



**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY FOR THE
AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY**

**STANDING COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORT AND CITY
SERVICES**

(Reference: [Inquiry into Annual and Financial Reports 2024-25](#))

Members:

**MS L CASTLEY (Chair)
MR A BRADDOCK (Deputy Chair)
MR T WERNER-GIBBINGS**

TRANSCRIPT OF EVIDENCE

CANBERRA

THURSDAY, 13 NOVEMBER 2025

**Secretary to the committee:
Mr J Bunce (Ph: 620 50199)**

By authority of the Legislative Assembly for the Australian Capital Territory

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

APPEARANCES

City and Environment Directorate	1
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Amended 20 May 2013

The committee met at 9.00 am

Appearances:

Cheyne, Ms Tara, Attorney-General, Minister for Human Rights, Minister for City and Government Services and Minister for the Night-Time Economy

City and Environment Directorate

Fitzgerald, Mr Bruce, Deputy Director-General, City Services and Transport
Springett, Ms Emily, Executive Branch Manager, Service Delivery and Engagement, Access Canberra
Rampton, Mr Tim, Executive Branch Manager, Roads ACT
Rynehart, Mr Josh, Head, Access Canberra
Vaile, Dr Jodie, Executive Branch Manager, Strategy, Data and Governance, Access Canberra
Chan, Ms Yu-Lan, Executive Group Manager, Strategic Transition
Clement, Ms Sophie, Executive Branch Manager, Infrastructure Delivery
Marriage, Ms Sue, Acting Executive Branch Manager, City Presentation
Kitchin, Dr Margaret, Executive Branch Manager, ACT NoWaste
Childs, Mr Daniel, Executive Group Manager, Territory and Business Services

THE CHAIR: Good morning, and welcome to the public hearings of the Standing Committee on Transport and City Services for its inquiry into annual and financial reports for 2024-25. This morning, the committee will hear from the Minister for City and Government Services.

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

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 will be useful if witnesses use these words, "I will take that question on notice." This will help the committee and witnesses to confirm questions taken on notice from the transcript.

We welcome Ms Tara Cheyne MLA, Minister for City and Government Services, and officials. Please note that, as witnesses, you are protected by parliamentary privilege and bound by its obligations. You must tell the truth. Giving false or misleading evidence will be treated as a serious matter and may be considered contempt of the Assembly.

We are not inviting opening statements, so we will now proceed to questions. I would like to ask about the resource recovery rate. My understanding is that the ACT government set a target of above 30 per cent, for the resource recovery rate for bulky waste collection in July 2021. In 2021-22, the ACT achieved 39 per cent, in 2022-23 it was 35 per cent and in 2023-24 it was 32 per cent. In 2024-25, the ACT has failed

to achieve its target, with a 29 per cent resource recovery rate for bulky waste collection. Why has the government failed to achieve its targeted resource recovery rate?

Ms Cheyne: Bruce would love to answer this.

Mr Fitzgerald: There are a couple of reasons that that rate was not achieved for the last financial year. During that period, we changed our household collection contract; we changed from Veolia to JJ Richards. Part of the bulky waste process is around retaining the material onsite at the depot, so that it can be used and redistributed, if it is appropriate.

As part of the transition period, there was not enough time for Veolia to transfer that material to alternative locations. Unfortunately, we did see the stockpiled material landfilled, so that did see an increase.

With bulky waste, we are at the mercy of what people are putting out to collect. There is a mix of high-quality furniture, steel, scrap steel—lots of different products that could form part of a bulky waste collection. Our ability to recover material is at the mercy of what is delivered, and we do see fluctuations in quality.

THE CHAIR: Is that part of the reason for the decline since 2021? The percentage has been going down over time.

Mr Fitzgerald: It is. We have found that, as people are more accustomed to the bulky waste service—and we certainly have a number of repeat customers—in the first collections, you will see the highest quality material; then, as they get accustomed to the service, there is much more of the things that are held over throughout the year to get rid of, as part of their annual collection.

THE CHAIR: I do not have the report in front of me. Is the contract cost the same or similar to what it was with the previous provider?

Mr Fitzgerald: We have seen across all of our waste contracts that the cost has increased. It has increased quite significantly, and that is reflective of market conditions. They were all competitive tenders and that was, unfortunately, a reflection of the market conditions.

MR COCKS: When you were going through the competitive tender process, were there any other tenderers that came in at a lower cost, overall? How does it compare to the previous contracts?

Mr Fitzgerald: I would have to take the detail as to how it compares to previous contracts on notice. I would not be inclined to talk about what we received through the procurement process. I would say that what we achieved through the tender process was the best value for money outcome for the territory.

MR COCKS: I am not asking for a breakdown of tenderer by tenderer. Were there any tenders that came in at a lower cost than this contract?

Ms Cheyne: We will take that on notice, Mr Cocks. We need to think about how we frame the information. In terms of overall value for money and what is provided, my understanding is that different tenderers offered different things. There are quite a few new aspects, as part of this new contract with JJs. Different tenderers may not have offered exactly the same, so the price they had offered may not translate. It might not be comparing apples with apples.

MR COCKS: Rather than having a clearly defined requirement that had all tenderers submitting apples for consideration, why do we have different tenderers providing a different scope?

Ms Cheyne: Although the bulk of the scope was clearly defined, there are the other valuable aspects that might be offered on top of that. Mr Fitzgerald knows better than me.

Mr Fitzgerald: It is a fair point, Minister. The way that the response schedules are provided means there is still a level of variability. That can be assumptions based on population and each response will set out those variables. We try to bring it back to an apples-to-apples scenario. That can take some analysis and some detailed understanding of what those variables are. There are options that are included. Parts of the tender also sought innovation through the process. All of those different items factor in.

MR COCKS: My understanding is that the cost of this contract is quite high, compared to the cost of delivering under the previous arrangements. That is my understanding; that is what I have been told.

Mr Fitzgerald: That is correct.

MR COCKS: I would like to understand, if we had others tendering at a reasonable cost, particularly given the budgetary pressure we have, what that value was, that you are saying we are getting. Along with the other information that you are providing on notice, could you provide the measurements that you used to assess the tender? What were the criteria and weightings?

Mr Fitzgerald: Certainly, that has been released publicly previously.

MR COCKS: I know it has. It would be useful if it could be provided along with this.

Ms Cheyne: We will give it to you as a pack. Let us try and respond to this set of questions altogether, with as much information as we can that does not breach any rules or legislation.

MR COCKS: That would be helpful.

Ms Cheyne: We can certainly talk about the changes overall in waste contracts across the market. We can also talk about why JJs ultimately had the best value for money proposition for government.

MR COCKS: Could you also provide some background as to what the rationale was

for condensing down to the single provider approach?

Mr Fitzgerald: Sure. I appreciate the questions you are asking, and we will try to be as helpful as we can.

MR COCKS: Thank you.

MR BRADDOCK: I have some questions about ACT libraries. Firstly, in terms of the working group report, there does not appear to be the retention of the performance of the ACT against the Australian Public Library Alliance and Australian Library and Information Association guidelines and standard of 0.8 FTE per 3,000 residents as a guideline. How is ACT performing against that particular guideline?

Ms Cheyne: I need to bring up the report. Effectively, I think that Mr McMurray's analysis showed that how we had originally done our own analysis against the standard was potentially erroneous due to how our libraries are structured and based on the regional model. In fact, across most of our libraries, we are overservicing in comparison to that standard.

MR BRADDOCK: How much FTE do we have per capita population in the ACT?

Ms Cheyne: I would have to bring up the report. I do not have it open in front of me.

MR BRADDOCK: You can take that on notice, if you like.

Ms Cheyne: I will.

MR BRADDOCK: Why, in that report, are cost savings positioned as a prospective benefit, given it also recommends that libraries need additional funding?

Ms Cheyne: I would have to check.

MR BRADDOCK: Take that one on notice, too.

Ms Cheyne: I will.

MR BRADDOCK: The next question is in terms of the display of posters on the noticeboards in libraries. It has come to my attention that applications to display uncontroversial, community-oriented posters have been declined on the grounds of not aligning with the current strategic priorities of Libraries ACT. From my review of the policy, the posters seem to align. Can you please clarify: what are the strategic priorities that are governing what can be displayed on those community boards?

Ms Cheyne: Ms Springett will be delighted to assist.

Ms Springett: I have read and acknowledge the privilege statement. As you are well aware, we are going through a significant period of reform within Libraries ACT in which we are looking at all policies and all documentation, including any relating to communications and public information, as part of that work. That work now is about four months in. Part of what is on our forward work agenda is what is displayed

within libraries.

You are talking about a policy that has been in place for a period of time. That policy will be reviewed, as part of that. My understanding of the intent of that policy was to put a bit of a framework around what is displayed within libraries, to make sure it is not offensive or there are other considerations in place. In terms of the particular example, I am not aware of it. It does not come up through the level where I would see what is going through. I do not have a decision-making process in that.

I would say that this will be captured as part of our ongoing work to review communications and what is in materials. If there is any additional information that can be provided, I am happy to look into it, specifically, but I am not aware of this particular case.

MR BRADDOCK: The current policy is extant but under review, and you have not yet developed a new policy; is that a correct synopsis?

