



LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY FOR THE AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

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

(Reference: [Annual and financial reports 2013-2014](#))

Members:

**MS Y BERRY (Chair)
MR A COE (Deputy Chair)
DR C BOURKE
MR A WALL**

TRANSCRIPT OF EVIDENCE

CANBERRA

WEDNESDAY, 17 DECEMBER 2014

**Secretary to the committee:
Mr H Finlay (Ph: 620 50129)**

By authority of the Legislative Assembly for the Australian Capital Territory

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

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Amended 20 May 2013

The committee met at 2.02 pm.

Appearances:

Rattenbury, Mr Shane, Minister for Territory and Municipal Services, Minister for Corrective Services, Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs and Minister for Sport and Recreation

Territory and Municipal Services Directorate

Byles, Mr Gary, Director-General

Steward, Ms Fay, Executive Director, Parks and City Services

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

Smith, Mr Kim, Executive Director, Directorate Services

Iglesias, Mr Daniel, Director, Parks and Conservation

Flanery, Ms Fleur, Director, City Services

Little, Ms Vanessa, Director, Libraries ACT

Roncon, Mr James, Director, Public Transport

Cloos, Mr Karl, Acting Director, Roads ACT

Marshall, Mr Ken, Senior Manager, Road Maintenance, Roads ACT

McHugh, Mr Ben, Senior Manager, Capital Works, Roads ACT

Shoukrallah, Mr Rifaat, Senior Manager, Traffic Management and Safety, Roads ACT

Farquhar, Mr Scott, Acting Manager, Fire Management Unit

Pitt, Ms Leesha, Acting Director, Canberra Connect

THE CHAIR (Ms Berry): Good afternoon everyone and welcome to this public hearing of the Standing Committee on Planning, Environment, Territory and Municipal Services inquiring into annual and financial reports 2013-2014.

On behalf of the committee, I would like to thank you, Mr Rattenbury, and your officials for attending today. Today's committee will be examining the Territory and Municipal Services annual report, excluding the business enterprises covered in our earlier hearings. Can I also draw your attention to the pink privileges statement before you and just confirm that you understand the implications of that statement.

Mr Rattenbury: Yes, thank you.

THE CHAIR: I also remind witnesses that proceedings are being recorded by Hansard and webstreamed and broadcast live. We will break for around 15 minutes at 4 pm. Minister, before we start, did you have an opening statement?

Mr Rattenbury: I have a couple of brief remarks, thank you, chair. As colleagues know, TAMS of course is an incredibly diverse portfolio, hence the number of officials here this afternoon for the areas we need to cover. I think that I will not take the time to go through the huge number of achievements that TAMS has had this year, but across that range of areas—whether it is libraries, roads, parks and city services, ACTION or any other units—TAMS has had a very, very busy year in addition to just delivering the day-to-day services to the city.

I would draw your attention to the satisfaction ratings that came out in TAMS's

annual survey earlier this year. It suggests that we might not need the full four hours, given that outstanding set of results.

MR COE: You might like to elaborate on that.

Mr Rattenbury: I look forward to elaborating on those points, Mr Coe. The last thing I want to say is that you may be aware, of course, that the Chief Minister this week has announced the formation of Access Canberra as part of those changes and the administrative arrangements. Canberra Connect is actually going across into that agency. But for the purposes of today's hearing we will cover Canberra Connect here if you wish. It seemed to make sense to continue on that path, given that the changes only came about two days ago. With that, I am happy to go to questions.

THE CHAIR: Thank you, minister. I will kick off with Canberra Connect and specifically Fix My Street. Could you tell the committee what sorts of complaints come to Fix My Street? Do you keep a breakdown of the different sorts of issues that have been identified by people in the community through Fix My Street?

Mr Rattenbury: Yes, Canberra Connect receives a huge number of contacts each year across a range of issues. It is in the order of 7.5 million contacts per year.

MR COE: You could do your stand-up routine now, actually.

Mr Rattenbury: Yes, exactly. That 7.5 million contacts includes things like online transactions and the like. As your question is around particularly TAMS related municipal questions, I will ask my colleagues from Canberra Connect to go to some of those details.

Mr Smith: I will talk generally about the type of stuff that comes into Canberra Connect. You can imagine that as the front door it is a fairly wide and diverse list of services that get requested both online and through the call centre.

There are some significant statistics held that dissect out each of the Fix My Street type requests—how many, how quickly we respond; that sort of thing. Rather than give you a list, which will probably bore everybody, we do have some information which can be provided later in detail.

THE CHAIR: That would be great, thank you.

Mr Smith: But generally, just so everybody is clear how the process works, Fix My Street is a portal through to other parts of the business, not just in TAMS but also in other parts of the jurisdiction. Canberra Connect have a system which helps track that and helps identify when a particular person has made a request. It is there. We do not identify the individuals, of course, but we identify the call and the subject matter of the call. That is then forwarded through our system to the forward work program of whatever it is.

That is generally how the process works. There is an automated response which indicates, in most cases, how quickly that would be dealt with. That automated response is based on the normal service standards that apply for each of those types of

things.

If it is a simple thing like a street light, that goes straight through with an expectation that it will be fixed in, I think, around 10 days. My colleague has just corrected me; it is 90 per cent within two days, thank you. But if it is things like collection of abandoned vehicles or that sort of thing, it can be quite a long program. If it is something that deals with a forward work program built around locations within Canberra, that can take a little while too.

