



LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY FOR THE AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

SELECT COMMITTEE ON ESTIMATES 2015-2016

(Reference: [Appropriation Bill 2015-2016 and Appropriation
\(Office of the Legislative Assembly\) Bill 2015-2016](#))

Members:

MR B SMYTH (Chair)
MS M FITZHARRIS (Deputy Chair)
DR C BOURKE
MS N LAWDER

TRANSCRIPT OF EVIDENCE

CANBERRA

WEDNESDAY, 24 JUNE 2015

Secretary to the committee:
Mrs N Kosseck (Ph 620 50435)

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

Capital Metro Agency	881, 957
Territory and Municipal Services Directorate	881

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Amended 20 May 2013

The committee met at 9.31 am.

Appearances:

Rattenbury, Mr Shane, Minister for Territory and Municipal Services, Minister for Justice, Minister for Sport and Recreation and Minister assisting the Chief Minister on Transport Reform

Territory and Municipal Services Directorate

Byles, Mr Gary, Director General

Perram, Mr Phillip, Executive Director, Parks and Territory Services

Iglesias, Mr Daniel, Director, Parks and Conservation, Parks and Territory Services

Trushell, Mr Michael, Director, ACT NOWaste, Parks and Territory Services

Flanery, Ms Fleur, Director, City Services, Parks and Territory Services

Little, Ms Vanessa, Director, Libraries ACT, Parks and Territory Services

Elliott, Mr Gordon, Acting Executive Director, Corporate and Business Enterprises

Childs, Mr Daniel, Acting General Manager, Capital Linen Service, Corporate and Business Enterprises

Horne, Mr Hamish, Chief Executive Officer, Canberra Cemeteries

Peters, Mr Paul, Executive Director, Infrastructure, Roads and Public Transport

Gill, Mr Tony, Director, Roads ACT, Infrastructure, Roads and Public Transport

McGlenn, Mr Ian, Acting Director, Public Transport, Network Planning and Development

Roulston, Mr David, Director, Asset Information and Management Services, Infrastructure, Roads and Public Transport

Capital Metro Agency

Thomas, Ms Emma, Project Director and Director-General

Edghill, Mr Duncan, Executive Director, Commercial

Allday, Mr Stephen, Executive Director, Procurement and Delivery

Taylor, Ms Melanie, Director, Communications and Stakeholder Engagement

THE CHAIR: Good morning, ladies and gentlemen. Welcome to the ninth day of public hearings of the Select Committee on Estimates 2015-2016. Today we will be looking at Territory and Municipal Services and the Capital Metro Agency.

Please be aware that the proceedings today are being recorded and will be transcribed by Hansard and then published. The proceedings are being broadcast as well as webstreamed. Before you on the table is the privilege statement. Could you please confirm that you have read the privilege card and that you understand the implications of privilege?

Mr Rattenbury: Yes, that is fine.

THE CHAIR: So noted. Before we go to questions, members, Mr Tony Gill, because he loves us so much and to make up for his non-start last year, has returned. He has some responsibilities in output class 1.4, land management, but he has to be

somewhere soon, so could we start with output class 1.4. I will ask a general question and then perhaps people could look at 1.4, to see if there is anything there that they want to ask questions on.

We might start, minister, with the follow-up financials. The total cost for the department in the current year is \$521 million; next year it is down to \$506 million. Could we have a reconciliation of what is going on there, please?

Mr Rattenbury: Yes, Mr Smyth. I will ask the finance director to answer that for you.

Mr Elliott: The main impact there of the drop in both the cost and the GPO is the transfer out of Canberra Connect to Access Canberra. So 2014-15 effectively had it for about six months and then it has been removed for 2015-16.

THE CHAIR: How much was transferred? Is it the full \$15 million, are there other losses or have you made some pluses?

Mr Elliott: There are some other ups and downs, but effectively that is around the figure—around that \$15 million.

THE CHAIR: Could we have a written reconciliation for the department of what came in and what came out?

Mr Elliott: Okay.

Mr Rattenbury: That is taken on notice.

THE CHAIR: On page 3 of budget paper H, what is happening with the staff numbers? Is that just the movement of Canberra Connect and Property Group?

Mr Elliott: Yes. The reduction from the 2014-15 budget to the estimated outcome primarily relates to the transfer out of property services and Canberra Connect.

THE CHAIR: There are no other losses?

Mr Elliott: No, those are the two major transfers.

MS LAWDER: Did you say two major transfers?

Mr Elliott: I am sorry; they are the two transfers we had for the year.

THE CHAIR: Members, are there any questions particularly for land management, which includes Yarralumla Nursery and the arboretum?

MS FITZHARRIS: Yes, thank you. I wanted to say congratulations to the directorate on those survey results which came out yesterday, comparing TAMS' performance across the country. I read that it was excellent, so congratulations.

I want to ask about land management. In particular, a number of constituents have got in touch with me, particularly in the newer suburbs in Gungahlin, in some confusion, I

think, about who is responsible for mowing, in terms of whether it is the developer, for example. It might be Village Building Co in the Broadview area, or possibly around the back of Bonner with the LDA. In Forde there is another joint venture arrangement. So there is confusion over who is responsible for it and also on what is urban open space and what is a park. Can you explain for me what the differences are and who is responsible for what?

Mr Rattenbury: Certainly. It depends, of course, on the land classification and to some extent the timing. TAMS remains responsible for urban open space at all times. However, during the development of an estate, for example, those areas that would be considered urban open space may still be the responsibility of a developer, if they have taken a larger area. So during that development phase they are responsible. I know one issue that has come up—I think you wrote to me, Ms Fitzharris—was about an area where the Village Building Co was still responsible. Once you brought that to my attention TAMS contacted them and asked them to take responsibility for that particular area.

There is a period in which an estate that has been developed remains with the developer, and then there is a point, once TAMS essentially receives the asset, when TAMS becomes responsible for it. So it can be a bit confusing for the average person, but we usually have a clear sense of it, and if there is a particular location, I would be more than happy to follow it up, to check its current status.

MS FITZHARRIS: Thank you. In terms of parks being mowed, I think something that is probably classified or designated as urban open space is viewed by some people as a park, not in any sort of technical term. Are there distinctions between how often a park would be mowed and how often urban open space would be mowed?

Ms Flanery: In respect of your question about what is a park, a park is usually something that has a name. There are lots of areas of urban open space that, as you know, people might think of as parkland, but all our parks actually have a name. In terms of mowing frequency, there is quite a complex program whereby areas are mown according to usage. On the whole, high use parks are mown every two weeks during the growing season, and sportsgrounds weekly or twice weekly.

MS FITZHARRIS: Is that all available online?

Mr Rattenbury: It is. It is fair to say that over the last summer we received an increased level of feedback from the community. They were frustrated by the mowing. There are a couple of things I can say there. As members know, we did have a particularly wet January. That had two effects. One is that it meant the grass essentially got fuelled at a time that it would normally be dying off and drying. Normally we do not have to mow much during that time. The other effect was that because it was wet it was hard to mow at times. That meant there was a backlog for quite some months.

It would be fair to say that we got a higher level of feedback about mowing than normal. One of the responses to that from the government through this budget is to allocate additional resources for mowing next year, to put essentially an extra mow into the entire program, to respond to that concern we have had from the community.

MS FITZHARRIS: My next question was about the budget initiative this year. Will that information be made available on the website as well, in terms of when that extra mow will happen or a pattern for that?

Mr Rattenbury: It is available in the sense that we have announced it. In the sense of people seeing what that will look like, the full mowing program is available. There will not be a particular mow where we would say, "This is the extra one," but people will see an increased frequency of mows in their areas through that published mowing program.

MS FITZHARRIS: Are you able to explain the additional \$8 million initiative for increased services for new suburbs?

Mr Rattenbury: That reflects that each year TAMS inherits new areas that it becomes responsible for. There is an agreed formula with Treasury that reflects the expansion of the city. So TAMS is given additional resources on an annual basis to reflect those new areas of responsibility, and so that they can upkeep them. That is a range of things—mowing, street sweeping, all of the basic municipal services that TAMS provides.

MS FITZHARRIS: I have a question on tree maintenance. Someone got in touch with me regarding where trees sprout and start to have suckers coming off the bottom. Is increased tree maintenance part of the additional new initiative or is that something that is—

Ms Flanery: Yes, \$600,000 has been allocated basically to remove vegetation around road signage and other assets such as bus stops. In terms of regular maintenance, which is what you are referring to, we are of course always trying to refine those programs. If there are any situations like that, people can contact Access Canberra and report those, and we will have someone look at them.

THE CHAIR: Dr Bourke had a supplementary.

DR BOURKE: No; all my supplementaries on mowing have been answered.

THE CHAIR: That is it? All right. Ms Lawder has a supplementary, then a new question, Dr Bourke.

MR COE: I have supps also.

THE CHAIR: Ms Lawder, then Mr Coe.

MS LAWDER: About mowing of sportsgrounds, did you say it is every two weeks?

Mr Rattenbury: Sportsgrounds are done much more frequently, generally on a weekly basis, and in some parts of the season, I think, up to twice a week, just because of the higher grade we keep those at compared to unirrigated areas.

MS LAWDER: I did have a complaint, I think from Lanyon Little Athletics, that they

had a carnival, they asked for mowing during the week prior to the carnival and it did not take place and the grass was ankle high. I think it was around that really high growing time.

Mr Rattenbury: I am surprised to hear that because that is the only complaint I have heard all year about the sportsgrounds. They tend to go quite well. Most of the concerns have been about other areas.

MS LAWDER: I will go back to them and try and find out.

Mr Rattenbury: I am not saying it was not the case; I am just saying that I am sorry to hear that. That is the only one I have come across with the sportsgrounds, and it is obviously a problem when they are trying to host their carnival.

MS LAWDER: Yes, and they got negative comments from parents coming from other areas about the state of the club. That is it for me.

MR COE: Pending the cross-country carnival?

MS LAWDER: Yes.

MR COE: With regard to the extra mow, when was that decision taken?

Mr Rattenbury: It was taken during the budget preparation process this year.

MR COE: Was that before or after the latest mowing contract was signed?

Mr Rattenbury: I honestly do not know, Mr Coe.

MR COE: What I am getting to is: was there a contract variation there or does the contract allow scaling up? How does it work?

Ms Flanery: My understanding is that the decision for the additional mowing services was provided as part of the budget process. Just to clarify, the majority of Canberra is mown by in-house resources, including sportsgrounds. All areas of open space parks are mown by in-house staff. That changed in October last year when we contracted out the arterial road mowing. So the only area that is currently mown by contractors is along the arterial motorways at this moment. We had a number of contracts ceasing, and we have reassessed the way we were providing those services.

MR COE: Are those arterial roads getting an extra mow or is it just the grass which is being mown in house?

Ms Flanery: There is one additional mow across the whole of the city, so it would be one. Those arterial roads would be given an additional mow. And there is money in the budget for surge capacity if we have increased rainfall or if there are particular areas that need mowing and we have not yet quite refined where that will be. We are working through that program.

MR COE: Going back the original question, was this known at the time of going to

the contract, the arterial contract, and therefore what impacts it would have had in terms of advertising the tender?

Mr Rattenbury: Having thought about that now, the answer to your question is no. The decision to fund extra mowing came after the allocating of the contracts.

MR COE: What is the cost of doing an extra mow for arterial roads?

Ms Flanery: I would have to take that one on notice.

MR COE: Yes, if you would, please. With regard to that contract—which went to the Melbourne company, and I see Victorian number plates on the side of the road where people are mowing the grass—how many times under that contract do they have to mow the grass adjacent to arterial roads?

Ms Flanery: The frequency in the last season, the 2014-15 summer, was that they mowed the arterial roads five times. At that stage there were two contractors involved because one contract was ceasing and another one was beginning. So it was five times. That was two full mows and three partial mows. The partial mows were five-metre-wide mows from the side of the road.

MR COE: So this is an extra full mow or a partial mow that is being done for arterial roads?

Ms Flanery: That has not been decided yet. We are trying to look at all the costings and work out where and how, because it also has not been decided if the contractors do that. There has been no discussion with contractors around who is doing the additional mow.

MR COE: Would the additional mow have to go to the existing contractor or can it go to other contractors?

Mr Perram: The mowing regime across the whole of the territory is a very complex area. The essence of what we are able to do with the budget that has been provided is go from five mows on arterial roads to six mows. Whether that is provided by the contractor or by our in-house services depends on the modelling that we are currently doing. It also, of course, depends on the seasonal conditions and whether we pick out certain areas that need it and certain areas that do not, depending on how the rainfall runs through the city.

MR COE: Okay. So—

Mr Perram: So there is no disadvantage financially for the contract to expand to pick up an additional mow, because it is an aggregation of the amount, and that has been budgeted for in the budget. But also we have a capability for using those funds in house if that is the best model that we are able to put forward.

MR COE: Sure. I guess it was perhaps slightly complicated by the statement that there would be an additional mow, and it is not necessarily going to be that because the allocation is barely being used somewhere for two or three mows somewhere else

but no additional mow elsewhere. I guess that—

Mr Perram: Perhaps I could word it that the modelling is being prepared on an additional mow basis. However, if it is best found to be in a slightly different area, and based on the seasonal conditions we confront during the year, it may not be six mows; it may be seven mows, say, in the south if they have additional rain and five in the north if they do not. So—

MR COE: Sure. Just finally, is there, in effect, an exclusivity clause or a commitment in the arterial road mowing contract that any additional work done on arterial roads will be done by that contractor as opposed to in house or another contractor?

Ms Flanery: I will take that one on notice.

MR COE: Thanks.

THE CHAIR: Dr Bourke, a new question?

DR BOURKE: Thank you. The widening of the entry gates at the arboretum, minister—can you give me some details about the plans to do that? And are there any plans to create another entrance, perhaps towards Belconnen, so that my constituents can gain access to the arboretum even more easily than they can now?

Mr Perram: Through you, minister, in relation to the widening of the gates, the popularity of the arboretum, particularly the number of buses going through it, has been the cause of that change. Basically two buses cannot pass through the original configuration of the gates; we are widening those out so that they can and there is no risk of an accident happening through that area. That is the primary reason. As to the access to Belconnen, no. The access going onto the—

DR BOURKE: “No never” or “not yet”?

Mr Perram: I am thinking the “no.”

THE CHAIR: Just “no.”

Mr Perram: But there is an access road—in the Molonglo subdivision there will be a road—that comes onto Parkes Way from the west. That will be the access provision or exit provision coming out of the arboretum. So there is a double access entrance and exit. There is a lot of modelling to be done with that, but alternative access is being investigated as part of that area.

DR BOURKE: More westerly, towards—

Mr Perram: Southerly, really, is probably the best way to describe it.

DR BOURKE: Southerly.

Mr Perram: Towards Woden.

DR BOURKE: When will that plan come about?

Mr Rattenbury: There is no time frame on that at this stage. It was not funded in the budget this year and it is a bit dependent on the timing of the Molonglo Road developments. It is one of those parallel processes. We want to take advantage of those new road developments but at the same time we are quite mindful of the need to create a second entrance into the arboretum. So “a work in process” is perhaps the best description.

DR BOURKE: Can you tell me about the extra resources for graffiti removal and prevention, please?

Mr Rattenbury: Yes. The approach the government is taking is twofold. One is that those additional resources that are provided in the budget will see the employment of a graffiti coordinator within TAMS. Having that position is about actually working with the street art community to provide legal spaces and manage that in a more productive way. We have had a couple of instances recently where there has been some miscommunication and people have been unhappy with the outcome. Part of that is trying to make sure that we channel some of the energy into the legal locations. There will also be additional resources for the removal of graffiti from public assets.

DR BOURKE: What do you describe as public assets, minister? I have got people complaining about graffiti that has been daubed over fences which face onto public land. Is that a public space that you are taking responsibility for?

Mr Rattenbury: No; those are considered private assets under the traditional boundary rules.

DR BOURKE: So why is it a private asset? If you or I, for instance, had a suburban boundary, the fence would be our joint responsibility. But when it comes to the government and the individual, it is the individual’s entire responsibility. Is that what you are telling me?

Mr Rattenbury: That is the rules; that has been the practice, yes.

DR BOURKE: What about the rest of the community that has to see this unsightly or offensive graffiti if the landowner does not choose to do anything about it?

Mr Rattenbury: TAMS will make representations to the landowners but we also have a range of other strategies in place. That is where working to provide legal sites for graffiti and the like is part of a two-pronged strategy.

DR BOURKE: Can you tell me about the steps that TAMS takes with landholders to have graffiti removed?

Ms Flanery: We contact the resident and note that there have been complaints. We provide them with some advice about how it can be removed. In some cases we also offer to plant shrubs. That is a bit of a mixed approach, because sometimes there are security issues with having shrubs on the back fences; some people do not want to pursue that option. But we generally try to work with the landholder. I feel very much

for them, but on the same hand, under the legislation, it is their responsibility to look after their fence.

DR BOURKE: What if they do not want to do anything and they refuse to do anything? What do you do then?

Ms Flanery: It is a democratic society. People have the right to make choices about what they have on their fences and do not have.

DR BOURKE: But these are fences that are visible to the rest of the community that is complaining about what is on that particular fence. You have abrogated your responsibility to maintain that publicly visible space, so what are you going to do about it?

Mr Rattenbury: I think the nature of it is that it is true that some members of our community find that particularly distressing and they notice it every time they drive past but others do not notice it at all and are not distressed by it.

DR BOURKE: Thank you.

THE CHAIR: A supplementary from Ms Fitzharris and then a new question from Ms Lawder.

MS FITZHARRIS: I want to ask about the progress on the legal graffiti sites. I know that I have spoken with you and your office about one in particular in the underpass of Mirra-bei Drive. There was a lot of feedback that most people who walked around that wonderful body of water liked every part of it except going near there. They quite liked the graffiti that was up there. They found it charming, hidden away and a nice surprise in that natural environment. Can you give us an update on where you are at with working with the street artists and working on this legal graffiti scheme?

Mr Rattenbury: I think that example that you have cited was one of the ones that got us focused on the fact we were not getting it quite right. But I will ask Ms Flanery to provide further detail.

Ms Flanery: We have done a number of things in relation to that site and I do acknowledge that we were perhaps a little paint happy there in painting over the area. We have met with a member of the Gungahlin Community Council and some street artists, particularly one of the ones who actually painted the graffiti or street art. We have been trying to get ideas about how we can actually turn a negative into a positive and really see how we can utilise that space. It is quite an amazing site. The minister is also having a roundtable with a whole lot of members of the graffiti community.

Mr Rattenbury: Next week.

Ms Flanery: Next week. And we have been doing a lot of work even before assets like bridges and things are built to look at: will they be appropriate for graffiti? How will we manage these sites? How long should graffiti last there? If it is ephemeral what is the paint-over time? How long does it stay? But we are trying to get the street art community and the communities that live around those areas to make some of

those decisions. We do not want to have a very draconian approach saying, “Yes. No.” It is really trying to be a lot more flexible.

THE CHAIR: A new question, Ms Lawder.

MS LAWDER: Land management includes the extra mowing, weed removal, tree maintenance et cetera. You may have heard that the conservation council weeds person suggested on our first day of estimates that there had been \$700,000 removed from the weeds budget in our reserves. Are you able to shed some light on that?

Mr Rattenbury: Yes. The two issues are not related. I will perhaps draw that out first. The extra money you refer to is, I guess, a deliberate decision by the government to increase the amount of resources available. In terms of the weeds in reserve areas it is not so much that money has been removed. There has been supplementary funding in the last two years and that is as a result of my agreement with the Chief Minister in the parliamentary agreement. That funding was not supported this year. The supplementation that has been there for the last two years was not provided.

MS LAWDER: Can you perhaps talk through the ramifications? This gentleman, Geoff, I think his name was, talked about the conditions in the ACT—one seed, 50 years to get rid of it—and whilst we may be cleaning up in the more urban or suburban area the seeds will still be coming in from other areas. Can you talk about what that looks like in the ACT?

Mr Iglesias: Weeds management is an annual responsibility for the parks service. What we do every single year is look at our priorities as they relate to nature conservation and where we can get the best value from delivering a weeds program. We actually produce a line-by-line schedule of what weeds we will target in which nature reserves throughout all of the ACT. We have nature reserves which are very high quality in both north and south and which are impacted by weeds such as serrated tussock or Chilean needle grass. And these typically are very invasive weeds and depend on a program which straddles a number of years.

I think we have shown, over a number of years now, that we have that ongoing program to deal with exactly the situation you are describing, which is that there are weed seeds out there and we have to keep up a program of weed control. And we do that by looking at our estate, identifying those highest conservation areas and ensuring that we have a robust weed program.

MS LAWDER: I do not have the transcript in front of me but my recollection is that he suggested that there was no scientific basis for removing or changing that funding for the reserves and it would have a detrimental effect including for mowing. Can you explain what you do to avoid the transfer of seeds from areas that may be quite contaminated to other areas?

Mr Iglesias: We work very closely with our colleagues in city services in relation to what you are describing. It is called weed hygiene. One of the main reasons weeds spread is that they travel on mowers. And we have identified over the years a system by which we can minimise that happening, again in the highest conservation areas. We have actually got a unit which is effectively a trailer which we use for our

vehicles, for example the parks vehicles. When people are moving out of one reserve into the next they are able to clean their vehicle effectively. There is a procedure in place to ensure that when the actual units that undertake the mowing move from one spot to another they are cleaned out to ensure they are not carrying weed seeds from point A—

MS LAWDER: What do you mean by a spot?

Mr Iglesias: I beg your pardon?

MS LAWDER: When you say from one spot to another what is that?

Mr Iglesias: It is a difficulty that our staff might have over the course of a week. They may need to visit three or four different areas. What we try and do is start the week in the area with the least weeds and move to the area with the most weeds. But as they move from one nature reserve to another nature reserve it is important that they clean down. If the machinery they are using happens to have weed seeds on it we try our best to clean it down and make sure we are not transferring those weed seeds to the second nature reserve.

Mr Rattenbury: The other thing I should add in this space, which I do not think was put in discussion the previous Friday, is that under the budget there was also an additional allocation of resources for working the lower Cotter catchment. This is a key area of concern for the Parks and Conservation Service and one where we have known we need to allocate some resources.

There is an additional \$2 million per annum there roughly. And part of that will include dealing with weeds in that significant and important area. I think the characterisation that there has been this loss of money for weeds over here is not a full assessment of what is in the budget in the sense that there will be a significantly enhanced effort in the Cotter catchment now to deal with a range of weeds as well as well as feral species and other issues in that catchment.

MS LAWDER: Are you able to take on notice and provide us with a breakdown of the weed funding over the past five years compared to this current year?

Mr Rattenbury: Yes, that is fine.

MS LAWDER: You just mentioned the lower Cotter catchment. How much of that funding will be targeted towards weeds versus, for example, erosion control, which was another key area identified in the Auditor-General's report?

Mr Iglesias: I would have to take that on notice to give you the detail. How about I take it on notice and I will be more specific? I have in my mind a general breakdown. There is a significant amount for weeds and a significant amount for erosion and sediment control but I will take it on notice and give you the exact breakdown.

MS LAWDER: And anything else in that funding—how much for weeds, how much for erosion and what else will be done?

Mr Iglesias: Sure.

THE CHAIR: Mr Coe, a question in this area.

MR COE: I have a question with regard to the territory's urban areas, in particular nature reserves. What is the status of the Harcourt Hill nature reserve?

Mr Iglesias: The status? What do you mean?

MR COE: Is it a nature reserve or not? There seems to be a fair bit of doubt about this. Indeed, there seems to be conflicting information on the TAMS website. I can vaguely recall signage there at one point which suggested it was a nature reserve. However I believe currently it may not be gazetted as such. Are you able to shed some light on this?

Mr Iglesias: Typically with the Canberra nature park, which is the hills and ridges in the urban area, we manage a lot of the area. We manage it as if it was nature reserve but it does not necessarily follow that the particular area of land is actually gazetted public land nature reserve pursuant to the territory plan. Harcourt Hill may well be one of these spots. What I can do is check that for you. The question would be: is it public land nature reserve and are we managing it as a nature reserve? Would that be correct?

MR COE: Yes, that is right. The TAMS website seems to be quite inconsistent in terms of using the term "nature reserve" versus not using it. Sometimes it is included. There is a glossy brochure, a 36-odd page brochure, that was produced in 2013 which does include Harcourt Hill nature reserve. However I can find pretty much no gazettal of that. We are concerned about what the implications are one way or the other.

Mr Rattenbury: We will follow that one up. There does appear to be some uncertainty.

THE CHAIR: That is a fair coverage of output class 1.4. We have still got to do 1.2 and 1.3 before 11 am. Mr Gill has got away with not answering anything. He is probably free to go. What areas does he actually have management of in this portfolio?

Mr Rattenbury: Just about any particular active travel issues that come up and the like. There are quite a number of TAMS line items around site infrastructure as such.

THE CHAIR: This is in 1.4?

Mr Rattenbury: Yes. We tend to flow a bit in these hearings. It is really if people want to go to any of those.

MR COE: They are not Roads ACT?

Mr Rattenbury: Sorry?

MR COE: The cycle paths are not in Roads ACT?

Mr Rattenbury: There is some crossover into active travel as well. We are just trying to be helpful here. With the shopping centre issues, particularly the shopping centres that butt up between the parks and city services and roads, we are just trying to make sure we cover that base.

DR BOURKE: Are we not doing roads and sustainable transport after lunch?

THE CHAIR: That is the ACTION segment of roads and sustainable transport.

Mr Rattenbury: I do not want to overcomplicate it. I am happy just to keep cracking on.

THE CHAIR: Members, we have got output class 1.1, 1.3 and 1.4. We might reverse the order. Mr Coe, we will go back to you and start the next round of questions. Information, waste or land management—go for your life.

MR COE: I have a question regarding rubbish at the tip.

Mr Rattenbury: Yes.

MR COE: Where are things at with regard to capacity and also to the review, I think done by KPMG, into the issues regarding the cell, when it will be required and the life expectancy of the tip?

Mr Rattenbury: I will ask Mr Michael Trushell to give you the full detail on the expansion and the capacity.

Mr Trushell: Currently we are in the final stages of completing the construction of two new cells, A2AC. They will be online next month. In the next budget we received funding for the construction of what is referred to as area 1. When that is complete, that will provide landfill capacity through to 2020.

MR COE: Is it KPMG who did the investigation? Where is it up to?

Mr Byles: Currently we are going through the recommendations to ensure that they are implemented in a timely manner. I have regular conversations with the executive director in that area—indeed, the director of NOWaste. Most of the concerns revolved around contract management and the monitoring regime. We have now put some alternative strategies in place to minimise the recurrence of such an issue.

MR COE: Sure, but in terms of the KPMG report, what were their findings?

Mr Byles: I do not have the report in front of me, Mr Coe. I am happy to speak broadly to it, but essentially it was about those issues. A better monitoring regime and contract management are the two key things that come to mind. Mr Perram might want to elaborate.

Mr Perram: Primarily it was exactly that in relation to the contract management on the site at Mugga. It was also in relation to ensuring the integrity of the site and

maximisation of the site so that the amount of waste going into the landfill was maximised. It may sound a bit unusual, but, if you like, waste management is talking about four dimensions. You have length, depth and height, but you have also got density. Density has one of the greatest consumptions of space if you do not get it right, because if you are getting half a tonne into a cubic metre instead of a tonne, you are using twice as much land space. A lot of it out of the KPMG report was to ensure the integrity of the use of waste and the disposal waste and maximising the site itself.

MR COE: I think in the annual reports hearings we spoke about the concern with the capacity or the rate at which rubbish was coming, as to which side of the equation was problematic. Can you pinpoint one being a greater contributor to the situation we confronted at Christmas?

Mr Perram: The issue that was struck—I will stand corrected by Michael, who can provide more detail—was that the original construction of A2AC, the cell that is coming online next month, had assumed an impingement or a lack of availability of space into that site of about 10 per cent. What actually happened during the construction period was that it was about 20 per cent. So that air space was not available for the placement of waste within the landfill cell. As soon as it opens, that landfill space is available again. It is a timing issue as far as availability is concerned rather than anything else. That was primarily the concern related to that—the loss of space, for want of a better description.

MR COE: Is Mugga functioning at full capacity now?

Mr Rattenbury: Yes.

MR COE: When did it reopen to full capacity?

Mr Rattenbury: In December last year—December 2014.

MR COE: At this stage what is the projected capacity of the existing infrastructure, the existing layout, at Mugga?

Mr Perram: Is that with A2AC, the new cell that is opening next month?

MR COE: Yes.

Mr Perram: So it is at the end of April?

MR COE: In effect, with what you have got in the pipeline, how much capacity or how many years will that facilitate?

Mr Perram: I think Michael answered that. With A2AC, the one that is opening next month, as well as the new cell that is budgeted in this budget paper, that will take us through to 2020.

MR COE: With regard to the dumping of Mr Fluffy waste, is that still going to be exclusively Belconnen?