Ms Springett: We have developed a significant number of new policies, and we are prioritising what we are developing that will have the biggest impact, particularly within the staff, in terms of their safety, wellbeing and satisfaction at work. In terms of the other policies, that are more around things like what information is displayed, that is in phase 3 of this particular project.

Ms Cheyne: Mr Braddock, I think most people in the community would understand that our immediate focus has been on the staff—wellbeing, culture, rostering and leave. Ms Springett and all of the library staff have done an amazing job. You would note that there has been no closure of a library due to lack of staffing since July. That is where the focus has necessarily been. I appreciate that there are other things that can be irksome in the community, but let us do the things that matter most in delivering a library service, and then we can move on to posters.

MR BRADDOCK: Understood. I might raise that individual circumstance with you, Minister, offline.

Ms Cheyne: Sure, you are welcome to do so.

MR WERNER-GIBBINGS: I think you answered my first question just then: how many times have libraries been closed due to a lack of staff this financial year?

Ms Cheyne: None.

Ms Springett: Yes.

MR WERNER-GIBBINGS: Zero. In the report—I will call it the libraries report, in shorthand—there were a lot of recommendations. What has been implemented of those recommendations and what work is still ongoing?

Ms Cheyne: I am sure Ms Springett can talk to that in detail.

Ms Springett: Firstly, I would like to take a moment to acknowledge the staff of

Libraries ACT, who do an incredible job each and every day, and who are incredibly passionate about the work they do. We are in a challenging period of change and reform, and I want to acknowledge them.

Key to the work that we do, we have approached the principle, which has been set by the minister, that we do with and not to. We have been collaborating with staff, particularly around the significant reforms that we are looking to implement. We asked staff, “What are the top three priorities that you want us to address in the short term?” The three that were identified, which is also reflected in the report, are around rostering, making sure a roster is fair, equitable, transparent and provides agility for staff. The second was around leave—again, ensuring that we are maximising leave opportunities for staff, it is transparent, and decision-making is at the lowest and most appropriate level. Also, communication: how can we improve communication with staff?

To support that work, we created three working groups, which were co-led by staff, and included staff from both branches and library support offices, as well as embedded officers from Access Canberra bringing expertise. The work of the communications group is finalised. The materials have been developed. That includes a new communication strategy and how we engage with staff, a central collaboration space where we can put messages up to staff, they can engage with us, and a series of face-to-face meetings. Basically, it is about how we approach the workforce.

That includes things like, when we go out for consultation, making sure that we are closing the loop, and providing listening reports to staff, so that they can see, even if they do not necessarily agree with the decision that is made, what factors went into the decision being created. That is really important in rebuilding trust. The communication work has been completed. That, indeed, was in a number of the recommendations within the report.

With leave, we have created a new leave policy. When I say “we” have created, I mean staff have created a new leave policy that, again, looks to maximise the opportunities there. It sets out very clear frameworks around decision-making. That is out for staff consultation. CPSU have been a key member across all these working groups. Rostering is also nearing the point of staff consultation, but it has been co-developed with staff.

In terms of other recommendations, you would be aware that there were 37 recommendations through the IWG report. We have delivered or partially delivered 21 of those within four months. That is the level of prioritisation we are placing on this. That includes developing a formal, structured project management plan. The rostering practices, which I discussed, involved three of those recommendations. As part of that, we are looking at the notion of minimum numbers. I am hopeful that, through the new rostering model, what are currently minimum numbers will be exceeded, so that we can move on from that.

We are looking at a delivery model and structure moving forward for government consideration. We have developed the strategic direction, drawing on previous work that was created, and feedback from the community. We are looking at role clarity and staffing matters. That involves recommendations 20 to 24. We are looking at the

systems and processes. That is everything from work health and safety to the example you gave, Mr Braddock, around things like communications and what is in libraries. More importantly, my key focus is on work health and safety. I want people coming to work and feeling safe and happy to be there.

Organisational communication involves recommendations 31 and 32. We are also considering, as part of the broader machinery-of-government changes, how we can harness the opportunities that that creates, now we are part of a broader directorate, to expand the opportunities available within libraries, particularly around things like digital support.

Long story short is that we are well into this reform journey. I am also balancing at the moment a workforce that has been through significant change. We need to rebuild trust. I am being guided by staff regarding the pace of this change. Half probably think we are moving too fast; half think it is not fast enough. We are probably somewhere right in the middle.

We are about to start looking strategically at the program delivery. As an example, we went to staff and said: “Would you like us to start this work this side of Christmas or next? How are you feeling? Are you being burnt out by the pace of change?” I would love to have delivered all of this in four months, but I am also bringing a workforce along with me. I will pause there, other than to express, again, appreciation for the incredible workforce we have within Libraries ACT.

THE CHAIR: They are going well? Are they happy? Is there a follow-up survey or any kind of feedback loop from the staff?

Ms Springett: We have introduced many feedback mechanisms. After each working group, we put out a survey that posed many questions: “Did you feel you had an opportunity to contribute? Would you participate in such a working group in the future?”

Ms Cheyne: To clarify, with working groups, sometimes you can set up a working group and it never ends. These working groups have been really targeted and focused on the issue that we are trying to solve. At the conclusion of the working group, when everything has been worked through, that is when they have been asked, “Would you do it again?” And 100 per cent?

Ms Springett: All have said yes; 100 per cent have said yes.

THE CHAIR: Great.

Ms Springett: We are working towards that co-design. Is the workforce happy? I think they can see that there is change on the agenda and on the horizon as well. I would hope that they feel engaged and listened to. I am in a branch nearly every weekend; my staff are in branches every day. I do not pretend to fully understand their roles, but I am working on that. I have a genuine interest in and passion for the work they do. I can see it is a significant contribution to the community. We are four months in. This is a journey that we need to go on together. “Happy” is subjective. I would describe it as cautious optimism and hope, because this has been a process over

a period of time. I hope they can see that we are genuine in the work that we are doing. That is how I would answer that.

Ms Cheyne: I need to correct myself. I said there had been none this financial year but there were two in July. The financial year starts on 1 July. In terms of Mr Braddock's questions, from Mr McMurray's analysis, if the goal is 64 hours per week per 100,000 population—

MR BRADDOCK: Minister, I am not talking about the hours per week goal; I am talking about the FTE per population goal.

Ms Cheyne: Okay; then I do not know. I was looking at the wrong thing, clearly. Was your other comment about this change of model achieving financial savings? Was that the quote?

MR BRADDOCK: It is from page 9—cost savings positioned as a prospective benefit.

Ms Cheyne: Okay. That is helpful. We will focus on that and get you an answer.

MR BRADDOCK: Thank you.

MR WERNER-GIBBINGS: On roads and closures, and specifically Commonwealth Avenue Bridge: when did you know about the extent of the works that the National Capital Authority was proposing for the bridge?

Ms Cheyne: I knew just before I went away, so it must have been early August. I think that is around the time that officials had been briefed—probably the most substantial brief that officials had had from the NCA about exactly what the works would involve, what the closure would look like, the level of disruption expected, and how soon they wanted to start, compared to what they had been telling us. Mr Rampton will correct me, because he was part of or aware of those conversations with officials.

Mr Rampton: I have read and acknowledge the privilege statement. We have had awareness of the NCA's intent to do the project for a number of years. We knew that was coming. While we have had continued discussions around it, we were not sure about how they intended to do it. That was not really laid out to us until they went out and did a procurement and got their contractor on board; then they proposed the construction methodology. I cannot remember the exact date, but it would have been around August, or potentially July, that we had a meeting with the NCA, and they talked around their intent to close one of the bridges, to be able to construct it.

We had some inkling that it could be the case, but we did not have that confirmed until we had those discussions with the NCA.

MR WERNER-GIBBINGS: That was when?

Mr Rampton: I had the discussion in about July-August. I would need to check my calendar.

MR WERNER-GIBBINGS: During the briefing, or before or after, had the NCA demonstrated the modelling that they had used to assess the impact of closing the Commonwealth Avenue Bridge down to three lanes and the impact that would have on traffic?

Mr Rampton: At that meeting they showed us some modelling. There was some preliminary modelling that they had done. We then took action to work with them to do further modelling.

MR WERNER-GIBBINGS: At that point, the initial modelling they showed you was not as persuasive?

Ms Cheyne: Sophisticated? I think you can speak freely.

Mr Rampton: It was not as sophisticated as I would have liked to have seen it.

Mr Fitzgerald: It is fair to say the modelling only looked at the impacts around the construction area and did not look at consequences for other areas of our road network.

MR WERNER-GIBBINGS: All of it.

Mr Fitzgerald: Indeed. With a closure of that scale, we are seeing pressures right across our road network. For us, it was important to step in and make sure that we had a much broader understanding of the impacts. That assists us in being able to design what the preferred solution is, in terms of the closure and the lane alignment, as well as how we then design a bus network to support that closure.

MR WERNER-GIBBINGS: Is it in the best situation it can be, in the time that we have left before construction starts?

Mr Fitzgerald: We have tested multiple options as to what is possible. We have looked at every innovative solution that we possibly could, and we believe that we have come up with the best solution possible. We are still not saying it is great. It is still disruptive.

