



LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY FOR THE AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

**STANDING COMMITTEE ON PLANNING, ENVIRONMENT
AND TERRITORY AND MUNICIPAL SERVICES**

(Reference: [Annual and financial reports 2011-2012](#))

Members:

MR M GENTLEMAN (Chair)
MR A COE (Deputy Chair)
MR A WALL
DR C BOURKE

TRANSCRIPT OF EVIDENCE

CANBERRA

THURSDAY, 21 FEBRUARY 2013

Secretary to the committee:
Ms V Strkalj (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.

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Amended 9 August 2011

The committee met at 2 pm.

Appearances:

Rattenbury, Mr Shane, Minister for Territory and Municipal Services, Minister for Corrections, Minister for Housing, Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs and Minister for Ageing

Territory and Municipal Services Directorate

Byles, Mr Gary, Director-General

Elliott, Mr Gordon, Director, Finance

Roncon, Mr James, Director, ACTION

Lawrence, Mr Michael, Senior Manager, Public Transport Systems

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

Gill, Mr Tony, Director, Roads ACT

THE CHAIR: Good afternoon everybody, and welcome to this public hearing of the Standing Committee on Planning, Environment and Territory and Municipal Services inquiry into annual and financial reports 2011-12. Today the committee will be examining the following components of the annual report of Territory and Municipal Services: firstly, ACTION and then Roads ACT.

We will commence with ACTION. Can I have confirmation from those attending that you have read the privilege card that is on the table before you and that you understand the privilege implications of that statement? Thank you. Before we proceed to questions from the committee, I will ask the minister if he would like to make an opening statement.

Mr Rattenbury: No, I did not intend to make an opening statement. I thought it would be better if we just went straight to the matters the committee wants to cover.

MR COE: My question is with regard to a story that appeared in the *Canberra Times* yesterday about ACTION buses and a potential contamination on board one of the buses. Firstly, are there any written procedures in place as to how to handle such potential contaminations?

Mr Rattenbury: Just generally on the issue, from briefings, obviously there is a protocol in place. I will check in a moment but I presume it is a written one. Certainly, all the appropriate steps were taken, in the sense that passengers were removed from the vehicle and provided with alternative transport—those sorts of things.

Mr Roncon: As far as written policy or procedures go, we do not actually have anything like that in place. However, it is just operational protocol that whenever there is a bodily fluid of some description that spills on a bus—and probably the most common one that we have is young children might get sick and vomit to or from school—the bus is isolated very quickly, a replacement bus is brought into operation, passengers are reloaded, as the minister said, onto the replacement bus and then, depending on the nature of the spill or the accident, the bus is either taken back to the depot and cleaned and isolated or cleaned on site and then put back into service.

MR COE: Why is there nothing written for something as serious as this? How are you meant to learn from past instances if nothing is actually documented?

Mr Roncon: It is not that there is nothing documented. Certainly, we do learn from those processes and if something has gone wrong—as we will in this particular situation; it has been a learning experience. The process is that had there been any blood found following the report from the gentleman that suggested that he may have spilled some, the health department would have been advised of that, particularly given the fact that he declared that it was a blood-borne disease. The cleaners could not find anything of that nature so they just gave that bus a general clean-down and then it was put back into service.

MR COE: How can you definitively say that the Health Directorate would have been informed? If nothing is written, how would everybody in the chain know what they are meant to do and what their responsibility is, as opposed to thinking that somebody else was doing something important?

Mr Roncon: I think that the learning experience from this is that we certainly do need a set of written procedures and processes around this. What has been a well-oiled machine in the past that has just taken care of these matters needs to be verified and quantified in terms of writing. So we will make that a matter of urgency.

MR COE: So you have not had any similar incidents like this before?

Mr Roncon: I mentioned the vomiting—lots of that type of thing. To be frank, and I will not go into it, some of our passengers do some very, very unsavoury things on buses. Those things, again, are just dealt with as a matter of course: clean-down, bus isolated, washed down—whatever needs to be done—to resolve the issue. While there may be no formal protocol or processes, it is a very well-drilled, well-structured process that goes into play. If you ask me to produce a set of instructions right here and now, I cannot do that, but certainly that will be a focus for us.

MR COE: In my suggestion, that is a priority. Is it true that for this incident there were maybe only just two passengers on board the bus at the time of its being pulled over, yet those passengers were not told to leave the bus until after cleaners or inspectors came onboard? So in effect the bus was sitting by the side of the road for 10 minutes while people were left on board, as opposed to evacuating the bus.

Mr Roncon: I am not aware that they are indeed the facts. From my understanding of the situation, the gentleman concerned, who I think had come from the Canberra Hospital, got off the bus at the Woden bus station and flagged down a transport officer. He indicated that he may have had a blood spillage and indicated those couple of other things we mentioned earlier on. Immediately the process that we talked about kicked into action in terms of isolating the bus and getting the passengers off. In short, I guess you do not know what you do not know. So as soon as our staff became aware of it, they got into action and did what they needed to do.

MR COE: My understanding of it is that the bus was pulled over and the passengers were left on board the bus for some minutes—perhaps up to 10 minutes—before additional ACTION staff came. At that point they were told to frantically evacuate the

bus. That, of course, would instil some fear into passengers that had been on board the bus waiting, yet somebody came on board some minutes later and said, “Evacuate, evacuate.” Is that not a bit of a worry that the message did not get through?

Mr Roncon: I think if it played out as you are describing it, it would be an area for concern. What I will, perhaps, do, Mr Chairman, is endeavour to find out some more information and provide that, if that would be to the committee’s—

THE CHAIR: I have got a couple of questions on it as well.

MR COE: How extensive has the investigation been?

Mr Roncon: I have relayed to you my understanding of exactly how it took place. I am not aware that it took 10 minutes and the passengers were sitting there. That is not the information that I have, based on the investigation that has been done. But I am happy to go back and recheck that.

MR COE: Minister, have you been informed that that is the situation?

Mr Rattenbury: I have been given the same information that Mr Roncon has given to you. I am not aware of the circumstances you are describing. Certainly, the young lady involved in the incident has spoken to my office, and we provided her with all the information we could and further contacts to ensure she was able to get the information she was seeking.

MR COE: And she spoke to your office on Thursday, is that correct?

Mr Rattenbury: No, that cannot be right—today is Thursday.

MR COE: Last Thursday?

Mr Rattenbury: I would have to check that, Mr Coe.

MR COE: Yes, if you could, please, check that. Finally—well, I have got plenty more questions actually—has any medical or counselling support been offered to the passengers?

Mr Roncon: All the passengers’ details were taken and they were advised that if there was anything to be worried about or anything was found in terms of the claim that had been made by the gentleman that they would be contacted accordingly. As we mentioned, there has been no need for any follow-up. In a situation like that, you want to be sure that you do not create panic unnecessarily. So the idea is to try and keep the situation as calm as you can.

MR COE: Sure. Given a passenger, from what I understand, sat in the same seat in which this person also sat and then ACTION undertook a review of CCTV, surely that is enough of a concern to get back to the passenger to say, “There are concerns here, or potential concerns; you might want to get checked out”? How could you definitively say, based on examining CCTV, that a person who sat in the same seat was not put at any risk from a blood-borne virus?

Mr Roncon: Again, I read the newspaper article, as I am sure you did. It is not my understanding that the passenger you are referring to was seated in that same seat.

MR COE: That is the understanding that I have from the mother of one of the passengers on board the bus.

Mr Rattenbury: I think the other thing—Mr Roncon can confirm this—is that the inspection of the bus did not find any blood.

Mr Roncon: Correct.

MR COE: And when were passengers advised of that?

Mr Roncon: I would have to take that on notice, Mr Coe. I do not know that off the top of my head.

MR COE: Has a comprehensive written report been provided into this to the minister?

Mr Roncon: No, not to the minister, no. Certainly my staff have reported back to me in terms of—

MR COE: Is it not a very serious incident?

Mr Rattenbury: It is a serious incident, and I think that several things have happened. My staff have been in extensive conversation with the department. I have been given detailed information about it. You are asking some further questions. We have undertaken to get you the answers on those.

MR COE: All right. There are no formal procedures in place for such contaminations or potential contaminations, and, in addition to that, you have not been provided a briefing on this?

Mr Rattenbury: I have plenty of information on it. Do I have a formal written briefing? No. But I have emails. I have been given a verbal briefing. I think Mr Roncon has described to you that ACTION has a standard procedure in place for a range of contamination issues that take place on buses. As he has said to you, this incident has highlighted that it is perhaps better that we formalise that into a written document. But, given the number of incidents that happen, he has indicated to you a situation that the drivers are quite experienced in having to deal with matters of this nature.

DR BOURKE: Minister, just coming back to those proposed formal guidelines, of course they would include other bodily fluids?

Mr Rattenbury: Of course.

DR BOURKE: Such as sweat, tears and saliva?

Mr Rattenbury: That is an interesting question, Dr Bourke.

DR BOURKE: They all have potential to carry a blood-borne virus.

Mr Rattenbury: I am not a medical expert to know that, but I think that is the sort of research work that we would need to do.

THE CHAIR: Minister, will you be working with WorkSafe ACT on this program in future to develop a better reporting regime?

Mr Rattenbury: I think it would be best if we had a conversation with WorkSafe to see what advice they might give us on the best role for them to play. They might give us advice that the protocols that are already in place work quite effectively and simply need to be formalised. They may give us further advice, and perhaps that goes to the issues Dr Bourke was raising.

DR BOURKE: Minister, what feedback have you had from wheelchair users and disability advocates about the accessibility of buses and the cooperation of drivers, especially when extending ramps or lowering the bus?

Mr Rattenbury: I have had some feedback on this. To mark the International Day of People with Disability last November we had a small event with some of the community advocates on the issue. I can say that ACTION is going extremely well in meeting its obligations under the Disability Discrimination Act. At the moment, ACTION has 220 easy access buses. They are wheelchair accessible buses, and that is around 55 per cent of the fleet, which puts ACTION just slightly ahead of the requirements under the act, which was to have that by the end of 2012.

By late November, we had already reached that point. So we were just slightly ahead of schedule. The fleet replacement program means that all buses will be wheelchair accessible by 2022, which is, again, in line with the requirements under the Disability Discrimination Act. That is the formal side of it. Your question is more of an anecdotal one, I guess, in a sense.

Certainly, on that particular day, when we had a number of disability advocates with us, the feedback generally was quite positive around people finding the bus drivers being very helpful. Sometimes other passengers, in fact, are quite helpful as well. But the drivers, from all the feedback I have had, are very supportive of people with a disability accessing the buses.

