among other things, promoting the use of active travel on public transport.

**MS CLAY:** Is that going to be published—that multimodal plan?

**Mr Marshall:** It will be available when it is completed.

**Mr Steel:** Noting that it is an operational tool, so it is not just another transport plan, transport strategy. It is actually meant to be used as a practitioner’s tool—in how it will be used to inform the work of practitioners.

**MS CLAY:** Thank you.

**THE CHAIR:** In the last annual report, you reported that six paths on the community path priority list had been built in Belconnen. Five of those paths are in College Street in Bruce, on the western verge of Coulter Drive in Page, in two locations along Joynton Smith Drive in Belconnen, off Stockman Avenue in Lawson, and off Luxton Street in Belconnen. In terms of an update, have those paths been built and completed?

**Mr Smith:** I have read and acknowledge the privilege statement. In relation to those paths, I understand that the majority of those, if not all of them, have been built. I would need to take the question on notice, to provide a full and frank answer.

**THE CHAIR:** Okay. In the annual report, I note that indicator (g) suggests that increases to community paths are measured using the date that “works as executed” drawings are submitted and registered. What does “works as executed” mean?

**Mr Smith:** “Works as executed” are the final drawings, technical drawings, that are lodged into our asset management system, which show the actual asset delivered on the ground. It would indicate the width of the path, the material the path is built out of and whether there is any associated infrastructure relating to those works.

**THE CHAIR:** It does not mean that the path was built or completed; it is just the engineering?

**Mr Smith:** If the “works as executed” has been issued, it means that the piece of

infrastructure has been completed.

**THE CHAIR:** It has been completed?

**Mr Smith:** Yes.

**MR BRADDOCK:** I am interested in the active travel links between the Gungahlin town centre and Yerrabi Pond. I also noticed that the recent draft active travel plan—I think the consultation closed this week—did not include that. Is it possible to ask why that might be the case, and what we are looking at doing to improve active travel links to the Gungahlin town centre?

**Mr Steel:** Some feasibility has been underway on the active travel links in Gungahlin, looking at what came out of the master plan refresh or the town centre refresh. We have also been consulting with the community on what priority path connections they would like to see for both pedestrians and cyclists in Gungahlin and all other regions of Canberra.

There was an interactive map produced, based on feedback from a range of organisations. We wanted to test whether we have got the priorities right, and that has been the consultation we have been having with the community. Last time I checked, we had over 1,400 comments on the interactive map. People were saying that they noted a missing link that needed to be addressed as it was not in there. They wanted a new pedestrian crossing in a particular location where we had not identified that.

We will look at what the feedback is through that consultation and see whether there are any issues that we have not addressed—whether there are some paths that we need to look at there, and better connections. We will certainly have a look at that one.

**DR PATERSON:** My question is also in respect of active travel. Earlier this year, or last year—I cannot remember now—I worked on the *Her Way* report, which I tabled in the Assembly. That was around how to engage more women in active travel and in public transport use. You recently released the updated draft of the active travel plan. How have women's safety or concerns been incorporated into that plan or thinking?

**Mr Steel:** It is certainly part of the plan that we want to encourage more people from different groups, including women, children and older people, to engage in active travel. The whole aim of the plan and vision that we are setting out is to have more Canberrans walking and riding more often, and that includes those particular groups.

We need to think about the specific barriers that present themselves for those groups in doing so. Safe, separated infrastructure is a key part of it. We know that is a fundamental barrier for everyone engaging, and particularly women. We also know that there is a range of other things that we need to do. We have been collaborating with partners in this space to address those—trial new things and take responsibility.

With the upcoming disruption, we think there is an opportunity to be able to encourage that in a way that has not happened before. While it is a massive challenge, the disruption that will be occurring in the city also gives an opportunity to encourage new ways of travelling, when people can. We recognise that, whilst most people use active

travel every day, for some people, and certainly particular groups like women, where trip chaining is involved, that can be a challenge. We have to think about new ways of supporting them and encouraging them to be able to take active travel as part of their trip chaining, and make sure that that is not a significant burden.

I will hand over to the team at Transport Canberra to talk a little bit about what is in the plan and what other work is going on, with this particular cohort in mind.