Ms Cheyne: One of the variables which I can talk about that is live today is that we cannot predict how people are going to change their own behaviour based on us saying that these roads will be closed or that there will likely be further congestion here. A colleague messaged me this morning and showed me their very clear run on Commonwealth Avenue Bridge, yet today is the first day when there will be, effectively, the start of significant disruption.

I appreciate that it is just one example, but potentially it shows that people did take different routes today because the message has got through. But there is what that means for the rest of the network as well. That is the variable that we do not know, and we need to see how that plays out over the next little while.

MR WERNER-GIBBINGS: This work is not being done in isolation. The ACT government has a number of other fairly significant projects underway which,

presumably, will impact transport times and traffic times. How are you able to coordinate it? How is the work on Commonwealth Avenue Bridge being coordinated with the other projects that the ACT government is doing, and taking into account the disruptions?

Ms Cheyne: I will let Mr Rampton speak to that in detail, but I would note that I think he does a pretty noble job. Anytime he is on ABC Radio, he is asked about NCA projects and closures, as if he is the territory-wide spokesperson. I think the ACT government does quite a lot of the heavy lifting when it comes to both understanding and communicating what the impacts are and trying to coordinate those. Mr Rampton can tell you what it is actually like.

Mr Rampton: When we were testing some of the scenarios, when we started that process, we factored in a lot of the known construction projects. William Hovell Drive is coming up; there is some stuff happening on the Monaro Highway; and, of course, there are the things in the city. We were not looking at it in isolation, from a modelling perspective, when we were coming up with the scenarios for the lane configuration.

On a day-to-day basis, we had working groups with Infrastructure Canberra on what is happening on their projects in and around the city; NCA were represented on that as well. We were always looking to see, “Are we putting something in place that may conflict with or contradict the project up the road?” We were always looking to coordinate those lane closures and those detours.

Even yesterday, I had the NCA out in Fyshwick, at my traffic management centre. We were showing the camera coverage that we have through the cameras, throughout the network, and our variable message system that we have. We are looking to coordinate with them on how we can better communicate to the public as to what is about to happen.

MR WERNER-GIBBINGS: You have a big couple of years ahead of you.

MR BRADDOCK: I have a question on the two temporary crossovers, north and south of the bridge. How many lanes are there actually going to be at the crossover?

Mr Rampton: There will need to be two.

MR BRADDOCK: Is there going to be a dedicated bus lane as one of those two?

Mr Rampton: Yes.

MR BRADDOCK: Fantastic. Thank you.

MR MILLIGAN: A very good morning to you all. There does seem to be a lot of road upgrades and maintenance occurring in that central area on the south of Commonwealth Bridge and so forth. What is the level of disruption that this government thinks is acceptable to the community specifically?

Ms Cheyne: On what measure?

MR MILLIGAN: I am asking you what the measure is. You have a number of different road upgrades occurring, and obviously it impacts the community. What level of impact to the community from these upgrades to roads is acceptable from the government's perspective? Is there a balance between, "We are upgrading the roads, but there is going to be disruption"? How is that measured?

Ms Cheyne: I cannot recall us ever having this level of major projects in so many different parts of the city. I think what I would say is that every effort is being taken with our contractors and with Infrastructure Canberra to coordinate, share as much information and advice as possible and to minimise the disruptions or to try and coordinate with school holidays, for example.

There are some things that cannot be avoided. I would say a good example are the works on the Molonglo River bridge next week. There is no way that we cannot close that, because of the risks to everyone from the concrete pour that will occur from the northern end. But, again, that is at a 2 am to 3 pm window, trying to balance what is needed to be done in a safe way with the community's needs. All going well, it should be open again by at least one of the peak hours that day.

With the Commonwealth Avenue Bridge, I think, again, every effort is being made. But, when you have to lift a span of a bridge off its piles, there are not a lot of options for us. We cannot helicopter people across the lake or build another bridge very quickly.

But, in terms of tolerance, the sense that I get from the community is that so many of these projects have been a long time coming—William Hovell Drive is great example—and people do not want to wait. Rather than a rolling, never-ending program, I think doing a lot of this disruption and being able to explain why something might be closed or why it is the way it is usually helps with people's tolerance. It is where we do things with no notice or no clear reason that I think people's tolerance threshold gets exceeded.

MR MILLIGAN: There seems to be eight to 10-odd upgrades occurring in that area. Is that 100 per cent of the upgrades that are due to be done now and into the future—say, in the next couple of years—or is there more to come?

Ms Cheyne: Sorry, Mr Milligan; which area?

MR MILLIGAN: Pretty much from Parliament House and south down, there are probably 10 or so different upgrades in a kilometre or two radius. Is that 100 per cent of the road upgrades that are due for that area, and you decided to do 100 per cent of the work now? Or is the community going to expect more upgrades to occur in that area going forward? I am just thinking about sequencing. I remember when Gungahlin had road upgrades, no-one could leave Gungahlin, because there were road upgrades on every exit point of Gungahlin. So I just wanted to know what the future is in terms of future upgrades.

Ms Cheyne: I would say an unfortunate and good example is Sulwood Drive. That project and how it was going to be coordinated to minimise disruption originally was

that it would take until March and there would be lane closures in both directions. But, due to what we have discovered with the stormwater drains, by closing that eastern span for a period of four weeks, we are actually able to reopen the whole thing sooner and then just carry on with minor works. That is a project that is 100 per cent funded by the Australian government through Roads to Recovery, and there are several more projects like that as well.

Ultimately, we have to balance a road network that is of a certain age. Deferred maintenance when it comes to roads usually leads to a series of gaping potholes—and that creates its own issues. With preventative maintenance—especially when the commonwealth is paying for it—again, I think the tolerance level is there as long as people understand why.

MR COCKS: I have a general question about the interactions with Access Canberra. I am looking at page 23 of volume 1 as well as the accountability indicators in volume 2—so under 2.1, Access Canberra.

Ms Cheyne: Could I have the page number again? Sorry; it was in my head, and then—

MR COCKS: That is all right. It is page 23 of volume 1 and page 141 of volume 2.1. Page 23 has a statement saying: “In 2024-25, we received a record of more than 25,000 regulatory complaints, service requests and related inquiries.” Can you give me a bit of a breakdown between those three different categories?

Ms Cheyne: Probably, to an extent. I will hand over to Ms Springett in the first instance. I take the point that you are getting at. The way that we would be framing this is—

MR COCKS: At this stage, I am just trying to understand things.

Ms Cheyne: I know. Just to explain why it makes sense to us but it may not make sense to someone else reading it, it is about the work of a particular team, which is the Resolution and Support Team, and they are reporting on all of the inquiries, complaints et cetera that they have been dealing with. But let me hand over to Ms Springett, because that is probably as much as I know.

Ms Springett: The Resolution and Support Team sit as part of my remit and are really a front door for receiving any regulatory complaints that come through in the ACT. What do we mean by “regulatory complaints”? That primarily relates to regulated industries. Our top three within that category would be parking-related complaints coming through—

MR COCKS: Sorry; as you go through can you maybe provide an example—because “parking-related complaints” could be people complaining that people are parking in the wrong place?

Ms Springett: That is exactly what it is.

MR COCKS: Or it could be people complaining about getting a parking ticket.

Ms Springett: No; it is people seeking regulatory action for us to take. It is people complaining that there may be illegal parking within their suburb or within a particular area. We also receive quite a volume of complaints that we triage and forward on that relate to other areas of government. But, as we are a front door for government, we do receive those, address what we can and forward on. Our other top two areas would be environmental complaints, which, primarily, could be noise or other things—and we are heading into key noise complaint season as the weather warms up—and Australian Consumer Law as well.

So they are sorts of complaints. We are seeing an upward trend, and that is driven by a couple of factors. One is we started to see an increase in some of the more residential complaints post COVID, when more people—

MR COCKS: Please forgive me, but there are so many questions for people across the table. The question at this stage is about what the breakdown is between those three categories that are in here: complaints, service requests and related inquiries. Do you have some numbers you can give me?

Ms Springett: We can provide that on notice. What I will say is we take a similar approach to all three categories, which is working to resolve them for the community.

MR COCKS: Why is it that we have a number that reads as if it is the number across Access Canberra, across particular interactions, but there is not what I would call a great tie-together in what you are describing here between service requests, regulatory complaints and something else called related inquiries. It sounds like there is a whole lot of other things that happen at Access Canberra in terms of contacts as well. So it is not all of the contacts for Access Canberra, is it?

Ms Springett: No, it is not.

Mr Rynehart: We have a single public face for what I like to describe as complaints about us and complaints to us. Our Resolution Support Team, which Ms Springett was speaking about, is the place that the community contact when they are lodging a complaint, whether that is about parking, as you described, or a business or a person is acting outside the legislation, or whether it is about our services that we have provided to the person. So that team deals with both of those. We also have the contact centre that takes the phone calls from the community. That is where most of our phone interactions occur, where a complaint comes in through that and they will refer it to the RST.

We can provide on notice—unfortunately, my report is not currently working—the breakdown of those specific numbers, but there are a range of different ways that people interact with us.

MR COCKS: Okay. How is this number used? It seems to be just a big number. Is this 25,000 used for anything other than saying, “This team is very busy”?