Probably one area of concern is that not all of the buses are available when people want to go. Certainly in those cases there are efforts to realign the timetable so that, if a person requires a regular service at a regular time, we can reorganise the fleet so that one of the available buses can service that particular route for a particular requirement. They are the sorts of adjustments that the team can endeavour to make where gaps may exist.

DR BOURKE: Speaking about those kinds of adjustments, what sorts of revelations have there been about the usage of routes resulting from the collection of MyWay data?

Mr Rattenbury: I might defer to Mr Roncon on that, because that is something on which there is quite a lot of detail.

Mr Roncon: It is a bit of a learning experience for us. The new GPS data and the MyWay data are relatively new in terms of what they can do. When network 12, the current network, was put together, we did not have the benefit of that data. We continue to learn and we continue to tweak where we can. We made some changes recently to the weekend network and a few weekday routes, as of 4 February. Being able to have that data and tweak some of those timings—over the last couple of weeks we have run a bit of analysis and we have started to see some improvement in terms of the use of that data to align our times better and hit our timing spots. It is a bit of a work in progress, and obviously future networks will completely utilise that GPS data to ensure that we improve right across the business, and certainly to use that data to ensure that constant improvement in future networks.

THE CHAIR: How does other data go into the program system if it is not MyWay? If you have got individual passengers, perhaps pensioners, just getting on with their pension cards, is the driver able to enter that data into the system as they arrive?

Mr Roncon: If they have a query, do you mean?

THE CHAIR: A seniors card.

Mr Roncon: Obviously the cards are programmed. If you are a student it is programmed as a student; if you are an adult it is programmed as an adult. And likewise for the seniors. So we are actually able to break that data down and work out who is travelling where. In particular, the tagging off issues are very important: we get that data to be able to know what people's complete travel patterns are rather than just knowing where they are getting on buses. The data is fantastic, it is plentiful, and we are using it to plan our future bus networks so that there will be some substantial improvement as we move forward.

THE CHAIR: When I use it I just use a cash payment and I am issued with a ticket. So the system would know where I am getting onto the bus?

Mr Roncon: Correct.

THE CHAIR: But it would not know where I am getting off?

Mr Rattenbury: You get much better value if you get yourself a MyWay card.

THE CHAIR: Yes, I have been told. But there is no way of telling with those cash payers where they get off?

Mr Roncon: No.

Mr Peters: On the split between the MyWay cards and the cash, about 81 per cent of the customers are using the MyWay cards and 19 per cent are using the cash tickets. As we said, that is a really rich vein of data for us to mine now around who is using

our routes, how crowded some of our services are, whether we could adjust those to provide a better level of service for people and what is happening with each of our customer segments—what is happening with our adult customers, what is happening with our tertiary customers, what is happening with our students. We can actually get in and drill down to that level. And I guess the other thing is using the actual GPS information from the buses, albeit the next day at the moment, to tell where the buses are in relation to the timetable so that when we do network adjustments we can start tidying some of that stuff up.

THE CHAIR: I have learned my lesson; I will get the card.

DR BOURKE: What sort of response are you getting from your Twitter accounts with bus updates during the peak hour?

Mr Roncon: Good responses actually. As we know, social media are a two-way forum. The response is generally good. ACTION is like any other business; we have some days that are better than others. We do it in the morning peak; that is the sort of service that we provide at the moment. Resourcing is always a bit of an issue around that, but the feedback generally is very good.

Since the inception of our Twitter account we have probably doubled our subscribers or number of members. It has been good. We get feedback. The great thing about it is that we get quite candid feedback. People will tell us when they are very happy and people will tell us when they are very unhappy. But you get that ability to respond almost immediately, and that is one of the things that people really appreciate—that they do not have to send a letter in and perhaps wait for it to go through a process in order to get an answer; they can get an answer rapidly. It has been very well received.

MR WALL: I would like to go back to Dr Bourke's initial question regarding accessibility on buses and deployment of the ramps. Is there a procedure or policy in place that drivers follow when they do or do not activate that system?

Mr Roncon: Yes, there is a process, and obviously it is one of those ones that we teach through our training program but also just in general terms. Obviously one of the main focuses for us around our driver education program is around customer service essentially—taking fares; assisting passengers; where possible, particularly when elderly people get on the bus, waiting for them to be seated before the bus takes off. Obviously you can have accidents or incidents like that sometimes. So there is some strong process and protocol around that.

MR WALL: I have a new question. Page 32 of the annual report relates to the real-time passenger information system. Whereabouts is this program up to?

Mr Rattenbury: That is currently under development. We are expecting to commence a trial for the real-time system by the middle of this year, so in June or July. That will involve around 20 buses in the first instance. This is behind the original scheduled timetable, which was to have a full rollout by the middle of the year, but when we went to tender for it through the course of last year all of the tenderers came back and indicated that the timetable that had been provided in the tender was somewhat ambitious and that it would be a much more effective and

reliable process to move to a slightly different timetable. As I said, the intent is to start with a trial in the middle of the year with a view to a full implementation by the end of 2013.

MR WALL: You mentioned that there was going to be a trial of 20 buses. How are they going to be selected?

Mr Peters: Essentially it will be 20 buses out of the fleet and a range of different bus times so that we can test how it goes on different buses and pick a location to trial the signage at one or two spots just to make sure that that is working okay. That is essentially what the trial is about—just to test the range of our equipment, the connections, and how it interacts with the government’s IT system to make sure that it all works. Assuming that the trial runs successfully, which we think it will, we will progress to roll it out.

MR WALL: Is there going to be any plan to focus on buses that are doing main peak hour runs—intertown or suburban links—or is it just going to be a random selection?

Mr Peters: The main focus of the trial is really to test the range of our fleet, to make sure that it works with the different types of buses that we have. They will be on a range of routes. Our buses do not do the same route every day; they do shift around to different parts of the network. The 20 buses will probably give us pretty good coverage across the network, iron out any dead spots in the network or anything like that—to identify any of those operational issues.

THE CHAIR: With the real time, you were talking about the display at a bus stop, for example. Have you looked at other options to communicate with the public on the real-time information?

Mr Peters: Yes, we have. Part of the rollout will be apps, for instance. People can use their mobile phones to access sites, as you can in other places now, which will tell you where the bus is. You should be able to visually see where the bus is in relation to your stop. All our bus stops will be renumbered so that you will be able to key in the stop and where you are on Canberra’s network, and it will then work out where you are in relation to your bus and give you advice as to how that works.

There is a transit journey planner on our website at the moment, Google transit, which does a journey plan for you. If you want to go from A to B, it will work out which buses you need to catch to do that, how far you need to walk and all those sorts of items. The advantage of the real-time system is that, whilst the Google transit system is based on a timetable, the real-time system is based on reality. That is the real advantage of it for the customer, and we think it will be a really big benefit for the Canberra community.

THE CHAIR: Are there other updates you could put on it? If a bus has broken down, I suppose that will show up with time anyway. Are you able to send other messages through that application?

Mr Peters: Yes—key messages in the system around where the next bus is. Part of the trial will be to see what other messages you might put up there, but typically it is

really saying that the 453 is coming along in 10 minutes, so saying that the 453 is due at 5.10. And it will progressively update you to make sure that it is actually coming. That is the real advantage of this system.

Mr Rattenbury: But the other features which I think are part of your question, Mr Gentleman, are that it will indicate, for example, whether the bus is wheelchair accessible or has a bike rack because, as we know, not all of the fleet does. So those sorts of things will be available so that people will be able to get a prior indication of some of those particular services they may also require.

MR WALL: Is there any plan to put light displays at any of the bus stops around town?

Mr Peters: Yes. When we talk about displays, we are talking about the sort of thing you might see at an airport regarding when the next plane arrives. It is that sort of feature. We are looking to put them at all the key interchanges and then at our major bus stops. Subject to funding in future budgets, we would progressively put them in across the network.

MR WALL: And the cost of rolling this project out, how is that tracking in relation to the budget for it?

Mr Peters: The budget for it is \$12.5 million. That is the capital side of the budget. We are within that budget at the moment. There is also some additional funding that was provided by government last year of around \$400,000 or \$450,000, which will enable us to do a few more bus stops and also sort out an ongoing licensing agreement with the systems supplier.

MR COE: Do the individual buses require additional GPS transmitting devices, or will the radio serve as that?

Mr Peters: You are starting to reach the bounds of my technical knowledge. I might ask Michael to answer that. The MyWay system has a GPS unit on it. The real-time system also comes with a GPS. We have had a little bit of trouble with the MyWay GPSs in terms of dead spots around town because we actually fitted them inside the bus. With the real-time system we will be able to address some of those dead spots so we will not get some of the drop-out issues that we have had. We will probably move towards using the real-time GPS.

Mr Lawrence: Mr Coe, yes, we will actually be using a new GPS from the real-time system, which will also then be running the MyWay system. So it will be one GPS for both systems, which is a lot stronger and powerful than what we currently have.

MR COE: So that ties in with what is mentioned in the report about new radios for the buses. I think that is right. It is page 12. Are you able to advise where that is up to?

Mr Roncon: Mr Coe, in terms of the new TRN radio system, that project has actually been installed and has been in the buses for about a year now.

MR COE: Okay. So when it says at page 12 under output class 1 that it is underway,

that should be “Completed”?

Mr Roncon: Yes, most definitely completed.

MR COE: Sure.

Mr Roncon: And running very successfully, too. It has been a very positive, well-structured and well-managed project.

DR BOURKE: Minister, what progress has ACTION made in progressing the ACT public service employment strategy for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people?

Mr Rattenbury: I might ask Mr Roncon to answer that.

Mr Roncon: Certainly. We ensure that all our jobs are advertised far and wide. I apologise for not remembering the name, but there is an organisation that deals specifically with Indigenous employment, and we always make sure we provide all the information and job ads and those sorts of things to that particular organisation, which then disseminates that information to that variety of agencies they deal with. That is part of our standard process.

Mr Rattenbury: Dr Bourke, I believe Mr Byles has some additional information that might be of assistance.

Mr Byles: Further to that, I have a regular appointment with Ms Roslyn Brown of the elected body. Only yesterday or the day before, I met with Ms Brown and indicated my desire to pursue the Indigenous recruiting program within ACTION. That is something that I will ensure that I follow up on with the director of ACTION.

DR BOURKE: What proportion of ACTION employees are Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people?

Mr Roncon: I do not have that information to hand.

Mr Byles: We will take that on notice.