Mr Rattenbury: Yes, except that the actual Mr Fluffy, which is sucked out and put in a bag, goes to the Mugga asbestos dump. The actual houses and the demolition will all go to west Belconnen, yes.

MR COE: How many areas are there at Mugga that have historical asbestos waste? I know that when I have driven around there, there are some areas which are fenced off and totally closed up; I understand that is because there is some asbestos waste. Are there any plans to collate or centralise those various asbestos piles or stockpiles?

Mr Rattenbury: There are two questions there. One is how many locations are there. Is your second question: are we actually planning to dig them up and consolidate them?

MR COE: Yes.

Mr Rattenbury: I think the answer to the latter would be no. It would be an enormous piece of work, and one that would bring risk that I do not think we need. In terms of the number of locations, we would have to take that on notice.

Mr Perram: And, minister, if I could confirm what you said there, we do not have any proposal to open up asbestos cells. They are recorded as dangerous sites, and in relation to any future works on those sites, if anyone is putting a DA in, they would automatically come up as sites where there is asbestos located.

MR COE: How much general waste went to Belconnen during the closure period of Mugga?

Mr Trushell: Around 20,000 tonnes.

MR COE: In terms of an average week, how much waste would go to landfill—to get the 20,000 perspective?

Mr Trushell: Twenty thousand is about one month's worth of waste to Mugga at full capacity.

MR COE: If Mr Fluffy waste goes to Belconnen and Mugga gets to a point where it is at capacity, will there be capacity at Belconnen in addition to Mr Fluffy for general waste?

Mr Rattenbury: Yes. The emergency landfill component of Belconnen is not being affected by Mr Fluffy; it is being put in a different space.

MR COE: What was the total cost of transferring waste to Belconnen as opposed to Mugga, and were the contractors successful in their attempts to be reimbursed for the additional transportation costs?

Mr Trushell: The cost of the west Belconnen activation was \$612,000. No contractor sought to obtain compensation.

MR COE: Right.

Mr Trushell: The way that it was managed was that we worked with the contractors. In some respects it was advantageous, particularly to those that were operating on the north side. It was easy for them to go to west Belconnen. We worked with SITA, the domestic kerbside contractor, to cause the least amount of inconvenience to them. The result was that there were no claims necessary for compensation.

THE CHAIR: Ms Lawder has a supp on this, as does Ms Fitzharris.

MS LAWDER: Thank you. Minister, I think you said the work at Mugga was completed in December. But there were ongoing issues well into the new year, February and March. If it was completed in December, what were the ongoing issues?

Mr Rattenbury: You mean the ongoing issues in the sense that some residents were still experiencing odour issues?

MS LAWDER: Yes.

Mr Rattenbury: I received some letters; I think the last I received was probably in early February—the fifth or sixth, from memory. It does seem that there were some settling issues, but certainly the works were completed, so we were surprised by those reports.

MS LAWDER: I thought I had received some advice that the tip face was still open into the new year.

Mr Trushell: I think what the minister initially said was that the operation of west Belconnen ceased in December and we returned the waste to Mugga Lane. As part of the strategy around that, we re-profiled Mugga Lane, which allowed us to create additional space there. That was the cause of the odour complaints, as a result of exposing and re-profiling old waste. We completed that work by February.

MS LAWDER: Yes.

Mr Perram: By re-profiling, we mean the south facing wall of the waste, so looking towards—

MS LAWDER: I did get a briefing on it. I was saying that—

Mr Perram: I just was not sure if—

MS LAWDER: My understanding from the briefing I received was that it was due to be completed before Christmas. But it was not completed. Is that—

Mr Rattenbury: That is right. Sorry, that is my confusion I created there.

Mr Trushell: The original intention was to run the west Belconnen operation for a longer period of time. It saved significant money to do the re-profiling works at Mugga and shut west Belconnen down within the time frame that we did.

MS LAWDER: When you plan these works do you think about the social impacts? There are many people in the area—Fadden and Macarthur mostly, but I am sure other suburbs. At a time when a lot of people were home on holidays, they found it impossible to eat outside, to have barbecues or even to have their windows open during the summer. Do you think about these things when you are planning the works?

Mr Rattenbury: Of course we do. There is no doubt that it was not ideal to have to do this, but for reasons that have been discussed in this committee before, we did need to do remedial works. At the tip a series of odour control measures were put in place, but, as has been evident to all of us, some people still experienced odour problems. We regret that, and I have certainly apologised to people who were affected by it. It was unfortunate. All best efforts were made to avoid those consequences, but there were still some consequences.

Mr Trushell: Minister, may I add a further comment to that? We ceased that operation on Christmas Eve for a period of three weeks over that Christmas period and recommenced after that. So there was an attempt through that initial holiday period to avoid the inconvenience to residents.

MS LAWDER: Thank you.

THE CHAIR: A supplementary from Ms Fitzharris, then a new question from Ms Lawder and then Dr Bourke.

MS FITZHARRIS: Minister, I want to ask about the initiative in the budget relating to improved waste resource recovery. Can you give us a little more detail about the timing and the benefits of exploring a business case for a waste-to-energy facility?

Mr Rattenbury: Yes, certainly. Those funds provided in the budget will enable the directorate to do a full analysis of, I guess, the next steps in our waste management in the ACT. We are at a point where we do need to make some significant decisions about the ACT's waste infrastructure for the next decade or so. This money is to make sure that we do forward work on that to achieve the government's waste objectives of maximising the amount of material recovered and, where possible, extracting energy from some of that waste. Certainly my primary focus is on making sure that we get the highest order use out of the materials. TAMS, in partnership with the environment directorate, will work on that over the coming 12 to 18 months to provide government with a decision on the best way to proceed in terms of our next capital investment.

MS FITZHARRIS: Is there an identified site? Is that the work that is going to take place over the next 18 months?

Mr Rattenbury: It is. The presumption is that we would use the existing Mugga site for facilities. But if there are other solutions that come up that are acceptable and that deliver the environmental outcomes we are after, my mind is not closed on that. But we might start with that presumption.

MS FITZHARRIS: Are there any facilities like this that you are aware of in Australia or internationally that you might be looking at as a model?

Mr Rattenbury: From a waste-to-energy point of view, there are certainly plants in Europe. In Australia?

Mr Trushell: There are some plants currently being developed in Western Australia. But I think the point to make with this is that the project and the strategy are not just around energy from waste. That is for the residual waste. The project also looks at improved resource recovery and recycling facilities as a priority with residual waste going into energy from waste. The project is not solely about energy from waste.

MS FITZHARRIS: In terms of resources, what have you got going into waste minimisation in the first place? Are there many resources that go into educating the community? I just add that my kids have loved the recycling. When the TAMS folk, I think it is, come into the schools, it is one of the things that really gets them excited when they are four or five years old. They come home and tell us off. I have noticed a real benefit in kids learning that at such a young age.

Mr Rattenbury: It is a recognised benefit. Not only kids learn but it is quite clear that they go home and work very hard with their parents. I think that is a very successful program.

Just coming back to the energy to waste, Ms Fitzharris, I also flag that at this point we need to be mindful of the issues surrounding energy from waste, in terms of emissions and the like. I am certainly yet to be convinced that is the right solution. I simply say that to flag that at this stage our focus is on, I guess, achieving the objectives the government has of minimising the amount of waste going to landfill and maximising the reuse and the recycling of as many materials as possible.

THE CHAIR: I have a supplementary on that. What you are saying is that the decision for a waste-to-energy facility has not been made?

Mr Rattenbury: No.

THE CHAIR: This feasibility study will come to a conclusion as to what should be done and what could be done?

Mr Rattenbury: Correct.

THE CHAIR: It has been put to me that one of the concerns for a waste-to-energy facility is that you have got to feed the beast.

Mr Rattenbury: Exactly.

THE CHAIR: Whoever builds that facility, I assume, will want to lock in guarantees of minimum amounts of waste.

Mr Rattenbury: That is exactly one of the reservations I have and that have been put to me. I guess that is why the government has allocated these resources—to make sure that we fully consider those sorts of issues. I would hate to see a situation where waste that could be reutilised in some higher value sense was being burnt for energy.

THE CHAIR: The government now calls it “NOWaste”. It used to be “NOWaste by 2010”. The ACT used to lead the world in this. For instance, San Francisco have now declared that they will be no waste by 2018, which is an outstanding achievement for a city of that size. When will you stop sending waste to landfill?

Mr Rattenbury: When will we?

THE CHAIR: Yes.

Mr Rattenbury: I do not have a date on that at this time.

THE CHAIR: Why not?

Mr Rattenbury: You can look at the data and see that the ACT has stalled a little bit in recent years—

THE CHAIR: We certainly have.

Mr Rattenbury: and that is what the intent of this new work is—to identify the best possible strategies and look at what other jurisdictions are doing. I held a roundtable just last week with some people external to government who work in the field to really try and tap into the best knowledge in our community to make sure that we are putting the ACT back at the forefront.

THE CHAIR: A new question, Dr Bourke.

DR BOURKE: My question is to output class 1.2 because I understand that Mr Gill is not going to be available for us shortly. It is about the feasibility study budget funding of \$100,000 for footpaths and cycling paths around the Belconnen town centre and an additional \$100,000 to assess connections between west Belconnen, the town centre and other town centres. Can you tell us something about that, minister?

Mr Rattenbury: Yes. You will see in the budget a number of initiatives similar to this across parts of town. What we are endeavouring to do, as part of the government’s broader objective, is increase active travel in the city—so walking and cycling across a number of paths of the city. We are looking to address gaps in the network and to identify areas where a cyclepath needs an upgrade, where there is a gap in the cycle network or where additional footpaths are required, either as an upgrade of one that might be in need of maintenance or where additional pieces of the network will be beneficial.

I guess the nature of these allocations is that we are looking at specific parts of town. Certainly in my mind the town centres are some of those places where we can make a lot of gains quite quickly. You certainly see this in Civic with the provision of the city cycle loop and now the Bunda Street shareway. The city has a number of other cycleways—for example, on London Circuit. The city has become rather more cycle friendly than it was previously. I think that we now need to look to do the same in places such as Belconnen town centre and Woden.

DR BOURKE: What sort of time frame is there for this work, minister?

Mr Rattenbury: Mr Gill, you might give me relief here?

Mr Gill: Always pleased to relieve the minister. As the minister described, funding is provided for feasibility and forward design in the current year. This will identify measures that basically have been sort of flagged in the various master plans. Belconnen or Woden are specific examples. They have been flagged I suppose not in a detailed level in these plans, but basically they require some additional work to confirm the feasibility and also to establish an order of cost.

Mr Rattenbury: What this reflects in the broader sense is that in this year's budget you will see there is a series of projects funded for construction this year. Then I guess that it is a rolling program as we had last year. There were a series of feasibility studies that are now being executed. We have got that rolling program so that we do not sort of come to a shuddering halt while more studies and designs are done.

Mr Gill: In terms of a specific example, as well as the Belconnen electorate, Benjamin Way is an example of a connection through the town centre. At the moment when you look at it from a cyclist's point of view, it is basically poorly served. This work would look at that and see what could be achieved on a route such as that. It is one of the main routes through the town centre.

DR BOURKE: On those shared paths where pedestrians and cyclists mix, minister, are you going to be looking at some wider paths to accommodate those higher speed commuter cyclists in their mix with the pedestrians?

Mr Rattenbury: Certainly work is being done on the inner north cyclepath that is funded in this budget, because that is an area where we are experiencing significant congestion. We have actually got—I do not want to say too many cyclists; you can never have too many cyclists. But there are a lot of people using that area. So that one is being widened more as a capacity issue.

When it comes to the interaction between cyclists and pedestrians, I think this is much more a cultural issue than an infrastructure issue at this point in time. The vulnerable road users inquiry last year, which I recall you were on, certainly identified the need for further work in this space. Work is being done both to prepare a code of conduct, which can be used, and to roll that out as part of our ongoing education programs.

Really it comes down to people being courteous to each other. I have seen some fairly appalling examples of cyclists on footpaths, either travelling too fast or not being, frankly, fair to pedestrians. I have also seen some pedestrians—it can get quite tough, as a person who does use a bell on my bike. There are an increasing number of pedestrians with noise cancelling headphones who cannot hear a bicycle bell. These are the challenges and we simply need people to perhaps be a little more courteous to each other in the use of these spaces.

DR BOURKE: In the last transport for Canberra report card there were some targets for shifting consumers to public transport. I think they were 10.5 per cent in 2016 and 16 per cent by 2026. Would you say those targets were ambitious?

Mr Rattenbury: I think they are targets we should be striving to achieve and, yes, I think they are ambitious in Canberra. You might have seen that we had the survey results back yesterday from the latest annual TAMS survey of the community. One of the questions that was added this year asked people why they did not use ACTION buses. Seventy-one per cent of people said that they just prefer to use their own car. I think that we do face a major challenge in the sense of increasing the public transport uptake in that it is a very convenient city to drive your car in. So people default to that very quickly.

Mr Byles: Mr Coe, you will remember that during a previous hearing you asked us to put that particular question in—why buses were not being used. So we took that opportunity.

DR BOURKE: Minister, are there some town centres which use public transport more than others?

Mr Rattenbury: I think it would be fair to say that the city attracts the highest level of public transport patronage in the sense that it is probably the largest destination. Is that what you are trying to get at?

DR BOURKE: No, not really.

Mr Rattenbury: No? Let's have another go then.

DR BOURKE: Let's have another go. In respect of journey departures from town centres—

THE CHAIR: We are doing transport later today.

DR BOURKE: Yes.

Mr Rattenbury: Can you come back to this when we have the ACTION team here, because they have got great data? They will be delighted to have this conversation.

DR BOURKE: Excellent; I look forward to it then.

MS LAWDER: I have a supplementary on the bicycle path. Minister, you spoke about not only cyclists needing to be courteous but also pedestrians. Some have dogs on leads going all over the place as well. I have written to you about increased signage. It is something I get from a lot of people who use Lake Tuggeranong or who live in Greenway. Is there any funding in this budget to put in additional signage saying, "Share the path, keep left," and that kind of thing?

Mr Gill: That type of signage can be—

MS LAWDER: And white lines down the middle as well.

Mr Gill: The point you make is a point that is often made to us. The type of signage that you are talking about is signage that can be picked up as part of our annual

recurring-type program. It does not need specific capital funding; it is relatively small in nature in terms of sign posting and line markings.

MS LAWDER: If it is relatively small in nature, I guess you will be doing it this year?

Mr Gill: As I said, we do have examples. You referred to Lake Tuggeranong. There is some recent correspondence from constituents on that. We have had similar correspondence from constituents about Emu Inlet in Belconnen. We have developed some behavioural signposts. As the minister touched on, a lot of this is about what is good and acceptable behaviour by the different users of the paths. I think it is important to promote that aspect. So the short answer to the question is that, yes, there will be some opportunities to improve behavioural sign posting across the network. It does not require capital works funding; it can be picked up as minor works funding.

MS LAWDER: It can be or it will be?

Mr Gill: Lake Tuggeranong is an example of a location that we have already listed to try to improve.

Mr Rattenbury: There is a level of that signage out there. It is a case of whether there are new locations. There is an ability to do it in new locations if particular ones are identified, yes.

THE CHAIR: Just for clarification, TAMS has some responsibility for waterways. What output class are they in?

Mr Rattenbury: We discussed roads yesterday. Roads ACT does stormwater, gross pollutant traps and those sorts of things.

THE CHAIR: Mr Corbell gave a bit of a flick pass to TAMS yesterday, saying to ask them.

Mr Rattenbury: Yes, and that would have been with Mr Gentleman yesterday, as minister for roads.

THE CHAIR: So it is in that output?

MS LAWDER: Water is in roads?

Mr Rattenbury: The responsibility, yes—the bit of TAMS that has responsibility for water issues.

Mr Gill: Basically, the selling on of water. Roads ACT is managing basically the inner north reticulation project, which has a number of ponds that will be used to sell on non-potable water to a range of users. Roads ACT has inherited that responsibility and has been managing it for the last few years.

Mr Rattenbury: If Ms Fitzharris wants to ask about ponds, it comes under parks and city services. So we are happy to come back to that.

THE CHAIR: We will go to Ms Fitzharris for a new question.

MS FITZHARRIS: I want to follow up, minister, on the issue of courtesy and good manners. It was raised with me at a community council meeting recently that someone does not like people smoking in a public place and could we put up signs. The staff in TAMS are often the front-line people in our public spaces. If we put up a sign for everything that we would want to teach our kids about being courteous and considerate of others, we may have signs everywhere we go. Maybe using the example of the cycle paths, is a culture change needed? What else can we do in terms of education programs about people using public spaces and being courteous to each other?

Mr Rattenbury: It is interesting that you should mention smoking. I ran into a constituent while I was out for a walk last night who raised the exact issue with me—that people were in fact standing underneath the no smoking signs and having a cigarette. She asked me what we might do about that. That is a research job for later today, to think about what our actual ability is from an enforcement point of view.

More broadly, in terms of these issues, the government has a range of tools—education campaigns on an ongoing base. We spoke earlier of waste in schools. In that case kids are taught at a very young age. It can be as simple as some markings on the ground sometimes. I am mindful of Dr Bourke's earlier line of questioning. The visual pollution is a tricky one; visual clutter can be a problem. It is probably a horses for courses thing. Social media these days is another way of talking to people about issues on an ongoing basis that is relatively cost effective for government. It is about constantly having that set of tools, I suppose.

THE CHAIR: A new question, Ms Lawder, and then Ms Fitzharris.

MS LAWDER: I want to ask about the local shopping centre upgrade program. Can you give us a broad overview? I may then have some more specific questions.

Mr Rattenbury: Certainly. I will get Ms Flanery to come back to the table for that one. She has the lead on that.

Ms Flanery: There are a number of ways that shops are upgraded. They are classified by size and investment. There is a group centre upgrade program. That mainly comes about from looking at master planning processes across government. The one that I specifically look after is the local centre upgrade program.

MS LAWDER: I can see that Erindale group centre and Kambah group centre are in this urban renewal.

Mr Rattenbury: Yes.

MS LAWDER: Can you give me an idea of what is planned, starting perhaps with Kambah? I have received a lot of complaints about Kambah which I would be most happy to pass on.

Mr Rattenbury: I was at Kambah Village on the weekend. Maybe it was because it was a beautiful, sunny day but there were a lot of people sitting around outside, drinking coffee and relaxing. One of the issues at Kambah, of course, and an issue we face right across our shopping centres, is that TAMS is responsible for the public domain but that tends to end at the drip line, and private owners become responsible for that area of leased land. That area of leased land is often where the concern is. TAMS, and to some extent the environment directorate, can approach the shop holders or the lease owners, but if they are not agreeable there is a limit to what we can ask them to do.

MS LAWDER: What are you planning to do at Kambah?

Mr Rattenbury: Sorry, I got distracted by the broader issue. In terms of this money, it will be used to improve the public realm. The design of these elements needs to be progressed for the preparation of a program of future works.

MS LAWDER: Wasn't that an election promise—to upgrade Kambah? Now you are just talking about design work. Will something actually be done?

Mr Rattenbury: We have to design it first.

MS LAWDER: Yes, but it has been a while since the election promise.

Mr Rattenbury: We are working through the list. There were a range of promises made on a range of shopping centres over a period of time. That list remains intact and the government is working through them.

MS LAWDER: Kambah, as I said, is probably the one I receive the most complaints about. You mentioned the public area and generally the drip line being the leased area. With respect to the central area at Kambah, where a lot of people might have been sitting when you were there the other day, is that a public area?

Ms Flanery: I would have to take that on notice, to look at the specific area that you are talking about. I know within my area we are doing minor upgrades at Mannheim Street in Kambah, which is the smaller centre.

MS LAWDER: A similar example is Erindale. There is a courtyard between the main centre and further out towards the college, and the courtyard is badly neglected—heaps of leaves, the trees drop branches. Is that public space that the directorate would generally be responsible for?

Mr Rattenbury: I will check that. I will specifically check the maintenance regime on that courtyard at Erindale because it should not be like that, if it is a TAMS responsibility. All of those spaces have a regular cleaning and maintenance regime. It sounds like, from your description, that one might have dropped off the list. We will double-check that one specifically.

THE CHAIR: It is also the main thoroughfare for students from Erindale College back up into the centre.

Mr Rattenbury: As I say, we will particularly look at that one.

THE CHAIR: Dr Bourke has a supplementary, and then Ms Lawder to finish.

DR BOURKE: Minister, last year in the budget you announced some money in the same program to upgrade the Cook shops, in particular providing car parking and landscaping improvements. What is happening there?

Mr Rattenbury: Bear with us. We will find the details on that one.

Ms Flanery: The minor upgrades are underway at the Cook shops. I can get some specific details about what that actually is. Just explaining the difference between a major upgrade and a minor upgrade, in major upgrades we would be looking at something like maybe changing the circulation pattern, addressing accessibility issues or major accessibility issues. It might be re-grading the area. A minor upgrade might be improving paving, some lighting, the aesthetics, changing the bins over, putting some other screens in and things and making a nice community space like chairs and tables in that area.

DR BOURKE: Those were certainly things that were talked about during the consultation. I am just wondering when it is going to happen. I think it was announced that it would be done within two years.

Ms Flanery: Yes, it is funded under a two-year program. The construction work—I am assuming that I can take it on notice—should occur in the next financial year.

DR BOURKE: I did not notice anything had happened when I was down there last week.

Ms Flanery: It should be occurring. I can take on notice as to the specific time of that upgrade commencing.

DR BOURKE: Allow me to congratulate you, minister, on the upgrades to the Macquarie shops, in particular the change to the traffic flow pattern and the improved bollards there to protect the shops from the accidental crashing of cars into the shops there.

Mr Rattenbury: I am pleased to hear it is working well.

THE CHAIR: A final question from Ms Lawder and then we will go to Ms Fitzharris.

MS LAWDER: Just a follow up, what I hear from shop owners and people that use the shops is often about the choice of trees. The trees drop a lot of leaves and they stain the pavement and stain the canopies. What process do you go through about choosing the trees?

Ms Flanery: First of all we have design standard No 23 which looks at suitability of trees for Canberra's climate. That is quite an extensive list and it has been under review. What we do generally is look for what we think would work there—whether it is a native area, the intent—and then try to pick a particular tree that is suitable for

that site. I think some of the issues that you might be referring to happen really no matter what tree we use because trees do drop leaves and little branches. We might need to do some additional cleaning or something like that or sweeping up around those areas if you have any areas of particular concern.

Mr Rattenbury: But I do know with Kambah the particular issue of the black sap has been raised and that is something that TAMS has taken on board into the use of that species.

MS LAWDER: Thank you for the work you have been doing at Theodore shops as well. That has been reasonably well received, although my understanding is that some of the work that was done was on the only flat space which is what people use to put up the tents when they have the parties at the shops, for example.

Mr Rattenbury: Was that temporary or permanent?

MS LAWDER: Permanent. I think. I think they were surprised. From the consultation that took place and what they said they wanted, it was not quite what they were expecting. One of the things they had asked for was a barbecue in that open area near the Theodore shops. They did not get a barbecue but there is a sign saying “Theodore shops”. I guess their view is that the bricks used for the signage could have actually been used for a barbecue, which may have had a better community usage. With the consultation again, how much input do you take from people before you make your own decisions?

Mr Rattenbury: The actual consultation process on the shops is really thorough. If we take the recent upgrade of the Chapman shops, for example, and Hughes—there are a series of them that I have actually attended—the first stage was to just go out and ask people a very open-ended, “What do you like about the shops? What is a problem? What would you like to see?” It is a very open and early stage of identification of issues. Then the team will go off and actually come up with a preliminary design. They will come back. They will have a proposal and they will seek further input on that. Then that becomes the final design.

I guess, going to the end of your question there, consultation does not always mean everybody gets exactly what they want but there is a very robust and, I think, thorough consultation process on the shop upgrades.

MS LAWDER: Thank you again for your work in that area.

THE CHAIR: A new question from Ms Fitzharris. Members, we have got to clear up 1.3 and 1.4 by 11 am.

MS FITZHARRIS: I want to ask some questions about playgrounds. I know that there are ongoing works around playgrounds, particularly the safety upgrades. I know we have had discussions, minister, around playgrounds in general and what some of the opportunities and challenges are for playgrounds across the territory. In particular, I am interested in whether there has been any more work done on natural play spaces. There is one, I think, at a playground in Tuggeranong.

MS LAWDER: Hopefully there are lots of playgrounds in Tuggeranong.

MS FITZHARRIS: There is a specific natural play space. Has that been well received? Do people like it? Might you do more of that across the city?

Mr Rattenbury: There are probably a couple of ways to answer that question. The first is that you will see in this budget there is \$200,000 for essentially safety upgrades for playgrounds. That comes on top of the usual maintenance program and that speaks to the fact that some relatively minor works can make some ageing playgrounds safe for ongoing use. That is the intent of that money—to make sure that there can be more life for those playgrounds. Longer term we do need, I guess, a bigger-picture strategy on playgrounds—how many of them we should provide, how close or far apart they should be. I think there is a really important discussion to be had with the community there.

Allied to that is the question of natural play spaces, which you started to touch on. We installed one in Oxley during this past year. I think the feedback on that so far has been fine. Certainly in recent weeks I have, interestingly, had a number of people talking to me about their desire to see more natural play spaces. They are essentially just the provision of rocks and logs in an interesting formation that children can just play on. I am very attracted to that because I think it both creates a great play space and is potentially quite a cost-effective way to roll out more spaces that kids enjoy as well. It is a bit of a work in progress, that one.

MS FITZHARRIS: I know that one of the challenges in the newer parts of the city is the relatively low number of community facilities—I know that is not in this portfolio—particularly for playgroups, for example, who often need a space but have equipment to store. But the main thing they need is access to a playground.

Has there been any consideration given to actually having some facilities co-located with public areas? We seem to have a lot of playgrounds that are very well used on the weekends but perhaps not so well used during the week. But for those people involved in playgroups, for example, who are almost by definition preschool ages, rather than building extra community facilities, we could build a facility quite close to a playground so that you do not have to have a community facility with a playground. You can bring a community facility, in effect, to the playground. Is that one possibility that you could consider?

Mr Rattenbury: I see your point which is essentially, rather than having a playground over here and a play centre half a kilometre away, let us site them closer together. I think it is a very good point. I will take that up with my Minister for Planning colleague to make sure that we are doing some thinking in that space. I would like to think that has already been thought about but I will take it up.

Mr Perram: There is some development by sport and recreation in respect of the redevelopment of traditional sporting sites into what are called crypts. I think that discussion that you are asking about is part of that discussion about how you locate them and what are the best facilities nearby.

MS FITZHARRIS: This might be for Friday then. Do you know when the Franklin

crypt will open?

Mr Rattenbury: We will prepare for that for Friday. I will make sure we know the answer on Friday.

MS FITZHARRIS: There is one other specific playground I would ask about. The playground in the Gungahlin Town Centre is rather a limited playground. It has three things on it, I think. The marketplace put a little playground inside their facility. My observation is that it is extremely well used. The feedback I have had is that it is well used. There are lots of things for, particularly, preschool-aged children to play on.

The one in the really nice public space outdoors which will now be surrounded, I think, more by cafes and eating establishments, because that is the private sector plan, really does not have anything for preschool kids to play on. Again, it is quite well used after school hours by older kids and on the weekends but not so well used during the day because there is nothing really appropriate for preschool-aged kids to play on. Could I leave that one with you?

Mr Rattenbury: Yes. Do you know anything about that Gungahlin one?

Ms Flanery: No, I do not know any specific detail but it is part of our review in looking at provision, types of play equipment. It is obviously a consideration that we are looking at demographics and things like that.

THE CHAIR: Ms Lawder has a supplementary on playgrounds.

MS LAWDER: Was there a playground strategy a few years ago? Is that still a current strategy?

Ms Flanery: There was a playground policy. From that we are recently developing a strategy. We have just been able to map all our playgrounds and include on that map all the types of equipment to really get a better idea of what we have, where we have it and overlay that with demographics and things. In terms of answering your actual question, we are now trying to develop a strategy based on a good understanding of our asset.

MS LAWDER: Do you have a feel for when the strategy will be finalised?

Mr Rattenbury: Not at this stage, no, but I want to get on with it. It is an area of interest for the community.

MS LAWDER: Do I recall correctly, I think a few months ago—last year perhaps—minister, you announced a hundred playgrounds that may be having some maintenance work, or was there a list of playgrounds that will be maintained?

Ms Flanery: There was some funding allocated in the 2014-15 financial year to do maintenance work on playgrounds in a similar way to the money that has been allocated now.

MS LAWDER: Do you allocate it to particular playgrounds? Was there a list of

playgrounds that would be—

Ms Flanery: To play items within playgrounds. I could bore you with lots of detail on playgrounds but—

MS LAWDER: I might not be bored.