A lot of the actual responses in terms of completing the request are dependent on the work program and where the work program has actually got to. In general terms, that is how it works. In general terms, that is sort of how we manage it. I would be happy for any specific questions.

THE CHAIR: When people are given feedback about the issue that they have raised—

Mr Smith: Yes.

THE CHAIR: you said you indicated on it the time frame for the particular issue. But is there any explanation in respect of an abandoned vehicle, because there is a bit of a process to go through with it—

Mr Smith: Yes.

THE CHAIR: about identification, the police and towing and all of those sorts of things? Are those sorts of things explained to people if they raise that as an issue?

Mr Smith: Yes. I will defer to my colleague.

Ms Pitt: There is a continuous program of improving how we respond to individual feedback. So particularly for roads matters, there are much more tailored responses that better manage community expectations about how the forward program of works is handled. We work with our other colleagues in the rest of TAMS across other municipal matters for that. Increasingly, the generic response is specific to specific issues.

THE CHAIR: Are you finding a crossover with your Twitter account? Are people complaining or raising issues through the Twitter account and raising issues through Canberra Connect? Do you try and redirect them through to the phone app or do you just take them as they come?

Ms Pitt: Canberra Connect does not handle Twitter matters. They are handled by the TAMS communication team.

THE CHAIR: Through the TAMS one, yes.

Ms Pitt: Yes, but they will refer Twitter users to the Fix My Street service and we will receive that accordingly. We obviously monitor what is being talked about on Twitter so that we can make sure that it is processed and triaged accordingly.

THE CHAIR: Is there any way to measure the success or the use of the phone app since its release? Is there any way that you can measure that?

Ms Pitt: There is not a specific phone app. There is an ability to bookmark the service which effectively works like an app. Yes, I would have to check for you whether there is a specific breakdown of that compared to our normal site.

THE CHAIR: I was wondering whether people know about it and whether they are actively going out and signing up to be on it.

Ms Pitt: Yes, some people are active users of the Fix My Street service.

THE CHAIR: Okay, you have got some serial Fix My Street users. That is good.

Mr Rattenbury: There is obviously an enormous efficiency in people using Fix My Street. That is why, members, when I write back to you on the range of matters that you write to me on I encourage you to have your constituency use Fix My Street. It is far more efficient than having a letter come from an MLA to my office, through to the department, through to the line area and all the way back when someone just has to go to Fix My Street. Now, there are times, of course, when Fix My Street or Canberra Connect do not resolve the issue to someone's satisfaction. But I would like to try and get to a place where members might see Fix My Street as the first resort and coming to the minister's office as the last resort.

THE CHAIR: Thank you, minister.

MR COE: As a supplementary to that, whereabouts is the progress up to with regard to the Gungahlin shopfront?

Mr Smith: Gungahlin shopfront is planned to open with practical completion in May 2015; so that is progressing on schedule.

MR COE: In terms of the fit-out, is that running according to budget?

Ms Pitt: The Gungahlin shopfront fit-out as part of the Gungahlin office block building is a budget being managed by the Chief Minister's department. There is a component of capital for the shopfront in respect of specific equipment that is required but it is not actually the building fit-out, like counters et cetera.

Mr Byles: Nothing has been brought to my attention about any cost pressures about the Gungahlin shopfront.

THE CHAIR: Supplementary, Dr Bourke?

DR BOURKE: Thank you, chair. Minister, does this move of Canberra Connect to Access Canberra affect the plans for a Civic shopfront?

Mr Rattenbury: No, the idea, as the Chief Minister has said in his public comments, of having Access Canberra is to have a single point of entry for the public into

government so that people do not have to worry about finding the right entry point but are able to come into government very simply and have government work out who they need to talk to rather than having to scratch around. Canberra Connect very much serves that role already. So it certainly makes sense to go across to Access Canberra in that way.

DR BOURKE: Thank you.

THE CHAIR: Mr Coe.

MR COE: The Heritage Library is still in this output class, is it not?

Mr Rattenbury: Yes. I will bring the library staff over.

MR COE: With regard to the Heritage Library, do you expect to have any changes in policy with regard to what you would be collecting there, given the pressures of storage and space in general? Do you expect any changes?

Ms Little: The changes are being driven by the digital agenda. Many more of the records of Canberra are now being published only in digital format on websites and those sorts of things. At the moment we are not collecting those as we would like, but I am in conversations with my colleagues around the nation and we are in the middle of a research project to see whether we could share infrastructure around the country so that we could keep the cost down for everyone, so a single point of entry for people who have to lodge documents with any one of the state or national libraries in Australasia and then being able to house them centrally. We acknowledge that our collection will continue to grow somewhat in hard copy but we know that the really big growth is in the digital agenda.

MR COE: Sure. So, in terms of that national approach, would that be for physical storage as well as data storage?

Ms Little: It is data storage. The physical storage is very much a local issue. We are probably going to be okay for another few years. We need to start planning pretty shortly for any expansion but we are okay for a while.

MR COE: And in terms of the storage of items that are digitised, whereas at present the hard copy or the original might be accessible, are there plans to, in effect, put those into permanent storage such that they are not accessible?

Ms Little: There are no plans for us to put things away so that they are not accessible. A lot—

MR COE: Even if they are digitised?