**Mr McHugh:** I acknowledge that I have read and understood the privilege statement. Thank you for the question, and congratulations on the work that you did last year. I think it was timely in our thinking regarding putting together the active travel plan, which is one of the deliverables from our transport strategy.

Thinking about how to attract more of a diverse user group to active travel was key. Some people within the directorate have particularly focused on gender-sensitive urban design principles and have been pulling together some advice that will inform our own planning, as well as the design and thinking of consultants and others who are working on active travel infrastructure. It is a really positive response to that particular issue.

It gets picked up right across the five priorities in the active travel plan. When we think about safe infrastructure for walking and cycling, obviously, if you get the safety piece right, you address almost all user groups. Another priority is having a better connected and maintained walking and cycling network. Again, there are barriers there; it is about making sure that you have a continuous link between your destination and your origin that links in.

With respect to supporting different types of new, emerging technology in the active travel space, the minister made a great announcement yesterday about the expansion of the use of e-scooters. We know that that type of active travel appeals to a different user group and can assist people who might not be confident about walking a short distance from the bus stop to home. E-scooters can potentially provide a safer outcome for those users.

The last two priorities include making active travel and bicycle parking safe and easy—guidance, signage, lighting and those sorts of things all coming together and holistically responding to that issue that you have raised.

**DR PATERSON:** One of the things that came up a lot through that work was trip chaining, with childcare centres being a major point in people's—women's in particular—trips. Has thought been given to engaging childcare centres more in this discussion?

**Mr McHugh:** We are opening that conversation with everyone; absolutely. Although we might not have targeted childcare centres, it is a great suggestion, and we will make sure that we have some representation from the early childhood learning and other sector, to gather their feedback.

**Mr Steel:** The focus has generally been on the safety program around schools because children will often walk to school by themselves. There is obviously a big focus on safety there, whereas children in the preschool age, zero to five, typically are not going



to be walking by themselves to school. However, they might be with a parent, and we want to encourage that as well. It is probably something on which we could do a dedicated piece of work.

When we have been consulting on new cycle paths and the cycle path network, as part of this piece of work, we have also had a separate piece of work and an interactive map around walking areas in the ACT. We are particularly targeting areas and getting feedback from the community about where they would like to see improvements to those primary walking areas. Often those are close to services like early childhood services, for example, that people will walk to if they are reasonably close by, in their community, which some of them typically are, in the suburbs.

Certainly, we can get feedback from early childhood services about whether we have those central and primary walking area priorities correct and whether we need to include more of those areas where there are early childhood services.

**DR PATERSON:** The e-scooter expansion is to Woden and Weston; is that right?

**Mr Steel:** Yes.

**DR PATTERSON:** Could you speak to that?

**Mr Steel:** Originally, when we were planning the rollout, we did not expect to include Weston in the initial expansion to Gungahlin and Woden. In discussions with the providers, we have been able to provide that connection into the suburb of Weston, which includes the group centre at Coleman Court. There are two primary connection points there, one on Heysen Street, because we have a brand-new protected cycleway there, a shared path, and one on Hindmarsh Drive, where there is a shared path connection.

We have identified with the scooter providers those specific safe connection points between the regions. We do not want to see people riding an e-scooter along the on-road cycle path on Adelaide Avenue, for example—on major arterial roads. Some people have attempted to do so under the current scheme, but we have made sure that we have geo-blocked that out, on Adelaide Avenue specifically. We are also keen to get feedback from the community, as we implement the expansion, on any further tweaks to the geo-fencing that may be required, around low-speed zones or no-go zones. There is also the matter of parking areas—where they would like to see dedicated parking areas established for e-scooters, so that they can get access to them more easily, and to deal with any safety issues.

That is a discussion we are having with the providers on an ongoing basis. We are continuing to have discussions to look at further expansion as well, before the end of the year, to the remaining regions, including Tuggeranong and Molonglo.

**MS CLAY:** Minister, I like your active travel plan a lot more than I liked the answers from the minister for education earlier this week. It is your job to build our connections and make sure we have good connections for active travel, but that will only go so far if we do not have schools in the right place.