Ms Flanery: It might take everyone's time. But when we are doing assessments of playgrounds, we have three different types of assessments. Where we have recognised that is better or more efficient to upgrade, say, all the bolts in certain types of equipment in one go the funding has been allocated. The new funding and the previous year's funding have been allocated to address all of those issues. If there are entrapment points, we put together a package of work and contract out that work to playground specialists.

Previously that work had been undertaken, I guess, on the job. We were looking at how we could be more efficient and also address a whole range of safety issues, I guess, in a more timely way so that we could close a piece of equipment for half a day, get all that work done and then get out of there, rather than having someone going, "I do not have the right bolt," and have to go back.

MS LAWDER: In your policy or your strategy—whichever; I think it follows on from Ms Fitzharris's question—there are some playgrounds where the demographic of the suburb may have changed. Now there are perhaps grandparents who want to take their children to the local park. Sometimes the equipment is not suitable for grandparents because they are not able to get close to the slide because there are ropes around or something. Do you look at those types of issues?

Ms Flanery: We inherited something quite interesting in Canberra. If you think about why we have playgrounds, the local playgrounds were actually designed for little kids as a place that did not have everything with bells and whistles. It was really somewhere that parents or grandparents or friends could go and their children could play on small pieces of equipment. Of course, what we thought 20 years ago or whatever were small pieces of equipment may now not be what people think is appropriate or what they like.

The next tier of playgrounds—there are three different tiers of playgrounds—is our neighbourhood playgrounds. They have equipment that ranges in age for probably three-year-olds up to eight or nine-year-olds. From that model then we step into our district parks which really cater for the broadest age groups and also for people with mobility issues and accessibility issues.

Those smaller local playgrounds really still focus on that important community space—people coming together, walking from their house to get there.

THE CHAIR: I have a question for library services in our last 4½ minutes. Welcome, Ms Little. Can you tell me how the home library service is going?

Ms Little: The home library service is going extremely well. There are quite a number of volunteers working in the program. As you know, we deliver to people

who are homebound because they are elderly or they have a physical disability or because they are not able to access the library for some reason.

THE CHAIR: When you say it is going extremely well, how do you measure that and justify that statement?

Ms Little: I will have to take the actual numbers on notice, but we have an active volunteer program and we have a great number of people—from recollection, it is about 400—who receive the service. I will take the exact numbers on notice for you.

THE CHAIR: How many people used to use the mobile library service, at most?

Ms Little: There were very few people who were using the mobile library service exclusively. When we did our research, the number was less than 20, so the closure of the mobile library was done on that basis and each of the people who was an exclusively mobile library user was assisted into another program of the library.

THE CHAIR: All right. Dr Bourke has a supplementary and Ms Fitzharris has a supplementary.

DR BOURKE: I have a series here. There are more people moving into developments around the Belconnen lake. I am presuming that usage of the Belconnen Library is increasing. What sort of local promotion are you undertaking for those new residents? How accessible is the current location, particularly for people in wheelchairs, as well as parking? Do you have enough power points and wi-fi signal capacity there? And what are the longer term plans? I can repeat those.

Ms Little: At the moment there are no firm long-term plans. That library is perhaps not the best located library that we have. It is away from the town centre. All of the research, internationally and locally here in Canberra, shows us that people want to be able to park their car, go to the library and go to the shops at the same time. In Canberra about 74 per cent of people want to be able to do that. So it is probably not our best located and it has probably not got the best parking compared to some of our other libraries. Its usage is quite steady. A lot of our programs are run out of Belconnen because it has got the community room and it has got good spaces. Our Giggle and Wiggle is very popular there, as is our story time.

You have posed a very interesting question around the new developments. That is something that we have not thought about, and I will certainly go back and talk to the library staff about how we are getting to the hearts and minds of people who are moving into apartment living. We tend to be generalist marketers, if you like. We market through community groups, through the media—the usual kinds of things—but you have posed a very interesting question.

DR BOURKE: And once again, with expansion in west Belconnen, is that putting more pressure on Kippax?

Ms Little: Kippax, again, is steady in terms of its use. It would be fair to say that it is one of the libraries that we particularly want to put a focus on in the next 12 months to two years. We have just developed a partnership with the West Belconnen Child and

Family Centre and are participating a lot more in their programs. So the work at Kippax that we are starting to put foundations down for is out in the community rather than in the library. We are finding that those most vulnerable people are not traditionally library users, so we are forming partnerships around that community in order to turn them into library users.

DR BOURKE: Speaking of non-traditional users, there has been a trend for small private libraries in public spaces—even people putting some books on their front lawn and running an honour system. Is that happening in the ACT? Maybe we could have outreach libraries at bus interchanges, at the light rail stations.

Mr Rattenbury: There is one in the New Acton precinct, I have noticed—a very lovely library in the Nishi hotel.

Ms Little: That is true. Internationally they are called pop-up libraries. They are doing them on beaches and at community festivals. There are a couple of ones that have popped up in the Melbourne city area. We are planning for community activities to do that very thing—to take out library items. We are also doing a little pilot, again with the West Belconnen Child and Family Centre, where we are giving them a small bulk loan, if you like, of material and they are going to circulate that amongst their clients. So yes, we are planning to put some of those pop-up facilities into some of our community events.

With regard to the bus interchanges, we have had very early discussions with the ACTION people—very, very early discussions with them—about having an e-book download facility in the interchanges. Rather than having hard copy material, which of course we could do, we have investigated the machines that you can see in Singapore. We think that perhaps on a bus the best thing is the electronic downloads of our e-books. We have canvassed the idea with ACTION. We have not progressed it much further than that, but we have canvassed it.

DR BOURKE: Good. We talked just then about those private enterprises and the opportunity for interaction around loaning. I noticed that the Canberra Recorded Music Society is shutting down its premises in the Griffith centre and its extensive collection of classical and jazz CDs is now being sold off at bargain basement prices. Did they approach Libraries ACT?

Ms Little: They did. Very informally they did approach us, but their collection is extremely specialised and not really related to a public library. We suggested that they try some other places, such as the Canberra School of Music at ANU, rather than put it into our collection.

CHAIR: Ms Fitzharris had a supplementary.

MS FITZHARRIS: I just wanted to ask about—

CHAIR: Sorry. If you are happy to stay a few minutes longer, we will finish with Libraries and then break.

Mr Rattenbury: Yes; that seems sensible.

MS FITZHARRIS: I want to ask about the upgrades to Gungahlin Library that are funded in this budget.

Ms Little: That is upgrades to a number of libraries, including Gungahlin. There will be some new furniture, particularly around the computers in some of the other branches, and there will be some upgrades to furniture and potentially security at Gungahlin.

MS FITZHARRIS: Have there been any security incidents there?

Ms Little: No. The security system at Gungahlin is shared with the college, and there are some issues around the college not being there all the time, so we are looking at how we might better make that work.

MS FITZHARRIS: So during school holidays?

Ms Little: Yes. Sundays.

MS FITZHARRIS: It is a wonderful library with great staff.

Ms Little: Thank you.

THE CHAIR: Ms Lawder had a supplementary.

MS LAWDER: Do you know the average distance people have to travel to their nearest library and is there a suburb or area that is further away from their local library than any other?

Ms Little: There is no national standard on distance to travel. We do have a map, which I am happy to take on notice and provide to you, and we have concentric circles coming out from each of the branches. It shows that there are very few people who are more than 20 kilometres from their library.

THE CHAIR: Twenty kilometres is a big distance.

Ms Little: Then there is another circle at 10 and one at five. When you do the concentric circles, there are very few parts of Canberra that are not well covered.

MS LAWDER: You are not aware of a particular area that is the furthest from the local library?

Ms Little: You would have to say Hall, I think.

MS LAWDER: Yes.

Ms Little: But I am happy to give you that map so that you can see it.

MS LAWDER: Thanks.

THE CHAIR: If there is not a national standard, is there an international standard or rule of thumb?

Ms Little: No, not any longer. Years ago—sadly, a long time ago, when I started out in libraries—there was a rule of thumb, but that is no longer the case. Cities have changed; modes of transport have changed.

THE CHAIR: Further questions for Libraries, members? One or two quick ones. Ms Fitzharris, it sounds as though you have a quick one. And Dr Bourke with a more complex one.

MS FITZHARRIS: How advanced is your e-book collection and are there plans to expand that?

Ms Little: Our e-book collection is as advanced as we can make it. In saying that, it is a bit like the music industry was a few years ago. The publishing industry has not quite yet worked out a business model for itself so we are a lot at the mercy of what the publishers will allow us to do. For example, some publishers will let us have a title for two years; after that, we have to re-buy it. That is very different from buying a hard copy book. Some will not sell us or allow us a copy of an e-title at all. Some will not let us have the e-title at the time the hard copy book is brought out; we have to wait 12 months or 24 months before they will give us that access.

The interesting thing for us is the feedback from the publishing industry. They think that the e-book part of their business has hit a bit of a plateau. There was all this doom and gloom—libraries were going to go; books were going to go—but what has happened is that, as with a lot of new technologies, things are finding their level in the new suite of access technologies. Our loans are quite healthy, but they are certainly not a large proportion of our loans. People who love it love it, and people who don't don't. We do find that people will use the e-version when they are travelling, on buses or whatever, but they still like the hard copy in bed.

MS FITZHARRIS: Thank you.

THE CHAIR: A final quick question from Dr Bourke.

DR BOURKE: Have there been any issues in transitioning Canberra Connect to Access Canberra—perhaps in work traffic or changes to the shopfront in the Civic library?

Ms Little: No, it has been very seamless from our point of view. They are a co-tenant for us in Civic Library, and of course they provide services to us: they do our telephone service, they extend books for people on the phone and do those kinds of things. It has been extremely seamless. They have done a great job.

DR BOURKE: Thank you.

THE CHAIR: We might suspend there. If you have any further questions for output class 1.1, 1.3 or 1.4, they will have to go on notice. We will resume with output class 1.5, regulatory services; 1.6, Capital Linen Service; and the ACT cemeteries authority

and statement of intent.

Sitting suspended from 11.08 to 11.25 am.

THE CHAIR: Welcome back to the late morning session of estimates for 2015-16. We will now move on to regulatory services, the Capital Linen Service and ACT cemeteries trust. Minister, in the regulatory services area, what is the process with dealing with nuisance dogs, or particularly dogs that have attacked somebody, and how do they get allowed back into their neighbourhood?

Mr Rattenbury: There is quite a complicated process for this. Ms Flanery will go through the details for you, Mr Smyth.

Ms Flanery: Mr Smyth, can you repeat the question?

THE CHAIR: This area looks at dogs. Under what conditions are dangerous dogs or dogs that have attacked somebody allowed back to their owners and allowed to remain in the neighbourhood where they have caused some grief?

Ms Flanery: When a dog attacks a person and that incident is reported, the dog is generally declared dangerous pretty quickly. It is held at the domestic animals facility in Narrabundah. If the domestic animal rangers pick up that dog, they check whether it is microchipped, to see who the owner is. If the owner is known or if they can identify the owner, the rangers will make contact and ask for that dog to be impounded.

There is then a process by which the registrar declares the dog dangerous and sets conditions upon its release. Some of those conditions are listed under the Domestic Animals Act. They include the dog having to be muzzled in public, to be in an enclosure when it is not being supervised, to be walked by someone over the age of 18, and for the owner to have a “dangerous dog” sign on their door. That is basically the declaration process. Generally, we try to see if the owner can comply with those conditions. All declarations are appealable. So when a dog is declared dangerous someone can appeal that condition, as can other affected parties.

THE CHAIR: How many dogs that are seized are put down each year?

Ms Flanery: I would have to take that question on notice. I do not have that with me at the moment.

Mr Rattenbury: Do you mean a dog that is considered dangerous and is put down as it is not considered to be safe to be let back out?

THE CHAIR: Correct; those that are seized for having caused injury to another animal or a human and then are not returned. If we go to page 13 of budget paper H, the percentage of saleable stray and abandoned dogs rehomed, the target is 90 per cent. Does that mean 10 per cent of animals are still put down?

Ms Flanery: Yes.

THE CHAIR: Is that 10 per cent of the 1,300?

Ms Flanery: Yes. Bear with me for one moment while I find my reference to the numbers. In terms of the 2014 year there were 105 dogs that were euthanased that were not suitable for rehoming. The number of dogs that were suitable for rehoming that were euthanased were 128. So in total there were 133 dogs in 2014 put down.

THE CHAIR: 233 or 133?

Ms Flanery: 133, so 105 and 28.

THE CHAIR: What are we doing to reduce that number, or are some dogs just not able to be rehoused?

Ms Flanery: We are doing a number of things. Volunteers come into Domestic Animal Services and do temperament testing to see if dogs are suitable for rehoming, and the ACT has an excellent rehoming rate. We have implemented changes to the Domestic Animals Act and also to the Animal Welfare Act. In changing those acts we are trying to address the breeding of dogs, so that we reduce the numbers of dogs being bred that are not going to be looked after. We are also encouraging responsible pet ownership.

Dogs need to be microchipped and they need to be registered. It is all about trying to reduce the number of dogs. We also have a code of practice for the sale of animals. When people are looking to purchase a dog through a pet shop, the RSPCA or Domestic Animal Services, they are provided with information and the rangers speak to them about what it means to own a dog.

THE CHAIR: Dr Bourke has a supplementary, and then a new question from Ms Fitzharris.

DR BOURKE: My question is about the Domestic Animal Services, which you have just been talking about, Ms Flanery. We heard, minister, from the RSPCA on the first day of estimates about their financial and staffing constraints. As a result of that they have apparently put on hold discussions about relocating from Weston to a co-located facility with DAS. What assistance are you providing to the RSPCA on this problem? Will DAS be forced to take over more of these functions?

Mr Rattenbury: That is an area that we are working on quite a lot at the moment. You will see in this year's budget—and I am glad to get the chance to draw this out—that there is a one-year allocation to the RSPCA of additional funding. From the government there is a base level of funding for the RSPCA, and that has been supplemented in recent years. That is only put in place for this year because we are in discussions with the RSPCA about what future animal welfare services will look like. Because of their pressures, the RSPCA are reviewing what role they should play. Out of that, the government will also need to see which bit of the equation we need to fill in. There are a certain number of animal welfare services that need to be delivered across the city.

The RSPCA are reconsidering what their role is, and that may change the amount of

funding we give them. If they say, “We want to do less,” then the government pays them for less services. That is a productive discussion that we are having with the RSPCA at the moment. I expect that to be resolved in the coming six months, which means that for next year’s budget we will then be able to lock in a longer term arrangement. That is why there is only the single year’s funding this year.

DR BOURKE: Do you have any particular changes in mind, minister?

Mr Rattenbury: I do not. At this stage it has been predominantly driven by the RSPCA indicating that they are reconsidering their role. They are a long-term partner of the government. We have been trying to allow them the space to have that discussion. TAMS staff have spent quite a bit of time with them, talking about defining what the roles are, looking at the legislation and those sort of things, and we are only part-way through those conversations. That is why there is not a definitive answer this year.

THE CHAIR: Ms Fitzharris, a new question?

MS FITZHARRIS: Thank you. I want to ask about the urban trees study announced in the budget. Is that funded just for this coming financial year?

Mr Rattenbury: Yes.

MS FITZHARRIS: Do you expect the study to be provided to you in this financial year?

Mr Rattenbury: Yes, I do. This relates to the fact that, as you know, TAMS manages over 700,000 trees across the urban landscape. Many of those are our iconic street trees. Quite a lot of those trees are coming to the end of their life. There are many tens of thousands of trees that will need to be replaced in the ACT in coming years. There is obviously the issue of great community sensitivity but also there is, I guess, a substantial arboreal issue around the types of species. How do we replace them when Canberra’s climate is changing? What is an appropriate response? This work is to help the government to find a sort of medium to longer term strategy to help us manage our urban forest in a way that addresses both that community sensitivity and from an arboreal point of view.

MS FITZHARRIS: In the context of the bush capital, I always assumed that there are more trees in our urban environment than there are in comparable urban environments across Australia. Do you have figures on where the urban parts of the ACT sit in comparison to other jurisdictions?

Ms Flanery: It is widely recognised that Canberra has the largest urban forest both in terms of numbers of trees—for sheer numbers—and also height. The jurisdiction that is closest to us is Brisbane but their trees are not as tall as ours. They also grow faster; so there is a higher throughput, I guess. The reason I am addressing the height issue is because that also introduces other maintenance things that Canberra has to look at that other jurisdictions do not. That said, there are some jurisdictions that have coastal areas; so it can be a little bit hard to quantify exact numbers.

Mr Byles: I have some figures that I researched about 12 months ago, Ms Fitzharris. Hopefully they are still current and accurate. Canberra's ecological footprint is about 8.5 hectares per person above the Australian average of 7.8 hectares and nearly four times the world average of 2.7 hectares. So that puts it in perspective about our ecological approach.

MS FITZHARRIS: Thank you. The height issue was about having to have different equipment and that it is more labour intensive and more time consuming to—

Ms Flanery: Safety concerns and all of those things.

MS FITZHARRIS: Over time, what have you noticed in terms of the urban trees? What is the decision-making? Are you going to have to think about the newer areas again? It is pretty clear to me that there are different types of street trees in the older parts of the city than even in the older parts of the new region in Gungahlin. There is quite a bit of difference. How often do you change that assessment of what is the most appropriate tree to be—

Ms Flanery: I think in Canberra we have been incredibly fortunate to have had excellent forestry and arboriculture skills and urban planning skills that were introduced in the design and development of Canberra. We have inherited a magnificent urban forest. What we have done over the last couple of years is assess trees in the urban environment, how well they are performing. That work is ongoing. Weston planted, as did Pryor, many experimental species because they had not been grown in Canberra, because Canberra did not exist.

In terms of new development areas, the developer of that area really nominates species. For example, for an area that might be close to a nature reserve—this is very much linked to the planning of Canberra—the species tend to be more native the closer you go to a nature reserve. Then around the town centres and things there are more of the exotic deciduous or deciduous flavour. That is not hard and fast.

The developers, as part of that development, look at the width and the area that they have to plant in. You are right; in many cases there are not as many trees in those new areas but that also is perception because they are not particularly big. Notwithstanding that, in the open space areas the canopy cover is significant. I will add that, in our assessments across Canberra of canopy cover, most of the suburbs are stocked at around the 90 per cent rate at the moment, which is really pretty high. We have an ageing issue. The current stocking rate is actually quite high.

Mr Rattenbury: I might just jump in here. The other thing is community expectation around our street trees.

MS FITZHARRIS: Yes.

Mr Rattenbury: We recently, about 12, 18 months ago, had a program to plant over 500 new street trees in Dunlop. TAMS went out and did a level of community engagement before the planting went ahead. What was fascinating to me, perhaps going through this for the first time, was that quite a few people came and said that they did not want a street tree. Actually, some of them were quite adamant about it, as

you can only imagine. They were very vociferous in saying that they definitely did not want a street tree. That was fine; so TAMS agreed. That was part of the consultation process. But even then in places where people perhaps had not engaged in the consultation process, once the street tree was planted they were pulled out by residents who did not want them.

MS FITZHARRIS: Do you know why they did not want them?

Mr Rattenbury: It was for a range of reasons. Some people just do not like them. They worry that they will get too big. Some people want to use it as a parking space. If there is a tree there they cannot. So there is a range of factors that drive it.

MS FITZHARRIS: Interesting. I have one other question about the fruit tree orchard that is the pipeline for Lyneham. Can you tell me more about that?

Mr Rattenbury: Yes. The proposal actually came from the community. They actually called it a Lyneham common in the first place. It was very much in that spirit, that it would be open to the public, grown by members of the community and that people could access it freely. TAMS has worked with them to work through the details of that. We recently undertook a community consultation to check that the community was happy with it. More than 400 responses were received and the approval rate or the support rate was 97-odd per cent. It has proved to be popular in the community and we will now proceed with that in light of that very positive community feedback.

MS FITZHARRIS: Does that have specific funding or is the community going to pitch in to actually establish the—

Ms Flanery: I am not aware that the government has provided any funding for it but, that said, we are providing support services. Also the other thing, I guess, that the government has contributed is the use of the space.

MS FITZHARRIS: How big is it?

Ms Flanery: Off the top of my head—I do not know. I think they are proposing to put in 30-plus trees.

Mr Rattenbury: It is 20 metres by 20 metres, that common area. It is about 200 square metres.

MS FITZHARRIS: It will sort of be managed like a community garden, in effect?

Mr Rattenbury: Yes, very much. This is something that I am very supportive of in the sense that this is a piece of land that perhaps would not have a lot of other use. There are a lot of those kinds of pieces of land around the community. I am very supportive of community reps coming forward and putting proposals to use the land in this kind of way—

MS FITZHARRIS: Great; so we can spread the word?

Mr Rattenbury: if you have constituents who want to do this. We have had a couple

of examples now with the city farm and now this one where, in some senses, the traditional regulatory system does not allow for this. We are working through to make it easier for people to apply and get access to these spaces. We just need to be mindful of things like easements and other community interests in the land.

MS FITZHARRIS: What about down the track? I guess that you have got to have that community management of the site so that it does not, for whatever reason, become a burden on TAMS unexpectedly. What will you do? Will you take the strong community support as a real indication that the community are going to pitch in and do this on their own?

Mr Rattenbury: Yes. This is one of the real challenges with community gardens and the like. There is often a whole lot of enthusiasm at the start. As many community things are, often it is one person who is the driver at the start that sort of enthuses everybody else. When that person moves on—this is the tension in wanting to allow these things to flourish but avoiding the issues that you have identified, which are suddenly having a bit of a mess at the end or TAMS has to take up responsibility.

MS FITZHARRIS: You cannot let that prevent you getting it up and running in the first place.

Mr Rattenbury: My preference at this stage is to allow that enthusiasm to boil out and not be too restrictive. But it is saying that we need to keep an eye on it. With an orchard, unlike a community garden, if it is suddenly not used, it is not too much of a blight on the landscape, I think.

MS FITZHARRIS: Thank you.

THE CHAIR: Dr Bourke had a supplementary; then a new question.

DR BOURKE: What sort of fruit trees are we talking about, minister?

Mr Rattenbury: I cannot remember. Do you know?

Ms Flanery: Yes.

DR BOURKE: Will it be popular with the possums?

Ms Flanery: All trees are popular with possums. My understanding is that they will be growing more nut-based trees than fruit-based trees, and that is part of a maintenance issue. This goes back, I think, way before all our times, but there was a technical services unit set up, and that technical unit in the public service was looking at industries in the ACT and the potential to grow nut trees because the climate seemed suitable. Someone has been digging up some of that research and trying to assist the community group in tree selection and care and things like that. That was just a conversation in the office the other day.

DR BOURKE: Almonds and walnuts, I presume?

Ms Flanery: Hazelnuts and things. Yes. I could be wrong, but I do recall the

conversation being more around nut trees rather than apples or cherries or something like that.

DR BOURKE: I was at a community consultation at the Aranda shops on the weekend hearing about a similar proposal for the piece of land to the west of the Aranda shops site, where there is some interest in having a community garden. Maybe when this Lyneham model evolves, it is something they could look at to see whether that is something they could do there. What sort of process do they have to go through to get your approval, minister?

Mr Rattenbury: I am aware of the interest at Aranda. As is often the answer, it depends on what they want to do. I understand that with Aranda there is an amount of space that is on their own lease that they can just use themselves to an extent. If they want to grow larger and go onto government land, that is when they need to approach TAMS. We will work with them, as we are working with other community groups, to try and make it happen.

THE CHAIR: Supplementary, Ms Lawder. Just remember that we finish at quarter past and we still have to do the linen service and the cemeteries. Ms Lawder.

MS LAWDER: I am aware of another site in Tuggeranong where one person in particular has been planting fruit trees on some vacant government land. When I spoke to them, they were reluctant to approach the department because they felt they may be asked to remove them. But their vision was a local resource where people could go and help themselves to fruit trees. How likely is it that they would get approval? It is not a group. It is just one person who has been planting trees of their own accord.

Mr Rattenbury: I think the answer is that the policy direction I would be giving the directorate is that I do not see a problem with that. We just need to be mindful of issues such as easements—access points for the fire brigade. Those sorts of quite obvious and technical issues are really the only barriers that I would see.

MS LAWDER: The person I spoke to was actually in the fire brigade so perhaps—

Mr Rattenbury: They have probably got it under control then. But you know what I mean. It is those kinds of specific technical related issues that I think are the only barriers.

MS LAWDER: I could perhaps encourage him to approach the directorate?

Mr Rattenbury: Yes.

MS LAWDER: Thank you.

Mr Rattenbury: Probably the other limitation that is out there for these kinds of things is access to water. There are lots of bits of open land we could use, but getting water to them is quite challenging.

MS LAWDER: His family have been carting buckets.

Mr Rattenbury: Exactly. It comes down to that. It comes down to a bit of dedication really. If we start offering to put water on as well, that becomes quite expensive; suddenly you have to start laying pipes and all those kinds of things, and that probably is a stretch too far at this stage.

MS LAWDER: Thank you.

DR BOURKE: If these community gardens or community orchards get out of hand, minister, and there is no-one looking after them, are you going to remove them?

Mr Rattenbury: I do not think so. We are so far from community orchards getting out of hand in this city. We really need to grow a lot more food in this city at the moment. We do not utilise our land very well. I think there is a lot more scope to grow food within the urban environment. At this point I think we are at a place where it needs encouragement, not discouragement.

DR BOURKE: I did not mean out of hand as in being too many. I meant out of hand as in no-one wanting to look after them. They are on your land. Are you going to look after them or are you going to remove them?

Mr Rattenbury: I certainly would not be asking TAMS to remove them in the first instance. On a slightly serious note, we need to be mindful of biosecurity issues around disease on particular species; that might be an issue that came up if they were neglected over time. But it would not be my move to go and cut them down, no; you would tend to just leave them there.

THE CHAIR: Dr Bourke, a new question; then Ms Lawder.

DR BOURKE: Speaking of things being abandoned, minister, we might move to abandoned vehicles on unleased land.

Mr Rattenbury: Yes.

DR BOURKE: Can you tell me how many—I see you have got 100 per cent removed within nine days—you removed within nine days? How many do you remove each year, I should say?

Ms Flanery: TAMS received 1,603 reports of abandoned vehicles. This resulted in 289 vehicles being classified as abandoned and requiring impoundment. Someone might drive along the Tuggeranong Parkway and see a car on the side of the road and do the right thing—let Access Canberra know—but that car may not in fact be abandoned; it may have broken down. We get many more reports than those that are actually classified as abandoned. Of the 289 vehicles that were impounded, 83 per cent were collected in the required seven-day time frame. So if I am doing the maths correctly, 47 were not. Is that right? Forty-seven were not done in the correct time frame. Does that answer your question?

DR BOURKE: Yes. What are the common places where they are found—or is there no common place; they are just everywhere?

Ms Flanery: They are not everywhere, to be honest, but I cannot answer that specifically to say that there is a common place. Obviously there are places of lower use. Sometimes they are abandoned in reserves; sometimes they are abandoned in front of someone's house—say the house of a girlfriend who is not a girlfriend anymore and they leave it there in disgust. There are a huge number of locations where those cars could be.

DR BOURKE: Thank you for that insight. Perhaps you could tell us how they are notified to you. Or do you undertake some form of surveillance looking for abandoned vehicles?

Ms Flanery: No, they are generally notified to us. There is a range of ways. The most common is through Access Canberra. Members of the public or whoever will notify TAMS. That will set up a whole chain of work. The city rangers will do a registration check. They will see if the car is registered and contact the owner. The owner may or may not be contactable; they may have gone interstate. We have a very strict time frame in which to remove that car once it has been classified as abandoned.

Mr Perram: It is not unusual for us to have vehicles abandoned also in the national parks, and rangers go out to those. Normally they are found by our rangers as opposed to being rung in by other people.

Mr Byles: Another form of advice includes the director-general driving by and seeing cars there for an excessive period of time. I can tell you—

DR BOURKE: So there is surveillance after all?

Mr Byles: There is surveillance, dare I say, at the highest levels.

DR BOURKE: Do you ever have any difficulties establishing ownership?

Ms Flanery: Yes. I hate to do this, but it does go back to those situations sometimes where relationships have broken down and someone then says, "The car is registered in person A's name but I gave it to ..." But registration details have not been transferred and then they may not be in a financial position to do anything to get the car removed.

DR BOURKE: What are the consequences for owners of abandoning their vehicle?

Ms Flanery: They are taken to the impound yard. If they want the car returned to them, they need to pay a fine for having that car abandoned.

DR BOURKE: How much is the fine?

Ms Flanery: Dr Bourke, I will have to get that one back to you. The numbers are rattling around in my head, and I do not want to give you any incorrect information, so I will take that one on notice.

DR BOURKE: Glad to hear it. If they choose not to remove their vehicle from the

pound, what happens to it then?

Ms Flanery: It becomes uncollected goods, so they are disposed of basically as uncollected goods.

DR BOURKE: I meant the owners, not the car.

Ms Flanery: Sorry. What happens to the owner?