Ms Little: We have not got a digitisation project on at the moment. Some of our material is already being digitised by the National Library. You might notice if you go into the National Library system that you can get access to a whole lot of the local newspapers right back to the beginning of federation and that is a national project that all of the jurisdictions have participated in. We do not have a very large digitisation

project at the moment and therefore no plans to make our collections inaccessible. Some of my colleagues interstate are very much thinking about these issues around storage of material, unique material, that they have digitised, but it is not something that is on our agenda at the moment.

MR COE: And in the past I know the National Library have received a lot more material than they currently do, especially with ACT specific material. When they change their policy with regard to what they will take, do they do that in consultation with the ACT Library Service or whatever the library service might be?

Ms Little: Yes, certainly. The National Library's collection development policy very specifically says that it now collects material about Canberra as the national capital and our collection development policy dovetails into that. We are very specifically collecting about Canberra as a community and as a place. Some of the material that the National Library held before self-government has been repatriated back to us so that we now have that record of Canberra as a community. For example, there was a discovery of some Burley Griffin material, believe it or not, in someone's shed a couple of years ago. That material was discovered by someone, who raised it with us, but it is not appropriate that we hold it, so we then handed it on to the National Library because that is about Canberra as the nation's capital.

MR COE: Sure. Has demand for the services of the Heritage Library been pretty constant or has there been a peak during the centenary?

Ms Little: The centenary certainly had a huge peak and there was a several hundred per cent increase in the number of enquiries. Because of Trove, we are beginning to see lots of requests coming from all sorts of places. We had the BBC get in touch with us recently for some material that they needed for a television documentary. We have a really good collection of material around the performing arts. A lot of the material we have got relates to a touring program. I cannot think which of the well-known Australian singers it was, but we asked for this program because no-one else in Australia had kept that program of that particular artist. It was from the 20s or something.

MR COE: You mentioned earlier that at present there is not a digitisation plan. Is that something that is on the horizon?

Ms Little: It certainly is. We are definitely looking into that and that is where this project with my national colleagues will help. We do have some digital objects, of course. We have the very good digital photographic collection and that receives a lot of hits and a lot of use. It is a fantastic collection of photographs from around Canberra, right across various times and places.

MR COE: Is your current digital storage wholly within InTACT or have you got any external contracts?

Ms Little: Not that I am aware of, no. It is wholly within the ACT government systems.

MR COE: Thank you.

DR BOURKE: I have some supplementaries. On the growing use of digital library services, you note in your report a 20 per cent increase downloaded from 2012-13 and an increase of 30 per cent from that time. What are the particular areas of interest that people are downloading? What is driving that increase and what are your forecasts for the future?

Ms Little: One of our very big areas of interest is family history. The highest level of use of any of our database services is for the family history services. That looks at things like children's activities, general interest, gardening—those kinds of things. We have quite a large hit rate on our musical databases as well—not the music but the databases that provide information on music.

DR BOURKE: And what sort of information do they provide?

Ms Little: Anything from composers right through to current groups and musical genres. It is a database, if you like, of authoritative peer-reviewed data, articles and those sorts of things.

MR WALL: While we are on libraries, and to follow on briefly from Dr Bourke and the programs that are offered, my wife recently completed maternity leave and is a big fan of the giggle and wiggle sessions that are held and which I understand are quite popular.

Ms Little: Very, yes.

MR WALL: The one issue that she had raised with me, as did a number of mothers in her mothers group, is that, as they return to work, those sorts of programs are not available on weekends.

Ms Little: Yes. We have one program at Erindale on a Saturday is my recollection. We are also aware of the working families. However, working on Saturdays and Sundays does attract an additional salary for people, so we have to balance our budget against what we can offer.

MR WALL: But certainly they are being considered or extended where possible?

Ms Little: Absolutely.

MR WALL: And the other one I just wanted to touch on was the system for managing overdue books and items. It was revised earlier this year. How has that changed? Has there been much of a reduction in items returning late?

Ms Little: Not a reduction in items returning late. The way we look at it is that we look at material that is returned within the first, say, four weeks and then we look at a longer period. At the moment it is showing that it has improved slightly, from my recollection, but getting material back is always an issue for libraries.

THE CHAIR: I think I asked during the annual reports hearings last year about power points and more computers or services available, particularly at Kippax where I

had been told that there was a need, but also for more power points for people who take their iPods down and recharge. Has anything happened with that?

Ms Little: Again, budget precludes us from actually putting more power points in, but we are looking at stands that can be plugged in and that you can then plug into. We are investigating those.

THE CHAIR: And what about computers?

Ms Little: What we are finding generally is that people are bringing their own devices, but if there is a particular need that I have not been made aware of I am happy to take that on board. We are tending to find that many more people are coming in with their own devices and using our wi-fi.

THE CHAIR: Thank you. Dr Bourke.

DR BOURKE: Minister, the government's April response to last year's PETAMS annual report recommendation 22 said:

TAMS has developed a proposed solution for the replacement of faulty MyWay cards within Civic. This proposal will require modification to MyWay system functionality to implement.

What progress has happened on this, and where are we at?

Mr Rattenbury: I will just ask the transport people to come forward. Do we still want Canberra Connect or the libraries or can I leave them go?

THE CHAIR: Bear with us for just a moment.