DR BOURKE: The ACT public service employment strategy for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people does evidence a target of doubling numbers by 2015. So you have two years to shufti along.

Mr Rattenbury: That is a very well made point.

THE CHAIR: Whilst we are on human resources, page 21 of volume 2 talks about human resource retention. I am aware that there is an ageing population among ACTION drivers. Quite a few go into retirement shortly. It talks a little in here about the sorts of processes you are looking at. Have you delved any further into that yet? Where are you up to in replacing that resource?

Mr Byles: I think across TAMS we are represented by a rather older workforce than perhaps is the ACT average. From what I recall, about 70 per cent of TAMS is over

39. Indeed, that is skewed a bit more when you look at the ACTION workforce who, I think, like to stay in their job. While ever they are doing a good job, I am happy to have them there.

However, in terms of workforce planning, in attracting good staff and the retention program for staff, that is a challenge throughout the directorate. We are continually looking at that. Mr Roncon may want to elaborate specifically on the ACTION retention issues.

Mr Roncon: Certainly. Thanks, Mr Byles. We are currently in the process of developing and managing a workforce strategy for ACTION, identifying exactly what you have mentioned. About three or four years ago, the average age of an ACTION employee was about 54 and over. Probably in the last three or four years we have got that down to under 50. It is probably around the 49 mark. We have had some significant turnover in staff.

As Mr Byles mentioned, our oldest employees are two at 74, who do a bit of casual driving and are wonderful drivers. It was in their blood. When they decided to retire, they wanted to stay active and still be able to participate and make a contribution, albeit on a casual basis. We go right down to the other end of the spectrum, where we have got drivers in their very early 20s. It is a bit of an issue for us.

Some of the times over the last couple of years, when we have had a few issues around driver numbers, it has been around our running a class, as you would be aware, every month, with about eight to 10 participants. We might lose four people over that preceding month through retirements or for whatever other reasons people might depart. It has been a bit of an issue for us. We are right on top of it now in terms of our establishment numbers. We have got them about right, and we will continue with that process and complete that ageing workforce strategy to deal with these issues.

THE CHAIR: Are many of them new starters? Do they mostly stay on?

Mr Roncon: It depends. It goes in fits and spurts. Sometimes the nature of the ACTION business, when a bus driver comes on, is that they come on as part-time employees. They are guaranteed 20 hours a week. Then there are opportunities for overtime and those sorts of things. As I say, generally speaking, the retention rate is reasonably good. It depends. Sometimes, if somebody can find full-time employment a month or two after they have started as a bus driver and they can be getting paid for 40 hours as opposed to a guaranteed 20 hours, they might choose a different career path. Generally speaking, the retention rate is pretty good.

MR WALL: What is the mixture of full-time, part-time or casual drivers that you are operating?

Mr Roncon: I am sorry, I missed the first part of the question.

MR WALL: What is the current mixture of full-time, part-time or casual drivers that you have operating?

Mr Roncon: About 60 per cent of our driving workforce is full time. About 40 per

cent is part time. Then we have a pool of casuals that we call on in times of need.

THE CHAIR: Have you thought about changing that ratio to perhaps incentivise those people coming on and moving them onto full-time positions? Would that give them an opportunity or an incentive to stay rather than to leave?

Mr Roncon: It certainly would. We are always looking at this as part of this ageing workforce strategy. Just generally, that sort of human resources retention policy means that there are a number of issues such as that that we need to review and look at better ways of doing things to retain staff. Like any business, when you get good staff you want to keep them and you do invest a lot of time and money in training them. So it is important to have them stay around as long as we can.

MR COE: Is it hard for a new staff member to crack the culture within ACTION?

Mr Roncon: I did not have any trouble as a new staff member three years ago, so personally, no.

MR COE: What about a driver?

Mr Roncon: It is a very blokey environment. It is a blue collar workforce and therefore it has those sorts of traits. Ten per cent of our workforce are now female and that is growing continually. Just in the last class that graduated a couple of weeks ago two of the eight people that graduated were female. So there is a growing number. The older blokes tend to leave or retire and you get a younger crew in. You get females into the mix as well. It starts to soften over time. I think it is important, as I think we all would appreciate, that cultures do not develop over short periods of time and they do not change over short periods of time. It takes time. It is a work in progress. I have certainly seen some change in the three years that I have been there in terms of those very issues.

MR COE: Do you get many complaints about bullying, especially from new staff?

Mr Roncon: Not really; no more than probably any other workplace. I think that, generally speaking, people come to work, do their job and go home and there is not a lot of interaction, given the nature of the ACTION workforce. The first shift starts at 5.30 and the last one finishes at about half past 12. A lot of people are just crossing paths and there is not a lot of interaction. Occasionally there are a few bullying and harassment complaints and we deal with those in terms of the ACT government's protocols around behaviour and whatnot. It is not huge. I have not noticed it any more than any other workplace I have worked at.

MR COE: Can you talk us through how shifts are allocated for drivers?

Mr Roncon: It is a pretty long and involved process.

MR COE: It is hierarchical, isn't it?

Mr Roncon: Yes.

MR COE: So for someone who is perhaps the newest driver they are not necessarily going to have their first choice of shifts, are they? The longer you have been there, the more likely you are to get the shifts you want; is that correct?

Mr Roncon: Correct.

MR COE: Is that something that ACTION management would like to change at some point?

Mr Roncon: I think the original question was about the retention of staff and how we work around that. Certainly, they are issues that we are always talking to our union colleagues about. We will continue to do that. It is not necessarily a bad system. It works pretty well in terms of getting those shifts out there. It does not always suit everybody but it is working okay. In terms of change and culture, it is a longer term process that we need to work through.

MR COE: In terms of a new person who starts, they have to start on part time, don't they?

Mr Roncon: Yes.

MR COE: How do you attract somebody to become a driver if you cannot guarantee them full-time work?

Mr Roncon: One of the things about the ACTION business is that we have got people beating down our door to want to join the business. We rarely have any shortage of applicants. When they apply they understand that it is part time with a guarantee of 20 hours. They know that. It is not something that is sprung on them after they have gone through the training process and started. It is something that they are well aware of and we are never short of applicants.

MR COE: Do newer drivers tend to do perhaps more than their fair share of the undesirable shifts?

Mr Roncon: No, I do not believe they do. Driving a bus is driving a bus in terms of the Canberra landscape. I think the short answer to your question is no.

MR COE: So new drivers would not do more weekend work than the average?

Mr Roncon: You are guaranteed the 20 hours and weekend shifts within the ACTION business are currently on a voluntary basis, so those people that drive on weekends are generally putting their hand up for those shifts.

MR COE: But often is that because they are only guaranteed 20 hours and they know that to put food on the table at home they really need to work more than 20 hours a week and therefore they are in a position whereby they have to take weekend work to try and make up a regular working week; whereas established drivers who might get their pick of the roster would therefore not be in effect forced to do weekend work? Is that a fair summation?

Mr Roncon: I think it would be a fair summation, but I think I would reiterate the point I made earlier that when people make application for a bus driving role with ACTION they understand the terms and conditions they are making that application under, so they know they are only getting 20 hours. We run forums here in the Assembly for would-be drivers and they understand it is a guaranteed 20 hours a week and overtime is available working on the weekends.

MR COE: I am not denying they are not informed of that, but is that necessarily the best way to run the business?

Mr Roncon: We are always looking for new and improved ways of improving the business, so yes.

MR COE: How entrenched are all these arrangements with the unions?

Mr Roncon: How entrenched?

MR COE: How entrenched are these arrangements with the unions? Has the government—

Mr Rattenbury: Can I just clarify what you are trying to get to, Mr Coe. I think a moment ago you were suggesting a level of concern about the flexible work practices that ACTION endeavours to put in place so that we run as efficient a system as possible. Is that what you are trying to ask?

MR COE: No. I have been asking questions here. The question is: with the arrangements that I have discussed in terms of the hierarchical nature of shift allocations, the 20 hours et cetera, are the TWU willing to move on these things? Have you chatted with them in negotiations or is it something that they are pretty determined to keep in place?

Mr Roncon: That is the existing business model, and it works well. Can it be improved? Can it be changed? Are there opportunities to have discussions with unions and sit down and make some changes that address some of those issues that you have raised? Absolutely. There are always those opportunities. But I have to stress that it is a model that works. It is working but, like any model, it can be improved.

MR WALL: Would you describe the hierarchical rostering process as equitable in a modern workplace?

Mr Roncon: It works. It is working within the ACTION business.

MR WALL: Is it equitable? Is it fair for everyone?

Mr Roncon: I guess it depends who you ask. Somebody who has been in the business for 35 years and paid their dues, so to speak, would answer that question by saying that it is very equitable, yes, that they should have the pick of the shifts. You will get other people that may not think so. As I say, there is always room for improvement in everything that we do, but it is not a system that does not work and we are never short of applicants for roles.

MR COE: What other bus operators would run a similar system in terms of starting off part time and the hierarchical shift allocations?

Mr Roncon: I cannot answer that; I am not aware of what other bus companies do.

THE CHAIR: I would like to go back to Mr Coe's questioning earlier on about weekend shifts—the part timers and then those wanting to operate on weekend shifts. Is there a penalty rate for working on weekend shifts?

Mr Roncon: ACTION currently operates under a composite wage rate, so the rate that gets paid during the week is that same rate that is paid on the weekend.

THE CHAIR: Is that the same rate for overtime as well?

Mr Roncon: Yes—essentially one rate across the business.

DR BOURKE: Minister, perhaps you could tell us about what is happening with free wi-fi on buses.

Mr Rattenbury: Again I might defer to Mr Peters for that one so that you get the most up-to-date information. We have spoken about it in broad terms.

Mr Peters: We have explored what is happening around Sydney, for instance, with wi-fi, how they actually do this and what their business models are for introducing it. There is an election commitment around introducing wi-fi into ACTION buses. At the moment we are putting forward a bid in next year's budget process to probably trial that at some interchanges and in some of the buses in our fleet and just see what the advantages and disadvantages of that are over a trial period to see whether it is worthwhile investing in it to the extent of the 400-odd buses that we have got in our fleet. Other places run a business model where you log on on the bus and St George Bank or someone like that, a sponsor, will come up on your home screen and they will pay for that advertising. That is how they fund the service, so there is some private sector involvement in some of those activities.

Obviously a lot of people have wi-fi in their individual phones, iPads or whatever these days so there is just that progressive stage to look at this—trial it first and see if there is benefit to the community. We suspect that there would be; it is usually an attractive feature of other services. People do like to get on and use the free service to do their business, read the newspaper or whatever it is that they wish to do on the way to work. Again, we think that it would be an attractive thing to have on the buses and would increase the patronage on the system.