DR BOURKE: They are not collected, I hope!

Ms Flanery: Nothing. If we can determine ownership of the car, the owner is given a fine and we pursue that owner for the fine.

DR BOURKE: So they get fined whether they pick up the car or not.

Ms Flanery: Yes.

DR BOURKE: Then you can probably take it on notice as to whether the fine is the same in each case and get back to me. Thank you.

THE CHAIR: Ms Lawder has a supplementary and then a new question.

MS LAWDER: In the example of cars that are presumably stolen and then burnt—I am aware of one out on the Cotter Road and one at Monks Creek in Monash, both of which were there for quite some time—why would there be any incentive for an owner to go and recover a burnt-out car, when presumably it has been stolen?

Ms Flanery: I do not think there is much incentive for them to go and collect that car so-called—

MS LAWDER: I am just wondering why they were left there for quite a long time.

Ms Flanery: I can answer that question certainly. In both situations the AFP are involved and—

MS LAWDER: I asked AFP and they said it was up to the rangers to go and collect them.

Ms Flanery: There are two parts. I think in certain circumstances, yes the AFP do notify us of abandoned cars and we do go and collect those cars. In other situations where there is police involvement they may go and collect them. In the specific circumstances that you are talking about there may not have been a nice handover between the AFP and the city rangers or vice versa. If there ever is that situation I am more than happy to follow it up.

THE CHAIR: A new question.

MS LAWDER: With regard to the response to DAs referred from EPD completed within agreed time frames—the target is 85 per cent, the outcome is 80 per cent—can

you explain some of the reasons why particular DAs might take a longer time? How are you going to try and improve that outcome for the coming years?

Mr Roulston: Can I ask you to repeat the question please?

MS LAWDER: On page 13 of the booklet, table 13, there is an accountability indicator called 'Responses on Development Applications referred from the Environment and Planning Directorate completed within agreed time frames'. The target was 85 per cent; the outcome was 80 per cent. Were there particular complex DAs that affected the outcome being lower than target or what are some of the reasons why and how are you going to try and address that in the coming year?

Mr Roulston: Thank you for that question. The target of 85 per cent currently is being achieved or exceeded. There was an area in the period between July and September where we had at one stage 50 per cent staff loss and also at one stage 100 per cent loss of staff due to illness and unexpected absentees. There was that period where we had a delay in getting those particular DAs through and we worked with EPD to triage those a lot more and provide more support to industry to try and reduce the impact of those delays. But it really was driven by the resources being unavailable at that period.

MS LAWDER: One hundred per cent staff away is pretty dramatic. How many staff are we talking about?

Mr Roulston: We have two engineering staff that primarily deal with the DA applications that come from EPD.

MS LAWDER: In the event that that happened again next year do you have other contingency plans in place?

Mr Roulston: Yes. We now have a full complement of two but we have also provided an additional two staff within the engineering group to be able to deal with and manage the DA applications.

MS LAWDER: You feel you are on track to achieve your target in the coming year?

Mr Roulston: Yes we are on track and we currently are achieving on a month-by-month basis in excess of 90 and up to 96 per cent of all DAs within the time frame. The challenge with the DAs and some of the timing with them is the complexity and the changes to the DA regime within the ACT. Currently TAMS has an allocation of 15 days to process those DAs and that has been probably set for a very long period, a number of years now. But we are seeing more complex developments within the ACT. That also does create a bit of a challenge but it just means that we have to raise the skill levels within the engineering team and make sure that we keep on top of those as much as possible.

MS LAWDER: Do all DAs get referred to the directorate or only some?

Mr Roulston: No not all DAs are referred to the directorate. TAMS gets the majority as far as a referral agent for EPD is concerned but there are a lot of DAs that are

exempt under the exempt processes. There are also DAs which can be handled under what they call the standard conditions, and EPD processes those internally.

MS LAWDER: Were there any particular DAs that took an extensive period to resolve?

Mr Roulston: Off the top of my head I could not actually say. We receive obviously between 50 and 80 DAs a week. I could not actually tell you any specific ones but there are a number of challenging DAs across the reporting period.

THE CHAIR: Ms Fitzharris has a supplementary to that.

MS FITZHARRIS: My supplementaries were along the lines of Ms Lawder's: 50 to 80 a week for two staff is a lot.

Mr Roulston: It is. Two staff are the key members who actually deal with the DAs. A lot of the DAs we triage as soon as we receive them by senior engineer into categories of minor, major or high risk. The high risk ones are the ones that are dealt with by the two key staff. The other ones can be actually dealt with by other engineers in the team, as required. Some are very simple and very basic. DAs for a driveway or a brick wall on land that is owned by the government are fairly easy to deal with, and then you have complex ones with multi-storey commercial and residential joint developments.

MS FITZHARRIS: The things that you need to look at are around roads and driveways, access, exits, pedestrian crossings?

Mr Roulston: From TAMS's perspective, we look at the design impacts on the assets that are owned by TAMS or on the government unleased land. What happens inside the boundary is not necessarily something we look at. That is done by EPD, other than the issue of extra entry and exits into underground car parks. We now extend further into those within the boundaries but other than that most of our reviews are to do with outside the boundary and the impacts on the assets that we already have in the area.

MS FITZHARRIS: If you have comments back into EPD, who then deals with the proponent of the DA? Is that you or does that all come through EPD?

Mr Roulston: When we put all our comments back in the formal process that does go back to the proponent through EPD but the bottom line of all of our comments says, "Please contact TAMS for one-on-one reviews or meetings." Then we normally, especially if it is a conditional approval and there are conditions attached, meet straight away within the next few weeks with the proponent about what those conditions mean and how we can assist them.

MS FITZHARRIS: With regard to ratios of car parking inside a residential development, for example, and outside and whether or not parking can be absorbed within public parking that is already available, is it your area that looks at that as well?

Mr Roulston: We do that in conjunction with areas within EPD. It is split across both directorates but yes, we do work closely together on determining the parking

requirements for all new buildings or constructions.

MS FITZHARRIS: And is it the case that within the planning framework—am I right?—you will assess the parking within the building as well as the available street parking or other public parking nearby?

Mr Roulston: It is taken into consideration in some circumstances, the parking that has already been provided by other developments in the area, yes.

THE CHAIR: I have a question on the linen service. I note, minister, there is a slight growth, about a three per cent growth, in the total cost and there is a similar growth in the number of tonnes of laundry delivered. Is it steady as it goes? The note on page 13 says:

The increase reflects new growth in the delivery of linen to the health and accommodation sectors.

Is the service looking for more business and seeking to expand or is it at the limit of its capacity?

Mr Childs: The primary growth has come through the accommodation sector. This financial year we have seen a growth of about 11 per cent. That growth has come through a number of contracts, some last year before these budget figures were produced but also this financial year. New hotels have come online. There was one new business for existing hotels and also additional product lines for current customers. Predominantly this year the growth has come through the accommodation sector more so than health. There are some new business developments that have come through small health sectors, community centres and those sorts of things.

THE CHAIR: And what capacity level is the service operating at?

Mr Childs: We are defining that at the moment actually. We have undergone a lot of strategic planning basically this financial year. We have really looked at our strategic planning. Part of that is looking at potential growth opportunities, particularly coming through the growth in the health sector, additional hotels that have been constructed and also contracts like the Calvary contract which is due for another tender opportunity in the coming years—looking at all of those areas of opportunity. We are trying to map that potential growth through our plans and trying to evaluate what our capacity is based on, what types of products we might be delivering. The actual capacity number is yet to be defined but we are certainly not at that point now.

THE CHAIR: So you do not know how much you could put through the service if you had to?

Mr Childs: We are looking at that at the moment, very much so.

THE CHAIR: When will you have that detail?

Mr Childs: We are hoping to have that done in the next six to eight months. The reason for that length of time is that there is a lot of work that needs to be done around

the types of products that, for instance, the new hospitals might use, the types of procedures, those sorts of things. There is quite a bit of work to do in terms of modelling growth through the Canberra Hospital and potentially the Calvary hospitals. There is a bit of work to be done there. It is important to know. In terms of capacity, we may have capacity across the majority of the plant. It may be just in certain functions that we are low on and need to improve in that area.

THE CHAIR: Are there any further questions for the linen service or for cemeteries between now and quarter past 12?

DR BOURKE: Cemeteries.

THE CHAIR: Cemeteries; a question from Dr Bourke.

DR BOURKE: Minister, have you or the authority met with Trident Corporate Services which is registered as a lobbyist for the Norwood Park Crematorium and memorial gardens?

Mr Rattenbury: I have not.

Mr Horne: No, neither have I.

DR BOURKE: Are you aware of any concerns that Norwood Park has in this area?

Mr Rattenbury: In regard to what, sorry?

DR BOURKE: In regard to public cemeteries and crematoriums and the like.

Mr Horne: They have not approached me with any concerns, no.

DR BOURKE: Mr Horne, can you explain, in the statement of intent on page 1, the 35 per cent figure for clients choosing to do business with Canberra cemeteries? Does it mean that 65 per cent did not choose?

Mr Horne: The 35 per cent relates to the number of families who choose to inter their loved one's remains at Canberra cemeteries. Principally, about 30 per cent of the population choose to bury; the other 70 per cent of the population choose to cremate. We also attract about five per cent of those cremated to be interred on our premises. So the total of that is about 35 per cent.

DR BOURKE: Sixty per cent are choosing Norwood Park to be cremated?

Mr Horne: No. It is a little complicated. We only do interment. Actually we do not do cremation. We do burial and interment of ashes. The total, compared to the total number of deaths in the ACT, relates to 35 per cent of those interred. Norwood Park in fact cremates 75 per cent of deaths in the ACT. Some of those memorialise with Norwood Park and some of those memorialise with us. Obviously Norwood Park, being the first point of contact in relation to cremation, has first refusal, if you like, of those who wish to have a memorial. In fact the rule of thumb, the standard across the industry, is that only about 30 per cent of people who get cremated actually choose to

be memorialised. The remains of the others go elsewhere.

DR BOURKE: Where are we up to with the proposed southern cemetery and crematorium?

Mr Rattenbury: A series of preliminary works have been done on that. I think I have briefed this committee before. There have been a range of tree plantings, for example, that are established on the site which will obviously start to take hold and prepare for the longer term. At this point in time the focus is on an extension of the Woden cemetery—and that is currently out for public consultation—as a means of providing sufficient capacity on the south side of Canberra for people to inter their loved ones.

DR BOURKE: What about the provision of a public crematorium?

Mr Rattenbury: We are currently examining options for that.

DR BOURKE: When will that examination be complete?

Mr Rattenbury: Quite soon, I hope.

DR BOURKE: When do you anticipate you will be making your decision, minister?

Mr Rattenbury: This year.

DR BOURKE: This year?

Mr Rattenbury: This calendar year.

THE CHAIR: Ms Lawder, a new question.

MS LAWDER: It does in a way follow on. The original plans had the southern cemetery up and running, I think, in the coming year; is that correct?

Mr Rattenbury: I honestly cannot recall. It is before my time. You are about right, yes.

MS LAWDER: Now when do you think the southern memorial park might become operational?

Mr Rattenbury: I do not have a definitive date for it at this stage. As I said the extension of Woden cemetery, which is currently out for public consultation, will provide about 10 years of capacity. That provides us with a lot more flexibility on the necessity for opening the southern memorial park.

MS LAWDER: Is it simply a matter of available funding for the southern memorial park?

Mr Rattenbury: I think there are a range of matters but we do need to have a facility on the south side. Woden is a well-recognised, well-established facility. There have been upgrades of the ancillary buildings, I suppose. The mausoleum has just had a

significant extension. There is a logic to maintaining Woden as a facility now but we clearly will need the southern memorial park in the medium to long term.

MS LAWDER: Was the southern memorial park anticipated to have some private or other investment or was it all government funding?

Mr Rattenbury: I do not know that the model was ever finalised.

Mr Horne: No. We investigated a wide range of models but no decision has been taken as to what direction it will take eventually.

MS LAWDER: Is the proposed expansion of the Woden cemetery an acknowledgement that for perhaps up to 10 years the southern memorial park is not going to go ahead?

Mr Rattenbury: It certainly takes the pressure off the need to proceed with southern memorial park as quickly as it was originally envisaged, yes.

MS LAWDER: Have you had many expressions of disagreement on the expansion of the Woden cemetery?

Mr Horne: At this stage we are still finalising the summary of the public consultation work. Early indications are that the majority of people are positive about the extension. However, I cannot really give you any more than that until the final report comes out.

THE CHAIR: On page 1 of your statement of intent it talks about progressing the introduction of the natural burial options. What is a natural burial and how will we progress it?

Mr Horne: A natural burial is essentially a burial that entails only biodegradable things that can be put into the ground. You do not put in a regular coffin which has lots of metal, lots of toxic plastic coatings and those sorts of things. Everything inside that coffin or whatever receptacle you use—it could be a shroud or a wicker basket or a range of things—is fully biodegradable. There is a wide range of variance of what is called a natural burial or a green burial but essentially the intent is that you encourage reasonably rapid decomposition and therefore the space can be reused again in the future.

THE CHAIR: How long before that opportunity is available in the ACT?

Mr Horne: We expect it to be available this coming year.

THE CHAIR: At both cemeteries, or is that done at another location?

Mr Horne: The model that we are operating on is not just a natural burial. For instance one could actually have a natural burial now just by burying only a coffin in one of our other burial spaces. However the other side of natural burial is that it has a very low maintenance regime in place at the same time. The spot we have chosen is actually a forest. That is at Gungahlin cemetery. That is just a planted forest but essentially it would be planted in amongst the trees without general markers but with

a methodology for locating the grave.

THE CHAIR: And how long before you can reuse the grave site?

Mr Horne: That is a difficult question. We actually do not know that. As you might guess, there is no rule of thumb as to how long it takes for somebody to degrade once they have been buried. We know that people are dug up many thousands of years after they have been buried and their remains are still there. However in some places it is only a matter of a few years.

THE CHAIR: Members, any further questions? No? Minister it would appear that we have finished for the morning session. We will return with output class 1.2, the sustainable transport part of roads and sustainable transport and ACTION public transport, class 1.1.

Sitting suspended from 12.14 to 2 pm.

THE CHAIR: Good afternoon all and welcome to the afternoon session of the ninth day of the public hearings of the Select Committee on Estimates 2015-2016. We will continue with Territory and Municipal Services and then later this afternoon the Capital Metro Agency. Between now and 3 o'clock we have output class 1.2, roads and sustainable transport, but the sustainable transport part of that, and ACTION, which is output class 1, public transport output 1.1.

Please be aware that the proceedings are being recorded and transcribed by Hansard and will be published and that they are also being broadcast and webstreamed. Could you all please signify that you have read the pink privilege statement on the table before you and confirm you understand the implications of privilege? So notified? Thank you very much. Minister, do you want to make a statement?

Mr Rattenbury: No, I am happy to go straight in.

THE CHAIR: Minister, the whole push to get more people onto buses—how is it going? What can we see happening in the next couple of years?

Mr Rattenbury: ACTION has undertaken a range of improvements probably over the last two to three years to make the customer experience a better one. That has included physical infrastructure such as improved bus shelters at places like the Cotter Road at Weston Creek, Gungahlin town centre, in the parliamentary triangle in particular—for example, the physical bus shelters—and the bus lane on Canberra Avenue to enable buses to get through there faster. We have seen those sorts of physical improvements to bus capability as well as the upgrading of bus stops to disability standards, which is an ongoing program. We have new buses coming into the fleet, so more buses will be air conditioned and have disability access. We have just sorted out the process to have bike racks added to all of the buses that do not currently have them. So that is the physical side.

On the customer experience side, we have obviously had the experience of NXTBUS to enable people to live-track their buses, and then of course the adjustments to the network, which saw an increase in services, particularly on the weekends, but about

300 extra services a day on a week day and a 20 to 30 per cent increase in services on the weekends.

That is the package. Each of them is about making it better for the customer. Similarly, we have been working very hard on the timetable to do things like improve on-time running. Since the new timetable came in on 18 May, the on-time running of ACTION has gone from 73 per cent to 79 per cent. The target is 75 per cent. We are now operating at a handful of percentage points above target, which I am pleased about, and we believe there is room for further improvement.

THE CHAIR: There was a review of ACTION done as a consequence of this year's budget?

Mr Rattenbury: Actually last year's, but yes.

THE CHAIR: Last year's. Is that finalised and is it available for the committee to see?

Mr Rattenbury: The report has been done. The cabinet is still considering it. In a sense, the report is owned by the Chief Minister as it was done through Treasury. The Chief Minister is the owner of that report in terms of releasing it.

THE CHAIR: We might direct that to the Chief Minister.

Mr Rattenbury: Certainly.

THE CHAIR: On page 100 of budget paper 3 you have transport for Canberra—supporting operational capacity.

Mr Rattenbury: Yes. This is the \$17 million figure?

THE CHAIR: This is the \$17 million figure. Why is that seen as an initiative? Why is it not just in the budget?

Mr Rattenbury: That is a good question. I think it is a bit of a Treasury answer. I can explain what this money is, which might go some way to your question. Over recent years ACTION has received additional funds from the government to cover costs such as increasing workers compensation, for example. Those additional funds all ran out this year, so it needed to be put in there as new funding. It has only been put in for the one year. The government is considering a range of matters under that review you spoke of earlier and we were not in a position to make longer term commitments.

THE CHAIR: But then you have the item below, that \$1.6 million, and then \$690,000 of expenses for the transport reform strategy. So you have got a review?

Mr Rattenbury: Yes.

THE CHAIR: You have one-off funding to continue the additional funding that you have required to keep the buses on the road. You have only been given it for one year because the government is now going to get you to prepare the transport for Canberra

transport reform initiative below.

Mr Rattenbury: Not quite.

THE CHAIR: No?

Mr Rattenbury: Those transport reform initiatives are separate matters. For example, they include a road corridor transport efficiency trial. This is under the lower line there, the transport reform initiatives and a whole-of-government peak oil strategy—those sorts of matters. They are separate pieces of work in the transport space that are not necessarily related to ACTION. It is actually a separate thing.

THE CHAIR: What is the transport reform strategy? It says under “Transport reform initiatives”:

The government will prepare a Transport Reform Strategy as part of the transport reform agenda.

Mr Rattenbury: Yes. This is the sort of thing I was just describing to you, which is looking at the broader transport system beyond ACTION.

THE CHAIR: How much will the strategy itself cost out of that?

Mr Rattenbury: I do not have a specific figure on that.

THE CHAIR: Can that be taken on notice?

Mr Rattenbury: I am happy to provide you with a breakdown of that expenditure, yes.

THE CHAIR: All right. What is the transport reform strategy to look at particularly with regard to ACTION?

Mr Rattenbury: It is looking at things such as ACTION business improvements that have been identified under the review—places where the review has identified some specific initiatives which would improve the performance of ACTION and; in places where we do not have organisational capability, we might need external assistance, for example.

THE CHAIR: It was put to me that the government is purchasing new seats for some of the bus drivers; is that correct?

Mr Rattenbury: Correct. That is not under here. That is in the capital upgrades program, but yes.

THE CHAIR: Why do we need to purchase new seats for the drivers?

Mr Rattenbury: We need to provide seats that have a higher rating, that can bear up to 150 kilograms, and not all of our seats are currently capable of that.

THE CHAIR: So are our drivers getting heavier?

Mr Rattenbury: I have no statistical analysis to provide you on that, Mr Smyth.

THE CHAIR: If we have no analysis then why are we doing it?

Mr Peters: We review drivers' seats. They wear out after a period, as a rule anyway. There is an ongoing program of replacing driver seats. I will take that on notice, but I think the answer is that the industry standard progressively has increased over the years.

THE CHAIR: So we are buying better seats that are in line with the industry standard. We are not buying better seats because our drivers are getting heavier?

Mr Rattenbury: Let me just come back to that because I was the one who said I had no analysis. What I meant is I do not have a table of bus driver weights that I am able to present to you, which is what I thought you were asking.

THE CHAIR: Surely that would be driving this decision, that we have evidence that drivers are getting heavier.

Mr Peters: As I said, we do replace the seats, because they wear out with use anyway, so there is an ongoing program. As we replace them we replace them with whatever the latest standard is. I think I should take on notice exactly what that standard is.

THE CHAIR: Thank you. Ms Fitzharris, a new question?

MS FITZHARRIS: Minister, I would like to ask about the community transport coordination initiative. Could you give us an update on where that is at? I believe it has been running for a little while and that this is a continuation of it, or at least for one year; is that right?

Mr Rattenbury: Yes. The service commenced last year. We call it the flexibus service. This service is designed to assist people who are transport challenged, for want of a better term—generally, older people as well as some people with a disability or people who, for other reasons, cannot get around by themselves easily. We started it to coincide with the introduction of network 14. Part of that was because in network 14 some of the routes were straightened out and we had some feedback from members of the community that, for older people, the further distance to the bus stop was a barrier to them.

We took the view that rather than having a whole bus service designed around perhaps getting to one or two people who might be a bit more distant, it was better to have a service that would retrieve them specifically when they needed to be. We were able particularly to take advantage of the special needs buses that take children with a disability to school in the morning and collect them in the afternoon. During the day they are not being used. So that physical infrastructure is now used during the day to take people to the shops, hospital or other key places that they need to go to.

MS FITZHARRIS: Does it include the buses run by community services

organisations as well?

Mr Rattenbury: A number of them have been integrated into the system, so they are all booked into the one system, yes.

MS FITZHARRIS: All of them?

Mr McGlinn: At the moment not all of the buses have been transferred to us.

MS FITZHARRIS: From the community sector organisations?

Mr McGlinn: That is it.

MS FITZHARRIS: Some of them have been, though?

Mr McGlinn: Some of them have been, yes.

MS FITZHARRIS: What was the rationale for some and not others?

Mr McGlinn: I believe that Woden community council handed their bus back in. So we have taken possession of that. Now we are in discussions with CSD about the transfer of the balance.

MS FITZHARRIS: Does that include their cars as well as their buses, or just the buses?

Mr McGlinn: No, just the buses.

MS FITZHARRIS: With the addition of the special needs buses to the fleet, that means there are a lot more services available; is that right?

Mr Rattenbury: The point I was making was that we are able to use those special needs buses that otherwise were not being used.

MS FITZHARRIS: So they are now part of the ACTION fleet?

Mr Rattenbury: They were always part of the ACTION fleet. ACTION has kind of always had them. But ACTION was delivering the special needs transport as a slightly separate part of the regular fleet.

MS FITZHARRIS: In terms of the booking system for that, is that all located within ACTION now?

Mr Rattenbury: Yes, it is.

MS FITZHARRIS: It still comes through the community sector organisations into—

Mr Rattenbury: No, there is a specific number people can call to book the flexibus. The bus is free and they can book it either from the nearest bus stop to their home or from their home.

MS FITZHARRIS: Do you have patronage figures that you could take on notice?

Mr Rattenbury: We do, I think.

Mr McGlinn: To date, approximately 8,000 passenger movements have taken place.

MS FITZHARRIS: Over basically a year?

Mr McGlinn: Nine months.

MS FITZHARRIS: I notice in the budget initiative it says it will maintain community transport in Woden, Weston, Belconnen and Tuggeranong. What happens in the inner south, inner north and Gungahlin? Is there a gap there?

Mr McGlinn: The service is expanding. We are about to commence a trial in Gungahlin in late July.

MS FITZHARRIS: Is that through Communities@Work?

Mr McGlinn: No, that is through the flexibus office. People will be able to ring and book, and we will have a dedicated piece of fleet in the area.

MS FITZHARRIS: In terms of being able to book the service, what hours does that run?

Mr McGlinn: That runs from approximately 9.30 to 1.30. Obviously these buses are being fully utilised after they have delivered the special needs children. In the downtime, whereas before they were not being utilised, we are now taking full advantage of that. The afternoon return trips start at about 1.30; therefore they are then available to go to schools to do the return journeys for those children.

MS FITZHARRIS: Are you able to provide some more details about the service in Gungahlin, when they are available?

Mr Rattenbury: Probably not for the estimates committee process, but I am more than happy to circulate it to members when we are a bit closer to the launch.

MS FITZHARRIS: Northside Community Service have quite a number of buses. They are not covered by the community transport coordination?

Mr McGlinn: Not yet.

MS FITZHARRIS: So the inner north and inner south are not yet serviced?

Mr Rattenbury: Southside Community Services continue to run their own bus service as well. It is not that we have gone out to particularly run them, but in the case of Woden they did not want to keep running theirs, so we incorporated that in ours. But for those who are happy to keep running their own, we have left them to it.

MS FITZHARRIS: Are you finding, in terms of when people use them, that they are using them within their own region—from houses to shops and libraries?

Mr McGlinn: Predominantly, yes. There is some specialist stuff that we do for people with dialysis requirements and things like that, to assist them.

MS FITZHARRIS: To go to the hospital?

Mr McGlinn: Yes.

MS FITZHARRIS: The \$500,000 in 2015-16 would just be a continuation of what we have already had, and adding in the trial in Gungahlin?

Mr McGlinn: Yes.

THE CHAIR: Dr Bourke, a new question?

DR BOURKE: Moving back to personnel matters momentarily, minister, last week we heard from the Head of Service. She said she had written to Mr Byles, amongst other directors-general, about the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment targets. I was wondering what the targets were for your directorate.

Mr Rattenbury: I would be pleased to talk about that, but I will ask Mr Byles to give you the full details.

Mr Byles: Dr Bourke, that is true; the Head of Service did write to all directors-general reiterating the need to achieve the diversity targets, plus some future targets in the outyears. I am very pleased to say that the target initially set for 15 June for our directorate has been achieved, the two per cent target, to the point where our identified Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff numbers are 37. This time last year they were 28. If we go back as far as 2010-11 they were 19. So we are very pleased with the considerable improvement there in achieving the target. That does not mean we should rest on our laurels, of course. There are incremental targets of 10 per cent in the outyears for every year. So we will be striving to achieve those targets and, indeed, exceed those targets where we can.

A range of initiatives have been implemented to achieve those targets, and they are quite significant within the directorate. I have included the achievement of diversity targets as part of the executive performance plans. I have allocated \$10,000 on a yearly basis for a scholarship to ensure that somebody from an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander background progresses through the development program to more senior positions. We continue our engagement with the pathways group, of course. All senior officers grade A and B have been required to attend some cultural awareness sessions. That is an ongoing program, of course, that all the higher executives have attended. Those are just some of the initiatives we have undertaken and we will continue to undertake to make sure we maintain our targets.

DR BOURKE: Thank you very much; well done.

THE CHAIR: Ms Lawder, a new question?

MS LAWDER: I have a couple of questions relating to the accountability indicators on page 36 of budget statement H. First, in a to d you have pretty much reached your target. That is a good thing; congratulations. The last few perhaps are below target; the estimated outcome for this year is below the target. With the percentage of services operating on time, minister, what are the factors affecting that so that we cannot get operating on time, on target?

Mr Rattenbury: As I said earlier in my statement to Mr Smyth, since the 18 May adjustment of the timetable, we have consistently performed at 79 per cent on time running or above. So we are now actually exceeding our target. We have done that for over a month now. We have even cracked the 80 per cent mark a couple of times, but consistently we are sitting at around 79 per cent, which is obviously a substantial improvement. I am confident we can maintain or in fact improve it through the course of the financial year.

MS LAWDER: The cost per network kilometre?

Mr Rattenbury: This reflects increasing costs, predominantly the increase in our workers compensation premium, which is obviously disappointing, but that is one which—as I am sure the committee has discussed with a number of other agencies—is impacting right across government. There will be a whole-of-government response to dealing with workers compensation.

MS LAWDER: So workers comp?

Mr Rattenbury: Has been the primary cost driver there, yes.

MS LAWDER: Why is it that you have a lower target in the coming year then?

Mr Peters: There is an expectation that the whole-of-government strategy will reflect a lower premium. But on top of that, we are making a much more concerted effort within the business in terms of getting people back to work quickly if they are injured. We have a dedicated resource in depots whose role it is to deal with people directly and improve it in that manner. That resource has been in place during the last financial year. It has started to show pay-off and dividends in that space; we expect that that will continue next financial year as well.

MS LAWDER: So up until this financial year you have not been focused on getting people back to work quickly?

Mr Peters: Yes, we have, but it has been a slightly more centralised model within government and we have been relying on our management team in the depots to do most of that legwork. Having the dedicated resource to help them out with that has made a difference.

MS LAWDER: That is a good thing. Do you have any feel for how the return to work figures compare to other ACT government directorates? Better performing? Worse performing?

Mr Peters: We do. We can certainly provide that level of detail; maybe our director HR, Steven, knows that off the top of his head. Generally it is an operating environment, so obviously we have a lot more injuries, and people with stresses and strains from turning and switching around when they drive the bus, than you might see in a more office based environment. Generally our figures will be higher than a comparable office-based directorate, but I think within the directorate, and Steven can probably provide advice on this—

MS LAWDER: You can take it on notice if you prefer.