Mr Rynehart: We use our complaints and our intelligence that comes in to inform our regulatory programs and to inform our compliance approaches. It assists us in

designing our forward-leaning work. A range of our investigations and our compliance activities are driven by the information that comes in. The volume of complaints and requests is simply a number. That just indicates what is coming in. It does not indicate what we are satisfied has occurred or any investigation that comes out of it. But it certainly informs our work from a regulatory perspective.

MR COCKS: Okay. That brings me to the other half of this question I am getting at. Page 141 of volume 2 is where we get into the accountability indicators. You have percentage numbers here relating to ease of person-to-person interactions that are both still reasonably under the target, which seems to be a bit of a sticky trend. But, when you dig in a bit further, it seems that it is actually about wait times and processing times. Why aren't you looking at those specifically as accountability indicators rather than something that is kind of survey-based?

Mr Rynehart: I will start and then I will hand it over to Dr Vaile in a minute. We look at wait times as part of our measure. We undertake an annual customer satisfaction survey, which informs us where our customers' perceptions are and where their satisfaction is. That is where these measures are drawn from, and wait times is part of that.

One of the things that we have identified—and which came back to us through the survey this year—is that wait times is, more commonly, where we are unable to resolve the issue at the first call. If a person calls us and then we have to refer it on, we tend to get a lower satisfaction from the customer. If they call and they wait a bit longer and we are able to resolve it, they tend to be more satisfied. But I will hand over to Dr Vaile about how we come to those numbers.

Dr Vaile: In the survey, there is actually quite a range of questions that are asked and then a measure is formed up about ease of use from the questions that are asked. What we are seeing is that wait times have always, in terms of customer satisfaction and ease of use, been a key indicator. But what is starting to appear, as Josh just mentioned, is that, where we have to hand them onto someone else and they might actually have to go through a bit of a process to get to the right person, that can actually sometimes be more of a factor than the actual wait time in the initial period.

Generally, people are waiting for less than five minutes. That is an excellent achievement for the contact centre. But that does not mean at peak times that it cannot be greater than that, because that five minutes is an average period of time.

Ms Cheyne: Mr Cocks, I can probably add a bit here. I think it is fair to say that Access Canberra, by being the front door, often is attributed to where there is dissatisfaction that might be out of their control. Here is an example. This is real: "Ring, ring. Access Canberra. I want to get an update on my Fix My Street tree complaint. The contact centre doesn't necessarily know; so they try to put the call through to the depot team. But all of the depot team are out actually cutting down trees or whatever they are doing." The person then might take a bit of time to hear back or they need to call back or whatever that might mean. It can then be reported as they did not have a good time with Access Canberra, but it was actually outside of the contact centre's control.

In terms of wait times, they are measured. I do get regular reports on wait times. Dr Vaile is correct: for contact centres it is less than five minutes. I do get monthly averages as well. There have obviously been some peak times. With service centres as well, we publish what the wait time is in real time. I can tell you right now that it is less than 10 minutes at all of our walk-in service centres.

MR COCKS: I guess the concern is about these performance indicators and actionability. As you pointed out, that one is not clearly within the control of Access Canberra. It is not something that is very easy for you to take action on. When you read one of the other ones here, performance indicator E, it sounds like there is a 94 per cent reduction in regulatory burden. But that is not actually what that is measuring, is it?

Mr Rynehart: And that is the reduction of regulatory burden on business by undertaking risk-based coordinated inspection activities?

MR COCKS: That is right. So you are not actually measuring the reduction in regulatory burden, are you?

Mr Rynehart: We are measuring where we have undertaken inspections to pick up multiple regulatory outcomes for our business rather than inspecting multiple times for that business. So it is a reduction of the burden on the business in that we go once rather than multiple times, but it is a specific measure on that, yes.

MR COCKS: So, by going once, are you saving up multiple issues to go and visit a business on one occasion?

Ms Cheyne: Yes.

MR COCKS: Taking the “what gets measured gets managed” approach, is there a risk that someone adds an extra issue in to go and visit a business that was not necessary so you can hit a performance indicator?

Ms Cheyne: No. What I would say, Mr Cocks, is that this has been something that I have been particularly interested in, given that I have assumed responsibility for Access Canberra and also had business, is that what business was saying to us was that if today liquor licensing comes in to do an inspection, like “Show me your ramp” or whatever it might be—so that is a risk management plan—and then the next day the Health Protection Service comes in and says, “Show me how you are cooking this food,” and then the next day someone comes in from the EPA to look at noise reduction measures, that is a real impost on businesses. So what is being measured here are where those activities can be coordinated—and the touchpoint with businesses is once. That is what is being prioritised.

MR COCKS: It sounds like the intent here is reduction of regulatory burden, which brings me to a question I have been asking many times through the time I have been in this place: are you measuring the actual regulatory burden on businesses?

Ms Cheyne: From an Access Canberra perspective or from a business overall? If it business overall, then that—

MR COCKS: It is an Access Canberra accountability indicator; so that is probably a good start.

Ms Cheyne: Sure. Perhaps Dr Vaile can assist me.

Dr Vaile: Access Canberra has worked with the ANU in the development of a new tool, called the regulatory value tool, which measures both regulatory value—

MR COCKS: I will be really clear here: I am asking about burden, not value.

Dr Vaile: It does take into account regulatory burden as well as regulatory impact. It is trying to get a more holistic view rather than just the burden, but also whether the regulation is achieving the purpose that it sets out to achieve. That tool is under development. It has been piloted and is hopefully going to be rolled out in the near future.

MR COCKS: I have been given a similar answer every year over the past couple. When is it due to actually be delivered?

Dr Vaile: The pilot has actually been completed. It has been delayed a little bit by machinery-of-government changes at this point, and we are hoping to continue work on actually rolling that out more broadly in the new year.

MR COCKS: Is there anything available that anyone can look at regarding the tool at this stage?

Dr Vaile: I believe that the tool is actually available to look at.

Ms Cheyne: Let's take that on notice and, if it is, we will send it to you.

MR COCKS: Thank you.

THE CHAIR: Thank you. We might move on. We have been on this for a bit now. Thanks, Mr Cocks.

MR COCKS: Yes.

Mr Rynehart: Sorry; I have the number of the complaints.

THE CHAIR: Okay.

Mr Rynehart: Of the 25,126 complaints that were lodged last year, 9,497 are parking; 6,048 are for another directorate; 3,605 are environment; 1,502 are transport; 1,444 are Australian Consumer Law; 1,080 are customer service; 941 are planning; 426 are other; 269 are building; 244 are agents; and 70 are other industry.

MR COCKS: Okay. So 100 per cent of that 25,000 figure are complaints?

Mr Rynehart: Regulatory complaints?

MR COCKS: So that 25,000 are all complaints?

Ms Cheyne: They are split between complaints, service inquiries and—

Mr Rynehart: Of those 25,000, 1,080 are customer service, which are service inquiries about us, and then the balance of those are about regulatory complaints. So yes, it does cover off those.

Ms Cheyne: So the vast majority are complaints.

Mr Rynehart: Yes.

MR COCKS: Thank you.

MR MILLIGAN: I have a couple of questions in relation to government's Vision Zero targets for road fatalities. What is the government doing in that space to reduce road fatalities?

Ms Cheyne: I will invite Ms Cocks to the table, who has been doing a lot of work in this space. Overall, there is a road safety strategy and an action plan. That is due for review. That work is being undertaken as we speak. We do have a levy that goes towards programs to achieve road safety outcomes. There is a particular program that seems to be delivering some amazing results, which is a learner driver program with the PCYC that we can talk about in more detail. Then, of course, there is the design of our roads and enforcement measures and other things that encourage safer driver behaviour. So it is broad and across multiple areas of government, but we do have a strategy and an action plan that we work to.

MR MILLIGAN: In the report, it states that road fatalities have gone up from 0.86 to 2.32. Does the government have any indication as to what has contributed to that increase?

Ms Cheyne: Again, in the ACT, because our population is so small, one or two extra fatalities a year does not necessarily mean a trend but it can show a pretty outsized increase. Bringing a bit of my AG hat in as well, I think we would say that it is always the five areas that Policing looks to target, including speeding, driver distraction and those sorts of things. Of course, there are some where someone has a medical incident or it could not otherwise be avoided. But I would not say that there is any one thing or one change in the ACT that is driving an increase.

MR MILLIGAN: The government has started to do more roadside drug testing, as I understand, for cocaine, ecstasy and cannabis. I am interested to know whether there has been a significant increase in the number of positive tests that have come from these roadside drug testings?

Ms Cheyne: It is not something that this directorate undertakes; it is Policing.

MR MILLIGAN: Okay; so covered by Policing.

Ms Cheyne: Yes. So if you are attending that, maybe you could ask them. I am reluctant to take a question on notice for another minister.

MR MILLIGAN: I guess where I was heading was whether people being under the influence of narcotics contributed to or increased the number of roadside accidents, incidences, injuries and/or other deaths.

Ms Cheyne: I will take that on notice, just because I probably do need to get some information from Policing.

MR MILLIGAN: That is excellent. Thank you.

MR EMERSON: I want to ask about the accessibility of Fix My Street, which has come up in the past.

Ms Cheyne: There is an entire inquiry devoted to this.