DR BOURKE: What sort of time limits would you be looking at for logging on? In many places where you log on to free internet you get a five, 10 or 15-minute block. What sort of time are you thinking about?

Mr Peters: I think that is one of the things that we would need to look at during the trial, but most places do seem to put a time limit on it—up to 20 minutes type of thing. Then after that you might start to pay or you might need to do something different.

That would be one of the features of the trial. I think the way we would do this would be to look for a private sector company to help us do this and work through all the mechanisms.

Mr Rattenbury: Certainly the other model that is out there has some sort of download limit, which is another way of rationing the service or making sure that it is not excessively used.

DR BOURKE: Or used inappropriately.

Mr Rattenbury: Yes, indeed. And those sorts of issues around appropriate content and the like are obviously part of a design testing process as well—and seeking advice from providers about how they deal with those issues in other circumstances. But all those sorts of protocols have generally been worked through by people who are already doing those kinds of projects.

DR BOURKE: So you would be looking to try to migrate some mature systems from somewhere else?

Mr Peters: Yes. I think the proposal would be that we go and look for a partner or a provider from the private sector who had done it before and see what they can do here in Canberra.

DR BOURKE: I look forward to it.

Mr Rattenbury: A few people are, I think.

MR COE: I have a question about the timeliness indicator. Minister, we had an exchange on the radio.

Mr Rattenbury: Yes.

MR COE: I am just wondering whether you could please give an update as to how that indicator is measured.

Mr Rattenbury: In that radio exchange—I meant to see you about this but I have not caught you—I think we were slightly in an apples and pears situation, so to speak. The observation I made on ABC radio was around the fact that I feel that the data we have now is the next generation of data. You indicated that you thought that some of the data had been around for a while. What I was specifically referring to, and I think this is where we were talking about slightly different things, was the fact that the latest set of data also includes bus breakdowns. The previous data, as I understand it—I think this is where we have a slightly different understanding—was a simple measure of all bus services. The latest figures on timeliness actually include those buses that break down.

MR COE: But the GPS component of the indicator has been around for a while.

Mr Rattenbury: I think it was first indicated in the 2011-12 budget that it would be made available, yes.

MR COE: It was published in that budget.

Mr Rattenbury: My observation, and I am sure there is a little debate about the exact wording here, was around the fact that we now have this sort of high level of data which provides an even greater level of accuracy and therefore enables us to do some of the things that Mr Peters was referring to before—really get the timetable right so that we give customers a more accurate sense of the timetable.

MR COE: For the period ended 31 December, the year to date result was 67 per cent.

Mr Rattenbury: Yes.

MR COE: Which, compared to the target, is a fair way away. What is the reason for that?

Mr Rattenbury: This goes back to the discussion we were just having. We have got a more accurate set of data. Previously the timetables were based on manual counts of timing points, but we now have the accurate GPS system. That is highlighting that the timetable perhaps does not accurately reflect the amount of time it takes to run services and that we need to be more accurate in reflecting that.

MR COE: What is the process for changing a timetable?

Mr Rattenbury: That will be adjusted over time. For example, we have just made some adjustments from 4 February. Some of those were based on data that has come through out of the MyWay collection already, and the GPS that is tracked to that. As I am sure you are aware, network 13 is not under development, and the data that is becoming available will be used to construct that new timetable, which will be more accurate as a result of having this data.

MR COE: Are there any administrative or staff issues with changing timetables? In tweaking, if there are timetables that are, say, three or four minutes out, enough to really mess with the patron, that potentially could throw out a shift, could it not, at one end or the other? How difficult is it to actually adjust the timetables so that they fairly reflect the service expectation?

Mr Peters: I will just make a couple of points, Mr Coe. The bus could be out one day and not out the next type of thing, so we need to take a reasonable view of data over a month or a couple of weeks to understand whether it had just missed that timing point on that day because there was traffic congestion or there was a crash or whether they are consistently a couple of minutes late at a particular timing point. So there is the need to go and look at the data, check with our transport officers and understand why it is that a particular bus might be late. Once you have determined that, we can see if we can adjust the timetable relatively easily on line, for instance—or if we only need to print one or two new timetables, we try to do that within the resources that we have got. As the minister was referring to, the real opportunity for us here is to take this GPS timing point data. It is a quite sophisticated way that we are looking at this compared to other places and the way we used to do it previously, which was essentially a customer survey—and really use that data, get our guys on the ground to

check the veracity of it and then update our timetables as we do major network changes.

THE CHAIR: When you are talking about this next major network change, the new network, there will be opportunities for the community to have input? There has been some consultation already, I understand.

Mr Rattenbury: Do you have the detail?

Mr Peters: Yes, that is right. We obviously try and get feedback internally from our drivers, who are the guys that are on the ground every day, and get some advice as to which routes are running well and which ones are not. We are, of course, guided by what is put in Transport for Canberra in terms of the mode share targets, walking targets and the frequency of our services. We put all those factors into a mix. There is again a reasonably sophisticated scheduling and costing model in ACTION around how shifts are allocated, and we need to get all that part of it understood as well. Once we get together a set of proposals which we have been working up over the last six to 12 months, we consult with our minister around the range of changes that we are proposing and then, subject to his agreement, we would intend to be out consulting with the community about some of the changes that are proposed.

Mr Rattenbury: I have been quite clear with ACTION that that level of community engagement is very important. It is bleedingly obvious to say so in some ways, but clearly we know from the letters and emails we get, and the Twitter accounts, that there are some people out there who know their services really well, know their suburbs well and have some very good ideas on adjustments we could make or where the system is not working at the moment. From my point of view, that will be a really important part of any new network development—to get that community input on it as well.

MR COE: Is the back end of the MyWay system fully operational? I know there was a staggered rollout of that back-end system. Are you able to extract all the stats and the data that you had hoped to be able to?

Mr Peters: The key thing about the MyWay system is that it gives us data on the number of passengers that are on the bus, the type of passengers that are on the bus and the number of passengers that are on any particular route—where they get on, where they get off—generally within that constraint of 81 per cent of people using a MyWay card. That gives us that data and there are the rest of the fare-paying customers. So there is the base MyWay data which we get as a data feed off the buses. That is then fed into a management information system called netBI, the business information system. We are progressively improving the reporting that we get out of that system; we are always developing that. At the moment we have got the standard stuff that we want to get out of that around how many people are catching particular routes and where they are travelling to and from. We will get better at that. In answer to your question, if I could summarise, we have the systems in place that allow us to mine the data, but we are progressively improving the reporting and how we use the data that we have now got.

DR BOURKE: Minister, what is the current balance of the MyWay accounts—in

other words, how much money have people put into their MyWay cards? How much have you got in your vaults—more or less, not to the nearest cent.

Mr Rattenbury: I do not think we have those figures. Do we have that data available?

Mr Peters: I am sure we could get it. I am just not sure whether we could release it.

DR BOURKE: Why?

Mr Rattenbury: The balance of people's individual accounts—

DR BOURKE: I am not asking for the balance. I am asking for the total balance that you have of accumulated credits that people have provided through their MyWay cards.

Mr Peters: We can provide that. We will need to go and get it.

Mr Rattenbury: We might have some more information for you, Dr Bourke, if you bear with us.

Mr Peters: It is around \$1.5 million to \$1.6 million, but if you want me to—

DR BOURKE: That is a real vote of confidence in the system.

Mr Peters: Yes.

MR WALL: Minister, for people who are generally transitioning from the MyWay pass through to the gold pass once they hit 75—

Mr Rattenbury: From 1 July we are moving to reduce that age to 70. That was a commitment from the ALP during the election campaign and we will be implementing that from 1 July.

MR WALL: What is the process for passengers who have had credit loaded onto a MyWay card and that credit may still remain when they transition into that new program?

Mr Rattenbury: We would of course transfer that across, I believe.

Mr Peters: Subject to the government's approval—

MR WALL: There is no point transferring credit to a free pass.

Mr Peters: I think it is fair to say we are still working through that issue. We are aware of it and we need to get the policy position right.

Mr Rattenbury: Thank you, Mr Wall. We will make sure that one gets followed up.

DR BOURKE: So there is no provision to cash out your MyWay card?

Mr Peters: Part of the conditions of using the card are that once the money is on the card, there is no real refund policy around that.

MR COE: Going to the financials, again looking at the statement of performance for ACTION for the period ended 31 December, the government payment for outputs is considerably higher, to the tune of \$13 million more, or 32 per cent. There is a note which says the actuals are higher than expected due to timing of cash requirements to cover annual workers compensation and insurance premium payments. How much of that \$13 million is accounted for by the explanation of variance No 5?

Mr Elliott: Thank you for your question. Yes, the figures are at the halfway mark. The Comcare premium is \$8.8 million and the insurance premiums are \$5.8 million. So it is in the order of \$14½ million for that first half-year.

MR COE: But they were not expected in the first half; is that right?

Mr Elliott: The payments were expected in the first half of the year. These have exceeded the expected budget or the original budget, so we are now working through how we can achieve efficiencies.

MR COE: The \$8.8 million and \$5.8 million—is that what you said?

Mr Elliott: \$8.8 million and \$5.8 million, yes.

MR COE: What was the original budget for those two premiums?

Mr Elliott: Currently combined, we are looking at it as a cost pressure of about \$3½ million.

MR COE: \$3½ million more than expected?

Mr Elliott: Yes. We are currently working through how we can achieve efficiencies for the remainder of the financial year.

MR COE: What is the reason for that increase?

Mr Rattenbury: I think it is a whole-of-government issue, Mr Coe. I have seen this come up in quite a number of directorates, where we are facing significant increases in our workers compensation or Comcare premiums. There is a whole-of-government look at it at the moment. It is obviously a pressure that we do not need across the board and it is having quite an impact on the bottom line.

MR COE: Presumably, when the invoices come in and they are \$3½ million more, there is a rationale for that?

Mr Rattenbury: I am not sure what you are getting at.

MR COE: When they give you an invoice which is \$3½ million more than what you expected, what are they saying is the reason for it?

Mr Byles: That is an issue that the minister clearly says is something that is being addressed by Chief Minister and Treasury directly. It is a whole-of-government issue about the increase in workers compensation and Comcare premiums.

MR COE: So as an agency you are not given information as to what you can or can't do to manage that premium?