Mr Roncon: Dr Bourke, I might have to take that on notice. I am not across the detail on that.

Mr Rattenbury: I am sorry we cannot be of more assistance today, but we will find that answer out for you.

DR BOURKE: I look forward to the response, minister.

Mr Rattenbury: So do I.

THE CHAIR: We are going to try and keep ourselves in output class 1 and do ACTION as a separate thing, so that we do not keep moving people up to and down from the table. Is that okay?

Mr Rattenbury: Yes, that is fine for us.

THE CHAIR: A new question, Mr Wall.

MR WALL: While we are still talking predominantly about information services, minister, with regard to the online payment of bills, how many bills or invoices that

the government issues are currently available to be paid online?

Mr Rattenbury: I think the vast majority of the government's available bills can be paid online. The bulk of our transactions, as I was touching on before with Canberra Connect—the large volume of those 7½ million contacts that Canberra Connect has each year are online payment of government accounts. That is the common thing, things such as rates and the like that are mostly paid through those mechanisms.

MR WALL: And what are the plans then to integrate into the existing system those that are not currently available?

Ms Pitt: Sorry, could you repeat the question please?

MR WALL: What are the plans to integrate into the online bill payment system bills that are currently not able to be paid online?

Ms Pitt: A lot of that work is being dealt with by services ACT under Chief Minister's. There is a regular program of works going on around online payments as new Visas are put in place or changes to Visa are put in place and agencies regularly review them. The alternative method to online payment is primarily cash or cheque. However, that is a very small portion of payments across government. It is only about a third.

Mr Rattenbury: As a general policy position, the government has a preference to move to online payments both because of the reduced transaction costs to government and for the convenience of those that have to pay their accounts or their bills.

MR WALL: What would be the proportion at the moment of those that choose to pay either at the shopfront with cash or card as opposed to an online bill payment?

Ms Pitt: I think it is approximately a third of payments through shopfronts and two-thirds through shopfronts electronic.

MR WALL: And for the online portals for paying bills, is it one portal for whole of government or does each directorate have its own online bill payment portal?

Ms Pitt: The majority of payments are receipted through the one portal, through Canberra Connect. Some individual business systems do have their own payment facility. For example, rego.act has its own payment facility but the majority are paid through the Canberra Connect online portal. It is approximately 60 per cent of collectable revenue that comes through Canberra Connect.

MR WALL: And what is the reason for keeping the rego separate?

Ms Pitt: It is a distinct business system in and of itself. JACS is responsible for that and there may be regulatory matters that dictate that.

Mr Rattenbury: The way it tends to work is that Canberra Connect essentially provides a service to government and agencies are invited to essentially come into Canberra Connect as they see fit. If an agency has not come across, then they may

have, as Ms Pitt said, a particular policy reason for that. But then the broad intent is that it all goes to Canberra Connect.

MR WALL: And does TAMS or Canberra Connect charge the other directorates a service fee for managing that portal or bill payment system?

Ms Pitt: The majority of the cost of that is allocated through the ACT budget. There is a small cost per transaction associated with bank fees that the banking provider charges us, which we pass on to agencies, that provides visibility to them of their costs so that they can take them into account in their setting of fees.

MR COE: As a supplementary, how many people have registered for the online account with Canberra Connect?

Ms Pitt: For the online account, I think it is approximately 80,000 people but I will take that on notice.

Mr Rattenbury: If it is anything dramatically different to that we will come back. We will undertake to do that.

MR COE: That is fine. With that online service, you cannot check historic bills, can you?

Ms Pitt: No, you cannot at the moment.

MR COE: Is there going to be some sort of system whereby you can keep track of when payments are due, how much you have paid, just the particulars of all those?

Ms Pitt: Under the bill payment policy that the ACT government released earlier this year there is an intention to move towards more electronic bill presentment and as integrated with the iConnect project it is intended that there will be a more sophisticated digital mailbox facility available into the future.

MR COE: So have preparations begun to plan that?

Ms Pitt: That is a matter for services ACT and the Chief Minister's.

MR COE: As at 2013-14, at the time of the annual report, had any work been done by Canberra Connect or TAMS to progress that?

Ms Pitt: The bill payment policy was only finalised and released towards the very end of 2013-14. I think it was in June.

MR COE: I think in the past we have heard that the government would like to get to a point whereby bills could be sent electronically and paid electronically and there is this fairly comprehensive style of portal. At this stage it is still in very early days of that?

Ms Pitt: The short answer is yes.

MR COE: Minister, do you know: is that something that the government is progressing or is that a priority for the government as a whole?

Mr Rattenbury: Yes. As Ms Pitt indicated, it is being led through the Chief Minister's directorate but I certainly can indicate that it has signed off on an intention for those things to move forward. Actually, there is a later one. The move by the Chief Minister this week to establish Access Canberra—it had several names in its gestation—I think underlines that desire to move to the sort of place you are talking about for the convenience of people who need to deal with government.

THE CHAIR: Minister, I have a question regarding the road works on the Barton Highway and when you think that is going to start. When is it going to start? Is it happening?

Mr Rattenbury: We will bring the Roads team forward. That is fine. Fire away.

THE CHAIR: A good way to start might be to update the committee on where things are up to on that.

Mr Rattenbury: Which road works on the Barton Highway do you mean?

THE CHAIR: You have referred to one here that is supposed to start, the Barton Highway-Gundaroo Drive extension.