I particularly like this line in the active travel plan that you have written: “The primary measure of success is mode share.” But when I asked the minister for education about Belconnen town centre, where we have 741 children right now, and a lot more to come, with nearly 3,000 dwellings in the pipeline, we do not have any schools near there. Florey and Macquarie are the closest. They are across a major highway. It is kilometres; it is a long way to ride. I know; my daughter rides to school, and I ride. It is a really long way. How are we making sure that our active travel is integrated with education and planning, to make sure that it is all fitting together?

**Mr Steel:** It is a really good point. Certainly, the new planning strategy is now a few years old, but the transport strategy and the active travel plan strongly make that connection between transport planning and land use planning. The two have to go together. That is critical, in order to get the best outcomes for people, and so that we have a liveable, more walkable city where we can make connections to these types of services, and public services in this case, as easy as possible.

Densification presents its own challenges. As the city grows, which will increasingly be within existing urban areas, we need to think through how that works. It is a challenge. Generally speaking, we have pretty good infrastructure for schooling in existing suburbs. I think you are right; with the town centre densities, people probably did not expect that there would be as many children living in apartments as there are.

The government has been investing in expansions to existing schools so that people can get access. Woden town centre, down my way, is an obvious example. In Garran, the government is investing a substantial amount to expand Garran Primary School to, I think, 800 students. There is an obvious connection there for people who are living in Woden town centre, together with the existing schools at Lyons, the early childhood school, and at Curtin.

We will need to do some further planning. Particularly with the extra population that we have had, which we saw in the census, that updated data will have to feed in to all of our transport planning modelling. It will certainly change some of the assumptions there about how fast the city is growing and what we need to do going forward in terms of transport. I do not know whether you want to talk about the transport planning work.

**MS CLAY:** We are expecting a new territory plan and district strategies later this year. Are transport modelling and the active travel filter embedded into that work?

**Mr McHugh:** We are currently in the process of providing our feedback on amendments to the planning structure and district planning. Linking back to your earlier question about multimodal network planning, the traditional measures of mode-share and how we measured that were all purely based on single-mode trips, and the data that was collected was limited to the predominant mode that you used on your daily journey. What we have learnt is that it is a pretty blunt instrument to measure just a single-mode journey, because you rule out a whole range of people who do multimodal journeys.

The focus of our transport planning, the multimodal network planning, is now focused on bringing active travel into being a component, if not a significant component, of everyone’s daily journeys, and being able to measure that and get a realistic reflection of people using active travel as part of their daily commute or daily trip. How that

informs our planning will be through the use of the operational tools that the minister mentioned and our strategic planning tools.

The traffic modelling, too, is becoming smarter. We are using data collection on active travel to inform our transport modelling work. We have taken a new approach to transport modelling over the last few years, from the old, traditional predict-and-build model to a more iterative transport modelling solution that is more granular and responds more to multimodal outcomes. Hopefully, that makes sense.

Geoffrey Davidson, who is online, is responsible for not just the transport modelling work but also our schools programs and the work we do with schools to develop their school travel plans. The core focus there is to try and encourage parents to take advantage of a lot of good infrastructure that exists around schools, and a lot of the programs that we have invested in over recent years in our school crossing supervisors and infrastructure upgrades. We know that it is not easy for everyone to walk and ride. Sometimes it does not fit in their daily life cycle. We have part-way drop-off designs for most schools, and plans in place. Without stealing too much of Geoff's thunder, I might pass over to him to give a further update.

**Mr Davidson:** I acknowledge that I have read the privilege statement. First of all, I will speak to the modelling conversation. We do have the Canberra strategic transport model. That model includes a range of inputs, including school enrolments. It has a number of future-years scenarios as well. That allows us to forecast demand across multi modes, including private vehicles, public transport and cycling. That model provides a useful tool under which we can test different land-use scenarios for the future, and different policy scenarios.

From the active travel programs that Ben mentioned, we have a school safety program. The minister also mentioned that. There are a number of programs that are run through that team. The first one is the ride or walk to school program, which is targeted at primary schools. That program aims to achieve a partnership approach with schools. It works really well when we have champions within schools and, in particular, teachers who are willing to take on that role of an active travel champion. The directorate provides teachers with professional development so that they can have the confidence to run different courses with the children. We have a fleet of bicycles which the school can loan and use as part of that curriculum.