Mr Byles: What I can say is that we take every step we can to try and restrict the premium increases. It goes to the very heart of the environment, the workplace safety issues and the like, to ensure that our premiums are kept as low as possible.

MR COE: Have there been many substantial claims within ACTION over the last year or two which might have contributed to this particular premium going up?

Mr Peters: No. James can probably provide some more detail on this. With the workers compensation premium, the strategies to reduce that are around getting people back to work as quickly as you can, once they have had an incident and they need to be off. So we are certainly heavily focused on that area, and of course on avoiding the incident in the first place. So they are the two strategies that we are focusing on to try and manage that premium.

MR COE: As of now, or at another reasonable point in time, how many people would be off on workers compensation?

Mr Peters: We would have to get you that number but it is probably something like 30 to 40, over a long period.

Mr Byles: We would have to take that on notice.

DR BOURKE: Would that be the total workforce?

Mr Roncon: Certainly, as Mr Peters has just indicated—and part of our discussion earlier on was around that ageing workforce. Obviously the facts of the matter are that when you get an ageing workforce, strains, pains and those sorts of things are a little more prominent than they are in somebody in their early 20s.

One of our key focuses over the last few years in ACTION has been on that very quick return to work. Perhaps there had been situations in the past where people had been left to their own devices and there was not necessarily that interaction with management as early as it could have been. That means people would go off and problems would occur. But we have been really focusing on that over the last few years in terms of making sure that there is early intervention—that is probably the best way of describing it—and ensuring that as soon as somebody finishes their shift or reports an incident, there are very strict rules and guidelines around completing an incident form and then we deal with that appropriately, firstly through the directorate, through TAMS, and then through our IPM people at Chief Minister's. So making sure that people get back to work as quickly as they possibly can is the key to keeping that premium down.

The other thing that the committee would be aware of is that workers compensation is long term; it takes three or four years. If there is an incident today, that particular incident can play out over a longer period of time. So you will not see any immediate premium reductions in anything that you do. It is always a longer term process and you really need to take that view.

Mr Rattenbury: On your earlier question, Mr Coe, you asked about the exact numbers. Mr Peters gave you a sense of it but we will take it on notice and provide a specific number, so that you have an accurate answer.

MR COE: That would be good; thank you. Also, if you are able to give a breakdown of what part of the workforce they are from—whether they are drivers, mechanics or other staff—that would be great.

Mr Peters: Yes.

DR BOURKE: But not at a level that would enable people to be identified.

Mr Peters: And it will be at a point in time.

MR COE: Yes.

MR WALL: Are any other options ever investigated to ensure that the best value for money is being received when taking out the workers compensation policy—self-insurance or private industry being considered as an alternative option?

Mr Rattenbury: That is probably what I was getting at before. We were slightly at cross-purposes on the question there. There is a whole-of-government discussion now starting. There is a concern to check that we are getting the best value for money, with the significant increases in premiums we are seeing across a range of directorates. I think there is a view that we need to look at whether there are better value for money options available to the government.

MR WALL: Are those discussions happening at the Chief Minister's department level?

Mr Rattenbury: I think it is Chief Minister's that runs it.

Mr Byles: I think that is a question best directed to the Chief Minister and Treasury Directorate.

MR COE: I have a question on the cost per passenger boarding. One of the ratios is the cost of the overall service, which is published. I was wondering whether you were able to tell me about the other side, which is how many passenger boardings there have been.

Mr Peters: I do have that figure. It was 18.2 million last year.

Mr Byles: It is the strategic indicator for TAMS. We are looking for the exact figure.

DR BOURKE: Is that journeys? There would be a difference if you go on?

MR COE: If you transfer?

Mr Peters: It is passengers on the bus.

THE CHAIR: If you take two buses, is it one journey or two?

Mr Peters: One journey.

MR COE: As the chairman just said, if you are doing two rides on a transfer, that is only going to come up once?

Mr Rattenbury: There is some uncertainty. This is how it is talked about. The methodology is quite important in relation to the accuracy of the answers.

Mr Lawrence: Can I confirm the question again, if I could, please?

MR COE: Half of the equation goes to total cost per passenger boarding. What is a passenger boarding?

DR BOURKE: My question was about a passenger journey. If, for instance, you catch the bus from Jamison to Belconnen, you get off and get back on in Civic, for some reason or another, is that a single?

Mr Lawrence: That would be a journey. A journey is made up of a number of trips. We normally report the amount of trips actually taken.

MR COE: That is 18 million trips?

Mr Peters: I have the exact figure. It is 18.27 million.

MR COE: How does that compare with previous years? I did see a report recently which suggested that public transport usage had fallen. I was wondering whether that was backed up by your figures.

Mr Peters: You understand that we had issues with the previous wayfarer ticketing system. It is very hard to compare directly what happened in 2010-11 and what happened in 2011-12, because of those failures with the previous system. If we go back another year, it would appear that our patronage is growing from 2009-10. Within our overall patronage, there are obviously different markets. Our adult market seems to be growing. That seems to be going well. Our tertiary market does not seem to be growing as well. Students seem to be going okay. Within the overall number of passengers that we get, there are different markets that perform differently.

THE CHAIR: What are some of those tertiary services that you provide? Are they to footie matches and so on?

Mr Peters: Part of the benefit of the MyWay system is that, now that we have identified that is not going as well as we expected, we can get into our data and work

out why. We think there are probably a lot more on-campus spots over the last year or so, where students are actually living on campus rather than living somewhere else and catching the bus. Perhaps that is influencing some of our figures.

MR COE: In 2009, ACTION made a decision whereby tertiary students could not use school bus passes or tickets and they had to go on adult fares or concession fares. Could that have had an impact on bus patronage?

Mr Peters: The figures that I am looking at are figures since we introduced the MyWay system. They are for only the last 12 months or so. Whilst it may have been done something before then, the information I was talking about was for the last 12 months. Basically, it is probably due to the number of spots on campus now.

MR COE: Do you get a regular report, a monthly report, with stats from the MyWay system?

Mr Peters: Yes, I do. As I answered earlier, the beauty of this system is that now we can get these types of reports coming out of the system. I do get a monthly report about how we are going in terms of patronage. I am progressively working with the team to refine that, around our top 10 routes, our bottom 10 routes, how our patronage is going across our various market segments. We are developing that and refining that as we go. Certainly we have got the bare bones of that in place.

DR BOURKE: Minister, how is ACTION responding to the growth of new suburbs in Gungahlin?

Mr Rattenbury: As the annual report indicates, new services were provided last year, the 2011-12 financial year, to the new suburbs of Bonner, Crace, Forde and Casey. Certainly my view is that it is very important that we get the bus services into the new suburbs as early as possible. Obviously as people move in somewhere, they begin to set their transport habits as soon as they move in. If we are able to provide a viable alternative, people may not buy a second car. Alternatively, if families are moving in and are under the financial pressure of having just taken out a mortgage, they might not be able to afford a second car, which underlines the importance of having an alternative for people who may not be in a position of having a second car should they need one.

It is my view that it is quite important that we get public transport options available as soon as possible. When I have had some discussions with the ACTION team about the flexibility of services we might be able to provide in the very early days, when perhaps not enough people have moved in to justify a full bus service, I have asked whether there are other things we can do in the short term.

Certainly the approach we are taking to somewhere like the new areas of the Molonglo valley, Wright and Coombs, will see a park-and-ride service put in on the Cotter Road to connect with some of the bus services so that, even if we do not have the population numbers in the suburb already, a good bus service will not be too far away. They are the sorts of options that we need to be thinking about in the new suburbs.

DR BOURKE: Your objective there is to try to build a culture of catching the bus whilst the homes are being built rather than try to piggy-back on those areas after people have got their homes set up?

Mr Rattenbury: I think so. If there is not an expectation of a decent service, people will set themselves up in different ways. "There is a lot of car parking space at my house. I need to get a couple of cars for the family." Once that is in place, of course people are going to utilise that investment they have already made. If we can provide a good, viable alternative that potentially saves people money as well, then I think we can really assist people who are living in some of those newer suburbs.

MR WALL: With the expansion of the bus network into these new areas, is there going to be an increase or change in the size of the fleet that is currently managed?

Mr Rattenbury: The number of buses or the size of individual buses?

MR WALL: Both.

Mr Rattenbury: As the area that we need to cover grows, we will require more buses. I think the advice on the size of the buses is that it is not really making a significant difference. In fact, in some ways it is more difficult to have different buses in the fleet in terms of maintenance strategy and those sorts of things.

MR WALL: With the introduction of the proposed light rail network into the ACT, is there going to be an impact on the number of buses required once that is online and operational?

Mr Rattenbury: Yes, the introduction of light rail will require a very significant rethink of bus services in the area immediately adjacent to the light rail. I think Professor Newman's talk at lunch-time today indicated that. They are my initial thoughts on it. Once you put the light rail spine in, we will see a very different set-up. Professor Newman talked about the notion of the buses sort of feeding into that central spine and providing a quick changeover.

At first blush, my experience of living in cities that do have light rail is that that system works very well. We are some distance off planning the specifics of that. That is the work that has got underway now. You may have seen that a tender was let in December by Minister Corbell and the office of transport planning in his directorate to start doing that sort of strategy.

MR COE: What is your role? I am a little confused with regard to light rail. What falls within Minister Corbell's responsibilities and what falls within yours?

Mr Rattenbury: As I think you may be aware, Mr Coe, a subcommittee of cabinet has been formed to address the light rail issue. The Chief Minister places a significant priority on this in ensuring that it is a whole-of-government project. All of the ministers have some part to play in the delivery of the light rail. The exact governance has not yet been finalised. That work is being done at the moment. The exact governance of how the project will be best rolled out across government is being developed. We are now only two or three months down the track from the definitive

commitment to build it and there is a very clear sense in government that getting the governance structures for the project is critical at the beginning. If we get that right, the rest of the project will obviously go much better from there.

MR COE: Whilst it may seem like just a few months ago, it actually was back in May that the government announced it, in effect, in the budget by establishing the Gungahlin-city transit way team. That team sits within TAMS, or is it ESDD?

Mr Rattenbury: ESDD. I do not know much about that to be able to give you detailed information.

MR COE: I guess that is the point.

Mr Rattenbury: It is the Economic Development Directorate.

MR COE: I guess that is the point I am trying to make, that you have got EDD, you have got ESDD and you have got TAMS. All have a fair claim to being involved, as do the other directorates. When will the government's arrangements be finalised? Is that body able to be scrutinised rather than having to run the risk of things being bounced around?