Mr Rattenbury: That one actually went out to tender on this Saturday just passed. This is the intersection of William Slim Drive, Gundaroo Drive and the Barton Highway. That went to tender on Saturday. The intention is for the works on that project to get underway in the first quarter of next year. We can happily go into the details of what that project will look like but in terms of timing, as I say, underway in the first quarter of next year with a construction period of—it will depend a bit on the final tender—a 12 to 18-month window.

DR BOURKE: Do we have any other signalised roundabouts in the ACT, minister?

Mr Rattenbury: We have just brought in signalisation in Tuggeranong at the corner of Erindale Drive and Bugden Avenue at Erindale. That is a temporary one that is used in peak hour. I think outside of that there is Isabella Drive as well as the other one.

DR BOURKE: Do you think there is any need to run some awareness for the community to understand how these things work?

Mr Rattenbury: Undoubtedly we will need to do some work when this comes into effect. As you might have seen from the public information on this, the intent is for those signals to operate to sort of match the time of day to improve the flow. I cannot recall. Is the intent they be full time or part time? Full time but time just to sort of coincide to match the peak flows.

MR COE: Can you refresh our memories about what works are being planned there and, in fact, expand on it?

Mr Rattenbury: The intent is to add additional lanes. The signalisation is to enable frequent flow of the traffic. There will be addition of bus lanes to give bus priority through the intersection and also the addition of on-road cycling facilities in all directions except south bound on the Barton Highway because the addition of extra lanes, with the bridge there, will be taken up now purely by traffic lanes. There will now be a separate bridge constructed next to it for a cycle lane. There will still be cycling facilities on that but that will be a separated one because of the use of that bridge platform for all the lanes.

Mr COE: And is that additional bridge in the median?

Mr Rattenbury: No I think it is in the outside lane.

Mr McHugh: The new bridge is on the northern side of where the existing bridge is.

MR COE: On the Gungahlin side. Is that going to be for both directions?

Mr McHugh: Yes. It links with the existing shared path that runs alongside Gundaroo Drive and provides two-way.

MR COE: Would cyclists travelling north or north-west be using that path as well? Will they be encouraged to?

Mr McHugh: There will be an opportunity to connect with some work we did for the centenary trail which links to the shared path up through Gold Creek as well. There is a connection to that.

MR COE: But, in effect, trying to deter people from cycling on the Barton Highway north or north-west?

Mr McHugh: No, not at all.

Mr Rattenbury: There will be on-road facilities in all the other directions. It is just that one that is separate.

MR COE: When you said the other direction, sorry, I thought you meant three other directions as opposed to the seven other directions, if that makes sense.

Mr Rattenbury: I understand, yes.

DR BOURKE: Minister, the press release that went out with the tender said that bus priority measures will be implemented on the Gundaroo Drive and William Slim Drive approaches to the roundabout including dedicated bus lanes with a raised median island between them and the general traffic lanes. Is this the start of the duplication of Gundaroo Drive and William Slim Drive?

Mr Rattenbury: Yes. The William Slim Drive duplication has been designed and Gundaroo Drive design has also been done. So the designs are ready for those and now they are a matter of the budget process to seek the capital funding for those

works. But having said that, I think there is an issue of staging and timing. I think it would be a little unfair on Gungahlin residents to do Gundaroo Drive at the same time as we are doing the roundabout. I think there will be some sequencing of works there.

DR BOURKE: So Gundaroo Drive will be the next cab off the rank?

Mr Rattenbury: Yes.

MR COE: In full or in part?

Mr Rattenbury: You mean as in the full length? I think that we would probably see Gundaroo Drive staged for duplication works, again in terms of trying to manage the tension between getting it done as soon as possible but getting it done in a way that does not create too many problems for people accessing the road and moving around Gungahlin as freely as possible.

MR COE: And the work that has been done with regard to the planning for that road, has Gundaroo been fully planned as well as William Slim or—

Mr Rattenbury: Yes.

MR COE: Did that planning actually do an analysis about components, in effect, the prioritisation of the staging?

Mr McHugh: Yes it did. The project went through an economic evaluation of staged options and that has been prioritised and put forward to government to consider.

MR COE: Is that first priority from Ginninderra Drive and Mirrabai or is that further south?

Mr McHugh: The first priority is from Gungahlin Drive up to Mirrabai Drive, closest to the town centre.

MR COE: And with regard to Mirrabai to Horse Park—

Mr McHugh: That stage has not been designed for duplication. It is just up to Mirrabai.

MR COE: Because that already is separated.

Mr McHugh: That is.

MR COE: Yes, grade separated but single lanes.

Mr McHugh: Single lanes, that is correct.

MR COE: So that has not been planned?

Mr McHugh: Not at this stage, Mirrabai through to the Barton Highway.

THE CHAIR: As part of that work that is being done for that intersection, is there work being done on traffic plans in the suburbs as a result of traffic flow being affected because of the road works happening at the intersection particularly near Karuah Drive in Dickson?

Mr Peters: The roundabout works will be staged so that the impact on traffic will be managed. In effect, you will almost have the same number of lanes as what you have got now during most of the construction.

Mr McHugh: The two lanes at the moment will be retained for the majority of the construction period.

THE CHAIR: Mr Coe.

MR COE: Staying in the roads part of the portfolio, what progress has there been with regard to the slurry seal?