**MS CLAY:** I will jump in. Sorry to cut you off. This is all great information. I do not want to waste too much of the committee's time. The question was about the territory plan and location of schools. We have probably got to where we were going. I love all of that information about the active schools program, but we are already aware of that. Thank you so much.

**MR BRADDOCK:** Do we have a recommended distance where we say kids can ride to school, to a primary school? Does that form part of our planning considerations?

**Mr Davidson:** I am sorry; I missed that question.

**MR BRADDOCK:** Is there a recommended distance that we expect children in primary school to be able to ride their bikes to school, as part of our planning considerations of

where schools should be located?

**Mr Davidson:** Thanks for repeating the question. We do undertake significant consultation with the schools. Typically, with the feedback we get, it depends on age groups. We start to find parents who are comfortable about letting their kids walk to school from around year 4. It is about the 15-minute mark, so about one kilometre from the school, that they are comfortable and confident to undertake a walking or cycling trip.

**MR PARTON:** On page 34 of budget statements H, \$4 million of funding for investments in active travel have been delayed in this budget. What specific projects make up this underspend, and which areas of Canberra would be affected by it?

**Mr Steel:** I do not think you should assume that just because there is financial reprofiling a project is delayed. I will hand over to the team to provide any further detail about those specific active travel programs.

**Mr Smith:** I would have to take on notice providing all of the specific projects. There are a number of projects which have been delayed—if we want to call them delayed—relating to things like environmental investigations, approvals and things like that. Whilst they may appear to be delayed, they are certainly not disappearing. They will be picked up as we move forward through the year. We can certainly have a look at that and provide an answer.

**MR PARTON:** Excellent. If I could get that on notice, that would be good.

**MS CLAY:** Moving on to recycling, I was happy last year that the Assembly passed a motion about recycling solar panels, appliances and batteries. We heard in an update earlier this year that there was national work underway and that we might see an industry-led scheme later this year. We were hoping for implementation in 2023. How are we going on that? I could not see anything in the budget, so I was not sure if that was still on track.

**Mr Steel:** It is not in our budget because it is a federal responsibility to undertake a national product stewardship scheme for solar PV, although we are very supportive, and we want them to implement it as soon as possible, not just for solar PV but for batteries, with the expansion of the existing scheme. I will hand over to the team to provide any further detail.

**Mr Fitzgerald:** I have read and acknowledge the privilege statement. The scheme is still on track for commencement on 30 June 2023. The industry program has been delayed until December this year. There is a delay in program formulation, but the implementation date has not changed from June 2023.

**MS CLAY:** That is great, Mr Fitzgerald. I am really happy to hear that. That is for panels and batteries. Do we have appliances in there? We are already doing TVs and computers. Are appliances there as well?

**Mr Fitzgerald:** Appliances are on the minister's priority list. They do have a later implementation date, I believe, but I do not have that on hand.

**Mr Steel:** Certainly, when I met with Minister Plibersek to announce the federal funding for the FOGO facility—and I have written to her about this as well—I indicated that we would like to see these product stewardship schemes, the new ones, implemented as soon as possible, and getting solar PVs is absolutely a priority.

**MS CLAY:** If we get that next year, that will be great.

**Mr Steel:** We just need to continue the advocacy there to make sure that they commit to new ones, and that they implement the ones they have already committed to on time, with the change of government.

**MR PARTON:** With respect to the raising of London Circuit, on page 17 of budget statements I, the completion date for raising London Circuit is June 2024. Are you able, Minister, to outline the major project milestones, such as breaking of the earth and all of the other major milestones that will occur between now and then, and when they are projected to occur?

**Mr Steel:** Sure. The discussions are still taking place with Abergeldie, the delivery partner for the raising of London Circuit project, at the moment about the construction program and what that looks like. But we are very close to site establishment. I will hand over to Duncan Edghill, from Major Projects Canberra, to provide a detailed explanation of what we expect the program to be once it is finalised.

**Mr Edghill:** Thank you, Minister. And I may pass to one of my colleagues in a moment. Hopefully you can hear me okay? I will speak up a bit.