Mr Rattenbury: Certainly, I think your observation about bouncing around is very important. There is a clear recognition of that. The government's arrangements will be sorted shortly.

THE CHAIR: Can I just come back to Mr Coe's question and your answer on park and ride in the new suburbs of Wright and Coombs. Thank you very much for the park and ride that is coming out in Calwell. I am looking forward to using that.

Mr Rattenbury: Yes, it will be ready very soon.

THE CHAIR: I know that with some of the park and rides there has been an application for pushbike sheds. I notice the one in Mawson has been patronised really well. Do you have any figures on how many people are using them? Are you going to build more of these pushbike sheds?

Mr Peters: No, we do not have any actual figures around how many people use them. For some of them, where we have got the MyWay card data, we are starting to collect that information. Each individual site is assessed based on what we think the demand might be for particular types of facilities, including the bike sheds. As we do the planning, which is ESDD, for the park-and-ride sites, we assess the demand for bike facilities at the same time. Sometimes that might warrant a shed if we think that it will be used to that extent and at other times it will be the racks.

DR BOURKE: Minister, could you please advise on the progress of the feasibility study into a third major bus depot in the city's north?

Mr Rattenbury: We have been talking specifically in the last few days about bringing the Woden bus depot back online, which will offer significant efficiencies, but in terms of the third bus depot—

Mr Peters: Just in response to that, we have just put a tender out to get some consultants on to help us look at the feasibility of that. I think that tender closes—

Mr Roncon: I am not entirely sure of the date but it is coming up; shortly.

THE CHAIR: So where are you up to with Woden depot?

Mr Rattenbury: Woden is currently being worked on. There are issues around potential contamination at the site. As you might imagine, being an old workshop site, there are issues of fuel tanks. They are currently being removed and that is being delivered by the Property Group, another part of TAMS. The timetable is a little bit dependent on the complexity of that removal. We have to test for contamination and, clearly, if there is contamination—so far there has not been any—that will alter the timetable as it will obviously increase the complexity of the remediation.

THE CHAIR: How have you gone with tenants that were on that site? Originally it was quite a large site. I understand you are not going to use that amount—

Mr Roncon: Again, the Property Group are actually managing that side of it, so it might be a question for them. Some tenants have left, but I am not too sure of—

Mr Rattenbury: Perhaps we can come back to that with the other half of TAMS and Property Group when we are on in a week or so, Mr Gentleman.

THE CHAIR: Yes, I am happy to.

Mr Rattenbury: We will make sure they come ready with the answer now that you have given us the warning.

THE CHAIR: Good.

MR COE: I have a question about the maintenance of buses and also the management of breakdowns. At present, with the two depots, I understand you have got separate maintenance teams that work on the buses that are based in either the south or the north. That is also so for breakdowns; is that correct?

Mr Roncon: Essentially, yes. We have got workshops in both regions. Generally speaking, if it is a south bus that breaks down, located in the south region, the response will come from the south, and likewise with the north.

MR COE: It has been put to me that a bus broke down within the Belconnen depot and the maintenance team had to come from the south depot to service that vehicle, in spite of it being literally a few metres away from the north side mechanic workshop. Is that so?

Mr Roncon: Not to my knowledge. It seems awfully strange that that would be the case. I can find out.

MR COE: Yes, if you could take on notice whether there have been any vehicles

from one depot that have broken down that have required callouts from the other depot.

Mr Rattenbury: I can imagine you would be interested to know the answer to that one.

MR COE: I think we all would.

Mr Rattenbury: Indeed; I would too.

MR WALL: Just a quick question on the allocation of MyWay terminals. I understand that there has been some, I guess, concern by residents around the Calwell area that there is not one at that local group centre. What is the process for the allocation of MyWay terminals and what is the proposed rollout into the future of those?

Mr Peters: What I can tell you about that is that we are in a tender assessment process for 10 additional recharge agents, including Calwell. It is part of that process.

MR COE: How many new terminals will be rolled out?

Mr Peters: The process we are looking at is 10 additional recharge agents.

DR BOURKE: Can you tell us about the online procedure for recharging a MyWay card?

Mr Peters: In terms of—

DR BOURKE: How can it be done? Is it easily accessed? Do many people use it?

Mr Peters: Yes. If you go to the Transport for Canberra website you will find a MyWay portal there. As long as you have registered your MyWay card up-front you can actually get in and reload online. It is a reasonably simple, straightforward process, not unlike any other bills you might pay.

DR BOURKE: Do you know how many people actually reload their cards in that manner?

Mr Peters: I do not have that number off the top of my head, no. One of the improvements to that process that we are looking at is allowing people to use their credit cards for direct debit. At the moment you need a savings account—

DR BOURKE: Or cheque account.

Mr Peters: Yes. That is not as attractive for some people as being able to use their credit card to recharge. So we are looking at how we might be able to modify our process to allow people to do that, which would be another attractive feature of the recharge online option.

MR COE: On the MyWay issue, you said that it is out to tender at the moment. Is

there not, in effect, just one manufacturer of the MyWay terminals?

Mr Peters: The tender process that we are going through is for which agents actually want to be a recharge—

MR COE: Sure, as opposed to the procurement of the actual hardware.

Mr Peters: Yes.

MR COE: Which I presume would be through a single select or part of the original contract.

Mr Peters: It is part of the original contract.

MR WALL: When is the tender process likely to conclude?

Mr Peters: We have closed the tenders—

MR WALL: With the delivery of the hardware?

Mr Peters: We have closed the tenders and we are in the assessment process now.

MR COE: Were all newsagents and other comparable businesses contacted or was it simply published on the contracts register in the *Canberra Times* so it was up to potential agents to find that out?

Mr Peters: We have targeted agents. We are progressively working through the hierarchy. Again, this is a supply-demand-management type arrangement. We actually nominated 10 sites, I think, in the tender and encouraged people from those locations to respond to the tenders—newsagents and those types of businesses that would obviously benefit from being a recharge agent and being well positioned in terms of how we want the system to be accessible to the Canberra community; we encouraged them to apply.

MR WALL: Was there any assistance given to potential tenderers? Obviously newsagents, businesses and the like would normally be familiar with government procurement processes. Was there any assistance or were there mechanisms by which they could gain help to complete the tender documents?

Mr Peters: Not specifically, I think it would be fair to say, but I think we have had a reasonable response to the tender.

THE CHAIR: Thank you, members, minister and staff in the directorate. We will take a break and resume with Roads ACT.

Meeting suspended from 3.28 to 3.48 pm.

THE CHAIR: We will resume the public hearing. We are now looking at Roads ACT. Minister, would you like to make an opening statement?

Mr Rattenbury: No. I am happy to go straight to questions.

DR BOURKE: Minister, is there a vision for continuing the eastern end of Ginninderra Drive, past where it terminates at Ellenborough Street?

Mr Rattenbury: Down at north Lyneham?

DR BOURKE: Yes.

Mr Rattenbury: I might defer to Tony Gill on that one.

DR BOURKE: It is a major thoroughfare that cuts deep into my electorate.

Mr Rattenbury: Yes, I know. I was just on it yesterday.

Mr Gill: There is no current proposal to extend Ginninderra Drive to Northbourne Avenue. The matter was looked at in some detail in the mid-90s, as part of local area traffic management, looking at Lyneham and O'Connor, and also as a result of some of the work associated with the Gungahlin Drive extension, from the Gungahlin external travel study. It goes back that far.

There were a number of reasons. One was: why would you extend a major road through playing fields? You would be creating a new intersection on Northbourne Avenue. You would be creating a major new crossroads on Northbourne Avenue. That is likely to have an impact on the amenity of the people in Downer and Dickson as it would become a more attractive through-route for traffic. Also it would be quite an expensive exercise. I understand that the reservation for a Ginninderra Drive extension has actually been removed from the territory plan and the subsequent works in Southwell park most likely would preclude that now.

There is a lot of information about this particular subject that could be taken on notice and provided. But it has been a question that has been looked at in some detail in the past, with a lot of community involvement in that wider north Canberra network.

MR WALL: Minister, another local-based question: Tharwa bridge and the work that has recently been completed on the restoration work down there. Previously there was a gate in a fence that ran along Bridge Street which prevented out-of-hours access to the park underneath the bridge. That was removed during the construction process. Are there any plans at this point to reinstate that facility?

Mr Gill: The gate and the fence were affected during the construction works. We approached the manager of that area, parks and city services, Brett McNamara. At his request we did not reinstate the gate.

MR WALL: It was at the request of?

Mr Gill: It was at the request of the people responsible for managing that corridor.

Mr Rattenbury: The whole river corridor is managed by the parks and conservation service.

Mr Gill: So there is a management arrangement in place and at their request we did not reinstate the gate.

MR WALL: Was there any explanation given as to why they did not want it reinstated?

Mr Gill: Ongoing vandalism. The gate had been reinstated on a number of occasions but it had been subject to a lot of vandalism.

MR COE: Page 222 of volume 1 has information at the very top of that page about the north-south arterial road for Molonglo suburbs and the north Weston pond and bridge. The arterial road has gone up significantly in price. What is the reason for the cost increase?

Mr Rattenbury: I will cover the north Weston pond first. You would be aware that the significant issue there was the asbestos.

MR COE: That is right, but I am also referring to the arterial road.

Mr Rattenbury: I will see if I can get you some detailed information on that.

Mr Gill: There are two stages. The initial figure basically only covered the first stage. The arterial road that is covered by this project is John Gorton Drive stage 1A and 1B. The initial \$11 million relates to 1A and subsequent funding basically covers the construction of stage 1B.

MR COE: Are they not separate projects? Should they not be treated separately rather than—

Mr Gill: You could argue that they could have been identified separately but they have been awarded as part of the same contract. If you go back through budget papers, you would be able to reconcile that. That is the explanation. We can take the question on notice, just to confirm that for you.

MR COE: Yes, if you could.

Mr Gill: My understanding of it is that it covers both stage 1A and 1B, and the extra money—that is why it is showing that increase.

DR BOURKE: Can we move to page 224, along the same vein—the Majura and Sutton Road pavement rehabilitation. The original value was \$2¼ million and it has been revised to a quarter of a million.

Mr Rattenbury: We have certainly had some problems with that road. Once the works were started it was discovered that the original geotech surveys, for want of a better term, were incorrect and that the structure under the road required a greater level of works. So there will be further works undertaken out there. We have had some complaints from the public about the quality of the works. Those works are going to be further developed as a result of that.

DR BOURKE: So the works that you had originally planned are going to change in scope. You are saving, or not spending, \$2 million there.