Mr Peters: Yes, we will take it on notice.

MS LAWDER: I think you just said that those types of workers compensation issues are more physical injuries than stress related compared to what you may get in some other areas of the ACT government.

Mr Peters: There is certainly a mix. Obviously our drivers are interacting with members of the public on a daily basis. Some of those situations can be quite stressful. Sometimes crashes or incidents can also be quite stressful. So there is a mix, but typically our injuries relate more to muscle strains.

MS LAWDER: The cost per passenger boarding also reflects the workers compensation?

Mr Rattenbury: That is actually a function of two factors. One is the increased cost, which we just spoke of; the other is one we are coming to, the lower passenger boardings. The nature of the equation is that those two both drive that figure upwards. As one goes down, the other goes up.

MS LAWDER: With the passenger boardings, you talked about the special bus service being well received. I am sure it is only a very small percentage of total boardings—

Mr Rattenbury: Yes, it is.

MS LAWDER: but has that increased the number of boardings, do you think? Are more people using that service?

Mr Rattenbury: No, not really. Mr McGlenn earlier said that the boardings were about 8,000 since the services started. To give you a context, the average daily boardings for ACTION are around 70,000 trips, so 8,000 in the scheme of things is statistically inconsequential, essentially.

MS LAWDER: So on what basis is your target for the coming year higher than your outcome for the current year, the estimated outcome? It is still less than the target for last year.

Mr Rattenbury: I think we have tried to set a realistic target for this year. The reality is that that is our outcome for 2014-15, and we do believe that we can see an improvement in patronage—the sorts of improvements that I was talking about earlier.

We have certainly seen, since the introduction of network 14, some very strong performances in some parts of the network where passengers have really taken to the new network. There are other areas where we are doing work to promote the improvements in services to try and encourage a passenger uptake or, in some cases, reverse some declines.

To illustrate that point, for example, there are active outreach programs. For example, there has just been one in Gungahlin; people have received a flyer through their letterbox outlining the services that are available and we have seen a very significant increase in patronage in Gungahlin over the last six or eight months, both with the additional services that have come with network 14 and also presumably as a function of a growing population in that area.

MS LAWDER: What has the five-year trend been for passenger boarding?

Mr Peters: The trend has probably been stable or slightly declining. I might just take the time to explain. Every time someone swipes their MyWay card onto a bus, that is counted as a boarding. That means that if you catch a connecting service, for instance, you tag on the first bus and then you tag on the second bus even though you are on basically one journey. So that is counted as two boardings. It works both ways, I guess.

When we introduce a direct service, which we have done in the last couple of updates, it is a great thing for the customer but it actually means that our boardings potentially decrease. That is not an excuse; I think generally the overall context would be that we are about stable. But the intent is to provide frequent, reliable, direct services that the customer wants. In the last couple of timetable changes, where we have managed to introduce those types of services, we are getting good patronage results.

MS LAWDER: Are people still required to swipe off?

Mr Peters: Yes.

MS LAWDER: Are you able to get the number of unique passenger boardings as opposed to the two trips that you mentioned?

Mr Peters: Yes, we are.

MS LAWDER: Are you able to provide that information—now or on notice?

Mr Peters: On notice we can.

MS LAWDER: You will take that on notice?

Mr Peters: Yes.

MS LAWDER: Thank you. I am done.

THE CHAIR: Ms Fitzharris has a supp.

MS FITZHARRIS: In terms of swiping off, are they required to? You can still get off the bus without swiping your MyWay card.

Mr Rattenbury: Physically, yes.

MS FITZHARRIS: Yes, that is what I mean. You cannot get on the bus but you can actually get off the bus. It is a choice, is it not?

Mr Rattenbury: That is right, yes.

MS FITZHARRIS: So in a sense they are—

MR COE: You get penalised.

Mr Rattenbury: Yes.

MS FITZHARRIS: Yes; it costs you money, but that sort of instant—

MS LAWDER: Do you have a feel for the figures of those who do not swipe off?

Mr McGlenn: I will take that one on notice for you as well.

MS LAWDER: Thank you. Sorry.

THE CHAIR: Mr Coe, a new question.

MR COE: Minister, will you please tell me the rationale surrounding the change in the director position in public transport?

Mr Rattenbury: I will actually ask Mr Peters to provide that.

Mr Peters: Thanks, Mr Coe. James Roncon was previously the director for transport with the focus in this financial year on improving the business. James is off line doing the director, transport reform role, focused principally on driving some those improvements that we want to see in the business. Ian is acting director, public transport, and Bren Burkevics is chief operating officer.

MR COE: Who does Mr Roncon report to in that transport reform role?

Mr Peters: He reports to me.

MR COE: Does it come under these output classes, does it come under roads and parking or even the Chief Minister's role with regard to reform?

Mr Peters: No, it continues to operate in this part of the directorate. It is reform within ACTION predominantly.

MR COE: How many redundancies have there been in ACTION over the last financial year?

Mr Peters: I will take the exact number on notice, but I think there have been three.

MR COE: Can you confirm or deny that a number of people, or many people in fact, are required to reapply for their jobs?

Mr Peters: Mr Coe, part of the work that we are doing in the business at the moment is looking at what capability we have within the corporate public transport area and within the corporation ACTION side. I am currently in the exercise at the moment of consulting with staff around what some other changes might look like and what sort of capability we might need building an integrated system going forward. So at the moment that is in the consultation phase. There are no staff at this point having to reapply for their jobs, although one of the likely outcomes of the process that we are going through would be that there will be some new positions that we will need to take us forward.

MR COE: How many job cuts are you anticipating within management at ACTION—in effect, I guess, jobs that at Macarthur House as opposed to at the depots?

Mr Peters: I guess the restructure is about providing us with the capability to go forward. As I say, it is in consultation phase at this point with staff. I think a better time to answer that question would be in a couple of weeks once we have digested the feedback and the position where we wanted to go. But as you would be aware, no-one is forced to leave the government if they choose not to.

MR COE: With regard to the feedback, what is the feedback in response to?

Mr Peters: I have presented to staff some of the capabilities, some of the actions and, I guess, some of the positions that we will need to drive business improvement into the future. I have sat down with staff. They are currently in the process of providing feedback to us around whether that makes sense to them from where they are sitting.

MR COE: In what form has it been sought? Have you gone and done individual interviews? Is it a staff meeting, a memo or what?

Mr Peters: I have had a staff meeting personally. I have led that meeting, presented possible changes to the staff, and then Ian and some of the other people have met individually with potentially affected staff and stepped them through the changes. I have met with numerous staff myself around what some of the changes might look like. As I say, that feedback process goes on for the rest of this week. Then I meet with staff again at the end of next week.

MR COE: I understand that you have got a meeting with the union later this week. What is in the agenda for that meeting?

Mr Rattenbury: We meet with the union all the time and so—

MR COE: Later this week?

Mr Rattenbury: Mr Byles and Mr Peters have a meeting. I think ACTION meets

with the union probably three or four times a week on a range of matters.

MR COE: Sure. Would it be fair to say that you will be discussing later this week changes in management and the issues about reapplying for jobs at this meeting?

Mr Byles: I am meeting with the TWU at their request. Mr Peters is joining me. There is no set agenda but we have a very good working relationship with the union and I will be happy to discuss whatever issues they care to raise.

MR COE: At the staff meeting that you addressed, Mr Peters, what staff did you speak to? Are we talking just Macarthur House staff or depot staff as well?

Mr Peters: No, I spoke to all the senior staff, I guess, in the corporate area within ACTION and within public transport.

MR COE: Roughly how many is that, ballpark?

Mr Peters: It is probably about 60.

MR COE: Of those 60, are there going to be changes perhaps in pretty much all those jobs or is it just going to be certain jobs that are going to have changes?

Mr Peters: As I say, Mr Coe, we are in the feedback stage but obviously everyone is affected because someone is affected. But it really depends on the feedback that we have got over the next week or so as to how many staff may or may not be affected at the end of the process.

MR COE: You say that that is in response to possible scenarios or possible situations. I guess it helps if you can sort of clarify what the scope is that you are looking at. What is the outcome you are looking at and what are the potential ramifications for those 60-odd staff?

Mr Rattenbury: As fascinating as this is, Mr Peters is in the middle of leading a change process with his team. I would like to clarify exactly what you hope to achieve out of this discussion.

MR COE: I have not been informed of this through any government channels. I do not think any of my colleagues or even the Assembly has been informed of this. I do not think we have been informed of the results of the review or provided with any other information. The point of this estimates process is to find out about the direction of the agency and to make sure that the money is being spent appropriately. Therefore, I think it is right and proper to ask whether you are proposing any changes to the structure or management of ACTION.

Mr Rattenbury: Mr Peters has outlined the intent of those changes. He has indicated to you that they are currently under consultation with the staff, so I am not sure whether we are now in an exercise of micromanaging Mr Peters through that change process when he has outlined to you the intent of it.

MR COE: Okay. What are the missing capabilities? He said that there will need to be

additional capabilities. What additional capabilities will be required which are not currently fulfilled in the existing structure?

Mr Peters: Mr Coe, I guess that in the ACTION business you have the delivery arm. Obviously you have the drivers, you have the mechanics, you have the transport officers, you have the starters, you have the depot managers. All that delivery stuff happens day to day; it is operational. Really not much change in that sense. All the capability that we need to actually deliver the services day to day from the depot, we have.

You would be aware that we have now got the MyWay system, we have got the real-time passenger information system, we have changed some of the inventory systems in the workshops. Again, we have got much better data about how things operate within the ACTION business. We need the capability to be able to extract that data, analyse it and turn it into business improvements, end performance measures and feedback to individual staff in the whole organisation around how we are performing as an organisation.

Those capabilities probably do not exist to that sort of extent. They have been there but not to the extent now that we have a much better business information system to drive decision-making within the business. These changes are really about providing that extra capability so that we can turn that really great information that we get around how services are performing, how the business is performing, which buses need to be maintained at which time, which buses are the ones that always give us problems rather than just sort of churning through the system, turning that into information and turning that into business improvement. That is probably the main area. If I named one area, it would be around business improvement and performance management.

MR COE: Finally, has the government considered or modelled and perhaps rejected the partial inclusion of bus services with the consortium running light rail?

Mr Rattenbury: There is no final decision on that at this point. It is a matter that is part of the bidding process, potentially.

THE CHAIR: Ms Lawder had a supplementary.

MS LAWDER: Page 395 of budget paper 3 has the whole-of-government staffing. According to this table, the number of full-time employees is expected to grow by about 26 in this coming year. In what areas is that growth? Mr Peters, I think you spoke about business improvement. Would all of those positions be looking at the data that you are collecting and how to improve the business?

Mr Peters: No. The answer is no. There is actually another timetable change that we will be doing in probably October of this year. That change needs more drivers, essentially. So most of those positions are actually more bus drivers.

MS LAWDER: It is just that I thought you said in your previous answer that you already had all your drivers and things that you need.

Mr Peters: I do at this point but next timetable change we will need more.

MS LAWDER: Twenty-six more bus drivers?

Mr Peters: It will be a mix. Some of them will be bus drivers; some of them will be changes in admin staff.

THE CHAIR: On page 37 of BP H, I notice that in the 2016-17, 2017-18, 2018-19 years, the user charges from the ACT government are significantly less than what they will be for this year. Is that as a result of the one-off funding for this year for capacity?

Mr Rattenbury: Yes.

THE CHAIR: So when the strategy is settled, those numbers will come back?

Mr Rattenbury: Prospectively, yes.

THE CHAIR: Yes, because your employee expenses dip \$10 million in the outyears, which would indicate the loss of 100 staff at least.

Mr Rattenbury: Yes, that is not a position we are taking.

THE CHAIR: If the employee expenses have been dropped down, the superannuation expenses remain constant?

Mr Rattenbury: Yes, I think that reflects the aspirations of the cost of workers' compensation. Our current premium is—

THE CHAIR: No, superannuation.

Mr Rattenbury: Sorry, in a sense employee expenses are dropping because of workers compensation, not through loss of numbers of staff, which is why superannuation will remain constant, if I have understood your question correctly.

THE CHAIR: No, that may be a reasonable answer. I will think about it. But the employee expenses are not going to drop \$10 million. It is still a budgeting issue, isn't it—the one-year funding?

Mr Elliott: Yes, it is just because it is only that one year budget going ahead. Yes, the answer is that it has only been budgeted one year out as per the funding of the \$17 million; so those outyears would still need to be considered in the next budget process.

THE CHAIR: What does "User charges—ACT government" for \$106 million for the coming year comprise?

Mr Elliott: It includes the appropriation for the government, which is approximately \$96 million, and then there is also some concessions we get reimbursement for—

THE CHAIR: It is very hard to hear you.

Mr Elliott: Sorry. It includes the \$96 million for the government funding, like an appropriation.

THE CHAIR: Yes, the GPO.

Mr Elliott: Yes, and then there is \$10 million that we claim back for disabled, disability-type—

THE CHAIR: From the concessions program?

Mr Elliott: Yes.

THE CHAIR: The percentage of fares recouped from the fare boxes is static at about 16 per cent. What is the standard around the rest of the country?

Mr Peters: I guess I would answer that in two ways. Usually we would be aiming at, and most public transport authorities would aim at, around 25 per cent if you are in a large city. In large cities, some of them do better. Brisbane, for instance, which has got a dedicated busway system, is up around 30 per cent to 35 per cent. Others are down around the 20s. Comparable places are probably around 20 per cent.

THE CHAIR: So we are below where others are?

Mr Peters: Yes, we are. It is obviously how high you set the fares. On the other side of it is what expenses you actually have in the business. At the moment, I think some of our business expenses in ACTION probably would not sit in ACTION in a comparable place. They would probably be more in the corporate side, some of those planning and scheduling-type functions, which on our books sit in ACTION but in other places might sit elsewhere. So it is a bit of both. Again, no excuse; obviously we want to do better in that space. For us, that is probably about getting people on the buses.

Mr Rattenbury: It is also fair to observe at this point that our fares are quite low compared to most of the jurisdictions. We sit well below the ticket prices for Brisbane, Sydney and other large cities.

THE CHAIR: Have you done any sensitivity analysis on what would happen if you increased the fares?

Mr Peters: There is an elasticity there. If you increase fares, you lose patronage. I think it runs at about for every 10 per cent you increase fares, you lose one per cent of your patronage, or around about that sort of order.

THE CHAIR: Does it work in reverse? For every percentage you drop it, does the patronage go up?

Mr Peters: It does as a rule, yes. But it is a bit more complex depending on what the market segment is that you are particularly looking at and how captive they are to the

bus system.

THE CHAIR: Have you done any sensitivity analysis or surveys on whether or not increasing the fares would lead to a decline in patronage?

Mr Peters: We certainly know that that is the case. Everywhere that it has been done, it is pretty well documented in the magazines, in texts and practice. If you raise them by about that percentage, you lose about one per cent.

THE CHAIR: Dr Bourke has a supplementary.

DR BOURKE: What is the fare box worth, minister?

Mr Rattenbury: Our annual revenue?

THE CHAIR: Yes, from fares.

Mr Peters: It is about \$20 million to \$21 million.

THE CHAIR: Is it? You have here “User charges—non ACT government” and the figure is \$24.7 million, so what is the difference?

Mr Peters: That includes advertising and other stuff that we do to generate revenue in the business.

THE CHAIR: Can we have the breakdown of that, please?

Mr Peters: Yes.

THE CHAIR: Ms Fitzharris has a supplementary.

MS FITZHARRIS: In terms of comparable fares, are you able to provide a comparison across other like—

Mr Rattenbury: Yes. I have had them at times; I do not have them with me today. We will provide those on notice.

MS FITZHARRIS: I want to ask about the use of data, particularly through MyWay but you also mention other data. It has been a bit of a recurring theme across a couple of the hearings about how much capturing and analysing data can inform us more about the community, what they are doing and where we might need to reform or increase or decrease services. What can you tell us about what MyWay has been showing you?

Mr McGlenn: We use a program called netBI to analyse our figures out of MyWay. Taking into consideration the network improvements that we put out on 18 May, we used the netBI data to source all of the ticketing information and the average run times. That enabled us to optimise the timetable. In doing so we took an average over a 60-day period—60 working days, or three months. That takes into consideration wet days et cetera, and it would absorb traffic accidents into the actual run time. The quality of

the output is shown in that the on-time running has gone up by six percentage points since then. We can certainly analyse everything through netBI coming out of the back of the ticketing system.

Quite often we get questions on notice in relation to where people are boarding buses, how many people boarded the buses between certain times et cetera. We run that through the netBI and it is all set out in the MyWay data. You mentioned before about people not tagging off. When we are doing network scheduling and planning, that is vital information.

MS FITZHARRIS: What do you know about the demographics of the MyWay cardholders? Do you know if there are more people aged 18 to 24, more men or more women? How much do you know about that?

Mr McGlinn: No, there is some privacy around that. We know if they have a concession card, a full adult paying card or a student card.

MS FITZHARRIS: With concession users, in terms of the difference between the peak period and the non-peak period, does the number of concession users in those two periods vary much?

Mr McGlinn: It would. I will take that on notice and provide that data for you.

MS FITZHARRIS: During the non-peak period how many full fare paying customers are there? Are people that use the buses for commuter purposes, to go to and from work on Monday to Friday, using the buses outside those travel times, on the weekends and at night?

Mr McGlinn: I will provide that. Through that question on notice, I will certainly give you all of that.

MS FITZHARRIS: Great, thank you.

THE CHAIR: Dr Bourke, a new question.

DR BOURKE: Minister, accountability indicator c in table 3 on page 36—could you tell us about the options for reducing emissions from the ACTION bus fleet? What further options are available to you?

Mr Rattenbury: Perhaps I can start by saying that the new Euro 6 buses are, in a sense, the best standard on the road. Their particular emissions are incredibly low. I cannot think of the figures but they are a whole order of magnitude lower than the last generation of buses because the technology has improved. Of course, buses have also become more fuel efficient over time. Updating our fleet is the most effective way to reduce those emissions as we go to better technologies. Is that what you meant?

DR BOURKE: Yes. What sort of fuel sources are you using?

Mr Rattenbury: We predominantly have diesel these days, although there is a section of the fleet that is gas. All of the new vehicles are diesel.

DR BOURKE: Are the diesel ones producing better results than the gas ones?

Mr Rattenbury: Correct. I am just getting some technical information.

DR BOURKE: I can see that.

Mr Peters: Dr Bourke, there is an additive called AdBlue that further reduces emissions from diesel fuel.

THE CHAIR: Ms Lawder, a new question.

MS LAWDER: Firstly, can you tell me the average capacity of an ACTION bus? What do you base your planning on?

Mr McGlinn: With the new fleet we are getting less capacity than the existing old fleet that we are retiring, due to the DDA requirements of the low floor and the weight of those vehicles. They are between 60 and 62 capacity. In a standard bus it ranges from 62 to 77. A steer tag vehicle, I believe, has capacity of 102 and for the artic vehicles it is 107.

MS LAWDER: \$200,000 was allocated for the replacement of ACTION's underground storage tanks and rolled over to this year. Why is it rolled over and why wasn't it done last year?

Mr Peters: I think those projects are completed. There was one project done at Belconnen. The project at Tuggeranong is about to commence. Again I will take that on notice, but I expect it is to do with the project still being in the defect period, and we will make the final payment in this financial year rather than the last financial year.

MS LAWDER: Again \$4 million was rolled over that was specific to Gungahlin corridor improvements. Why was that money rolled over?

Mr Peters: Again that funding was simply rolled over due to projects needing to be designed last year. That design has taken a little bit longer, and then the construction follows through in this financial year.

MS LAWDER: Do you have a time frame when you estimate completion of those improvements?

Mr Peters: We expect most of those improvements to be completed in this financial year.

MS LAWDER: Another one was \$600,000 rolled over for the Erindale bus station upgrade. What was the reason for that rollover?

Mr McGlinn: The initial quote for the works was in excess of the budget, so the project was revised and they have gone back out to tender.

MS LAWDER: Will that mean lesser functionality delivered to fit within the budget?

Mr McGlinn: It is probably the public realm; there were some works to do with some attributes to buildings and things like that—the functionality, the colour of the concrete et cetera that was going to be used in the paved area. The functionality will still be there but it will not be as pretty.

MS LAWDER: When will that Erindale bus station upgrade be completed?

Mr McGlinn: As I said, those tenders are just closing now or just recently closed. I will take that on notice; I can tell you when the contract will be awarded and an estimation of the delivery.

MS LAWDER: Thank you. A final one is the revised funding profile for the real-time passenger information system, passenger information displays and signage; \$281,000 was rolled over.

Mr Peters: That line item is really to do with, as I said before, the final contract payment. That line item should have been clarified. I think we are in the process of trying to clarify that. It was not to do with the displays; it was actually to do with the final payment on the actual system.

MS LAWDER: So the displays have all been installed now?

Mr Peters: Yes.

MS LAWDER: All working?

Mr Peters: Yes.

MS LAWDER: Whereabouts were the displays—throughout all the bus interchanges?

Mr Peters: Pretty much throughout. Certainly there are some in the city bus interchange that you can see, and at the major bus interchanges around town.

MS LAWDER: Is that Gungahlin, Belconnen, Tuggeranong and Woden?

Mr Peters: Yes.

Mr Rattenbury: Also the ANU stop on Marcus Clarke Street. That is one of the other major stops. I cannot remember if there are any others.

Mr Peters: We can certainly provide the list.

THE CHAIR: Mr Coe, a new question.

MR COE: It is really a supplementary to one of the previous questions from Dr Bourke. With regard to AdBlue what are the costs incurred to get that infrastructure and the additive up and going?

Mr Peters: I will take the detail of it on notice but in terms of what it is, when we were refurbishing the fuelling facilities at Belconnen, it is simply a tank.

MR COE: An additional tank?

Mr Peters: It is an additional tank and the pipe work into the fuelling system.

MR COE: What is the cost benefit of it? Obviously you have the reduced emissions but what return on investment do you get? What additional efficiencies do you get out of the detail?

Mr Peters: Again I will take that on notice in terms of the detail of the exact improvements but cleaner emissions is the benefit.

MR COE: If it is better emissions presumably that means that it is more fuel efficient, does it, or is it simply on the exhaust? Does the return come from cleaner exhaust or using less fuel because of the additive?

Mr Peters: Cleaner exhaust is the key benefit.

MR COE: The diesel is actually not going further as a result of adding this?

Mr Peters: Let us get the detail of that.

Mr Byles: We will provide you with the information on that. If you drive along the highway you can see AdBlue stickers up at service stations for use by major convoys of trucks. Presumably there is some benefit in commercial fleets using it.

MR COE: I am just curious whether it is exclusively emissions or whether it is actually efficiency as well.

Mr Byles: I understand.

MS LAWDER: Are you about to ask a substantive question there? I have a follow-on, a supplementary. I want to clarify your answer to my earlier question about what the average capacity of an ACTION bus is. You had the 62 through to 107. I am unaware of how many in each of those categories you have. But if you had to say what the average capacity was, what figure would you use?

Mr Peters: More than half our fleet is the standard bus, which would be the 60 to 65. We have 33 artic—33 articulated buses—26 steer tag buses, 350 standard.

MR COE: With regard to advertising there has obviously been a spate of buses with advertisements on them of late. I understand there was a bit of a promotion, a special, running. What are the details of that?

Mr Rattenbury: Sorry, I missed the second half of that question. You lost me.

MR COE: What are the details of the advertising special or promotion which has taken place, which brought about the influx of advertisements?

Mr McGlinn: The advertising is actually contracted out through a company called GoTransit. And then we obviously get a remuneration for the space.

MR COE: But has the price at which ACTION leases out the space, in effect, to the agency changed?

Mr McGlinn: It is on a contractual arrangement and that contract is due for renewal, I think, within the next 12 months. We can renegotiate the funding there.

MR COE: But in the last six months—

Mr Rattenbury: Have we run a special discount?

MR COE: Yes. Has the leasing space that ACTION charges the advertising agency changed?

Mr McGlinn: Not as far as I am aware.

MR COE: I understand that there are people around town spruiking bus advertising because the price has come down. I am just curious to know whether it is simply an initiative of the agency or whether ACTION has contributed to that discount as well.

Mr McGlinn: It would be the agency's choice.

MR COE: With regard to the percentage of the fleet that is able to be advertised on, is it fixed or is it, in effect, open and 100 per cent of the fleet can be advertised on?

Mr McGlinn: I am unaware of the contractual details at the present time but I will take that on notice, review the contract and provide such advice.

MR COE: Has ACTION changed its policy with regard to political advertising on buses?

Mr Rattenbury: Not that I am aware of.

MR COE: I note that Animals Australia are advertising with authorised ads that obviously, by our definition, I am sure, would be intended to influence voters. I was wondering why it would be that political parties are not allowed to advertise on ACTION but groups like Animals Australia are.

Mr Rattenbury: I am not aware of that issue.

Mr Byles: I saw that same bus.

MR COE: There are a few buses actually.

Mr Byles: I saw one with it on and I raised concerns with Mr McGlinn, I think last week, and we were following it up. I had the initial same concerns but I just wanted to take some advice.

MR COE: I am pretty sure it is authorised.

Mr Byles: I am awaiting advice but my concerns were probably similar to yours initially. But I will be informed by the advice received.

MR COE: I note that a former Labor candidate, who is a solicitor, has a lovely, big No 1, no less, on the back of a bus.

THE CHAIR: Minister on page 38 of budget paper H, under “Current Liabilities” payables this year are \$2.8 million but they are \$3.5 million next year and then they seem to go up by a million each year for the outyears. Why is that?

Mr Rattenbury: I will ask Mr Elliott to assist you with that.

Mr Elliott: I might take that on notice just to get the details. I understand the question; it is just the movement between—

THE CHAIR: How can you forecast? They look to be up almost a million dollars a year every year for the next three years. Why would you allow that to happen or what is driving that? In the line below it, the “Interest-Bearing Liabilities” are miraculously at \$341,000 for five years. How is that?

Mr Elliott: I will take that on notice.

THE CHAIR: “Employee Benefits” dropped 10 per cent this financial year. Why are you expecting them to drop?

Mr Elliott: I will add that to—

THE CHAIR: On notice? Below that, “Other Liabilities” are miraculously \$2,888,000 for five years. How is that possible? I get very nervous when I see the same number repeated.

Mr Rattenbury: Add that to the on notice list, I suspect.

THE CHAIR: I will leave it at that. I have one other question, the cost of the drivers seat replacements. How much will the new seats cost?

Mr Peters: I will have to take that on notice. They are relatively sophisticated, as you can imagine.

THE CHAIR: That is all right. Ms Fitzharris.

MS FITZHARRIS: Thank you. I want to ask a question in the realm of sustainable transport, about the active travel office. Is that in your bailiwick?

Mr Rattenbury: No; that is a matter the Chief Minister is just resolving at the moment under an administration submission. We will know the answer to that shortly.

MS FITZHARRIS: In general terms, in terms of sustainable transport—active walking and cycling—

Mr Rattenbury: Yes.

MS FITZHARRIS: The investments in this budget—can you run me through those, please?

Mr Rattenbury: Certainly. I will just think what page they are on. I guess they fall into a number of categories. As has been publicly said, the government is investing, overall, about \$23 million in active travel initiatives. That includes a range of things. In broad outline, that is new investment in cycling infrastructure, and investment in walking and cycling infrastructure in new suburbs; as the suburbs are built, that infrastructure is put in. There is an ongoing maintenance program for our walking and cycling infrastructure across the city; TAMS does that every year. As we discussed earlier today, there is a program of forward design work to make sure there are projects ready for next year.

MS FITZHARRIS: Yes.

Mr Rattenbury: And then there are a few other things. That \$23 million includes, for example, the installation of new bubblers across the city. That has been counted in that figure because it obviously assists if there are bubblers being put by bike paths, footpaths and the like. It is that sort of full range of investment.

MS FITZHARRIS: Yes; great.

Mr Rattenbury: I would also add to that, and I am not sure where it is accounted for, that we certainly feel that the addition of the extra bike racks on the remaining buses in the fleet that do not have them will assist in the active travel space.

MS FITZHARRIS: Great. What changes, if any, have been noticed over the last few years, in terms of planning for new suburbs, about walking and cycling? I am thinking more in the cycling space. For example, are Throsby and Denman Prospect going to look a bit different from what the cycling infrastructure in, for example, Dunlop looks like, or west Macgregor?

Mr Rattenbury: It depends. There is a range of standards already in place, so you will see on-road bike lanes being put in as new roads are built. John Gorton Drive will be a good example of that of recent construction. However, I have also asked TAMS to re-look at the design standards, because there is a level of community pressure around full separation of cycling facilities. I have asked TAMS to look further at the design standards to contemplate where we need those full separated facilities.

MS FITZHARRIS: Is that largely on major roads or is that more on suburban roads, or is it a bit of a mix?