MR EMERSON: Is any work underway during the inquiry? We are waiting till the end of it. One of the specific issues I wanted to ask about is that one community member apparently said that, when they put in their password, if the password does not work for whatever reason, there is no screen reader function to tell them that that is the reason the password has not worked. It may be just a small thing that could be looked at and fixed in the interim.

Ms Cheyne: Certainly we are aware that the functionality for people who are visually impaired is an area for Fix My Street that is still a work in progress. We have heard that pretty loud and clear from that community. Where we are at in terms of screen readers and that accessibility, Ms Chan might have an update. But, if not, we can certainly take it on notice and come back to you.

Ms Chan: I have read and acknowledge the privilege statement. We have received some feedback about accessibility and some ways in which we could improve that. One of the things is the ACT Digital Account, which is how you log onto Fix My Street and other services. That underwent an accessibility audit against WCAG 2.1, level AA, in 2024. As a result of that, we made some changes to the email and the mobile verification screen. We have ensured that all pop-up messaging can be closed easily. We have made some changes to what they call the hamburger menu—when you click on it, the bits drop down—regarding how that appears on the mobile app for the Digital Account.

There are a few other changes we want to look at: password, verification of email, account recovery, the login page and error messaging. We know we need to do some work with the colour contrast. There are some changes to the headings and improving text for screen readers. There are a number of things in that work program.

MR EMERSON: That is good to hear. Obviously, he is keen to be able to lodge issues related to footpaths. The other side of footpath maintenance is the planned inspections, audits and so on. During question time, I asked about this. It is a chamber question on notice that I received a response to from Minister Steel while you were away, Minister. It includes—

Ms Cheyne: I had better look at it!

MR EMERSON: For reference, it is chamber question on notice 494.

Ms Cheyne: Thank you.

MR EMERSON: It includes a table and says, “The below table indicates the frequency of planned path inspections based on risk profiles, pending resource availability.” For the committee’s awareness, there are different columns: concrete, asphalt, pavers, and then different parts of the city. Some are expected to be inspected every two years; for some it is three years and for some others it is four years. In the case of town centre pavers, it is every year. I am curious about the “pending resource availability” line and to what extent this table is being followed, based on resource availability—let’s say, last financial year and this financial year.

Mr Rampton: The table that Mr Emerson is referring to comes from our operations plan for path maintenance.

Ms Cheyne: There is the line above it that says “pending resource availability.” What does that mean?

Mr Rampton: The people who are doing the inspections are multiple asset inspectors. They are also inspecting all the pavements in the network as well as paths. It is a small team and it is impacted when we have vacancies and leave. There are about five people in that team. We do our best to get out there with the plan inspections. As I mentioned in a previous hearing, the town centres, particularly the city, are most regularly inspected because the biggest risk on our path network is pavers, as opposed to any other type of path, because they easily move around. We are about to commission and engage a company to do testing of a technological solution to our path inspection. That will be kicking off soon. We have engaged them to go through a number of suburbs throughout the territory—suburbs of different ages and with different path profiles. I will not talk about the technology they are using, but they will not be walking the streets, as we have done previously; they will be using a technology solution to mark up where we have issues on our path network. I am excited about that. We will see how it goes. We also have some funding over the next few years to do a full sweep of our path network.

MR EMERSON: With respect to this table, is there somewhere internally where you are tracking parts of the city—“That was due to be inspected. It is supposed to be every two years”—say, in the Dickson town centre—“but we have not done it for three years” or “We did that just six months ago.” Is that all tracked? It would be pretty complex, but—

Mr Rampton: Yes. It is captured in our asset management system when we are onsite and logging work orders from the inspections.

MR EMERSON: This is going to be hard data to pull together, but is there any way that you can present that to the committee, perhaps in the form of: “This percentage of the network has been inspected,” according to the timelines provided in that table? Is

that something that could be provided?

Mr Rampton: I will take the details of that on notice. We will see what we can give you.

MR EMERSON: Thank you. If it is not a percentage, perhaps there is some other way of representing the data.

Ms Cheyne: Mr Emerson, you are not asking us to create something for you, but, if there is some way that we are capturing this at the moment that we can share—

MR EMERSON: Yes. Do not just give me your entire database. That would be great.

Ms Cheyne: Sure.

MR EMERSON: Thank you. I am curious about the part in relation to personal injury claims. I understand that, if someone injures themselves on a footpath, it is not enough that they just happen to injure themselves on a footpath. For their claim to be successful, the government either had to know about the defect, the damage, which they would if someone had lodged a FixMyStreet request, or ought to have known, and perhaps the government should have known if they had followed this table but did not. Are you cognisant of those risks—either abiding by the tables or not or following up FixMyStreet requests quickly or not? To what extent is that included in your decision-making process?

Mr Rampton: It is definitely considered. Many of the claims that come in are handed over to ACTIA, our insurance agency, to do the investigation, and we provide evidence and support based on the claim, one of which is: when were we last there to inspect that section of path? That is definitely considered part of the ruling on that claim.

MR EMERSON: Thank you.

MR BRADDOCK: I am looking at page 37 of the annual report which has stats on how much work has been done on different types of paths. By my calculations, concrete paths are up by 43 per cent and asphalt paths are up by 14 per cent, but segmented paths are down by 22 per cent and gutters are down by 34 per cent. Is there any reasoning behind these movements and changes?

Mr Rampton: It depends on the risk profile and what we have on our database as to things that need to be repaired. We will always try to repair something or replace something that is of a higher risk to the community, and that fluctuates from year to year.

MR BRADDOCK: What is the median time between a defect being identified and a repair being done?

Mr Rampton: It depends on the surface and the type of path. I would need to take that on notice.

Ms Cheyne: I think we have responded to this—

Mr Rampton: I think we have previously.

Ms Cheyne: on maybe three, if not four, occasions this year.

MR BRADDOCK: My apologies.

Ms Cheyne: Perhaps I could just give you the QONs.

MR MILLIGAN: Going back to roads and upgrades—

Ms Cheyne: Great. Mr Rampton is here.

MR MILLIGAN: I know. I turn my focus to the great electorate of Yerrabi. We have the Gungahlin road improvements. Mr Braddock is very happy and I am sure Ms Castley is too. It looks like the Gungahlin road improvements program has been delayed by six months. I am wondering why. And what streets does this program cover?

Ms Cheyne: Sorry, Mr Milligan. I was being too facetious and I did not hear what you said. Which program?

MR MILLIGAN: Now I have forgotten what I said! The Gungahlin road improvements program. It is on page 397 of the booklet. I think it states that it was delayed by six months. I am also interested in which streets this program covers.

Ms Cheyne: This looks like it is a capital project, where we had to revise the completion date from June 2026 to January 2027. As to the reasons, Ms Clement will answer.

Ms Clement: I have read and understand the privilege statement. The Gungahlin road improvements project is a project that is jointly funded with the commonwealth. We needed to match that funding through our budget process, so, when we received the funds and were able to progress the delivery of that project, it had been pushed back a little in terms of having all of the funding available. The other factor was that CED was undertaking the Gungahlin transport plan. We needed to complete that work in order to finalise the scope for the road improvements project. It is a feasibility study that will look at some corridors, in terms of the upgrades we can make to those corridors to get the best outcome for the traffic network and the people of Gungahlin.

MR MILLIGAN: Obviously, the questions now are: when will that study commence; how long will it operate for; how will people contribute to it; what sort of budget are we talking about; and what is the timeframe? There are all the standard questions that would obviously follow from mentioning that there is a feasibility study.

Ms Clement: We are in the process of undertaking the procurement at the moment. I would have to check on exactly where we are at from a timing perspective. Potentially, we will have a consultant engaged before the end of this year or early next year. They will then do their investigation works and will start to get across the detail. We would

be looking at sharing with the community probably after we have done the feasibility work and we have gained a little more insight into what we think the proposals might be, so I expect that would be later next year.

MR MILLIGAN: No budget is set aside yet, or is there a budget for the study and then a separate budget for the works?

Ms Clement: That is correct. There is a budget for the study at this point, which is \$500,000, and it is 50-50 funded with the commonwealth. We do not have a budget for delivering any of those works. We would use the feasibility work and development-of-concept options to gain an understanding of what the costings might be and will look at how that might be prioritised.

MR MILLIGAN: There is no timeframe set aside yet for construction work? It all depends on what is chosen and how much budget you have for it going forward?

Ms Clement: That is correct. Yes.

MR MILLIGAN: The William Hovell Drive duplication has increased by \$16.8 million. I am wondering about the cause of this.

Ms Cheyne: Several things, including time. Time is not on our side. Costs have increased everywhere in the last few years, and that has affected, I would say, every project across government, including roads. The second element that is kind of related is the requirements put on us through environmental approvals. They have made the project more complex.

Mr Fitzgerald: That was largely due to the alignment of the shared path and pushing into areas of environmental concern, and therefore having to ensure that the impact was as reduced as possible.

MR MILLIGAN: It is sort of like the government's own agenda and direction impacting your own works going forward—right? They are so focused on the environmental aspect of things that it is impacting your own development.

Ms Cheyne: That is somewhat fair. However, the path alignment, you might recall, was a particular issue for one of Mr Braddock's colleagues who was working with some local residents. That added some time. Changing where the path will be created further environmental challenges that we needed to manage.