Mr Gill: The initial design for this work was done some years ago. It was done during a period of drought. We have had subsequent quite wet periods in the last three years. When this actual project started last year, and construction work started, the underlying conditions were found to be quite different from what was initially proposed. So they were unable to continue with the work. We put it in a holding pattern. We have done some work through our maintenance program as a holding pattern. We are reviewing the design of that project.

MR COE: Were the initial surveys incorrect?

Mr Gill: They were incorrect.

MR COE: What recourse does the territory have to review those contracts?

Mr Gill: We are working with the design consultant, who are providing their services at no cost to the territory to rectify it. There is an acceptance that there was an error in the advice provided. Rather than go down a legal course of action, we have tried to work collaboratively with the consultant to get a better outcome. So we get a revised design which we will be able to progress.

MR COE: What was the nature of the error in terms of the advice provided to you?

Mr Gill: When you are doing these types of work, part of any roadworks is to get some geotechnical advice on underlying ground. An important aspect of that is where the water level is, in the watercourse. They had relied on earlier advice rather than going out and repeating it. That did not indicate any problem with the underlying water levels. When the work was excavated, it was clear that the advice was not correct. We quickly brought that project to a conclusion and have taken a different course of action.

MR COE: Sutton Road was relatively recently resealed, wasn't it?

Mr Gill: Yes.

MR COE: When you talk about the concerns, is that in effect, despite it being resealed recently, all the pot holes and the deterioration?

Mr Gill: There are two aspects. A reseal basically makes the road waterproof and provides good skid resistance. But the underlying pavement over a period of time needs to be replaced. So the substantial work on Sutton Road that we are talking about here was road rehabilitation work which was needed to replace the existing pavement.

MR COE: Had that information been known prior to resealing Sutton Road, would the resealing still have gone ahead?

Mr Gill: We probably would have modified our approach.

MR COE: How much was spent on the resealing?

Mr Gill: The resealing work had to go ahead, as it turned out, as a holding pattern, until we can do some more substantial works.

MR COE: When was that finished?

Mr Gill: It was only finished in about September last year.

MR COE: When did Roads ACT become aware of the inaccurate geotechnical advice?

Mr Gill: We would have become aware of it in around August last year. So it gave us some time to review it, to put it in holding—maintenance treatment.

THE CHAIR: Minister, would you be able to provide the committee with an outline of the programs undertaken in 2011-12 that were designed to improve traffic flow and, particularly, safety in the ACT?

Mr Rattenbury: Yes, certainly. There are obviously a large number of ongoing projects through the black spot program and similar sorts of things. In terms of traffic flow, the major projects would be completing Gungahlin Drive, a well-known particular piece of work; the Kings Highway realignment; the Tharwa bridge upgrade; and the Monaro Highway duplication at Canberra Avenue. They are the main ones. There were also construction tenders progressed for the Belconnen to city transit way, the Parkes Way widening which is now underway, and the upgrades to the Cotter Road. They are the bigger projects particularly related to traffic flow in the growing city.

THE CHAIR: I particularly noticed the Monaro Highway duplication at Fyshwick and noticed that towards the end of last year it really increased traffic flow on my route, which was from down south to the northern part of Canberra. Now, though, with the new construction of Majura parkway going ahead, the speed limit has been reduced to 60 in advance of that work going on. I guess the question is more in relation to the Majura parkway. There is work on both ends at the moment. When do you expect that the speed limit might change?

Mr Rattenbury: I certainly agree that the widening over Canberra Avenue has made a significant difference; that old bottleneck is gone now and it clearly is a much better passage for people. In relation to the speed limits, particularly coming across Dairy Flat Road—I think that is where you would be experiencing it—I have asked Mr Gill to review that. I was out there the other week as well, and I was a bit surprised by how far back the limits came into effect for the low level of work that was going on, particularly on a weekend when I was passing through the area and there were no workers in the area. Mr Gill has undertaken to review that. I do not think he has had a chance to do it yet.

Mr Gill: I have. What the contractor has done for that Majura parkway project is go out and put in place a lot of roadwork speed limits. Some are close to work at the

northern end of the project near the Federal Highway; some, as the minister touched on, are very remote from any work activity. We have issued an instruction to the contractor to remove or cover those roadwork signs that are remote from any current road activity. That will take place within the next week. It is important that the credibility of roadwork speed limits is maintained. They are there for a purpose and they are there to protect the safety of the work site. If people ignore them—or if they are in place, there is no activity and they lack credibility—they are not effective.

Mr Rattenbury: That is the discussion we had. That credibility is very important. If there are no obvious works, people just get frustrated, and that is not what we want. We want to get the safety where we need it.

THE CHAIR: Before we go to other members, I have a question on safety. There are several road signs in the ACT that have sayings like “Speed kills” or “Drive n text: UB next”—those sorts of road signs. Do you review those? I think they are part of a national program, but do you review those road signs?

MR COE: They are Jon Stanhope specials.

Mr Rattenbury: I am afraid I do not know the history of them. I might defer to my colleagues on this one.

Mr Gill: The signs should be seen in the context of an overall road safety strategy trying to send various road safety messages to the commuter. They are reviewed in conjunction with Justice and Community Safety and the police. You might note that also, on the two permanent variable message signs that we have in the territory, similar messages flash across. They are reviewed on an occasional basis.

MR WALL: You refer to the variable message signs. Is it appropriate to be advertising events such as centenary functions on those instead of driver safety or road messages?

Mr Gill: There is a policy covering their use. There are policies covering the types of signage or the types of message that are put on the variable message signs. One of the categories—a lower category than road safety—covers community messages. Our view, and the view within TAMS, is that promoting the centenary of Canberra is a community message.

DR BOURKE: Minister, what is the planned completion date for the Parkes Way works?

Mr Rattenbury: Mid this year?

Mr Gill: Somewhere between June and September this year, depending. There is one issue with that particular roadwork at the moment. The subcontractor who is doing the bridgework has gone into administration. We are going through a process at the moment of getting a new subcontractor. It is not affecting the program at the moment, but until that subcontractor, who is a fairly specialist contractor, is put in place, that will have an impact on the program. I would say more conservatively—September rather than June.

DR BOURKE: With that project with the bridge where the contractor has gone into administration, are you going to use a single select?

Mr Gill: No. With the Parkes Way project, the contractor is Woden Contractors. They have not gone into administration; it is the subcontractor to Woden Contractors. It is a negotiation between the main contractor, the head contractor, and the subcontractor to resolve that issue, and it needs to be resolved in a fair and equitable manner. At the moment it is not affecting the timing of the program, but on occasions these things, if they are not resolved, can impact on the program delivery.

MR COE: Going back to the permanent variable message signs, is there ever going to be a capability to give real traffic information like the time it is going to take to get from Hindmarsh Drive to the city, to Glenloch or whatever the case may be?

Mr Gill: The answer is yes, there will be. We are at the very early stages of developing an overall strategy for what we call intelligent transport systems, which includes things like what you described—real-time information, variable speed limits and messages. Closed circuit TVs allow you to monitor traffic along routes and at intersections. We have just put a briefing up to the minister. We have not verbally briefed him on it yet, but we have set a time to do that. It is an important commitment. It is a fairly big task. There are a lot of what you might call back-end aspects in terms of setting it up. Other jurisdictions are well down that track to a greater or lesser extent. I think it is a general view that we should be following that. Just getting the most out of the existing network, if that is the only outcome, would be a good outcome.

MR COE: Is there any possibility that the widening of Parkes Way is going to result in a bus lane or is it going to definitely be three lanes of private vehicle traffic?

Mr Gill: There is no proposal for there to be a bus lane.

MR WALL: I would like to go back to page 222. One of the projects listed on there is the Erindale centre major bus station. It seems funny that it has gone from over \$3 million down to \$300,000. What is the progress with that project?

Mr Peters: I think the answer to that question is that that project was just deferred whilst the master plan was completed for Erindale. We have been progressing the design of what we call a major bus station there in conjunction with a park and ride. Then the master planning process overtook that so it made sense to wait and integrate everything into the one master plan. We think we have got a better outcome in terms of that master planning process for the bus station, and we would be progressing the design of that this year.

MR WALL: The master plan calls for a relocation of the existing bus facility at Erindale. Is that something that we are going to expect to see funding for in the near future?

Mr Peters: We are currently progressing the design of that, and then funding for construction subject to the usual budget process.

MR WALL: Still within the Erindale precinct, the improvement of car parking is an issue that comes up time and time again, particularly around the Gartside Street precinct. Are there any plans or is there any indication that there are going to be any improvements made to parking facilities in that area ahead of the proposed works in the master plan being carried out, which were foreseen to happen in the 15 to 20-year time frame.

Mr Peters: Again, part of the design of the bus station is around a park and ride in Ricardo Street, which runs off Gartside. So it is about a park-and-ride facility down the end of that where we can expand the existing parking down there, which will help improve the situation in terms of use of the bus service, which is an important outcome for that centre. The other thing that we had done in the original consideration for the bus station was to have it in Gartside Street between McDonald's and the shops further to the west, which probably would not have been a good outcome in terms of parking or traffic management arrangements. In terms of any interim parking—

Mr Gill: We have looked at options to increase parking on Gartside Street; it is not necessarily easy and it is a relatively expensive process. At the moment, basically cars park kerbside. If you were to try to formalise that parking and provide, say, angle parking, you would lose the existing kerbside parking. For a reasonably high investment dollar-wise you do not get a very good return. In conjunction with some of the local traders out there, we have looked at options and we have not been able to progress it to a stage where we have sought any construction funding.

DR BOURKE: What do you forecast for Coppins Crossing Road as the population of Molonglo takes off?

Mr Rattenbury: That is a very interesting question.

Mr Gill: Coppins Crossing Road ultimately, as part of the Molonglo development basically, is done away with and John Gorton Drive becomes the arterial road, that north-south arterial road. Coppins Crossing will not exist in the future.

DR BOURKE: It is going to be removed?

Mr Gill: Yes, as part of the planning for that. John Gorton Drive will provide that north-south arterial connection.

Mr Rattenbury: Both for the car drivers of the city and for the cyclists that will be a loss. It is a terrific road through there.

MR COE: The services down the guts of Northbourne are going to have—

Mr Gill: The guts? I am just trying to imagine where that is!

Mr Rattenbury: It is the technical term!

MR COE: At what point will a comprehensive study be done to determine exactly

what services, what utilities, are located there? I think we have chatted before about the difficulty in determining all the utilities around town. They go back 60 or 70 years often. When are you doing that study?