Mr Rattenbury: It is a bit of both. It depends who you talk to and where they are riding. Certainly the research indicates that enhanced separation will encourage more female cyclists, particularly. And in areas, say, around the city, where they are put in,

and areas of Braddon and the like, where there is a lot of short distance commuter work, those people would like to see separation—whereas with those who tend to ride on the big roads or on an arterial road where the traffic is doing 80 kilometres an hour, that in fact is a stronger case for separation than when you are in a 40 kilometre an hour zone, say around Dickson town centre. So there are different views depending on how you cycle.

MS FITZHARRIS: Do you have a sense of how many people are commuter cyclists—from my point of view, fast commuter cyclists—or just ambling to the shops or doing the family bike ride on the weekend? Do you have a sense of what our cycle activity is on those two or is it just impossible to break down?

Mr Rattenbury: I do not have any good numbers to hand, Ms Fitzharris, but I guess what I would say is that I see three categories of cyclists in Canberra. There is the lycra brigade—those who are out for sport, competition, training, fitness, at high speed, often in a group, and dressed in a certain way. Then there are the commuter cyclists, and we are seeing more people going for the European style of commuter cyclists—with an upright bike, often riding in their work clothing, going at a slower pace. Quite a few of those are taking up electric bikes now; we are seeing an increased penetration of the electric-assisted bikes. Then there is the third category, which is the sort of weekend rider, more a family going for a recreational ride. That is not an exact science, but they are the three main categories I think about when thinking about cycling planning.

MS FITZHARRIS: In terms of planning the new suburbs, does the planning take into account the link between shops and residences, particularly the link with schools, where school sites are designated, or community facilities? I assume school sites are designated community facilities at the outset of an estate development plan?

Mr Rattenbury: Yes, they tend to be. They do, but again that is an area where I think there is some room for improvement. What we see in Canberra, I think, culturally, is that people tend not to think of that as a distance they would cycle down to the local shop. They tend to jump in the car and go. In some ways, cycling infrastructure just within the suburbs is probably not as strong as it is linked between the suburbs. Historically with the cycling infrastructure, the cycle paths run between the suburbs, they run to the city or they run to the town centres. There are probably not as many facilities going down to the shops at Forde, if you live in Forde, for example.

MS FITZHARRIS: I am most familiar with Harrison and Franklin. For those areas on the flat—not everywhere is going to be on the flat, of course, but particularly there is an underpass on Flemington Road from Franklin into Harrison that seems to make a big difference for kids from Franklin, who can now cycle into Harrison to school without having to cross Flemington Road. That is extremely anecdotal. In terms of walking infrastructure, are they the same issues or is that pretty standard and that planning pretty set?

Mr Rattenbury: It is fairly set. It is less complicated in a sense. The challenge for us from a walking point of view is probably in the older parts of the city where the infrastructure is ageing and therefore deteriorating and the lighting is of a certain age and probably does not meet people's expectations.

MS FITZHARRIS: Thank you.

THE CHAIR: Dr Bourke, with perhaps the last question for ACTION for estimates this year?

DR BOURKE: I had better make it a good one then.

Mr Rattenbury: The pressure is on now, Dr Bourke.

DR BOURKE: Thank you. Let us have a talk about the new timetable, minister, which has now got the last bus one hour earlier, as I understand it. Has that shown any usage changes?

Mr Rattenbury: Perhaps I can answer that question by saying that at the time network 14 came in, a number of late night services were removed from the system in order to give us greater capacity earlier in the day when we believed there was more demand. This was based on a straight-out numerical analysis of who was using the buses at night. We found that we had a substantial number of services that ran, on average, with less than a handful of passengers—literally zero, one, two or three—over a sustained period of data. Over a couple of months, it was literally those one or two passengers. So they were the services that were removed.

DR BOURKE: Have you noticed more people using the last bus service now?

Mr McGlinn: We can pull that data for you, Dr Bourke. What we are tending to find as well is that some of those people have potentially moved to the earlier service instead of relying on that last service.

DR BOURKE: That is what I was asking about.

Mr McGlinn: They are the suburban services you are referring to. Obviously, the two trunk routes, the blue and rapid routes, continue to approximately the same time as they previously did.

DR BOURKE: And the question was: were they moving into that earlier service or were they changing their plans or going to private cars or taxis? Do you think the late night parking charges that have been introduced further into Civic than they have already been in the past will change that patronage?

Mr Rattenbury: In what way?

DR BOURKE: In getting more people to use those later services or leaving earlier. What do you think is going to happen?

Mr Rattenbury: I do not know at this stage. We will see how that goes.

DR BOURKE: What sort of changes have you noticed as a result of the parliamentary triangle parking charges?

Mr Rattenbury: We have seen a substantial uptake of the use of buses in the parliamentary triangle. Mr McGlinn, do you have the figures to hand?

Mr McGlinn: I can certainly provide those to you, Dr Bourke. There has been a significant increase in people catching our bus services into the parliamentary triangle, particularly from Gungahlin, on the one-seat journeys.

DR BOURKE: Could I have that broken down from journeys and from locations—from town centres primarily, numbers and percentages.

Mr McGlinn: Yes. No problem.

MR COE: Could I just add a quick supplementary in the one minute to go?

THE CHAIR: Ms Fitzharris had one first; then Mr Coe.

MR COE: Sure.

THE CHAIR: Ms Fitzharris had a supplementary before the question was asked.

MS FITZHARRIS: I will let you go.

MR COE: What consultation did Access Canberra, the Revenue Office, the director of operations or whoever it is have with ACTION with regard to increasing the hours of paid parking in the city?

Mr Rattenbury: I am not aware that there was any direct consultation with ACTION.

THE CHAIR: Ms Fitzharris, have you still got a question?

MS FITZHARRIS: My supplementary relates to a conversation I had with Mr McGlinn and Mr Peters last week. A constituent—in fact, a mother and daughter, an older mother and daughter, who loved catching ACTION buses—raised something with me. They were really keen to see if you could consider having a bus driver of the year award, because they wanted to find a way to recognise some of the great bus drivers they have. Could you take that into consideration?

Mr Rattenbury: It will be hotly contested. Our bus drivers are very popular with their passengers.

MS FITZHARRIS: That is exactly what she said too. Thank you.

THE CHAIR: All right, members. That is our time with Minister Rattenbury and ACTION, and the close of TAMS for today. We will return at 3.15 for capital metro. Minister, thank you to you and your officials for your attendance today and the answers. For questions you have taken on notice, could we have them as quickly as possible, hopefully within five working days. The *Hansard* will be forwarded to you for correction or additions should you see fit as soon as it is available.

Sitting suspended from 2.56 to 3.14 pm.

Appearances:

Corbell, Mr Simon, Deputy Chief Minister, Attorney-General, Minister for Health,
Minister for the Environment and Minister for Capital Metro

Capital Metro Agency

Thomas, Ms Emma, Project Director and Director-General

Edghill, Mr Duncan, Executive Director, Commercial

Allday, Mr Stephen, Executive Director, Procurement and Delivery

Taylor, Ms Melanie, Director, Communications and Stakeholder Engagement

THE CHAIR: Good afternoon all and welcome to this afternoon session of the Select Committee on Estimates 2015-2016. It is the bottom of the ninth and we are here for capital metro. Please be aware that the proceedings are being recorded and will be transcribed by Hansard, and then published, and that proceedings are also being broadcast as well as webstreamed.

Minister and officials, in front of you on the table is the privilege statement, the pink card. Could you please confirm that you have read the privilege card and that you understand the implications of privilege?

Mr Corbell: Yes, thank you, Mr Chairman.

THE CHAIR: Thank you, minister, and thank you, staff. With that we will move to an opening statement from the minister before we go to questions.

Mr Corbell: Thank you for the opportunity to appear before the committee again this afternoon. The Capital Metro Agency is planning, designing and delivering one of the most significant urban transformation projects undertaken by the ACT administration. The project forms part of a longer term vision about a more sustainable, vibrant and lively city that meets the needs of a growing population into the future.

The introduction of light rail will fundamentally change the way our city grows and the manner in which Canberrans live. The inevitable growth of our city will see our population reach 400,000 people in just two years time. By 2050 it is projected to be over 600,000 citizens. We must focus this growth in a way which provides for high quality public transport connections, allows more people to live active lifestyles and provides for greater urban consolidation.

Without improvements to public transport, road congestion will continue to grow as our population increases, and this will impact on travel time and overall amenity and productivity for all Canberrans. The negative impacts of road congestion have clearly been outlined in a recent report from Infrastructure Australia. That report, released earlier this year, found that delays on major roads are set to cost Canberra \$700 million per annum by 2031, largely due to the level of population increase in Gungahlin and Belconnen.

The report states that the Northbourne Avenue corridor is the most expensive road in the ACT, with delays costing \$430,000 per lane kilometre in 2011. This cost is forecast to rise to \$1.1 million in 2031 if action is not taken now to reduce traffic

congestion and travel time. The government made a clear commitment in 2012 that, if elected, it would build the first stage of a city-wide light rail network and that it would be delivered through a public-private partnership and be on the corridor from Gungahlin to the city. We are fulfilling this election commitment.

Since its formation in July 2013, the Capital Metro Agency has established a long list of project achievements to make sure that we meet our time frames. The agency has prepared a comprehensive and robust business case for stage 1 of light rail and this document has been released in full. The business case outlines a strong case for the introduction of light rail in Canberra and demonstrates that this investment will deliver a positive economic return that includes transport, the environment, health and wider economic benefits.

The agency has opened the expressions of interest process for potential bidders, and from this the project received strong private sector interest, with four consortia expressing interest. This was an excellent result for Canberra. Following a detailed evaluation, two consortia were short-listed—ACTivate and Canberra Metro—to proceed to the procurement process, the request for proposals phase. These two consortia contain some of the world's largest and most respected companies when it comes to delivering major infrastructure projects. The makeup of each consortium is reflective of the strong market appetite for the project.

This level of competence and interest in the project is also evident in our local business sector, who are already establishing partnerships with the two consortia to leverage the economic opportunities that will flow from it. In April this year more than 100 people representing various local businesses in the ACT attended a “meet the bidders” networking event. This event provided these local businesses with an opportunity to get to know and be known by the short-listed consortia.

In addition, the agency is ensuring that the need for local industry participation in the project is apparent to the short-listed consortia. This will see both consortiums presenting innovative solutions to assist the local jobs market to adapt and develop in a manner that is mutually beneficial. The project provides a great opportunity to build ongoing capability that can be called upon for future stages of light rail, as well as to support other local infrastructure projects.

We know that the first stage will deliver almost \$1 billion worth of economic benefits to our community, including 3½ thousand jobs during the construction phase alone. And we know it will drive business and investment certainty along the corridor, stimulating significant economic activity as land surrounding the light rail infrastructure increases in value and is used in more economically productive ways.

The Capital Metro Agency is also engaged in community consultation, and community feedback has been invited on the early designs for the project, which saw over 16½ thousand interactions with the local community and identified stakeholders. Using this feedback we have again reached out to the Canberra community to let them have their say on urban design elements for the Northbourne Avenue corridor, and again we saw more than 13,000 interactions in this respect.

In February this year I announced also that an extension option from the city to

Russell was to be included in the capital metro stage 1 procurement process. This decision was made in response to strong support and feedback from businesses and the wider community for such a possible extension. Should it be included as part of stage 1, it will see a further increase in patronage of more than 30 per cent.

The three-kilometre extension will link the CBD to the thousands of people who work within the Constitution Avenue corridor and in the Russell defence precinct. This will not only increase patronage in peak travel times but also provide a viable and attractive option for workers to make trips to and from Russell during the day, helping support retail activity in the city centre, in particular.

The two consortia are currently preparing their final bids to finance, design, build and operate the first stage of light rail for Canberra, and while they finalise these bids a lot more work is to be done. Significant funding in the ACT budget will enable the ongoing provision of specialised technical, program management, legal and commercial advisory services, as well as stakeholder engagement activities that will be essential to the completion of the procurement phase, as well as to the management of its construction and delivery over the next four years.

We as a government understand how critical it is that this project is undertaken in a professional manner and meets world-class outcomes. The agency has been successful in attracting some of Australia's leading consultants and specialist advisers in this respect.

As part of the budget, the government has announced that it will make a territory contribution of \$375 million. This contribution will be fully funded through the combination of the asset recycling initiative and the \$60 million bonus payment from the federal government as a result of the ACT selling and recycling surplus assets.

The capital contribution will be made once construction is complete and the light rail service is up and operational. Making a capital contribution to the project and doing it in this way in regard to timing is the best way to ensure the best return on investment for the territory. It will also see the contribution being large enough to provide meaningful value for money benefits for the territory, but it leaves sufficient debt in the project to attract competitive finance for the private sector partners. The fixed amount will provide bidders with certainty as to the size of the territory's contribution and allow them to confidently arrange financing for the remainder of the transaction.

Finally, Mr Chairman, as members would be well aware, consultation is currently open on the project's draft environmental impact statement. The EIS provides the community with an opportunity to learn about the impacts that could arise from the result of the construction and operation of light rail, and how they will be mitigated.

This process will not only help prepare the community and stakeholders but also allow them to give their feedback to the government in identifying issues that will need further work, as well as opportunities for improvements. The EIS covers a broad range of topics from biodiversity, landscaping and greenhouse gas emissions to the design of substations, traffic management and control measures for noise and vibration.

It is worth highlighting that the project did not meet the standard conditions set out to trigger the requirement of an EIS under the Planning and Development Act. Instead, the Minister for Planning made a declaration under that act mandating that the project would follow the impact track process and, therefore, require an EIS. This is a further demonstration of the government's commitment to openness and transparency. The EIS allows the agency and the community to fully understand the potential environmental impacts and benefits of the project.

There will be a range of drop-in sessions held over the coming weeks for people to ask questions of capital metro about the EIS and there will also be online forums where people can ask questions and have their say. Mr Chairman, thank you very much for the opportunity to make an opening statement. I and my officials are happy to try and answer your questions.

THE CHAIR: Thank you, minister. We will go to Ms Lawder.

MS LAWDER: Good afternoon. I want to start with trees. Are you expecting the removal of trees on Northbourne Avenue and Flemington Road to begin this year—this calendar year, or next calendar year? When exactly are you thinking of starting to remove trees?

Mr Corbell: The exact timing will be determined following the completion of the selection of the preferred bidder and agreement with that preferred bidder about their time frames. As is outlined in the EIS, our anticipation is that it will be at some point later in 2016.

MS LAWDER: My understanding is that originally you were thinking of planting *Eucalyptus rossii* on the Northbourne Avenue median strip. Now you are going for *Eucalyptus mannifera*, or the so-called brittle gum. Is that still the case?

Mr Corbell: That is correct, yes.

MS LAWDER: There have been a number of reports, and today in the Canberra *CityNews* Cedric Bryant, a local gardening person, said:

The recently announced replacement species for the capital's gateway, *Eucalyptus mannifera*, is "not commonly referred to as the widow maker or brittle gum for nothing,"...

"It is renowned for dropping branches without warning, not on windy days necessarily, but on a quiet, dead still day. It is one of the main problem trees for ACTEW with large branches falling on power lines."

I am sure your people have been able to access similar studies. Why have you opted for the brittle gum rather than another variety?

Mr Corbell: The selection of the preferred tree species, Ms Lawder, has seen a very comprehensive assessment process. Initially, it is the case that *Eucalyptus rossii* or scribbly gum was selected. However, following further analysis, including further analysis of soil conditions, it was determined that the soil conditions on Northbourne Avenue would not be suitable for *E rossii*.

After consultation with the National Capital Authority, the Australian National Botanic Gardens, independent expert arborists and a range of other stakeholders, the recommendation to government was that *Eucalyptus mannifera* be chosen, which is known as brittle gum. The reason for that is, first of all, it is a well-established and well-known street tree in the ACT. There are already over 100,000 brittle gum trees planted in the urban forest across the ACT, including on some very high profile and iconic avenues—for example, Captain Cook Crescent in the inner south of Canberra. It is also a tree which is indigenous to the local climate; therefore it is well suited to the Canberra climate.

It is the case that the brittle gum, like all other eucalyptus species, can shed limbs, and can shed limbs unexpectedly, but that is going to be a problem with any native eucalypt species. The advice to the government is that the risk is no greater or no worse than for any other eucalyptus species.

It is a requirement of the National Capital Authority that the tree plantings along the Northbourne Avenue corridor be of a native species, not an exotic species, so we were always going to face this issue of limbs falling. The advice is that *E mannifera* is a tree that can deliver the stately, elegant shape that the NCA requires for the presentation of the avenue, it is well suited to our local climate, it is well suited to the soils in Northbourne Avenue itself, and it meets the design requirements of the NCA.

MS LAWDER: You have mentioned the NCA. They have made some well-publicised comments in the past few days about the “scorched earth” approach. The *Eucalyptus mannifera* is one example, in that it can only be planted when small; mature trees cannot be planted very easily. What are you going to do to avoid the “scorched earth” look?

Mr Corbell: I note that the chief executive of the NCA, Mr Snow, made some further comments where he indicated that some of his comments had been misreported. I refer you to his comments in that respect. Clearly, tree removal along Northbourne Avenue is identified as a high impact issue that has to be managed, and managed sensibly. The trees along Northbourne will require renewal in any event, and to do so in conjunction with the light rail project is a sensible way to approach the issue.

The NCA have indicated to the territory that they would be keen to ensure that the territory properly tests the scope for a staged removal and replacement of trees. The territory agrees that it is sensible to do that. We have put it very clearly to the two consortia that they will need to demonstrate to us how they are taking those issues into account and what they can deliver in terms of a staged removal and replacement approach.

MS LAWDER: You mentioned that some of the trees would have had to be replaced anyway. According to the government’s most recent report on the trees, what percentage of trees on the Northbourne Avenue median strip between Alinga Street and Mouat Street were defined as needing replacement?

Mr Corbell: An assessment undertaken in 2014 found that, through failing health, storm damage and removal of dead or dangerous trees, the total number of trees in the

median from Alinga Street to Flemington Road had dropped to 484. That is from the 802 trees recorded in the same stretch in 2010, and only 59 per cent of those were noted as being in good health.

MS LAWDER: Fifty-nine per cent in good health?

Mr Corbell: Yes, and the number of trees had declined over a four-year period from 802 to 484.

MS LAWDER: What was the report before the 2010 one and what did it find?

Mr Corbell: I do not have those figures in front of me, Ms Lawder. I would have to get advice on that.

MS LAWDER: Will you take that on notice?

Mr Corbell: Yes.

MS LAWDER: Will the tree removal and utility relocation be done by the consortium that wins the contract or in a separate contract?

Mr Corbell: The subcontracting arrangements will be a matter for the successful consortium, but those works will be undertaken by the PPP.

MS LAWDER: So it is all the one package?

Mr Corbell: Yes, that will be their responsibility.

MS LAWDER: Given that it is part of the one package, how will the government have any visibility or be able to ensure some local participation in that subcontract? Often there is a local weighting for contracts or procurement that the government undertakes.

Mr Corbell: Yes. The government has set out very clearly that we have a local industry engagement strategy. It is a requirement of the bidders that they demonstrate how they are complying with that strategy, and how they are ensuring that there is strong value-add, and strong opportunity for local businesses to win work and for local people to be employed.

It is worth making the observation that the consortia themselves consider that the engagement of local labour and local supply is the most cost-efficient and economic way to approach much of the work that they have to do. One of them has made the observation to me that it is cheaper than flying people in and out and putting them up in hotels. It just makes economic sense to employ locals and to secure supplies locally wherever that can be achieved.

The government has made it very clear that a key criterion for us in the assessment process is the ability of the consortia to engage local labour and local supply through local Canberra businesses. I think that is highlighted by the very strong response we have seen from local businesses to the recent “meet the bidders” event earlier this year.

Over 100 people attended, representing a very large number of local Canberra businesses.

We know that each of the consortia has entered into arrangements with local subcontractors. Obviously that is an outcome that we want to see because, as a government and I think as a community, we know how critical jobs are in the construction sector right now. We know how important the construction sector is for the ACT economy. This presents a significant opportunity for jobs and for business to be won by local Canberra companies.

MS LAWDER: Finally, going back to the trees, from the 2014 report on the trees, the 2010 report and the one before that, could you advise—take it on notice if necessary—what percentage of the *Eucalyptus elata* trees on the median strip between Alinga Street and Flemington Road, the same sort of information you provided before, have a useful life expectancy of over 20 years, according to each of those three reports?

Mr Corbell: I am happy to take the question on notice.

MS LAWDER: Thank you.

THE CHAIR: Ms Fitzharris has a supplementary and then Mr Coe.

MS FITZHARRIS: We had evidence from both the TAMS minister and the commissioner for the environment yesterday about the trees. As you indicated, many of them would have needed to have been removed and replanted anyway over a period. As you indicated, some have gone already. Are you aware whether or not the trees that would have to be removed would have been replanted with the current species?

Mr Corbell: I am not really in a position to be able to answer that. The existing tree plantings and any replacement of existing tree plantings on the median would be the responsibility of TAMS. I would have to refer you to TAMS.

THE CHAIR: Mr Coe, a new question.

MR COE: Minister, what are the chances of the government abandoning the light rail project before the next election?

Mr Corbell: Zero.

MR COE: Absolutely no chance at all?

Mr Corbell: No chance.

MR COE: No chance it will be delayed until five, 10, 20 years down the track?

Mr Corbell: The only issue at play is obviously making sure that we get a good affordability outcome—and we are committed to making sure there is a good affordability outcome—and that there is value for money. As long as we get that, the

government is not going to be abandoning this project.

MR COE: It is not quite zero then. There is still a chance that it could be—

Mr Corbell: Clearly the government has indicated it has affordability thresholds that we expect the bidders to meet but I do not doubt that they will be in a strong position to present competitive bids.

MR COE: What is that affordability threshold?

Mr Corbell: It is as it is outlined in the business case. We are very clear about our expectations around cost in the business case and those parameters are unchanged.

MR COE: If a consortium comes to you and says, “Actually it is going to be more like, say, \$850 million, \$950 million to construct light rail from Gungahlin to the city,” will the government say no or simply drag out the repayment period?

Mr Corbell: The government are not going to pre-empt the outcomes of the negotiations that we are yet to enter into, nor are we going to signal our negotiating position ahead of that process.

MR COE: It is well known around town that both consortia are telling contractors or subcontractors that \$783 million is way too ambitious and it is likely to be more than that. I am just wondering how you manage that in the event that they do come in at, say, \$900 million.

Mr Corbell: The government set out its parameters in the business case and there are key parameters around both the availability payment and the capital construction cost. Both are relevant and interrelated considerations and we will wait to see the outcome of the bidding process. But I am not going to pre-empt the bidding process, nor am I going to pre-empt the negotiations that follow the selection of the preferred bidder.

MR COE: What is going to be the threshold for the Russell extension? What is the affordability threshold? If \$783 million is as much as the territory can afford, how can you then afford to do a Russell extension?

Mr Corbell: The government has indicated that it sees potential economies of scale associated with a three-kilometre extension to Russell, and we want to see what the market response is to that. A final decision on whether or not to proceed with the Russell extension will be based upon the completion of a second business case, which will be presented to the government in due course and which will be informed by the actual market costing of what a Russell extension looks like.

MR COE: What is the time line for that second business case?

Mr Corbell: That will be completed ahead of the government selecting the preferred bidder.

MR COE: Will that be published like the first business case?

Mr Corbell: I anticipate it probably will be but the government has not formally reached a position on that.

MR COE: Is there a preliminary cost estimate for it?

Mr Corbell: The government are not going to disclose our initial assessments on these matters ahead of the bidding process because we are right now asking bidders to formally cost that extension and we are certainly not going to signal our punches ahead of the completion of that process.

MR COE: How can it possibly be consistent with Gungahlin to the city where you have come out and said it is \$783 million? In which case why did you not shut up regarding a figure and just let the market tell you what it is?

Mr Corbell: It was necessary for Gungahlin to the city, given the clear commitment of the government to proceed with the project and a commitment to have a robust business case to inform that final decision to proceed, that we did that work, and that is what we have done.

THE CHAIR: A supplementary from Ms Fitzharris but I might ask one first. The route to connect to Constitution Avenue will be along what street?

Mr Corbell: From the Alinga Street terminus?

THE CHAIR: Yes.

Mr Corbell: Via the remainder of Northbourne Avenue to London Circuit and then London Circuit to Constitution Avenue.

MS FITZHARRIS: I want to challenge a repetitive habit I think Mr Coe has of making pretty outrageous assertions—“well known about town”. It has been a consistent feature, I am afraid, throughout the week. Could you elaborate for us on how frequent the consultations and discussions are between you and your officials and both consortia as well as local business?

MR COE: And how does that refute what I said, sorry?

THE CHAIR: That is an interesting question.

Mr Corbell: Certainly, Ms Fitzharris. In relation to my engagement with Capital Metro Agency, I meet at least weekly with Capital Metro Agency to discuss progress on the project and key issues as they arise. In terms of Capital Metro Agency’s engagement with the bidders, right now we are at a very intensive stage of meetings with the two short-listed bidders. This is a day-by-day proposition. For example, there have been a series of meetings this week with both the short-listed bidders. That work is ongoing and that is going to keep on going between now and approximately the end of the third-quarter of this calendar year. There is a lot of work ongoing with those bidders.

In terms of engagement with industry, the Capital Metro Agency has worked closely

with industry peak bodies in town such as the Canberra Business Chamber to leverage their support in getting the word out about the “meet the bidders” events, for example, and equally with other industry bodies like the MBA. They have been very helpful in giving us access to their membership in terms of getting information to their membership about what is happening around potential for industry engagement and for their members to win business. That has been ongoing.

Equally, the two short-listed consortia are now reaching out directly with industry and running their own “meet the bidders” events. These are not events that are being auspiced by the Capital Metro Agency. They are being run by the two short-listed bidders themselves to engage local industry and secure and finalise their arrangements with local businesses for options around subcontracting supply of services and materials and the like.

It is a very strong response. It is ongoing in terms of those discussions and there are many Canberra businesses that are very hungry for the work that is going to come from capital metro. I know that there will be many Canberrans who will be very keen to be able to use their skills in the construction of this project.

THE CHAIR: Minister, how much has been spent on capital metro to date?

Mr Corbell: From when Capital Metro Agency was established to date, which is the 2014-15 financial year, in 2013-14 there was a mixture of recurrent and capital expenditure totalling \$8.468 million and in 2014-15 again a total of capital and recurrent expenditure totalling \$23.631 million.

THE CHAIR: And what have we received for that expenditure? There is certainly the business case and the EIS, but what else has been delivered for that more than \$30 million?

Mr Corbell: The first thing I would say is that “besides the EIS and the business case” underestimates the enormous body of work and effort that has gone into both of those documents. The EIS alone is 1,800 pages of analysis. The business case is underpinned by a series of other pieces of work that looks at everything from congestion modelling, patronage assumptions, utilities investigations to a broad range of other matters.

The Capital Metro Agency are also funded to deliver ongoing community engagement, education and consultation activities and then there is also all the other work that is now informing the conduct of the procurement process. Capital Metro Agency are also funded to run the procurement process and the legal, technical and other analysis that sits behind that—financial analysis. In addition they are also funded to do a whole range of other preparatory work around things such as utilities, investigations and a range of other matters. It is a very broad remit.

In comparison with the costs for the delivery of a PPP that we would see in other jurisdictions, if you were to look at the costs that accrue to an equivalent government agency in New South Wales or Victoria charged with running a hundred million dollars worth of PPP, our costs come in significantly under the cost that it would be in Victoria or New South Wales for a similar sized and costed project.

THE CHAIR: How much did the old ESDD spend before Capital Metro was established?

Mr Corbell: You would have to direct that question to EPD.

THE CHAIR: You do not have that number?

Mr Corbell: No.

THE CHAIR: Do you know how much other agencies have spent to support the establishment of Capital Metro to date?

Mr Corbell: You would have to ask those other agencies.

THE CHAIR: What is the process from here and what are the key dates? The tenders have closed. When do submissions have to be in?

Mr Corbell: No, tenders have not closed.

THE CHAIR: Selection of the two preferred tenderers has occurred. When do tenders close?

Mr Corbell: The short list of bidders is now in the interactive workshop stage with Capital Metro Agency where they work through in detail a broad range of issues that they need to take into account in presenting their final proposals and their financials. That work is ongoing. They are due to complete that by the beginning of September, and the government will then be assessing those bids over the balance of this calendar year and will be making a decision about a preferred bidder either at the end of this year or early next year.

THE CHAIR: Construction is to begin when?

Mr Corbell: Construction is due to commence in 2016. The exact timing and staging will be contingent upon the program agreed between the government and the preferred bidder.

THE CHAIR: What design work has been done to date?

Mr Corbell: Very extensive design work—you mean design work by Capital Metro Agency?

THE CHAIR: Any design work on the actual plans or by the consortia.