MR MILLIGAN: The hope going forward, particularly with the Gungahlin road infrastructure plan, is to get that cracking as soon as possible, because, if it is delayed any longer, it will add more cost to the construction of whatever you do going forward.

Ms Cheyne: Absolutely.

MR MILLIGAN: I assume that is going to be a priority.

Ms Cheyne: I look forward to your support in making sure it is.

MR MILLIGAN: I could probably put in a lot of requests for a lot of roads that could be improved. I am sure Mr Braddock has a few questions.

MR BRADDOCK: I am sure, if you can find the money, Mr Milligan.

MR BRADDOCK: Given we have been talking about the cost of roads, I would now like to talk about the cost of the bike path network—

Ms Cheyne: I am shocked.

MR BRADDOCK: As was I when Mr Milligan started asking about roads! The *Active Travel Plan 2024-30* has a cycling network map on page 24. It shows the existing network, current works, potential future priorities and future network vision. Has the government done any costing on the work to build that whole network?

Ms Cheyne: Not the entire network; however, there is a map online which details where different projects are up to in terms of feasibility, design and construction. That is on the community path maintenance webpage. That shows how we are staging the improvements that are identified in the Active Travel Plan.

MR BRADDOCK: Does the government consider the cost of the network, in terms of how it is cheaper to move people by a path network than it is by the road network, when it is making these investment decisions?

Ms Cheyne: We are trying to support the community through all modes of travel. Active travel is part of our agenda, very firmly, and we have received a lot of support from the commonwealth, reflecting how advanced many of our feasibility studies are and our overall vision for the delivery of active travel initiatives across the ACT. I think the short answer to your question is yes.

MR BRADDOCK: Does the government agree that the path network is comparatively cheap compared to the road network?

Ms Cheyne: Sure.

MR BRADDOCK: Then what is stopping us from prioritising the path network over road projects?

Ms Cheyne: I would not say it is not prioritised. I think we are balancing both.

MR BRADDOCK: When does the government hope to fully build that future network as described in the Active Travel Plan?

Ms Cheyne: It all depends on resources, Mr Braddock. We have been pretty clear on where we are putting in our effort, and there have been a lot of new paths recently. A whole lot of infill paths and missing links have been completed, including the Wentworth Avenue median in Kingston this year, Batchelor Street in Torrens, Ipima Street in Braddon and Wittenoom Crescent in Stirling. There is another pipeline of work in Campbell, Hughes and Watson, and another package of works is kicking off, with design expected to be completed by the end of December. There is more work

planned as well, but we are looking at getting commonwealth support where we can, because the 50-50 arrangement is great for both of us.

MR BRADDOCK: Drilling down to the Garden City Cycleway, when will construction of that be completed?

Ms Cheyne: Ms Clement can probably help me here. It depends on whether we are talking about 1B, 1C or 1D.

MR BRADDOCK: The entirety, in terms of all eight segments.

Ms Clement: You will be aware that stage 1, from Braddon through to Ainslie, has been funded. That is almost complete. We are about to put out a tender for the last piece of that work which connects to Cooyong Street and to Lonsdale Street. I expect that will be constructed by mid next year. We now have funding for stage 2. Stage 2 will deliver from Watson through to North Ainslie Primary School, sort of on the border of Dickson and Ainslie. We have started procurement for a design consultant. That tender might have gone out in the last week or it is about to go out. We will need to do the detailed design for that section. We have the concept option for detailed design, and I expect we would be looking at getting a construction tender out maybe late next year, so construction would commence the following year. That will see the section connecting the city to Ainslie and the one from Watson to bring people to Ainslie. That will be completed in the next few years.

MR BRADDOCK: The City Services website has an FAQ: when can the community expect the full Garden City Cycleway to be constructed? The website does not actually answer that question, so my question is: what is your best estimate?

Ms Clement: In terms of what has being funded, that would be completed, I would say, in 2028.

MR EMERSON: How is that section you were talking about, the travelling path to North Ainslie Primary School, connecting with the plan for Sherbrooke Street, or is that one the same project?

Ms Clement: They are separate projects. Stage 1 brought the Garden City Cycleway up to Angus Street in Ainslie. Stage 2 will come to, I think, the corner of Hawdon Street and Majura Avenue, and then it will go near Majura Primary School. There is a section from North Ainslie Primary School to Angus Street. At the moment, we have a proposal for an active street along Sherbrooke Street. We have talked to the community about that because it is a new type of infrastructure for Canberra. That section is not funded at the moment, but we have progressed the detailed design so that we have the costings and we can look at some options for how that section might be funded.

THE CHAIR: I have a very quick supplementary that goes back to Mr Milligan's question about Gungahlin. There was a feasibility study on transport. Will that cover the Park and Ride car park? Who will I talk to about that particular one, or is it just lodged on Fix My Street?

Ms Clement: Park and Ride probably would not be picked up, because we are looking at a couple of corridors from a traffic perspective rather than the Park and Ride.

THE CHAIR: In the city.

Ms Clement: Yes.

Mr Fitzgerald: That is the Park and Ride opposite Winyu House?

THE CHAIR: The dirt one behind Big W.

Mr Fitzgerald: Yes. It is subject to future land release. We are investigating options for the potential relocation of that Park and Ride.

THE CHAIR: Maintenance?

Mr Rampton: That would be in my direction. I have not been out there for a while. It is a little bit lumpy and bumpy, is it?

THE CHAIR: Yes—so bad.

Mr Rampton: I can check with the team on that one.

THE CHAIR: Thank you.

MR BRADDOCK: I have a question about Smiths Road. There is a bit of history which I will not bother repeating. How much does it cost to grade the ACT gravel portion of Smiths Road each time we do that?

Ms Cheyne: I have answered this somewhere. I do not have it immediately at hand. It may be a question on notice. It is pretty cheap compared to the solution that residents there have called for. I will get you the specifics.

MR BRADDOCK: In response to a question on notice by Ms Lawder, apparently it is programmed to be graded every four months. How many times have you graded Smiths Road this year?

Ms Cheyne: At least once; maybe twice.

Mr Rampton: Potentially twice.

Ms Cheyne: If you subscribe to our weekly maintenance update, you would get notification.

MR BRADDOCK: Would you be able to provide a breakdown of the number of times it has been graded in the past five years?

Ms Cheyne: Yes. Let's take it on notice and we will show you what we have.

MR BRADDOCK: You completed one kilometre of capital works on Smiths Road back in 2022 and it cost \$2.3 million. The recent New South Wales resealing work, this year, averaged about \$1 million. Is there any reason the New South Wales side costs so much less than the ACT side?

Mr Rampton: I am not privy to their procurement processes and how that was worked out, so I am not able to provide comment on the New South Wales side.

MR BRADDOCK: Have you recently calculated how much it would cost to completely reseal the remaining three kilometres of unsealed road on the ACT side of the border?

Ms Cheyne: We have. I will see if I can get back to you before we finish. I have the numbers somewhere. Pete in my office, if you are listening, I know that you told me, so send it through!

MR BRADDOCK: Given that Smiths Road residents rely heavily on this road for their daily commute and also for emergency entry and egress, would you seal the remaining three kilometres of the ACT side of that road?

Ms Cheyne: No.

MR BRADDOCK: Why not?

Ms Cheyne: Because of the cost.

MR BRADDOCK: Thank you.

MR WERNER-GIBBINGS: I have a question about road resurfacing and resealing. I will start with road resurfacing and notifying people who will be impacted. I tend to get these questions: “When is resurfacing happening?” or “How come it is happening and I did not realise it was happening?” Assuming a program is set each year—I realise that there is a website and a map for that program—why is the list only a few days ahead?

Mr Rampton: You are correct. We have come a long way in recent years with that map. We look at putting the map out to show what the program is for the year. The timing of it can depend on the availability of contractors. At the moment, and for as long as I can remember, most of the road resurfacing program is done by external contractors. We are working with them on the availability of their resources. They will give us an indication of where they have capacity. There are times when we shift work around to different locations. We may have an unexpected event and we needed to change our program. While we endeavour to put as much as we can on the website as early as we can, we also rely on contractors to do the letterbox drops and things like that and to put out the signage leading up to the works they intend to do on a street.

MR WERNER-GIBBINGS: I will come back to the contractor delivery question. Have you done any thinking about how more detail could be provided and likely timeframes—say, a month—for particular works to be undertaken?

Mr Rampton: We have a preliminary program. That is potentially something that we could put on the website as an indicator for the community. Like I said, it changes—not a lot. It tends to run along to that program quite well. That is something we could explore.

MR WERNER-GIBBINGS: From the feedback I get, I suspect that would be useful. You said most of the work is done by contractors; therefore, it is not all work. What is the split? What is the proportion between the work that is contracted and the work that is delivered internally?

Mr Rampton: At the moment, I have a small asphalt crew. For this road resurfacing season, I have them out doing what we call prep patching. Before we do a reseal on a road, which is the top layer, the spray seal, we repair some of the damaged sections of road so that we are not just putting a bandaid over a broken road. My internal crew is working on a package. It might be Municipal Road South. They are focused on that. In previous years, that has also been sent out to external contractors, and I have had the asphalt crew working on reactive maintenance. This year, they are doing both. They are working on reactive maintenance, but they are also doing the prep patching for one of the packages for the road resurfacing program.