**THE CHAIR:** Sounds good.

**Mr Edghill:** One of the principles that we are taking to construction is ensuring that we keep traffic flowing along Commonwealth Avenue during the build process. It is that major principle which is driving some of the milestones that we see along the way.

We are working through with Abergeldie at present, the finer details of their construction program. In broad construction terms, the first thing that we will see is the construction compounds themselves. They have been set up on site establishment. That will commence in the next one month to two months. We would also expect, in this calendar year, that there will be works commencing associated with the temporary signalisation of Vernon Circle and the City Hill Park. So that is what we will see this year.

Then, when we move into next year, in very broadbrush terms, the construction approach will firstly see—for those unfamiliar with the route, there are the two existing Commonwealth Avenue bridges over London Circuit. At all times there will be at least one bridge there or one structure there to enable that north-south traffic movement to happen. So the first thing that we will do is, next to the existing bridges, on one side of them, on the western side, Abergeldie will build up the earth in that vicinity so that we can effectively demolish the eastern bridge first.

Once the eastern bridge is demolished that then allows the fill to be brought in to raise

London Circuit on that side. Whilst that is being built up, we can switch our focus and that will then involve the demolition of the west bridge—sorry, just making sure I get my east and west right. Then that will allow us to build up London Circuit on that particular side.

The next milestone will be bringing the road into its final alignment. The very last thing that will happen, this is obviously in very broadbrush terms, is all the landscaping adornments and the street furniture and so forth, associated with the project. So the practical completion will be getting to in that 2024 period.

It is probably a little easier to describe with maps and a series of diagrams, but hopefully that gives you a sense as to the construction approach.

**MR PARTON:** No, you have done very well. Thanks for that.

In closing on that line of questioning, Minister, have there been any updates—because I have not seen any for a while from the Disruption Taskforce regarding levels to traffic disruption expected—on the cost of the disruption to the Canberra community and business?

**Mr Steel:** We will provide clear information to the Canberra community about the disruptions that are occurring at each stage of the construction program. That will differ, depending on where we are at. So we are expecting—I do not think Mr Edghill touched on this—that the southern end of London Circuit would be closed between Edinburgh and Constitution Avenue, around the end of the year, going into next year. That actually happens ahead of the bridge demolition pieces of work.

That milestone is the key point, I guess, in relation to the disruption program. We will be providing clear information about those effects, but most of the disruption will be associated with the bridge demolition. We need to confirm the construction program with Abergeldie, though, before we then also confirm where we are going in terms of communications, which is a large part of the work of the Disruption Taskforce in terms of what they need to do to make sure that we mitigate that disruption as much as possible.

In the ACT transport recovery plan refresh we have announced some of the measures that we have already undertaken; some of which are infrastructure works, some of which are related to communication, the introduction of intelligent transport systems and a combination of those two things, to provide people with the opportunity to rethink their route and rethink their routine based on information that we provide on the radio through paid radio advertising—whether it is through the spokesperson, often on a daily basis, providing updates on where the construction is up to, so that people have the latest information to make the best decisions about their commute into the city—or not making their commute into the city, as it may be, depending on what is happening. So I will hand over to the team and Alison Playford as well, because she has been involved in chairing the Disruption Taskforce, to talk about their work.

**Ms Playford:** The task force has very much been focused on the, sort of, planning side. We are just doing a bit of a transition and reviewing our terms of reference, in fact, as we move into that actual disruption. The two streams of work have focused on the actual interventions, and we are starting to see a few of those roll out now.

The Corin dirt works have recently started, you would have noticed. That will introduce the signal there, which will assist with the additional traffic that we are expecting over Kings Bridge and on Parks Way and that flow of traffic.

The Vernon Circle traffic lights are also going to be key—which is one of the first stages Duncan talked about in relation to raising London Circuit—in terms of particularly the public transport route around.

We are also looking at practical interventions in terms of signage and paths around the city and wayfinding, and car parks. One of the very first things that you will notice—again, which Duncan talked about—is the establishment of the compounds that will impact on some of the car parks. So we are working through what needs to be done with alternative car parks that we might be directing people to, to make sure there are appropriate standards. So that is the sort of interventions work.