Mr Rattenbury: I cannot recall when we last spoke about this, Mr Coe, but the position now is that the slurry seal will be used for all shopping centre car parks. There will no longer be chip sealing in shopping centre car parks; I think we have had fairly clear feedback from the community on that one. It is better to spend the extra bit of money on those car park spaces. There is a trial of slurry seal underway on Bowen Drive at Kingston in one direction there. That has been in place for probably close to 12 months now; we will be coming up for an evaluation on that soon. And I think there was one other site.

Mr Cloos: I only know the car park development, but generally, where we have noise complaints from residents, when we have got dwellings at very close proximity to the road, we consider reducing the actual seal material size to reduce the noise. Part of the microsurfacing or the slurry sealing is what we are using to try and minimise the noise at those locations.

MR COE: In terms of the product or the technology, is it, in effect, chip sealing and then microsealing after that? Is it a two-step process or is it simply that the slurry seal contains 100 per cent of the additional surface?

Mr Cloos: I will invite my maintenance colleague to give you the details.

Mr Rattenbury: The answer to your question is yes. That is my recollection, anyway.

Mr Marshall: In answer to the question, it would be very rare to use microsurfacing slurry seal on its own. Generally speaking, it can be applied over an existing spray seal, existing surface or aged surface. Or in some circumstances the treatment might be a two-stage treatment.

MR COE: With regard to where the spray seal or chip seal has been used, especially on low traffic roads, especially suburban roads—cul-de-sacs, places, et cetera—has that proven to be effective? If it is dependent upon compacting by cars, by vehicles, are these sorts of streets generating enough traffic or enough movement to fully seal the roads?

Mr Marshall: You are talking here about chip seal, spray seal?

MR COE: Chip seal, yes.

Mr Marshall: Very effective in those circumstances, and very widely used in those circumstances.

MR COE: Yes, but is the surface not dependent upon it being compacted by traffic?

Mr Marshall: The application of the treatment in the first place involves compaction, heavy machinery. To some degree, vehicle traffic helps with that, but it is not a constraint on the use of that treatment in residential streets.

MR COE: We regularly get feedback from residents who say that their street is being sealed with chip seal and in effect the seal is just gathering on the side of the road because it does not seem to have been compressed or compacted to the same standard as a high traffic road. Is it intended that there is that excess? Is that in effect a failure or a sign of an incomplete job?

Mr Marshall: In the vast majority of cases, no, it is not. It is essentially impossible to get precisely the right amount of aggregate spread initially, so it is expected and anticipated that there will be some aggregate loss, some stone loss, in the very short term period of days and weeks after the initial treatment. There is a regime of sweeping that is planned and applied to all those sites to manage that excess aggregate. People's perceptions are often coloured by those very early periods. It is something that Roads ACT and the maintenance area are working on in terms of communication with people and the information about what to expect when the street is resealed. Certainly it is reasonable to expect that there will be some loose aggregate over the first days and weeks. There are measures in place to manage that.

MR COE: Where numerous layers of spray seal have been applied on road surfaces perhaps several inches higher than the gutter or the spoon drain, is there a limit to how many times you can apply more layers before you have to do a rebuild or a scraping of the surface?

Mr Marshall: In principle there is; however, spray sealing is the thinnest of the options available. Generally a spray seal is as thick as one layer of aggregate, which is typically between seven and 14 millimetres, so it is really quite a thin treatment. In practice, many reseals are possible in most circumstances. With asphalt overlay, what is generally known as hot mix, if you like, asphalt is a thicker surfacing, and there certainly are limits to how many times asphalt overlay can be used in circumstances where there are constraints like kerbs. Ultimately it may become necessary in those circumstances to excavate first before a resurfacing can be achieved—although there are other techniques in the way that the edges are treated as opposed to the more heavily trafficked lanes, so it is possible to manage that issue in many circumstances.

MR COE: Another concern that I am sure we all would have heard about is the anecdotal view that there is a heap of aggregate that might gather in the drains, especially soon after a sealing. Is that actually a reality, and is it a concern?

Mr Marshall: The protocols that the contractors use involve protecting the kerb inlets to the underground drainage network to prevent the ingress of aggregate into the underground network.

MR COE: Is it temporary sandbagging?

Mr Marshall: That is right, yes. They will stay in place until the vast bulk of any excess material is removed by sweeping. Then, once the surface has settled, the contractor comes back and those measures are removed.

MR COE: After the sealing is complete, if there is still remnant loose aggregate, does that pose any risk to the stormwater system?

Mr Marshall: There is an ongoing sweeping regime after the reseal program. There is also a regime of an inspection of the sites by the contractor and by the superintendent. With any sites that are continuing to generate loose material after you would normally expect them to have stabilised, they will be swept more regularly to prevent that material from migrating into the drainage network.

THE CHAIR: Dr Bourke.

DR BOURKE: Continuing with roads, minister, going to the Allara Street and Parkes Way connection, is this a recent afterthought to the Constitution Avenue concept? It does not seem to feature on the TAMS website or any available NCA online plans.

Mr Rattenbury: I have had that view expressed to me by a couple of constituents, including some quite recent examples. I think we can best say that it has been an oversight on the part of TAMS. The intent to make that connection has been there for some time. I think it is simply a case of error; we have apologised to a number of people for not showing it as clearly as it should have been.