Mr Corbell: There is a very detailed design, enhanced definition design, which has been developed by Capital Metro Agency. This is used to inform our assumptions around the cost, the constructability of the project and how it needs to be managed and implemented. That is set out in quite some detail in the EIS document itself and has been the subject of previous consultation rounds, for example in relation to the location of stations, access for pedestrians, cyclists, interaction with vehicular traffic

and so on.

THE CHAIR: And what further work then would the successful consortia have to do to turn that work into the actual blueprints for construction?

Mr Corbell: The enhanced definition design is for the purposes of informing the government's analysis around the delivery of the project and its potential cost, constructability and all the other issues I mentioned just then. The two short-listed bidders will prepare their own designs. They have access to the enhanced definition design and we certainly anticipate they will draw from it extensively but ultimately it will be the responsibility of the two short-listed bidders to outline what they believe the final design should look like and we will as a government assess those two bids and their final designs as part of our overall assessment of the bids they put forward.

THE CHAIR: How long is it anticipated that the successful tenderer would take to do the final designs?

Mr Corbell: The level of definition that they deliver is a matter for them to determine but the territory does have requirements around a sufficient level of detail to allow us to determine our preferred bidder. They will then have to proceed with their design through engagement with the relevant planning authorities.

THE CHAIR: So they will do the design and they will submit the DA?

Mr Corbell: The territory may choose to lodge its enhanced definition design as the final design, given that there will be a high level of similarity between that and the final designs put forward by the consortia. We may choose to lodge our enhanced definition design and use—what we would anticipate, all things being equal—an approval for that design which can then be adjusted if there are any variations on the part of the final design from the consortia and they would have to go through a process to get that approved if they chose to do that. Alternatively it may be the case that the final design will be lodged by the preferred bidder.

THE CHAIR: It will be a PPP but the contract will then be a design, construct, maintain, operate?

Mr Corbell: It will be a PPP which has all of those elements and more.

THE CHAIR: What more would it have in it?

Mr Corbell: The big difference is around the financing model. Mr Edghill can give you more context on that.

Mr Edghill: The minister is correct. One of the main structural differences between a DCMO contract and a PPP is the existence of private sector financing in the transaction. Typically that consists of a debt and equity component and then there may be multiple tranches of private sector debt sitting within the PPP. Technically there is not a single finance provider sitting behind the PPP structure. One of the roles of each consortium is to arrange the various financiers who will tip the finance into the project as it is being constructed.

THE CHAIR: Minister, just to finish, what are the key milestones? A successful tenderer signs up, they start the design work but what are the key milestones then for the delivery of the project?

Mr Corbell: The key milestones are the lodgements of the bids by the two short-listed bidders, the selection of the preferred bidder, the contract close and financial close with the successful preferred bidder and construction commencing. The other key milestone would be planning and works approval.

THE CHAIR: And when construction starts what are the key milestones in the construction phase?

Mr Corbell: As I have indicated, that will be resolved once contractual terms are agreed with the preferred bidder.

THE CHAIR: And the opening date still?

Mr Corbell: The government still anticipates that construction will be completed at some point late in 2019 or into early 2020.

THE CHAIR: Thank you. Ms Fitzharris.

MS FITZHARRIS: Thank you. Minister, you mentioned in your opening statement that this is delivering on an election commitment made in late 2012, but I guess the history of this goes back some way. I think the *Canberra Times* had a piece which said that it actually went back to Walter Burley Griffin's plans for Canberra. Could you talk us through the last 20 years, I guess, by reflecting on the community consultation and the public conversation around light rail and the other work the government has engaged?

Mr Corbell: I have to confess—

MS FITZHARRIS: You were not around then?

Mr Corbell: I was not in this role 20 years ago but, in summary, and to the best of my recollection, debate around light rail has been a fairly constant issue since the establishment of self-government. It was first seriously put on the table by the private sector in the mid-1990s, led by Bob Winnel from the Village Building Co, who proposed a light rail line from the then conceptual Gungahlin town centre to the city as part of an urban village development for Gungahlin. That was an issue that was explored by the then Follett Labor government in the mid-1990s. The issue has come on and off the agenda ever since in a range of ways.

It is probably worth highlighting that the Winnel proposal actually came about from a piece of academic work that was undertaken by professors Newman and Kenworthy, who wrote a book called, if I recall correctly, "Towards a more sustainable Canberra". I am confident that there is a copy here in the Assembly Library. They wrote it in the early 1990s. They highlighted the opportunity for Canberra to be an early adopter of light urban rail to accommodate more sustainable patterns of urban growth.

Newman and Kenworthy have gone on to be globally recognised transport academics in the role of urban rail and in creating more sustainable cities, and their interest in the subject remains unabated. I think the genesis of light rail, certainly in the history of self-government, goes back to the very comprehensive book they wrote about it in the Canberra context, where they themselves identified the Gungahlin-to-city corridor as the corridor that they believe was most suitable for the first stage of a light rail network for our city. That is over 20 years go.

MS FITZHARRIS: I recall in late 2011 going to consultations both in the city and Gungahlin town centre around light rail and bus as an option. Is that report still available?

Mr Corbell: I am sorry, when was that?

MS FITZHARRIS: Mid to late 2011.

Mr Corbell: I imagine it is. I am not quite sure which one you are referring to, but I imagine the document is potentially available, yes.

MS FITZHARRIS: Thanks.

THE CHAIR: Are you asking for a copy?

MS FITZHARRIS: I recall it was around the community consultation in terms of what the community wanted, what the community's preference would be—light rail versus bus rapid transport. Are you able to talk about that particular study?

Mr Corbell: I am not able to talk about that particular study in any detail, but there were a series of investigations undertaken around that time. The government has previously provided a reconciliation of those reports. We can certainly do so again and perhaps try to identify the specific outcome you are interested in.

MS FITZHARRIS: Thank you.

THE CHAIR: Done?

MS FITZHARRIS: Yes, thank you.

THE CHAIR: Dr Bourke.

DR BOURKE: Thank you, chair. Minister, could you tell me about the differences in ride quality for passengers between the proposed light rail and the bus bobbing along the outside lane of Northbourne Avenue? Will all the station platforms be the same height as the carriage, allowing easy wheelchair access?

Mr Corbell: Thank you, Dr Bourke. In relation to the second part of your question, yes, all the stations for capital metro stage 1 will be zero step. This will provide very good access, and equal access, for people with any mobility problems—wheelchair users, the elderly, people with prams. It will be a very accessible service in that

respect. There will be no step involved. That will be the case also in accessing the stations. It is a very mobility-friendly design that is being delivered.

In terms of light rail versus bus, I think these issues have been well articulated. In summary, the issue that we have to consider is carrying capacity and also the capacity to deliver a permanent right of way. Commuters will always have concerns about any public transport service that does not have a permanent right of way and could potentially be changed overnight by the managers of the day. We know that is one of the challenges with bus services. They can be there one day and gone the next. It does not encourage investment certainty in terms of development along the corridor and it can cause uncertainty for commuters as well, and that can impact on their decision-making around their preferred transport mode.

That is the issue along Northbourne Avenue. We know, from the Infrastructure Australia analysis that came out earlier this year, that Northbourne Avenue is the most expensive road in the ACT when it comes to congestion costs to the economy. We know that that is only going to continue. We know that travel time is going to continue to deteriorate unless we take steps to improve the capacity for public transit to have a secure and enduring priority journey along the corridor.

Buses that simply are mixed with general vehicular traffic are going to get stuck in the congestion with cars. They are not going to have any particular priority, nor are they going to be able to achieve any particular level of reliability or frequency compared to light rail. Light rail is going to be able to deliver a reliability of frequency that cannot be met by buses sitting in general vehicular traffic.

DR BOURKE: Do you see that as the major attraction for passengers?

Mr Corbell: I see it as one of the major attractions for passengers. We know the quality of the ride is also something that is greatly valued by passengers in other cities that have urban rail and light rail services in particular. They consider it a more comfortable ride and a more enjoyable experience as a result and that does impact on consumer preferences. But, fundamentally, there is no doubt that the fact that there is a guaranteed travel time, that it is not going to be interrupted by general vehicular traffic, that it is not going to be caught in congestion in the same way that buses will if they remain in general vehicle lanes, is a very important consideration if we want to deliver a long-term guaranteed permanent level of frequency and reliability for public transport users in what is one of the fastest growing parts of our city.

DR BOURKE: We have talked a little bit before about an extension to Russell. How do you imagine Belconnen linking into the light rail network in the future as a spoke arrangement, with Civic as the hub, or perhaps some increased capacity along the Northbourne line and a linkage from either Dickson or Lyneham?

Mr Corbell: Those are certainly all issues that the government is looking very closely at. They are the responsibility of my colleague the Minister for Planning through the light rail master planning work. I am not able to comment in detail on that, as it is his portfolio responsibility, except to say that a very detailed analysis is being undertaken by the government as part of that light rail master planning work, including options associated with Belconnen.

DR BOURKE: Would there be any technical issues for light rail extension to Belconnen along either Belconnen Way or Ginninderra Drive, given the gradient on Belconnen Way?

Mr Corbell: I am really not in a position to comment on that, Dr Bourke. My responsibilities are as Minister for Capital Metro, which is stage 1, from Gungahlin to city and potentially city to Russell. The other analysis that you are interested in is being undertaken as part of the light rail master planning work but, again, it is not work being undertaken by the Capital Metro Agency. It is being undertaken by the Environment and Planning Directorate, and Minister Gentleman has carriage of that work.

DR BOURKE: I know that, but I just hoped you might have had some insight into the capabilities of light rail vis-a-vis the two routes, but needless to say—

Mr Corbell: I am not responsible for that work, and I do not want to tread on my colleague's toes. I would encourage you to raise the matter with my colleague.

DR BOURKE: Okay.

THE CHAIR: A supplementary from Ms Fitzharris to Dr Bourke's question, and then Ms Lawder.

MS FITZHARRIS: Thank you. Minister, just going to back to Dr Bourke's first question and your responses around the quality of the ride, in terms of getting on and off light rail compared to a bus—I guess I am used to standing in one long queue at the bus and everybody tagging on as they get on the bus—is there quite a difference with light rail?

Mr Corbell: I will ask Ms Thomas to talk a little bit about this, given her experience as rail commissioner in South Australia and responsible for light and heavy rail in the urban environment in Adelaide, and her experience of that.

Ms Thomas: In South Australia I did have experience not only with light rail but also heavy rail and buses as well, so being familiar with customers who use all three modes of transport. There is quite a lot of difference in the experience that a customer will have on light rail in comparison to a bus. Firstly, at the start of their journey, they will have quite an open station with good amenity, good lighting, good features, and a much bigger environment than just a bus shelter that people might be used to.

As the minister has already explained, the entry way to the light rail is level with the entry way to the tram. So instead of stepping up into a bus, which can sometimes slow the entry and exit of people, it gives a direct entry not only with a front door but also across anywhere from four to six doors that all open at the same time. So you have, if you like, the whole side of a tram opening up and people can get on and off much faster than they can with a traditional bus.

On top of that, the boarding process of tagging on and tagging off that people will be familiar with with MyWay or any ticketing system into the future will happen off

board. So it happens on the platform rather than as you get onto the vehicle. Again, that makes for an easier transition on and off without having to stand in a long queue while everyone goes through the process of tagging their MyWay card.

Certainly the process of boarding and getting off the tram is a far more swift experience and far simpler. Once you enter the tram, you are in a much more open environment. You tend to have a wider corridor down the middle, generally a flat floor all the way along, so you do not have a step up over any axle points or anything. People can move through and feel like they are in a much wider, lighter and brighter space because of that.

There is much better legibility of accessibility points for people requiring mobility devices. They will be able to get on and be right near the door and will not need the assistance of drivers or others to help them on and off the light rail. There are a number of experiences that people will have in terms of using the light rail that will be very different to their bus experience now.

MS FITZHARRIS: I presume for prams as well. I did once try and get on a bus with a pram, and I only did it once. It is just being able to walk on and off. And I presume they will be able to sit anywhere on the tram with a pram?

Ms Thomas: That is exactly right. Again, the assisted areas where there is more room for prams will be available. Some of those prams are quite big, especially if you have twins.

MS FITZHARRIS: Yes.

Ms Thomas: There is more room available on the light rail vehicle for all wheeled devices, including bikes. Again, people will be able roll bikes straight on and straight off the light rail vehicle. It gives much easier access for anyone who needs to travel that way.

MS FITZHARRIS: Will they be able to stand with their bike on the light rail, or will the bike be put in a particular rack? Do you know that yet?

Ms Thomas: We will not know that exactly until the bidders provide their responses, but generally those areas for bikes will be in similar open spaces in the light rail vehicle, where there is room available for them to stand as well as leave their bike and sit, if they choose. Most people with bikes like to be close to them. I know I like to be close to mine. It will be a personal choice at the time. But it is likely that bikes will need to be held in some way because we do not want any sudden stopping or anything to cause any safety problems.

MS FITZHARRIS: Thank you.

THE CHAIR: Mr Coe has a supplementary; then a new question from Ms Lawder.

MR COE: With regard to the aisles, the doors, the flat floors and the bright space—which of those cannot be delivered by buses?

Mr Corbell: Buses certainly do not have as wide a physical body as light rail vehicles do; nor can they deliver the smoothness of ride that wheels on rail can.

MR COE: What is the difference in the width of a tram versus a bus?

Mr Allday: Trams come in a standard format. They are a typical vehicle size for most rail vehicles, so they are much wider than a bus—they are about 2.8 metres—and they are much more open. The way that you lay out a tram means that you have got open areas and you have got designated areas where you can designate prams or wheelchairs or put bicycles and have them secure; and you lay out the seats such that they are much more accessible for people to be able to move freely, whereas within a bus you have got a very designated aisle which is very narrow and very constraining. So the feel, the look and the inside of a tram are much more spacious than with a bus.

MR COE: Isn't a bus pretty much that same width—about 2.6?

Mr Allday: The problem you have got with a bus is that it is much more constrained because, the way you look at it, your seats are laid out in such a way that you cannot sit and move around. And you are steered always to the one exit on a bus, generally speaking.

MR COE: But with all these things, why couldn't you have four-door buses—

Mr Allday: The width of a tram is slightly wider—sorry?

MR COE: Why couldn't you have four-door buses? Why couldn't you have four-door buses, why couldn't you have a wider aisle and why couldn't you just take out seats and have more standing room?

Mr Allday: A tram is still much wider; it is wider than a bus. Why can't you have that situation in a bus? A bus—

MR COE: I think a bus is 2.6.

Mr Allday: With a bus, you are not allowed to have a set number of people able to stand, because you have to be able to stand in a secure manner, be able to hold on. As such, a bus would not carry the number of people that a tram can carry.

MR COE: I guess it assumes that the tram is always going to be at capacity. If they are not at capacity, it does not really matter whether they can carry more or less. The fact is that if you have got a bus that is carrying 40 people or a tram that is carrying 40 people, whether one has 100 spare spaces and one has got 30 spare spaces does not really mean much, does it?

Mr Corbell: Is that a question or a comment?

MR COE: What does it mean? What is it going to mean to have more capacity on the line at midday on a Tuesday? Isn't it simply going to mean you are going to have an emptier tram than you would have with a bus?

Mr Corbell: Like we have empty roads in the middle of the day as well?

MR COE: Yes, but surely you build such infrastructure for capacity, during peak hours?

Mr Corbell: As we are with light rail.

MR COE: So is there going to be more capacity as a result of having a dozen trams than with the 72 buses that currently run south along Gungahlin from 6 am to 9 am?

Mr Corbell: Per vehicle, yes, and—

MR COE: Per vehicle, but in total capacity—

Mr Corbell: And that is what—and that is important because—

MR COE: But in total capacity—

Mr Corbell: And that is important because we know that at the moment, and as the population continues to grow, there are challenges in accommodating everyone during the peak times. That is only going to continue as the population continues to grow. In comparison, one single light rail vehicle leaving, say, a particular stop at 10 past eight in the morning is going to be able to carry a lot more people than a bus leaving that stop at 10 past eight in the morning. That is one of the great advantages of LRT—its carrying capacity. We also know that you can add extra vehicles to your LRT fleet. So instead of having three carriages, your standard LRT set, you can have four, for example. And you are adding how many more as a result?

Mr Allday: It is almost a third when you work it out. You can certainly extend them.

Mr Corbell: Those are all the demonstrable advantages of LRT over bus.

MR COE: You can put another bus on as well.

Mr Corbell: But fundamentally the big problem with buses is that buses are not providing any improvement if they are stuck in the traffic jam with all the cars.

THE CHAIR: Ms Fitzharris now wants a supp; then we will go to Ms Lawder with a new question.

MS FITZHARRIS: Are you aware of any buses that are configured differently to the current fleet that we have, along the lines that Mr Coe was talking about?

Mr Corbell: There are other bus technologies out there. There is guided bus technology. You can get articulated and double-articulated buses; there is no doubt about that. But the fundamental issue still is that unless you give a dedicated and permanent right of way, buses are no more competitive than a car, and they are stuck in the traffic jam with the car.

DR BOURKE: But surely those characteristics of buses that Mr Allday described

before, with the need for safety, are exacerbated by the fact that buses bob and move around, which is the entire reason why rail transport offers you a different potential, because of the smoothness of the ride.

Mr Corbell: There is no doubt that there are clear consumer preferences around ride quality, and that influences mode choice. It is well established in cities globally around that phenomenon.

THE CHAIR: Ms Lawder, a new question.

MS LAWDER: Thank you. Minister, in the national partnership agreement on asset recycling that the ACT signed with the federal government in February of this year, the ACT government signalled its intention to sell \$392.71 million in public assets in order to fund the light rail project, 100 per cent of the proceeds going towards capital metro. Is that your understanding?

Mr Corbell: Yes. The agreement between the federal and the ACT governments is that the bonus payment, as well as the revenue received from the asset sales themselves, will be directed towards the capital metro project.

MS LAWDER: So it was the 392.71 plus the bonus, which, in rough terms, is 60 million-ish.

Mr Corbell: Could you just repeat those figures, please, Ms Lawder?

MS LAWDER: 392.71 million of public assets plus the bonus payment.

Mr Corbell: The total amounts are that the ACTTAB sale contributes 106 million; land sales associated with the public housing estate 287 million—that is not just the public housing estate; there are other government sites in that—and the commonwealth incentive payment 59 million.

MS LAWDER: I am looking at the federal financial relations website, which has the agreement on it now. It clearly says 392.71 million, estimated proceeds from the sale of net assets—that is in schedule A to the agreement—with 100 per cent going to capital metro. Did the ACT overstate their estimated proceeds in the agreement that was signed by the Treasurer and the Chief Minister?

Mr Corbell: On my calculations, Ms Lawder, if you add up the proceeds from ACTTAB and land sales, the amount is 393 million.

MS LAWDER: 392.71?

Mr Corbell: With rounding, the calculation I have just done—393, yes.

MS LAWDER: I am interested in budget paper 3, page 167. There is a chart that looks a bit like this one.

Mr Corbell: Yes.

MS LAWDER: That says \$375 million capital contribution to capital metro. Where has the remaining 17 or 18 million gone?

Mr Corbell: My understanding is that that is a staging question. The sales program for the government surplus land assets would occur over a defined period, and that, if I recall correctly, extends beyond the construction timetable for capital metro.

Mr Edghill: Certainly. And what the asset recycling agreement does not do is—it is not prescriptive as to how the proceeds are applied to the project; it is just that the proceeds are applied to the project. So to the extent that the funding from the surplus asset sales exceeds the \$375 million capital contribution, those excess funds can be applied to the project through the first availability payment, which is made post the construction period.

MS LAWDER: Good. That was my next question—whether that change was included in your calculations of the annual availability payments. So that is what you are saying?

Mr Corbell: It is important to stress that the funds that are secured through the asset recycling initiative—that is, both the funds that are available as a result of land sales and the cash that is provided as the incentive payment from the commonwealth—are to be used for the capital metro project. But how they are to be used is a matter for the territory to determine. The territory has to determine that, of the total amount available, 375 million will be paid to capital metro through a capital contribution at the completion of the construction phase. The balance will be used for capital metro but the territory has discretion as to where that will be used for capital metro. As Mr Edghill indicates, it could very well go towards the territory's payments through the availability payment regime.

MS LAWDER: Have you confirmed a 20-year availability payment period?

Mr Corbell: The actual contractual term in terms of dates? Not at this point. That will be concluded once contractual negotiations are completed. But it is a 20-year operational term.

MS LAWDER: The \$17 or \$18 million from the sale of assets will go towards the availability payment—is that correct?

Mr Corbell: It will go towards capital metro. That is the undertaking the territory has with the commonwealth.

MS LAWDER: How are you going to spend that \$18 million?

Mr Corbell: That will be determined by the territory in due course.

MS LAWDER: What is due course?

Mr Corbell: Later.

MS LAWDER: Later? Tomorrow? Next year?

Mr Corbell: I am not going to get into some guessing game. It will be determined in due course. It has not yet been determined, but it will be put towards the capital metro project.

MS LAWDER: Thank you.

THE CHAIR: Mr Coe, a new question.

MR COE: Minister, could you please advise what the depreciation treatment is for the reports that get commissioned by light rail, by capital metro?

Mr Edghill: Certainly. Under relevant accounting standards there is a point in time where costs associated with the project are capitalised. You will have seen in previous budgets that it was simply recurrent expenditure which was appropriated by capital metro, which was reflective of the fact that under accounting standards it was not yet appropriate to be depreciating assets. You will see in this year's budget that there is both a recurrent and a capital appropriation. That is reflective of the fact that under the appropriate accounting standards it will be appropriate for certain costs associated with the project to be capitalised. So my understanding is that project costs will be capitalised effectively as work in progress until such time as the operations commence, and it is at that particular point in time that depreciation of capitalised costs will commence.

MR COE: It commences then, did you say?

Mr Edghill: The depreciation of the work in progress capitalised costs, correct.

MR COE: So there is zero depreciation until that point on all capital. So in effect, the full value remains on the books until then?

Mr Edghill: As work in progress.

MR COE: What items would be captured by that capitalisation treatment? What sorts of items?

Mr Edghill: Any costs which are directly associated with the project itself. For example, much of the work which is occurring in my colleague Mr Allday's group which goes to technical matters associated with finalisation of the procurement process, the costs then associated in actually managing the contract from the government side during the construction period—they may be costs which are capitalised, costs associated with our customer experience and operations activities, certain legal and commercial costs associated with finalisation of the procurement process and then management of the contract when we get to construction. That contrasts with other costs which are not directly related to the project for accounting purposes. For example, some of the work which goes to the operations of Capital Metro Agency as a government directorate as opposed to directly to the project itself under accounting standards would be recognised as recurrent costs rather than as capital costs.

MR COE: Are all in-house staff counted as an expense or can some staff have their salaries capitalised as well?

Mr Edghill: Certain of the staff whose activities are dedicated to the project itself rather than the operations of the agency, for want of a distinction between the two—then, as with any other infrastructure project, from the relevant point in time under the accounting standards, yes, some of those costs would be capitalised.

MR COE: Does that have to be done on a staff member by staff member basis or can you go on a statutory percentage for the agency?

Mr Edghill: We are trying to account for it on a reasonably granular level, so it would not be the case that we simply apply a particular percentage. What we would do is—there are a few things that we will do and are doing. The first is to look at individual staff and to look at the activities of individual groups within Capital Metro Agency, but we would also look at the functions which have been undertaken by various of those groups. For example, costs associated with the Russell option may be capitalised at a later point in time than for the base project.

MR COE: I know you did mention it, but what is the start time for the depreciation? Is that commencement of works or completion of works with regard to the in-house depreciation?

Mr Corbell: If you have got it in your head, Duncan.

MR COE: Feel free to chime in, minister, if you would like to.

Mr Corbell: Mr Edghill is much better at this than I am.

Mr Edghill: We are anticipating that we will reach a point where we are capitalising certain of the costs associated with the base project in July of this year.

MR COE: What is the trigger for that? What proximity to the project commencing do you need to be in order to capitalise?

Mr Edghill: It is not so much about proximity to the project itself. The accounting standards talk about effectively it being more likely than not that the economic benefits from the project are going to be realised. For accounting purposes—of course, this is all ultimately subject to the view of our auditors, but on this particular point we have engaged with our auditors since late last year both to make sure that we had our budget papers correct for this year and to make sure that we are following the accounting rules as we should be doing. We have determined that that point of the economic benefits being more likely than not for accounting purposes is best realised about halfway through the interactive process with our bidders. We began the interactive process in late April, the beginning of May. The base project proposals are due back in on 4 September and the midway point between those dates is about in July of this year.

MR COE: Thank you.

THE CHAIR: Minister, the original thought was for something like 14 trams for the city to Gungahlin run. If it is extended to Constitution Avenue, how many additional trams are required?

Mr Corbell: Mr Allday.

Mr Allday: That number is yet to be determined. Obviously you will realise that to do that we have to do an assessment of the alignment of the planned route, which we have done; we have already started to do the design work for that. That determines some of the constraints, the operational constraints in particular, that would determine the run time between the end from Gungahlin through Civic and from Civic through to Russell itself. We have done some analysis on that; however, that is still to be further defined yet. That in itself will determine our opinion, and it is only our opinion, of what number of LRVs additional to those that have been identified for phase 1 may be required for the extension. Ultimately it will be determined by the proponents, who, as part and parcel of their submissions to the request for proposals, will actually propose what they believe to be the set number of light rail vehicles that may be required for the primary route and for the additional extension to Russell.

THE CHAIR: And the light rail will operate what hours?

Mr Allday: The hours generally are set out in the business case. I believe, and correct me if I am wrong, that it is effective from about 6 o'clock in the morning through to about 11 o'clock or 11.30 most evenings and a bit later on a Friday night and Saturday. The exact ones I think are in there.

Mr Corbell: It is approximately 1 am, if I recall correctly, on Friday and Saturday night, and it is an earlier start time during the week and a slightly later start time on weekends. From Monday to Thursday, operating hours are, to be precise, 5.59 am through to midnight. Sorry, that is not correct. Generally speaking, it is 6 am to midnight Monday to Thursday, with a later finish on Friday and Saturday and a slightly later start on Saturday and Sunday.

THE CHAIR: At some stage all the LRVs will be in the depot, which I understand is at Mitchell.

Mr Corbell: It is proposed in our definition design that Mitchell be the location for the depot.

THE CHAIR: And the capacity of the depot at Mitchell is how many LRVs?

Mr Allday: The depot is actually sized to allow for expansion for the future as well. It can take up to 25 light rail vehicles in total. That would encompass both the primary and also the extension to Russell, and would also have some spare capacity in that.

THE CHAIR: So what you are building is for 25 trams. I thought the EIS said it would house 18.

Mr Allday: The facility itself can house up to a maximum of 25. Not all of that will necessarily be built. It will be dependent upon whether we actually go ahead with the

Russell extension or not.

Mr Corbell: Provision is made in the size of the facility to accommodate that growth.

THE CHAIR: The initial construction of the depot will house how many?

Mr Corbell: That will be dependent on whether or not, first of all, the government accepts bids and pricing and decides to proceed with the Russell extension. That will influence the amount of stabling required and the number of LRVs required.

THE CHAIR: To go to ACTION buses, a number of school routes come down Northbourne Avenue. Will that continue?

Mr Corbell: The detailed design of new bus network operations is ongoing, in collaboration with CMA to a degree, but largely within Territory and Municipal Services, so those are matters best raised with them.

THE CHAIR: What consultation has CMA had with ACTION so far about changes to the network?

Mr Corbell: First of all, there are no detailed network changes yet in place. Obviously conceptually there is a clear understanding of what changes need to occur, but the detailed network and timetabling issues are not yet resolved. The simple reason for that is that we are talking about network changes that will take effect in 2020, so over four years away.

THE CHAIR: Conceptually what changes will have to occur to the ACTION network?

Mr Corbell: Conceptually there will be significant changes to the commuter bus services that run along Northbourne Avenue, because they will be replaced by a light rail service. Issues around bus services and so on are matters that are yet to be resolved.

THE CHAIR: What is the likely number of services that will be replaced?

Mr Corbell: I can give you, on notice, some analysis around that.

THE CHAIR: For instance, will kids that go to Daramalan, live in Gungahlin and get the bus be forced to get a bus that takes them to the Gungahlin interchange and get a tram to Dickson or will they still have direct bus services?

Mr Corbell: That level of detail is yet to be determined, recognising that these network changes, any network changes, are over four years away.

THE CHAIR: Page 34 of, I think, technical paper 5 in the EIS suggests, for instance, that ACTION routes 30 and 31, which go from Belconnen to the city via Giralang and Kaleen, would be terminated at Dickson, with passengers then required to transfer at Dickson onto the light rail in order to get to the city. Is that your understanding of that proposal?

Mr Corbell: That is a possible impact. There is the potential for changes in the design of bus routes across large areas of northern Canberra. The reason for that is the decision to proceed with an interchange facility at Dickson that will realign bus services to operate east-west, with light rail operating on the north-south spine.