MR WERNER-GIBBINGS: Are you able to provide a general split for internal work and contracted work? It can be on notice. That is fine. I am interested.

Mr Rampton: It is a small proportion. It is not a big chunk of the program, but I could give an estimate of it. I will take that on notice.

MR WERNER-GIBBINGS: With the contracts that go out, what is their size range in terms of dollars? Is there a minimum and maximum contract size? How large are they, generally?

Mr Rampton: The packages of work that go out?

MR WERNER-GIBBINGS: Yes, the work that is contracted out.

Mr Rampton: It ranges. They are multiple-million-dollar contracts. Some of the rural road packages are smaller. When we get into the arterial road packages, they are a bit bigger, because there is a lot of traffic management associated with that. As a broad range, it would be within \$2 million to \$8 million dollar packages.

MR WERNER-GIBBINGS: That was the window I was looking for. It will be significant.

Mr Rampton: Yes.

MR WERNER-GIBBINGS: It is probably more difficult on the bigger ones: how are you able to ensure that the government is getting value for money from these contracts?

Mr Rampton: Earlier, I mentioned the asset inspectors, I also have another team that

is dedicated to the pavements for the road resurfacing program. I have staff that go out most mornings or in the evening to ensure that we have the right conditions onsite for our contractor to start work. We need the right conditions for that work to happen and be effective. I do not want a contractor doing work out there in unfavourable conditions and next year we see an issue with what they did. I have staff out there, not monitoring every move they make, but doing spot checks out there on what is happening.

MR WERNER-GIBBINGS: That is interesting. On the contracts register, there are contracts not just for doing work; there are also contracts for supervising the work.

Mr Rampton: Yes.

MR WERNER-GIBBINGS: While you have staff out there doing the maintenance, it is not all internal staff who are doing the supervising. Could all of that supervisory work be done internally as opposed to being contracted out?

Mr Rampton: No, it cannot be done internally. That is exactly why we have those contracts. They need to supplement my internal team, to be our eyes and ears out on the site.

MR WERNER-GIBBINGS: How is that working? Reasonably well?

Mr Rampton: Yes, it is working well.

MR MILLIGAN: In the annual report, at page 385, it states that the delivery of city services maintenance and services was roughly \$25 million higher than anticipated. It lists a few areas as to why, but it is a significant amount of money. What is the government doing to guarantee, going into the future, that we do not see this type of blowout happening again?

Ms Cheyne: What page?

MR MILLIGAN: 385.

Ms Cheyne: I am going to guess that this will be related, particularly, to some of the issues we have had with weather, as well as where we have had some cost pressures with things like overtime.

Mowing is a great example, especially in the crisis period 18 months ago. Effectively, because we had so few actual days available to us when the conditions were okay for mowing to occur, there was quite a lot of overtime, which contributed to that.

Mr Fitzgerald: I am happy for Ms Marriage to come to the table and provide an additional response. The other thing to note with that expenditure is that there are non-cash elements to that increase. During 2023-24, we undertook an asset revaluation. Pleasingly, our assets as a city continued to grow. A consequence of that, though, is an increased depreciation cost that we then have to attribute to the provision of municipal services. Within that figure, the majority of that figure relates to an increase in depreciation costs. As the minister said, there are always fluctuations in terms of

what our service offering needs to be, to maintain the city.

MR MILLIGAN: You mentioned that overtime is one of the contributing factors to this blowout, and it is partly due to the weather, according to you, Minister. Is the government looking at how they could address that, to try and reduce the amount of overtime that is given out? Are you looking at introducing a new team, or a different way of handling situations like this, to avoid that higher hourly rate through overtime, and just have a normal full-time equivalent staff member to manage these matters?

Ms Cheyne: There are two sides to this. One is that, with that extreme weather season, again, there were just so few days where the conditions were right; it was unavoidable. With respect to what we have been trying to work on—it has already come up a bit in the Fix My Street inquiry, and it will definitely come up in the municipal services inquiry—reactive maintenance has a cost to government. The more proactive, the more we keep to a program schedule and the more that we do preventive maintenance, and we do not defer that maintenance, it means that costs generally are much more manageable.

When we start jumping into everything that someone wanted fixed yesterday, that starts to affect our overall service delivery and, ultimately, it costs more. Is there anything to add to that, Ms Marriage?

Ms Marriage: I might ask Mr Milligan to repeat his question because there has been a lot to talk about. I can certainly add some further detail.

MR MILLIGAN: It was probably more around how to address the amount of overtime that has been paid out to staff members to do the delivery of services. Is there a way of addressing this, and to prevent so much overtime being done, by having a full-time equivalent staff member doing the work instead?

Ms Marriage: The minister is correct. The last couple of seasons have been extreme seasons, in particular for our mowing and horticultural services. Also, the cleaning and litter picking activities around Canberra are within my remit. Naturally, public toilet cleaning is a seven-day-a-week activity. Most of our public toilets are cleaned once a day, but some of them are cleaned twice a day. There are overtime implications for that, naturally, because there are Saturday and Sunday activities.

In the extreme seasons that we have had in the last three years, we have also had to look at catching up with overtime in our mowing, which did put a cost pressure on our business. That cost pressure was not realised as much in the last financial year, so we were able to manage that.

We do explore in our business—and we keep quite detailed records of—how we are doing our scheduling each year. We keep data on what the extremities of that season are, the amount of times we have had to recut areas or do extra passes that have gone through, the overtime that is relatable to that, and the wear and tear on machines, if you are talking about mowing, because that causes downtime and servicing requirements that we need to do. We have kept those records over the last five years. That allows us to explore whether there is an opportunity to bring in extra FTE to reduce that overtime cost.

Over the last three years, we have had an extra initiative-funded team of 10 staff who have come in to support us on the horticultural side of things. That has meant we have been able to insource some of our arterial road mowing. Bringing it in-house allows us to control and regulate a little bit better where the priorities are in our space.

We have also had an initiative-funded team which has been an enabler team, a traffic management crew, that has allowed us to look after our crews and support them on our high-profile, high-risk roads. They can go out there and make it much more efficient for our teams to just come in, do the mowing along that area and go off again. There are improvements that we have made over those extreme years that we are now trying to embed.

MR MILLIGAN: It seems like additional funding will provide better local services.

Ms Marriage: I would never say no to additional funding.

MR MILLIGAN: Hopefully, we see a bigger request—

Ms Cheyne: I look forward to recommendations from the committee.

MR MILLIGAN: at the next estimates hearing, and that Ms Cheyne has been able to champion and get more funding for maintenance of our local areas.

Ms Cheyne: It needs to be a collaborative championing.

MR EMERSON: The goal for the annual growth of the community footpath network was greater than 50,000 square metres, and it hit 86,170 square metres. Bravo! Why is it so much more?

Mr Rampton: It is the other way around, Mr Emerson, sometimes.

MR EMERSON: I know. Normally, my questions are the other way around as well.

Mr Rampton: Thank you for the compliment. It is a combination of things. The growth of our path network comes about as a result of capital works projects that may be happening in the area. There are private developments that are occurring, as well as land release and development within Canberra. We are seeing areas like Molonglo expanding, and that path network is starting to come online and hitting our books.

MR EMERSON: On the private development front, I was looking at the last annual report, where the goal for growth was not achieved. The reason given was that less than anticipated path assets had been gifted to TCCS by developers. Do you have figures for how much of this year's growth can be attributed to that?

Mr Rampton: We do have a breakdown of what is the source of those.

MR EMERSON: Could you provide that on notice?

Mr Rampton: Yes, we can.

MR EMERSON: Okay, that would be great. While we are on numbers, unfortunately, this one is the other way around. With the percentage of community members satisfied with the condition of footpaths, the goal was 75 per cent, but the result was 69 per cent. There is a brief note in the annual report on the reason for that—concerns regarding damaged surfaces, unsurprisingly. To what extent do these figures—last year it was 68 per cent or 69 per cent, so it is a small dip—change behaviour? How are we collecting that information and how is it used?

Mr Rampton: With collecting the information, there is the annual community survey that is done. There is a specific question related to the satisfaction with path maintenance and pavement maintenance. It is used. We also get, interestingly, a breakdown by region, which I find helpful when I am looking at forward programs and things like that.

MR EMERSON: Could you provide that on notice?

Mr Rampton: I think we can. I do not see any issues with that.

Ms Cheyne: We will take it on notice and see.

MR EMERSON: Okay. Sorry, I interrupted you. You find it useful; I think I might find it useful.

Mr Rampton: We find it useful to see which areas of Canberra have different views on our assets. It does play a part. We are looking at, obviously, other technical aspects of it, but that is the feedback side of things, when we are planning.

MR EMERSON: I am splitting hairs here, but in the targets there is a percentage of customers satisfied with the public road network. The target is greater than 75 per cent, but for the community path network it is just 75 per cent, rather than greater than. Do you know why that is the case?

Mr Rampton: No, I do not know why there is a difference.

Ms Cheyne: Do you want me to take that on notice? There might not be a reason.

Mr Rampton: I think that is a historical difference. Obviously, with any of these targets, our aim is to over-achieve the target in any situation.