DR BOURKE: Has the NCA approved the opening? If so, when?

Mr Marshall: Yes. The NCA provided works approval for the connection in October this year.

DR BOURKE: How much is the Allara Street connection aimed at bringing general traffic off Parkes Way into the city and how much is aimed at giving access to car parks under the Convention Centre block?

Mr Marshall: The connection from Parkes Way into Allara Street is driven by an accessibility issue in accessing car parks along Constitution Avenue which was generated by the provision of a new central median along Constitution Avenue which will restrict right turn movements. It was not envisaged to address the congestion on Parkes Way.

DR BOURKE: Were there alternatives to gain access to those car parks other than the Allara Street connection?

Mr Marshall: The alternatives are U-turn movements at signalised intersections which will be in place. However, given the sheer volume of traffic that will need to undertake the U-turns, without this additional access, those signalised intersections would not manage that volume of U-turning traffic, particularly the Allara Street and Constitution Avenue intersection.

DR BOURKE: Just continuing with more about Constitution Avenue, on the TAMS website update it says that the Vernon Circle car park construction—I am sure we have all noticed it as we have driven in—is just for initial earthworks and that cladding the median and verge trees whilst completing part of the Constitution Avenue and Vernon Circle link is not funded. Why have you gone about it in this way and what will linking those two roads, Vernon Circle and Constitution Avenue, achieve?

Mr Marshall: That decision was made some time ago, and it was made at a time when the future alignment of light rail and other things had not been decided. That section and the lack of clarity around its future use was one of the reasons why it was not included in the scope of work. However, including the landscape formation and the earthworks for the future connection was seen as timely as part of this main civil work so that any future road connections would be quite simple or the underground infrastructure and things will be in place. When the adjacent car parks and lights are developed in the future, that might be the time when that road connection might occur.

DR BOURKE: So the purpose of doing the works now is?

Mr Rattenbury: I think the belief is that there is efficiency in doing the preliminary works. This is a long-term view that Constitution Avenue will be connected to Vernon Circle. The efficiency of having the earthworks and the earthmoving machinery in place now means that, as Mr McHugh said, there will be a much easier connection at a later point in time.

DR BOURKE: When this connection happens, will traffic entering Vernon Circle from Constitution Avenue only be able to head for Commonwealth Avenue or will it be able to cross lanes to go round to Northbourne Avenue or other exits that the NCA has flagged off Vernon Circle?

Mr Marshall: At this stage it is likely that that facility will be closed at the same time. There will be a set of traffic lights installed on Vernon Circle to accommodate the traffic coming in and out of Constitution Avenue. That would also allow pedestrian access across to City Hill, but it is likely that that U-turn facility on the southern side of Vernon Circle would be removed, for the reasons that you have raised, with merging and other issues.

DR BOURKE: That future plan would then facilitate access to City Hill from Civic? It is not exactly the easiest place to get to at the moment.

Mr Marshall: Yes. That is one of the key benefits for the longer term.

DR BOURKE: Thank you.

MR COE: Just to clarify, if somebody is travelling west on Constitution Avenue and then turning left onto Vernon Circle, it is almost like a roundabout at present: you can go into that right lane and then turn right to go clockwise around City Hill. Are you saying that will be taken away?

Mr Marshall: That is one of the options. It has not been decided at this stage.

MR COE: If that is taken away, how would you go north from that Constitution Avenue and Vernon Circle intersection?

Mr Marshall: You would obviously need to either find another route or find another location to head north. It is only an option at this stage; it has not been decided upon.

MR COE: If it is, in effect, just a turn left—Parliament House bound only, say, in terms of direction—would that make the U-turn provision any more dangerous or unpalatable in that circumstance as opposed to the present circumstances? In actual fact, wouldn't the vehicles often be going slower if it is signalised?

Mr Rattenbury: I think they are all fair questions. It is not something that has been designed at this point in time. They are the sorts of questions we need to work through.

MR COE: Is the gradient leading up to Vernon Circle from the Constitution Avenue car parks where they are excavating at present going to be sufficient? Is it going to be at a reasonable enough level for a signalised intersection?

Mr McHugh: Yes. In relation to the gradients, obviously the earthworks that you are seeing out there now are adjusting those levels to make sure that they comply with the standard requirements.

DR BOURKE: Returning to Allara Street, minister, how will residents be able to exit their garages onto Allara Street, given both the foot and cycle traffic that is coming up the footpath and this new stream of traffic that is heading into the city off Parkes Way?

Mr Rattenbury: The intent is that, at this point in time, Allara Street will be an entry only. So it will not be an entry and exit. There will only be an entry off Parkes Way, just in terms of volume of traffic. There will be essentially a device to slow the traffic down as it enters into Allara Street. The design currently shows a raised platform, which will also enable the extension of the Civic cycle loop. Where it currently finishes, at Constitution Avenue, off Allara Street, those works will be continued on both sides of Allara Street and there will be a provision for cyclists and pedestrians to cross Allara Street where the footbridge is. That will be on that raised platform, to provide safety for those people.

DR BOURKE: So they are going to be crossing over Allara Street and the cars will be coming up from Parkes Way?

Mr Rattenbury: Correct. That is why there will be one of those raised crossings there for that purpose. Linked to that, the modelling that has been done by Roads ACT on the volume of traffic indicates that there will be no significant issues or significant

delays for residents exiting the car park out of the Forum building.