The other stream of work is, as the minister said, around communications. We have been doing a lot of work with key employers in key buildings that will be most affected around the city, and key businesses. We have got very strong feedback that people want to know very close to the time when there is going to be an actual something that affects them, what it is and what they should do. So they do not want to know now what is going to happen in two months time about the car parks; they want to know as we are doing that.

We are preparing a whole lot of collateral so that we are ready and we know exactly who is going to be affected by which part. Again, Duncan went through in very broadbrush terms the different roads that will be affected at different times during the construction program. It will be very micro. The task force is looking at how we will best use the information that will come from the establishment of those intelligent transport system monitors et cetera, as we will monitor literally on a day-to-day basis what is happening with the traffic.

If there is an incident on a particular road which impacts on traffic—because as we know, it is incidents when you take the out lanes of traffic which particularly causes the backups—we will readily communicate through a whole range of sources about what is happening in a very real-time way and have websites and information up to date, where we can push out real-time information to people. So they are probably the strands of work.

We have also included the National Capital Authority into the work of the task force as they are starting to do the design work for the Commonwealth Avenue bridge strengthening: how those projects might interact. And thinking about some of the private sector development that is happening across the city and making sure we do not just tell people about what is happening with the raising London Circuit project—Mr Morris is doing some other work very close by in relation to his development. That is one example, but there are other private developments around the city which will also impact, so making sure people understand all of those combined things.

**MR BRADDOCK:** My question is regarding weeds, because TCCS has a role in controlling weeds in the urban areas. Given the La Niña events, we have had a

proliferation of growth, so I wanted to make sure that the resourcing is commensurate with the task that is in front of us at the moment.

**Mr Steel:** Yes, this is typically a piece of work that actually does happen around this time of year because the mowing teams are generally working on doing their regular planned mowing schedule when the weather is warmer and when the grass is warm. During this period it opens up the opportunity when the grass is not growing as vigorously and is dormant to enable those sort of weeding activities to take place. I will hand over to Daniel Iglesias to talk a little bit further about what his team is doing there.

**Mr Iglesias:** I acknowledge the privilege statement. Weed management is two pronged, in that we do focus a lot of our time during the off mowing season in the control of weeds, but we also partner with the community to deliver some weeding in and around the open spaces as well. I think it is true to say that there is a degree of prioritisation in relation to weeds, as to which ones are targeted.

Certainly around a lot of the public spaces, around the frequent use spaces, playgrounds and arterial roads, there is a focus on rolling out a weed program. That is impacted year to year, depending on what the climate does to us, whether it is particularly wet or particularly dry. It does wax and wane depending on seasons.

Weeds are remarkable critters in that they have the capacity to adapt very, very quickly. Our staff are just as wily though, and they pick up the places where they are taking off from year to year. They will be tipped off by the community as well, and we tend to be quite responsive as to what we try and focus on in any given year.

As far as the types of weeds, typically they are African lovegrass and Chilean needlegrass. A lot of those grassy type weeds are a particular problem, particularly in the urban area where they are in close vicinity to natural areas. That is a real priority. In the urban open spaces some of the more common weeds, such as Patterson's curse and some of the others, are all targeted from year to year.

**MR BRADDOCK:** If the level of weed growth varies from year to year, do we adjust our resources to adjust to those levels of growth?

**Mr Iglesias:** In any given year, even if we have the best conditions, we will never be able to get to all the weeds. So it really is a question of prioritisation. Some years we are able to focus on a particular space; other years, because of conditions, we focus on another. So we are always able to deploy the resources where they are going to deliver the best bang for the buck for the Canberra community. We have never had a year where we have been short of priority areas that we can deploy weed control.

**MR BRADDOCK:** So what is the priority for 2022-23?

**Mr Iglesias:** We start in the high-use areas. If we can get a window, if La Niña can hold off for long enough, we will look at playgrounds, we will look at arterial roads, we will look at high-use open space areas such as around Yerrabi Park and some of the other larger-use parks. So where we can make the best difference to the experience that people might have and where we can deliver some protection to our high value native areas as well. And where our colleagues in EPSDD might be focusing their efforts as well.



**MR BRADDOCK:** Why are arterial roads a priority? I would have thought where there is more foot traffic and more, say, higher intensity people focused use would be a higher priority.