Ms Cheyne: Perhaps we could make them both equal or greater.

Mr Rampton: Yes.

MR EMERSON: Yes.

Ms Cheyne: Excellent. I have not taken that on notice, but we will make that change for the next report.

MR EMERSON: That sounds good.

MR MILLIGAN: I am not sure if this was addressed earlier—waste collection from households, both general recycling and the green bins. A lot of households would like their bins collected more regularly, particularly the recycle bin and so forth. Does the government have any plans to increase the frequency of the collection of recycling, or does it plan on keeping it at each fortnight?

Ms Cheyne: There is no plan at this stage, Mr Milligan. We are looking at the area of resource recovery overall, particularly as it relates to things like FOGO. Mr Fitzgerald just gave me a look, so maybe I am wrong.

Mr Fitzgerald: It was a look of approval, Minister. In our waste audits, we are seeing a reduction in both our red bin and our yellow bin, having regard to the contents within those bins. Through other initiatives like the Container Deposit Scheme, there are recycling drop-off points, so we do see a reduction in presentation rates for yellow bins. We are not seeing pressure on the system at this stage that would necessitate that change.

MR MILLIGAN: You mentioned there was a reduction in waste collected through these weekly and fortnightly bin collections. You mentioned the Container Deposit Scheme as one of the reasons why, potentially, the collection in our recycling bins has dropped. Do you have evidence to support an increase in using that scheme?

Mr Fitzgerald: The scheme itself continues to collect over a hundred million containers per annum.

Ms Cheyne: It is a lot.

Mr Fitzgerald: It is a lot.

MR EMERSON: Greater than or equal to!

Mr Fitzgerald: A significant number of containers go through that system. About 50 per cent still go through the yellow bin. We know that there are people whose preference is still to seek to recycle those containers through the yellow bin. That still leaves half of all containers going through alternative means—presentation at our drop-off centres.

MR WERNER-GIBBINGS: It is National Recycling Week this week, I think. You spoke a little bit about the challenges. Could you expand on where we are up to with recycling in the ACT as a program, a strategy? What are the initiatives that are working? What are the challenges that you are finding?

Mr Fitzgerald: We have seen our recovery rate from households continue to hold pretty steadily, in terms of total resource recovery. Our big challenge at the moment, in terms of recycling, is largely in our construction and demolition area and, to a lesser extent, in our commercial waste. They are areas where we are specifically focused on what are the impediments to undertaking additional recycling. We are talking generally about large volumes of waste in the commercial sector—upwards of 250,000 tonnes per annum. They are areas where that is the biggest gain.

With households, what we see is that they generally get it. They understand how they recycle. The contamination rates that we see through our waste audits are generally low compared to other jurisdictions. There is opportunity for households to do more. Generally, the community are participating well in the schemes that we put out. Things like the reduction in single-use plastics have made an impact. The actual waste generation rate in red bins is 1½ kilos or 1.2 kilos less than our last audit. We are seeing that reduction in numbers. Dr Kitchin, is there anything else?

Dr Kitchin: I have read and understand the privilege statement. We have undertaken a waste audit again this year, which we undertook in 2022 and 2024. We are really clear on some of the numbers; yes, the households are doing really well: 1.5 kilograms less of “red” waste from each household.

You asked about the challenges. We also do audits with our landfill, and we found that, by volume, there is an increase in tonnage of some of the textiles. We are looking at textiles for actual volumetrics, for where we can reduce textile waste. From a risk management perspective, we are working with the community on batteries, because of the risk. I think we are all aware of the risk of fires and making sure that the community is really aware of that. The recent audit has shown almost a 50 per cent reduction in batteries in our household bins.

MR BRADDOCK: Mr Fitzgerald, you mentioned the challenges with construction waste. What is the government’s strategy to try and turn that around?

Mr Fitzgerald: The Circular Economy Strategy looks at adaptive reuse as being a key function of trying to limit the amount, particularly, of demolition waste that goes through to landfill. It is still a very difficult problem to address. In the first instance, with looking at some of the streams that come through that demolition waste, such as timbers, concrete and other materials, it is about making sure that we have reliable sources to recycle those materials.

Generally, they are not activities that are undertaken by government; they are commercial activities. We need to make sure that, through our procurement practices and others, we are incentivising the opportunity for circular economy practices. That generates industry to be able to recycle the product and to make sure that there are viable solutions other than landfilling for that.

MR BRADDOCK: Are we making sure that they are experiencing the true cost of that landfill, to incentivise them not to, or to minimise their construction waste?

Mr Fitzgerald: The problem with trying to incentivise through landfill gate fees—I presume that is the solution that you are suggesting—is that we do have a competitive landfill market around the ACT. Any price increase here just leads to transportation of that material across the border; so it is not a fix.

Ms Cheyne: Or dumping.

Mr Fitzgerald: Indeed.

Ms Cheyne: I have some answers to things that I said I would try to answer.

THE CHAIR: Do you want to do that now?

Ms Cheyne: Sure. The early estimate for the sealing of Smiths Road is \$6 million to \$10 million. That is before doing any detailed investigation and design work, and it also excludes specific safety treatments like roadside barriers and road realignments. It is not just a case of putting some spray seal over it and hoping for the best. There would have to be pretty significant preparatory works. I said that it was significant, in terms of the difference between that and the grading. Grading it, each time, costs about \$11,000, so grading it each time costs hundreds of times less than sealing the road. I think it is two orders of magnitude or something. In terms of value for money, I think that paints a pretty stark picture. It was definitely resealed at the end of June, and it may have been resealed in the last few weeks, due to some heavy vehicle activity.

I think I have an answer to something else, but I have forgotten. It is 100 million containers.

Mr Fitzgerald: Yes.

MR BRADDOCK: I have a question about the RSPCA's new facility. How much funding has been committed for that facility? Also, how much has been provided so far?

Ms Cheyne: There is a \$40 million provision. I will ask Mr Childs to come to the table. He has been working on this project for a long time. \$40 million was provisioned. An amount of \$2 million has been made available through the most recent budget to go to the conclusion of the design works for the construction. Once that has reached a point of maturity, that unlocks the rest of the provision. The way it is being provided is through a grant. Effectively, because that means we are handing over a significant sum of money to the organisation, we need to be assured of the governance around it. That has probably been part of the conversation in the last few days, including on radio.

Mr Childs: The minister has pretty much hit the nail on the head. We are running through the negotiation process right now to release that \$2 million. Those negotiations have been going on for the last few months, and we anticipate them being wrapped up very soon.

MR BRADDOCK: There is \$40 million in total for the entirety of the project, \$2 million for the design phase and subsequent funds to be provided once that phase is completed. Is that a correct summary?

Mr Childs: That is right.

Ms Cheyne: The \$2 million is within the \$40 million envelope.

MR BRADDOCK: Thank you. That answers those questions.

MR WERNER-GIBBINGS: I have a question about Brindabella, because we have

had all this Yerrabi favouritism. The government is building a number of—

Ms Cheyne: Speaking of the Monaro Highway, the southbound closure is postponed.

MR WERNER-GIBBINGS: Say that again?

Ms Cheyne: The Monaro Highway southbound closure this weekend is postponed.

MR WERNER-GIBBINGS: Okay; that is not what I was going to ask about, but—

Ms Cheyne: No, but I thought you would appreciate it, all the same.

MR WERNER-GIBBINGS: Yes, I do; noted. I will pass it along. There are a number of new central playgrounds that have been built and that were announced earlier this year. That will be appreciated. Some questions have come up since then. Is there a plan or thinking being done by the directorate to look at, repair and replace the very small pocket playgrounds at the end of cul-de-sacs? There are three being done at Bonython, but there are probably 50 or 60 only in Tuggeranong that vary in age—50 years old, 30 years old, 20 years old—and that are in varying stages of repair. Some are fine; some have wood that is rotten, and that type of thing. Is any work being done on having a look at that?

Ms Cheyne: In the broad sense, yes. Playgrounds are inspected regularly and there is, effectively, a rolling program that responds to the auditing of playgrounds. Particularly where there are safety issues, those are prioritised, but more general repairs and refreshes can occur as well.

We do have a Play Space Strategy that reflects that there is a lot of nostalgia and fondness for some of these smaller pocket parks that might only have one or two pieces of equipment. When we have done community consultation, I ask kids all the time—and the answer often surprises me—“Do you want five small playgrounds in an area or do you want one big one?” Kids always say to me that they prefer to have one big one. The more playgrounds we have, the more that we need to spend on maintenance, auditing and so on. The balance that we are looking at across the ACT at the moment is about the value that is being provided by local playgrounds, community-based playgrounds and district playgrounds, and making sure that we have the right balance between all three.

THE CHAIR: On behalf of the committee, I thank you for your attendance today. A bunch of questions have been taken on notice that are outstanding; please provide your answers to the committee secretary within five business days of receiving the uncorrected proof *Hansard*.

Again, thank you to our witnesses, who have assisted the committee with their experience and knowledge. I also thank broadcasting and Hansard for their support. If a member wishes to ask questions on notice, please upload them to the portal as soon as possible, and no later than five business days from today. This meeting is now adjourned.

The committee adjourned at 10.59 am.