Mr Rattenbury: That is one of the issues under consideration at the moment as part of the scoping of the light rail project. Clearly, that work will need to be done as a preliminary works to putting in the light rail. Part of that will go to the model we decide to implement to construct light rail and, therefore, who will do it. I certainly expect that TAMS will play a significant role in it.

MR COE: Are you able to say with any confidence what services are there, in terms of completeness?

Mr Gill: It will be difficult. There are lots of services, telecommunication services. It is a very important part of that particular project, trying to establish the scale and extent of service relocation. There needs to be some surety that services are in the locations that the work-as-executed drawings basically suggest they are. It is very important and it is always a risk to a major project. But I think the steps that are in place are the steps that any area responsible for delivering it would go through.

Mr Rattenbury: It is seen as a major issue in this project. In a sense, in the ACT the engineering of the light rail is quite straightforward. I think this is one of the more difficult questions.

MR COE: Absolutely. Is an answer considering the installation of light rail on an existing lane of traffic?

Mr Rattenbury: That is not being canvassed at this point. I have not been in any conversations where that is the issue, no.

MR COE: Another question on 224 regarding projects—transport for Canberra, installation of bus shelters, whereby \$1 million is allocated. Are they the more typical suburban bus shelters or are they the big ticket bus shelters proposed for Commonwealth Avenue?

Mr Rattenbury: I do not specifically know about the Commonwealth Avenue ones. Obviously we have now got a private operator, Adshel, who install bus shelters around town. As you might appreciate, they are really only interested in the high visibility sites. That is why the government is still spending money on bus shelters. That does tend to be in the more suburban locations where the private operator is not interested; it is obviously not attractive to them as an advertiser.

MR COE: Is that \$1 million for the new glass front with the LED lighting?

Mr Gill: Just reinforcing what the minister said, these are basically non-advertising shelters. They are pretty similar to the existing shelters but you would see them more in residential areas.

MR COE: Are you able to tell me, roughly, or take it on notice, what the cost of a new shelter is?

Mr Gill: Typically about \$20,000 per shelter, installed. That is basically the concrete base and the shelter itself installed and some associated design work; so about \$20,000.

MR COE: A lot of them do have the LED lighting inside. Is that so for all the new shelters or are only some getting lighting?

Mr Gill: As part of that design we are putting LED lighting in.

DR BOURKE: How many will you be installing in my electorate of Ginninderra over the next 12 months?

Mr Gill: I could take that on notice.

DR BOURKE: I thought you might know that one!

MR WALL: Perhaps you can extrapolate it over the three electorates, Mr Gill.

DR BOURKE: There are only two electorates represented here.

Mr Gill: We can tell you where that money has been distributed and you can work out the electorates.

THE CHAIR: Minister, if I could just bring you back to page 222 and the fifth one down—Smiths Road bridge. There is not a lot of traffic on that bridge. That was washed away, I think, with the floods. You have made a value there, so that work, I guess, is underway. What is the time line there? Mr Jeffery would like to know.

Mr Rattenbury: He will be able to ask it himself next year.

Mr Gill: It was washed away in early 2012. There is a temporary bridge in place. At the moment the residents who live in New South Wales and use this road to get into and out of the territory have good access. We have gone out to tender for a replacement bridge. We are currently in tender discussions on that. There have been some issues with the actual cost of its replacement. We are recovering the cost through insurance so we are having discussions with the insurance authority about the extent of that. It is current, but the tender process will take some time to resolve.

THE CHAIR: Beyond the bridge is now bitumen up to the top of a hill.

Mr Gill: There is a small section of sealed road. Ultimately the aim is to seal the rest of Smiths Road over a period of maybe 10 years. We have done some design work. To seal that road we need to improve the geometry of some of the quite tight bends and then basically progress to the sealing of the road on an incremental basis.

THE CHAIR: You just go to the border?

Mr Gill: We would just go to the border, yes. That is still about 5½ kilometres.

THE CHAIR: Thank you.

MR COE: While we are on regional roads, the Kings Highway is, of course, an ongoing issue, especially for the electorates of Monaro and Eden-Monaro. What interaction does Roads ACT have with New South Wales RTA and the councils about possible upgrades to the highway?

Mr Gill: We have got a pretty good working relationship with Roads and Maritime Services, as they are called now, in New South Wales and the local councils. In relation to the Kings Highway, there is a Kings Highway working group that was set up some years ago which we participate in. RMS have looked at sections of the Kings Highway for improvement and have only recently, I think, released a study on that in terms of what they are proposing. We have done some work which we completed only last April. Five kilometres of Kings Highway in the vicinity of Sparrow Hill was completed, a \$50 million project. That was done in conjunction with input from New South Wales and Queanbeyan. I think Palerang also had a role in that. There is a good working relationship, as there needs to be.

DR BOURKE: Could you tell me about the west Belconnen intersection improvements and what has been achieved with that work?

Mr Gill: West Belconnen intersection improvements—we are talking about Southern Cross Drive at the intersection with Florey Drive and the intersection with Starke Street.

DR BOURKE: The \$1½ million.

Mr Gill: That is the location. We have installed a set of traffic lights at the intersection of Southern Cross Drive and Florey Drive. That has been implemented and in place since September last year and it is working quite well. The cost of that project came in at about \$1.2 million. It was quite an expensive project. It was going to be a roundabout initially but when we checked the cost of installing a roundabout, it was prohibitive so we moved back to a scheme that we could deliver within the existing road line. Traffic lights were quite a reasonable option in that location. It also provides well for pedestrians who cross from Florey Drive into the Kippax shopping centre. It provides better than a roundabout would in that location.

There is also some money available for some improvements at the intersection of Southern Cross Drive and Starke Street. That is currently underway and will be finished later in the year. That will be supplemented by some funds from the public transport program because we want to get access to the Kippax terminal for larger buses. We will need some modifications to that intersection to achieve that.

DR BOURKE: Have you had any feedback from the residents of west Belconnen following this intersection upgrade?

Mr Gill: We have had some feedback. Most of it has been positive. There have been some comments about the line marking when you are coming down Southern Cross towards Kippax. The line marking has received some mixed comments and we are modifying those. We are also doing some work in relation to a park and ride in

Kippax in that general vicinity. So that will be good from that point of view. I think it is generally seen as positive. I suppose often the comment is: why didn't we do it sooner?

MR COE: Still in Belconnen, at the other end of Florey Drive, the Lhotsky Street roundabout, at the emergency services facility, which is—

Mr Gill: That is not a project that we are actually managing. I am aware of it.

MR COE: The project is being met with some concern by traders in Charnwood because at the moment in Charnwood a Woolworths is being upgraded and that back car park is currently blocked off. Now there is concern that with difficulty in entering the other car park whilst the roundabout is under construction, traders there may suffer over the course of about 12 months. Is that a concern which has been raised with you?

Mr Gill: It has not been raised with me directly. I can take that on notice in terms of whether it has been an issue. The construction of a roundabout can be managed and access can be maintained to Charnwood shops. There is no reason why it could not be maintained. I would be very surprised if access was severely restricted as a result of that arrangement.

MR COE: I do not think their concern is that it will be blocked off. It is more that in amongst all the other changes at the centre it will be another difficulty.

Mr Gill: It will be another difficulty. Having said that, I am aware that residents and traders in Charnwood have been pretty supportive of getting some intersection improvements at that location. They have been looking at it for a number of years.

MR COE: Absolutely. I have contacted the minister several times about Lhotsky Street and speeding motorists out the front of St Thomas Aquinas Primary School. But that said, like all projects, it has to be managed properly, and it is the timing which is of concern to a lot of the traders.

Mr Gill: We will look at the traffic management plans that are associated with that and monitor them to make sure that access to the shopping centre is not unduly impacted.

MR COE: Do you know when the project is due to commence?

Mr Gill: I will have to take that on notice.

MR COE: Is that being done entirely within the Emergency Services Agency?

Mr Gill: It is being done by ESA; it is being managed by ESA. Our involvement would be in terms of approval of the actual roadworks aspects and also the management of any temporary traffic management arrangements.

MR COE: Is it usual for another agency to undertake roadworks—works that are really ancillary to the actual core business of the agency?

Mr Gill: It is not unusual. The Economic Development Directorate do a lot of roadworks associated with land release, as do the LDA. So it is not unusual. About half of the roadworks that are done in the territory are done by others and handed over to TAMS to manage and maintain.

MR COE: Is that so for existing roads rather than new estates?

Mr Gill: Both. It can be associated with existing development or it can be associated with new development.

MR COE: How is TAMS brought into the loop on projects which are being done by—

Mr Gill: We are brought into the loop at a number of different stages. We are involved in the initial planning. So we would have some understanding of the project planning. The next stage we would have involvement in would be at the design acceptance. So there is a design acceptance of what is proposed. Then once it is going through that construction phase, at the end of that process we would be involved in the asset acceptance component, when those assets are handed back to the ACT government, or TAMS on behalf of the ACT government, to manage and maintain into the future. So we have been involved throughout that process.

THE CHAIR: Minister, I will give you the hoary chestnut: road sweeping. The report indicates that just under 18,000 kilometres of road sweeping occurs in the ACT each year. How do you go about rostering that service? How many machines do we now have operating as sweepers in Canberra?

Mr Rattenbury: I am just looking for my details on that.

Mr Gill: In answer to your question, we have five sweepers. We have a program whereby we program the sweeping of main roads once a month and residential areas twice a year. We also have a program, particularly in those leafy suburbs—the inner north and inner south—where we do additional sweeps during autumn. We will also do an additional sweep based on an inquiry through Canberra Connect. If someone has raised an issue with us, we go out and inspect it and see if it is in need of a sweep. So we will always respond in that way. But in terms of our program work, we publish our sweeping program on the TAMS website. That is in general terms.

THE CHAIR: Do you use those sweepers for emergency—

Mr Gill: The sweepers are available to assist in motor vehicle crashes. We have a response requirement for that. The police will contact us through Canberra Connect and we will respond and clean the road of debris, glass, oil or whatever. So we have five sweepers. We also do some work for private developers because the type of equipment is fairly specialised and they would lease or rent it from us for periods of time.

THE CHAIR: How do you provide the maintenance for that equipment now?

Mr Gill: We provide maintenance for those machines through an external contractor. The external service operator is in Fyshwick.

THE CHAIR: There being no further questions, we will adjourn. Thank you very much, minister, and staff of the directorate. We will return on 4 March at 10 am, when we will consider the annual report of the Environment and Sustainable Development Directorate.

The committee adjourned at 4.29 pm.