**Mr Iglesias:** If we do not manage weeds along arterial roads, they will spread really, really quickly, and you can potentially have weeds this high and coming out onto the lanes of traffic. So there are lines of sight issues in some instances, especially around roundabouts. So it is a priority for us.

**MR BRADDOCK:** Okay, thank you.

**DR PATERSON:** Minister, my question is in respect to the City Services Holder depot. I was wondering what is happening there; and, also, how is the government working with the archery club to ensure this is a good transition situation for everyone?

**Mr Steel:** The Western Valley Archery Club—I still cannot get my head around that one—is co-located with the Holder depot for TCCS. We do need to expand that depot.

We have, of course, the growing Molonglo region but also growing responsibility in relation to the urban forest. The Urban Treescapes team has expanded and we need to make sure that we have proper depot accommodation for those staff members. I think there is a team of 11 moving out there.

I am happy to hand over to the team to talk about what the construction involves. We are looking at the opportunities because, when we do expand the facility, we will be expanding out near the archery club, so can we provide some shared toilet facilities for them to use as well, as part of the expansion. Jeremy Smith can talk to that.

**Mr Smith:** Thanks, Minister. Yes, we are working through design and planning approvals at the moment for the expansion of the Holder depot.

As the minister has highlighted, we are working closely with the archery club to try to provide them some added amenity through that planning and then construction phase. We are aware that we will be impacting on, for example, one of their shipping containers which they utilise to hold some of their stores and equipment. We will look to relocate that shipping container for them on their site.

As the minister has highlighted, we will look to provide, for example, toilet facilities that the club is able to use on the edge of the depot itself. It will be much like a sports ground where sporting clubs have access to toilet facilities at those. That will actually be an added amenity that the archery club do not currently have. We will continue to work with them through the life of the planning and design, and then, as we move through to the construction of that project, we will be able to offer them that facility.

**DR PATERSON:** In initial talks, there was some concern with the club—I do not know what it is—their fairway or their archery way—that it would be reduced in length. Will it be impacted or not?

**Mr Smith:** I believe that there will be some impact. I think they call it a green.

**DR PATERSON:** Thank you.

**Mr Smith:** In early conversations with us, they raised that as a concern. We are continuing to have those conversations to understand the full impact and whether that can be mitigated in any form as part of the works that we will do—whether that is allowing them to have a slightly longer green at the other end, or something like that, we will continue those discussions as part of our engagement with them.

**DR PATERSON:** In respect to the Holder depot, will that mean that more staff will be based there?

**Mr Steel:** I will hand over to Daniel Iglesias to talk about the staffing that will be out there. Treescapes will certainly have a big part of that because we need those people—I think they are currently camped over at Woden and Phillip—to have permanent accommodation.

**Mr Iglesias:** Our place management staff are very keen when there is any talk of accommodation, because, as you may know, some of the accommodation is rather—how shall I put it—old. So they are looking forward to seeing what might be deliverable at Holder.

Yes, we will be bringing together some place management staff—the staff that look after the cleaning and maintenance of the city, as well as some Urban Treescapes staff. Our skilled arborists that respond to tree work, and those that respond to stormwater, they will be co-located at that site. They are looking forward to seeing a purpose-built facility that will really suit what they need.

**DR PATERSON:** My final question: do you think that will improve services to the Woden-Weston Creek-Molonglo area of town, given that they are more centrally or closely located?

**Mr Iglesias:** I think inevitably the team looks to be as resourceful as they can in how they deploy their resources. A depot that is built with that in mind is going to mean that people can get to jobs easier and they can deploy the machinery a lot more effectively. So I would be optimistic that it would be the case.

**THE CHAIR:** Given that the time has now reached 2.15 pm, the committee's hearing for today is now adjourned.

On behalf of the committee, I would like to thank Minister Steel and directorate staff for their attendance today, and all other officials and statutory holders. If any witnesses have taken any questions on notice, would they please get those answers to the committee secretary within five working days of receipt of the uncorrected proof. If members wish to lodge a question on notice, please get those to the committee secretary within five working days of the hearing. Today's hearing is now adjourned.

**The committee adjourned at 2.15 pm.**