THE CHAIR: How does that fit in with capital metro's ethos of quick and more efficient public transport if I get a bus and I am forced to get off a bus at the tram station, get on the tram and then continue my journey?

Mr Corbell: The government's requirement is that public transport services will be integrated between bus and light rail operations, and interchanging will need to occur in a very smooth and timely manner with short waiting periods—high levels of frequency, for example, along the capital metro line. A frequency of between five and 10 minutes is a very high level of frequency for that spine service. The key issue that will need to be resolved through detailed timetable design will be to ensure that movements from light rail to bus are equally at a high level of frequency, with short waiting times. Interchanging in and of itself is not a concern as long as waiting times are short; that is the issue that the government will be investing considerable effort in over the coming period between now and the start of light rail operations in 2020.

THE CHAIR: So in effect light rail will cannibalise some of the ACTION network for its own survival.

Mr Corbell: Light rail is designed to replace bus operations, so it should not be surprising to anyone that it takes patronage from those bus operations where it is replacing those bus operations. It is worth highlighting as well that the experience of light rail in other cities is that it grows bus network patronage as well. As long as the services are integrated, as long as there is a high level of frequency for both bus and light rail and interchanging is able to be achieved in a quick and timely manner, which is the government's objective, we know that patronage is grown in both the bus network and the light rail network. It is not a case where one loses and one wins; the fact is that both win. That is clearly the experience on the Gold Coast, where bus patronage has increased along with light rail operations.

THE CHAIR: But on the Gold Coast they have not met any of the numbers that were originally put forward for the light rail, have they?

Mr Corbell: The projections that the previous government set out are that their projections have been exceeded.

MR COE: The revised projections, not the Labor government projections.

THE CHAIR: The original projections.

Mr Corbell: The projections that were agreed by the previous government have been exceeded.

THE CHAIR: The Labor government or the revised numbers from the Newman government?

Mr Corbell: It is not for me to comment on the ins and outs of what is happening in the Queensland government, but the projections as set out by the previous—

THE CHAIR: You quoted Queensland. You opened the door.

Mr Corbell: The projections as set out by the previous Liberal National government in Queensland have been exceeded.

THE CHAIR: Were the projections originally put forward by the then Labor government met or exceeded?

Mr Corbell: My understanding is that the Liberal National government revised the projections set out by the Labor government.

THE CHAIR: Did they revise them up or down?

Mr Corbell: They revised them down.

THE CHAIR: By significant amounts or small amounts?

Mr Corbell: I would have to take that on notice.

MR COE: Was it 50,000 to 17,000? Is that right?

Mr Corbell: In any event, patronage is higher than projected on the Gold Coast light rail line, and that is consistent with the patronage increases that have occurred in Adelaide and in other urban rail projects in our country.

THE CHAIR: Ms Fitzharris, a new question.

MS FITZHARRIS: Thank you. Minister, you mentioned in your opening statement the consultation that the agency is undertaking. Can you go into a little more detail about that, in particular consultation around the EIS?

Mr Corbell: The EIS is now on public exhibition. Comments are able to be formally received from anyone with an interest in the Environment and Planning Directorate performing its functions and the ACT Planning and Land Authority. They are the formal recipient of any comments and people are able to make a submission to the Planning and Land Authority during the exhibition period.

In addition to that, capital metro will be running its own community consultation to allow people to ask questions about the EIS, because it is not the role of the Planning and Land Authority to answer questions about the EIS. It is the role of the Planning and Land Authority to assess the EIS and to take into account public submissions. As the proponent, capital metro is undertaking public consultation on the EIS and allowing people to ask questions about that.

The consultation activities will involve two drop-in sessions to be held in Gungahlin and two to be held in Dickson, so four in total. The Gungahlin drop-in sessions are on

Saturday, 27 June and Tuesday, 30 June. The Dickson drop-in sessions are on Saturday, 4 July and Tuesday, 7 July.

In addition, capital metro will be reaching out to property owners and tenants along the route, residential and commercial, retail tenants and property owners, and there will also be an online presence where people can ask questions and make comments through that online process. Capital metro will be forwarding material also to the Planning and Land Authority as part of that process.

MS FITZHARRIS: How are they reaching out to the local businesses?

Ms Taylor: The question relates to how we will be reaching out. We will be implementing a place manager program from 8 July. That place manager program is essentially an opportunity for members of the community to talk to our place managers about the project and raise their concerns. The place manager will be meeting with businesses, residents and community organisations along the corridor, and as part of their role they will also be coordinating community and business reference groups.

MS FITZHARRIS: At a local level?

Ms Taylor: At a local level. There will be three place managers along the corridor and they will be placed in each precinct. So there will be one placed in Gungahlin, one in Dickson and one in Civic.

MS FITZHARRIS: At the Access Canberra shopfronts?

Ms Taylor: That is correct.

MS FITZHARRIS: Do you already have feedback—I know you have mentioned the local industry who may be involved in building the project—from the businesses along the corridor about their views on the project and what they see?

Ms Taylor: We have a good relationship with the Master Builders Association and the Business Chamber. We are working quite closely with those groups to make sure that the businesses along the corridor are actively involved. Those business reference groups are also an opportunity for those groups to have their say and to provide us with feedback on the project and where they see the opportunity. As part of the place manager program, that doorknocking of residents and businesses will also provide a one-on-one opportunity should they not wish to participate in the broader reference group.

MS FITZHARRIS: That role is not specific to the EIS? It is for the whole project?

Ms Taylor: No, absolutely not. We thought the EIS was a good opportunity to start that program, and that will continue throughout the project.

MS FITZHARRIS: So they will be available—

Ms Taylor: From 8 July they will be rolled out every Wednesday and Thursday. So

they will be embedded in the community. Should there be a need from the community for them to be there every other day of the week, they will be. We will start to promote those open sessions in the next week. As I said, there is an opportunity for people just to drop in, say hello and get their questions answered. The other option is that the place manager will be doorknocking residents and giving them a heads-up that they will be coming into their area so they can answer any questions that they might have about the project.

MS FITZHARRIS: Thank you.

THE CHAIR: Dr Bourke, a new question.

DR BOURKE: Thank you, chair. Minister, are you able to make any observations about the expansion of the Sydney network with their new line from Randwick to the CBD in regard to length and costs and how that all compares to capital metro?

THE CHAIR: And is it only for hipsters?

MR COE: That is right. And what do your Labor colleagues think?

Mr Corbell: I think it is great to see a Liberal government supporting light rail. I think there are great opportunities for Liberal colleagues around the country to learn the lessons of the investment decisions being made by the Baird government in this respect.

What is interesting about the city light rail projects is that, to the extent that we know, at least one has had a benefit-cost ratio lower than capital metro, yet they have still warranted investment decisions by the New South Wales Liberal government. Equally, we can see in Sydney that they are contentious. That is, again, not a surprise to me.

What is clearly recognised in Sydney is that there are limits in the capacity of buses to deliver the reliability, the frequency and the carrying capacity that can be delivered through light rail. It is very pleasing to see significant investment being made in urban rail, light and heavy rail projects, in Sydney.

The other point to be made is that, in terms of direct benefits to the territory, the fact that New South Wales completed their bidding process slightly ahead of the commencement of our expression of interest round meant that we were able to leverage the experience and the standing capacity of a number of bidders who were unsuccessful in the Sydney round but well formed and ready to go with bids and EOIs here in the ACT. Certainly one of our short-listed bidders is a consortium that was fully formed but unsuccessful in the short-listing in Sydney. I am sorry; they were short-listed, I think, but they were unsuccessful as the preferred bidder.

DR BOURKE: Which other jurisdictions are realising the benefit of light rail over buses, minister?

Mr Corbell: There is a broad range of light rail projects in planning or under active development around the country. Obviously, most recently the Gold Coast has completed its light rail project. That has been discussed frequently here and in other

places. Adelaide has, in the last few years, completed extensions to its light rail network. There is strong lobbying occurring in South Australia at the moment around where the next extension should be and strong advocacy from local government areas in Adelaide to be the recipient of the next stage of light rail network in that city.

There is a range of other proposals under planning consideration in a number of cities around the country. Newcastle, for example, has a very well advanced proposal which is being worked on by the New South Wales government, so that is an interesting comparison to Canberra in terms of size. Equally, there are less developed proposals in a number of smaller centres. There is a proposal being advanced by the relevant local government areas around the Sunshine Coast. Indeed, I have had the opportunity to meet with the mayor from that region, who has been interested to learn about our experiences and understand what it may mean for his local government area as they advance that proposal. There have also been proposals advanced at various times in Western Australia and, I am advised, in Parramatta in Sydney. There is a range of proposals under active development.

DR BOURKE: But this is not just a solely Australian experience, is it, minister?

Mr Corbell: No, it certainly is not, Dr Bourke. I think everyone is familiar that light rail is enjoying a renaissance around the world, particularly in the United States and Europe, with significant new build or extensions taking place in dozens of cities in the United States and Europe in particular.

THE CHAIR: As a supplementary to that, are there other jurisdictions that have abandoned it? Wellington in New Zealand was to go ahead and they have not done that. Edinburgh have cancelled the extension to their lines. Are there not just as many cities that are going the other way and working on bus rapid transit?

Mr Corbell: I think it would be fair to say that the momentum is well and truly in favour of expansion and new build rather than decisions being made by city governments not to proceed. That happens, of course, but I think the momentum is well and truly the other way.

THE CHAIR: A supplementary to Ms Fitzharris and then Ms Lawder with a new question.

MS FITZHARRIS: You mentioned often controversial projects. I think the Productivity Commission report that you referenced acknowledged that community controversy is an aspect of major infrastructure projects and that something needs to be done nationally to address the productivity losses if we do not plan infrastructure for the future. Is there anywhere where they have invested in bus rapid transit only to find that it is not going to serve them for the long term and are now planning light rail?

Ms Thomas: I do not have any exact figures for you, but in the city of Nantes the minister and I were fortunate enough to hear a presentation given by its local authority, which had put in bus rapid transit. That bus rapid transit has had to be extended and was at maximum capacity very quickly. Nantes is not a city that is too much larger than Canberra in its true form. It has had to consider quite quickly that it might have

to transfer that to a light rail vehicle system instead of bus rapid. Its capacity point was running buses at about every three minutes. If you think about the peak for Northbourne Avenue, our predicted peak is 3,900 people during peak hour. That would require 100 people per bus capacity—articulated buses every three minutes just in the peak of what we are projecting at the moment. It is a similar discussion to what is happening in Nantes at the moment.

A number of American cities have also considered it. There was a discussion about Reno in America where they put in a bus rapid and within four weeks of that opening they were already talking about whether they should change it to light rail. The reasons given were that they had looked at the example of Portland and seen that the land use development and transport development in conjunction with one another had been far more successful with the light rail vehicles. Some of those cities are starting to look at transitioning. Some bids are not getting off the ground in terms of bus rapid before they start having a conversation now about light rail vehicles. Those are just a couple of examples that I know of.

MS FITZHARRIS: Thank you.

Mr Corbell: Mr Chairman, earlier you asked a question about the operating times for LRVs. I have those figures now. On Monday to Thursday the operating times are 6 am to 11.30 pm. On Friday it would be 6 am to 1 am on Saturday. On Saturday it would be 6 am to 1 am on Sunday and on Sunday it would be 8 am to 11.30 pm.

THE CHAIR: A new question, Ms Lawder.

MS LAWDER: Minister, I am looking at the light rail business case in brief on the Capital Metro website. At point No 9 it talks about the light rail master plan and it says that the draft light rail master plan will be released for public consultation in early 2015. I have not seen it. Is it available?

Mr Corbell: That is correct. It has not been released at this stage. These are matters that are the responsibility of my colleague Minister Gentleman. As Minister for Planning he has responsibility for the development of the light rail master plan. As I understand it the minister has determined that further work is required before public consultation occurs. However, public consultation will occur before any decision is made by the government about the final form and detail of that master plan.

MS LAWDER: In theory then, you are the minister for light rail stage 1?

Mr Corbell: That is correct.

MS LAWDER: And you are the Deputy Chief Minister. I guess my fear is that if we cannot deliver a draft master plan on time what is it going to mean for a big project like the light rail when we cannot even do this small piece of work in a timely manner?

Mr Corbell: I draw your attention to all the milestones Capital Metro Agency have in terms of delivery of documentation and delivery of key project time frames. I am pleased to report that Capital Metro have met every single one of their time frames

agreed with the government for delivery of this project. I think that says a lot about the capacity of CMA to deliver.

MS LAWDER: When is the light rail going to go to Tuggeranong town centre and Lanyon town centre?

Mr Corbell: Those are matters that are part of the government's consideration around the light rail master plan and I refer you to Minister Gentleman as the responsible minister.

MS LAWDER: You would have no idea how long the light rail might take to travel from Tuggeranong to the city or from Lanyon to the city either?

Mr Corbell: Travel time?

MS LAWDER: Yes.

Mr Corbell: Again those are matters that fall within Minister Gentleman's responsibility. He has responsibility for the light rail master plan and the analysis behind that. I will not tread on my colleague's toes and I refer you to him.

THE CHAIR: Mr Coe, a new question.

MR COE: Have any staff of the agency travelled abroad to visit light rail operations as part of work obviously for the Capital Metro Agency?

Ms Thomas: No.

MR COE: Have any staff received entertainment, hospitality or gifts from any of the consortia?

Ms Thomas: No.

MR COE: None at all?

Ms Thomas: No. We have a gift register within the agency that people are required to fill in and there are no gifts registered in the register for anyone receiving hospitality. On top of that we have very strict probity requirements within the project that require that we do not receive any hospitality from them.

MR COE: That was the next question actually. What are the government's policy requirements with regard to hospitality and gifts?

Ms Thomas: Apart from the general ACT government policy requirements which we follow within the Capital Metro Agency we have a probity plan for the project that requires very strict conflict of interest acknowledgement or flagging throughout the project. We do that on a regular basis in case people's circumstances change.

We also have very controlled interaction with any of the bidders such that we have an independent probity adviser who has been appointed by the project for the purposes of

this. He attends every meeting that we have with the consortia so that he can keep records of any probity discussions. Under that we also have a regular meeting with him to discuss any issues that he might have. He also attends the board meetings. All the members of the board are subject to the same probity requirements as the members of Capital Metro Agency. We have a fairly strict regime of probity across the whole project.

MR COE: Have there been any changes with regard to members of the board?

Mr Corbell: The board is as has been announced. All changes to the board have been announced publicly and the only substantive change since the board was first established was the appointment of Michael Kerry. Michael Kerry was appointed to the board to bring landscape architecture and landscape design experience. He is an independent board member. The government has agreed to the appointment of the Director-General of the Justice and Community Safety Directorate, Ms Alison Playford, as an additional appointment, given her responsibilities for transport regulation.

MR COE: Are there any changes to the board that you can foreshadow?

Mr Corbell: No.

MR COE: In regard to the links of the chairman to Infrastructure Australia and KPMG, how do you juggle those issues? I guess, in this sort of space, you have people in because of their expertise and because of their knowledge. The nature of that is that they are going to have links to various, different aspects of the subject. Therefore how do you manage that or how does the chair manage that?

Mr Corbell: Mr Fitzgerald as the independent chair has made all the relevant declarations required in relation to any issues that may see the potential for a conflict to arise. Mr Fitzgerald was very clear to the government and made full disclosure of the fact that he had been asked to act by the current federal government as the head of Infrastructure Australia for a short period. That appointment has now concluded and he is no longer the head of Infrastructure Australia. He was only in that role in an acting capacity. So I am confident that Mr Fitzgerald brings all of the skills and experience needed for this very big infrastructure project.

MR COE: With regard to the specialist adviser consultancy services panel—and there are quite a few firms and individuals listed on that panel—how does the agency determine which ones are engaged for various works?

Ms Thomas: We have a number of ways of determining that. In some instances we have run a competition amongst members of the panel for scopes of work. In some instances we have had a direct appointment where that direct appointment is relevant and falls within the guidelines of the procurement requirements within the ACT government. So it is made on a case-by-case basis for the type of work that needs to be done.

MR COE: What would be an example whereby you would directly go to a panellist rather than seek quotes or expressions of interest?

Ms Thomas: I think it is worth stepping back a little, in that when we created the panel part of the panel selection process was to bid their rates. It was a process that we went through that allowed us to select our panel members on the basis of a competitive process in the first place to get onto the panel. It is not like there has been no process at all in order to select that final panel make-up.

Probably a good example is the individual that we use for ticketing. It is a specialist person. There are not a lot of people within Australia who have good ticketing experience and are able to give us a broad view of what is happening there. Bernie Carolan is one of those individuals. He has had very broad experience in ticketing, particularly in Victoria but has also been used on Sydney light rail. It made sense at the time, where there is not a lot of capacity within the Australian market, to select him.

MR COE: That makes some sense especially for those very specialised type roles. In regard to some of the more generic roles, whether it be perhaps some aspects of the engineering of the project whereby there are numerous panellists that might be able to carry out the works, would there be any instances of numerous panellists that would be capable of doing the work yet a direct or single-select process was undertaken?

Ms Thomas: Can you maybe give me an example of what you are thinking of? It might help to be a bit more specific.

MR COE: It is deliberately a broad question. I am not pointing at anything or anyone but there are many of these panels that have a zero next to their name and there are many that have substantial amounts next to them. I was just curious as to how you go about picking those especially when it is a single-select process.

Ms Thomas: It depends on the scope of work again as to what we require them to do. Where there is broad scope of work and we think that the activity can be undertaken by a number of agencies, we have generally gone out to the panel and asked for their views and sought that. A good example of that is our transaction management agency group. We have undertaken several processes throughout the panel for that. It is not so easy to say that just because everyone is under engineering they all have the same skill set. We have subskills within that engineering set, so we generally choose people who have that particular skill set at the time and that are available. The value for money test is the reason that we have the panel in the first place so that we have already been able to test that value for money.

MR COE: And are those panels excluded from doing work for either of the consortia?

Mr Allday: I can answer that. At the time when we set up the panel we obviously went for a very broad range of different skill sets covering project management, engineering—a whole broad base of urban design et cetera. We continue to revisit that. For instance, as the proponents have come on board and we are now into the RFT and the consortia have formed, we check against that panel and any that are on that panel do not get used because of the conflict of interest.

MR COE: But they are not actually excluded from being a panellist if they are working for the consortia?

Mr Allday: When we set up the panel it was well before we had even got out to the market for the expressions of interest. Since then we continue to review it and if there are any conflicts we clearly cannot utilise those people because they are actually active within the groups.

MR COE: Are there any companies that have done work for Capital Metro Agency and are perhaps privy to commercially sensitive information that are also doing work for either of the consortia?

Mr Corbell: I think as Mr Allday has indicated, they are not privy to that information if there is a conflict.

MR COE: But surely they could have done work prior to the consortia forming?

Mr Corbell: That would not be information that would be confidential in that context but Mr Allday can elaborate.

Mr Allday: Clearly we have a very good probative process. Where we have been approached—sometimes along the process there has been the situation where the respondents have wanted to approach and bring on board people that had done previous work with Capital Metro—and asked whether they can or they cannot engage with those, we review the works that they are proposing to actually utilise them on. We fully look at what works they did whilst they worked with us during the process leading up to the EIA process and we then sit with our probity guys as well and between us we assess what the risk might be. It is a matter of understanding what they have had visibility to, what their roles might be, what form of information may or may not be available to them, what the risks might be from the probative perspective. Then we make a decision. And there have been instances where we have said to some that they can be engaged because we can clearly define and demonstrate there is no probity issue and there have equally been those where we have said they could not.

Mr Corbell: Ultimately all these decisions are abetted by capital metro's probity auditor.

MR COE: And who is that auditor?

Ms Thomas: Our independent probity adviser is Sparke Helmore. It is a local law firm.

MR COE: And are they on the contract register?

Ms Thomas: Yes.

THE CHAIR: Minister, there have been a couple of reviews of the capital metro full business case, one of which is public, one of which is not. What is in the second review?

Mr Corbell: The second review confirms the findings of the first review that has been made public. The territory has commissioned that second review for its own assurance as much as for any possible public debate. That is the status of that document at the moment.

THE CHAIR: Why is the government keeping it a secret? If it confirms the first review and the nature of the case, why not release it?

Mr Corbell: The government may very well release it, but we will release it at a time of our choosing.

THE CHAIR: What advice is contained in the second review that causes the government not to release it immediately?

Mr Corbell: There is nothing in the second review that causes the government to not release it. It is simply a matter of timing around what we know is a hotly contested political debate.

THE CHAIR: What elements add to the hotly contested political debate that you are keeping a secret?

Mr Corbell: These are matters for judgement. I do not get to dictate when you, the opposition, make announcements or release particular positions or commentary on light rail, and it works the other way.

THE CHAIR: But we do not spend public money on getting those documents.

Mr Corbell: The government spends public money on many things that are not immediately released or made public. The government, of course, always has discretion around when it releases reports commissioned by it.

THE CHAIR: But if it confirms the findings of the first review, what else does it contain that causes you to hang on to it this closely?

Mr Corbell: Nothing, Mr Smyth. As I have indicated, the government has discretion around when it releases reports it commissions.

THE CHAIR: Ms Fitzharris, a new question.

MS FITZHARRIS: Thank you. Minister, I wanted to ask about the jobs associated with stage 1—I think 3,500 in stage 1. Does that mean over the period from the start of construction to the late 2019-20 period?

Mr Corbell: That is correct. That is over the full construction period. We anticipate that the total number of jobs to be supported is estimated to be over 3,500. Of those, 1,450 are direct jobs; 2,100 are indirect jobs. It is assumed that during the peak year of light rail construction, the project will support approximately 1,775 jobs, a mixture of direct and indirect jobs.

There is a broad range of occupations that would be supported during the entire

construction phase. That includes people skilled in civil construction, mobile plant, construction distribution and production management, building and engineering technicians, engineering professionals, information professionals and electrotechnology professionals such as electricians—electrotechnology in relation to rail signalling, electrotechnology in relation to rail communications and networks and electrotechnology in relation to electronics and communications—and systems electricians; as well as electrical supply network infrastructure, rail traction and overhead line, cable jointing for electrical supply—and business systems analysts and programmers, mechanical engineering and trades workers, truck drivers and contract program and project administrators.

As you can see, it is a very broad range of occupations that are anticipated to provide the greatest number of direct jobs during the construction period. There is also a broad range of indirect jobs in a broad range of occupations, including accounting, sales assistants and sales persons, office and practice managers, business administration managers, retail managers, cleaners and laundry workers, bricklayers, carpenters and joiners, surveyors, architects, designers and planners, accounting clerks and bookkeepers, contract program and project administrators and information and organisation professionals.

MS FITZHARRIS: The indirect jobs come from land development opportunities, or are they directly related to the construction?

Mr Corbell: The indirect jobs come through both the broader economic benefits that flow through into the economy as a result of expenditure on the part of the workforce as well as those businesses that support businesses that are directly involved in the project.

MS FITZHARRIS: Do you have any analysis beyond the build?

Mr Corbell: Beyond the build there are long-term employment opportunities; I will ask Mr Edghill to elaborate on that.

Mr Edghill: I have to apologise; I do not have the exact data to hand. There is EY jobs analysis, which is publicly available on the capital metro website. Post construction it talks about leaving a jobs footprint of around 50,000 jobs in the corridor, which is a combination of commercial and retail and other activities which are generated through the economic activity prompted by the light rail.

MS FITZHARRIS: Thank you. Minister, you mentioned yesterday that the investments for renewable technologies are also having effects on the research and study for industry. Do you see a similar thing happening as a result of light rail?

Mr Corbell: Yes, I believe there is significant potential in this area—for example, in terms of new skills or trade training that may occur as a result of the establishment of a new workforce that previously has not existed in our city in terms of light rail maintenance and operations. Those are new technical and trade skills that will need to be supported over the duration of the light rail operation and could very well lead to the establishment of new trade and training opportunities here in the city.

The exact details of that are yet to be determined, and obviously will not be until we see the details of the bidders' final proposals to the government. But there is certainly significant opportunity there, and there may be other opportunities in the higher education sector as well. But those are matters that are subject to the detail of the proposals from the shortlisted bidders.

MS FITZHARRIS: In addition to that, you mentioned the global consortia that already have a presence in Canberra.

Mr Corbell: Yes.

MS FITZHARRIS: Having organisations with vast experience around the world in Canberra, are you able to measure their legacy in terms of what they will leave behind?

Mr Corbell: I am certainly very encouraged by the fact that both of the shortlisted bidders have established a local Canberra presence in the lead-up and during the bid process—and that is even before they know whether or not they are the successful bidder. Each consortium has established a significant presence here in Canberra. That involves the letting of commercial premises here to accommodate their staff who are in Canberra, as well as local staff they are recruiting during the bid process itself. That is an early economic benefit to our city, albeit a modest one, because we are still at the bidding stage.

In terms of the preferred bidder, they will have to establish a sizeable presence here in Canberra to oversee and run their operations during the three to four-year construction period. That will be a very significant presence and that is, of course, over and above their subcontractors and the other commercial arrangements they enter into for delivery of the projects. That means that they are letting commercial office space here in Canberra, they are establishing a workforce here in Canberra and they are spending money in the local Canberra economy. That is a very good thing.

THE CHAIR: Dr Bourke had a supplementary, and then a new question.

DR BOURKE: Thank you, chair. What discussions have you been having with RTOs, if any at this stage, around those trade training skills or the new technologies and trade skills that may be required?

Mr Edghill: Local industry participation has a particular focus within the Capital Metro Agency. We have approached many stakeholders within the Canberra community who have an interest in providing or overseeing training opportunities for the workforce. There are a few elements to the workforce legacy that we are seeking to achieve through Canberra metro. There are discussions being held with tertiary education providers because with the system there is a need for a whole range of skills in both project delivery and its ongoing operations, maintenance and lifecycle activities.

We have engaged with universities and the likes of CIT, and we have engaged quite heavily with the Training Fund Authority here in the ACT to work through the mechanics of a PPP arrangement and how the training fund works, which is a little bit

new to both sides, and also to look at not just the training levy side of the equation but to work with them in thinking about what sort of training will be required in connection with the light rail project and to understand whether there are any synergies there and then talking with other training organisations throughout the territory.

There is the potential, I think, for the successful consortia to bring to us their own ideas as to training that can be implemented in the territory. Indeed, in the project's RFP documentation one of the components is a local industry plan which will be bid back by each of the respondents. In there they will set out their proposals to us regarding everything from ongoing workforce training through to apprentices and anything else which has a local industry component to it.

On top of that there is the positive workforce legacy which is left, not through formal training mechanisms but through actual engagement with top-tier national and international firms. For example, we understand that some of the local businesses who are currently engaging with the bidders may not have previously engaged in projects of this size before or of this particular nature. One of the benefits that will come is that, when we get to the end of this process and the next big infrastructure project comes down the pike in Canberra, we have left a local industry who, whether or not they were successful in becoming part of the capital metro project, know how to engage in these bigger projects. They have an increased awareness of how to insert themselves into the supply chain. That is really in terms of the supply side of the equation.

Then you can look at, for example, safety. When you have got local subcontractors who are working within sophisticated safety management systems of national and international firms then that helps to increase their awareness of what is international best practice. Those positive benefits get applied to what they are doing outside of the capital metro project. Certainly training is a very important part of what we are looking at, but the legacy can extend in ways that perhaps are not even immediately apparent.

DR BOURKE: A substantive question, if I might, chair?

THE CHAIR: You are allowed 23 seconds, but go for your life.

DR BOURKE: Minister, what are the plans for the Swinden Street-Northbourne Avenue intersection stop in Downer and how does it affect the adjoining Lyneham sports zone?

Mr Corbell: There will be a need for redesign of a number of those intersections between Antill Street and the Federal Highway. There are a number of access points for both the netball centre and Yowani golf club that will need to be realigned. Capital metro have been in close consultation with the leaseholders at both of those sites. We have identified a preferred solution in consultation and agreement with those leaseholders. That will actually improve the safety and the quality of the access points into both of those sites.

DR BOURKE: So I suppose that begs the question, minister: will golf buggies be allowed on the light rail?

Mr Corbell: It may beg the question, but the answer would be no.

THE CHAIR: On that note perhaps it is time to close. Thank you, minister, and thank you, officials, for your attendance here this afternoon. When the transcript of the proceedings is available it will be forwarded to you for correction or addition. If you could get any suggestions that you have to the secretary, the committee will look at that. All questions taken on notice, if we could have an answer as quickly as possible and preferably within five working days. Members, we return tomorrow for another day with the minister in his other role as Attorney-General. We also have Minister Burch as minister for emergency services, as well as Mr Rattenbury as Minister for Justice.

The chair's award today goes to Ms Flanery for her expose on why cars get abandoned in the ACT, particularly the fact that some cars are abandoned on former girlfriends' front yards when they are no longer girlfriends, with Dr Bourke commenting, "That is an interesting insight." I think it is time we finished the day there.

The committee adjourned at 5.30 pm.