DR BOURKE: What if there are?

Mr Rattenbury: There can be delays on any road on any day of the week. The modelling does not show substantial—

DR BOURKE: What I am asking is: if you discover that the modelling is incorrect and there are significant delays, what do you do then? What are the options to address their concerns about being unable to get out of their car park between eight and nine in the morning?

Mr McHugh: There are measures that can be put in place to manage access into or out of driveways—keep clear zones and the like, to ensure that, physically, access can be made. Obviously, the ability to control the traffic signals at Allara Street and Constitution Avenue will give Roads ACT an ability to manage queuing in the street itself.

DR BOURKE: So you are going to signalise the exit off Parkes Way?

Mr Rattenbury: No. He meant at Allara Street and Constitution Avenue, to allow more time so that if the volume becomes such an issue we can clear more traffic.

DR BOURKE: Then you could have a bigger keep clear area?

Mr Rattenbury: Or less queuing.

Mr McHugh: The current plan is to put a keep clear in there, and another one at another driveway location to the back of Constitution Avenue.

DR BOURKE: How have the residents responded to those solutions?

Mr McHugh: It is fair to say they are not comfortable with the proposal, but they have been very accepting of the efforts that we are making to try and minimise the impact of the connection.

DR BOURKE: It was a surprise to them, too, wasn't it?

Mr Rattenbury: Certainly some residents found it a surprise, but Roads ACT has made a considerable effort to spend time. I know Mr McHugh and some of his colleagues have been to a significant number of meetings with the residents.

THE CHAIR: So you are saying that the entrance into Allara Street from Parkes Way is for people to be able to access the car park behind the pool?

Mr McHugh: No. Primarily, it is to access car parks on Constitution Avenue which you can currently turn right into. So when a new median goes in on Constitution Avenue, you will not be able to turn right into those car parks—for example, the Convention Centre car park and the Airservices building car park next to that. This will allow people to turn right out of Allara into Constitution and get into those car

parks.

THE CHAIR: Okay, so it is the Convention Centre car park and some other—

Mr McHugh: There are a few of them along there.

THE CHAIR: government car parks underground.

Mr McHugh: Yes, that is right.

MR COE: How many vehicle movements do you expect to turn from Parkes Way?

Mr McHugh: In the morning peak hour the current model is telling us about 360 vehicle movements.

MR COE: It will, I imagine, be quite attractive for people who are headed towards the city from, say, Belconnen, Weston Creek, Tuggeranong or Rivett, who are at the moment travelling on Parkes Way. Wouldn't it actually be, in effect, the simplest way to access pretty much all of the east of the city, rather than doing a cloverleaf or weaving through Edinburgh Avenue?

Mr McHugh: Yes, it will be another option. Whether it is more attractive or not will be determined by how traffic balances itself out to access the city. It is a link that was identified in the city plan documents released in 2013 as well as a range of other connections. So it is in line with future planning for connectivity into the city from various places.

MR COE: It is still only 360 in the morning?

Mr McHugh: That is the model number, yes.

MR WALL: I have a supplementary. Going back to the Constitution Avenue upgrades, minister, that project is a joint project, isn't it, between the ACT government and the commonwealth?

Mr Rattenbury: Yes, it is funded by the commonwealth as a gift to Canberra in the centenary. So the commonwealth has actually provided the funding and the ACT is delivering the project. But the NCA obviously has a significant role in the design, look and feel of it.

MR WALL: Is the ACT government contributing any funds towards the project?

Mr McHugh: No. We are funded from the federal government.

Mr Rattenbury: The \$42 million all came from the commonwealth.

MR WALL: How is the budget tracking for that project?

Mr McHugh: It is on track at the moment.

MR WALL: There were a substantial number of services that were dug up along various sections. What kinds of services have been encountered?

Mr McHugh: Mainly telecommunications, but obviously a road like Constitution Avenue also carries those trunk services—sewer, stormwater, water and gas as well. But the predominant impact was through telecommunications services.

MR WALL: To what extent have those services been relocated?

Mr McHugh: At this stage all services that conflicted with the road alignment have been relocated.

MR WALL: Who has borne the cost of relocating the services?

Mr McHugh: The project.

MR WALL: The project exclusively, or has it been—

Mr McHugh: Exclusively, yes. That is standard procedure.

MR WALL: What has been the cost to date of the relocation of those services?

Mr McHugh: In the vicinity of about \$9½ million.

MR COE: Are those utilities located all the way along Constitution Avenue or are they primarily between Coranderrk, or whatever the name of the street is at that point, through to Constitution?

Mr McHugh: They actually travel typically from the city through to Russell, the majority of them. We have relocated them between Anzac Parade and London Circuit, predominantly.

MR COE: Have the telecommunications companies contributed financially to any of those?

Mr McHugh: No.

MR WALL: Whilst we are on the topic of roads, a number of constituents have recently raised what they call difficult intersections to negotiate, particularly in my electorate, and have requested slip lanes. What is the normal process that TAMS or Roads ACT go through to assess whether upgrades to an intersection are required?

Mr Rattenbury: The primary mechanism is the traffic warrant system, which I think I have spoken about before, and I think most members are familiar with. Essentially, that is a system that seeks to record a range of factors, of which crash history is certainly one, but there are a number of other factors in there. That produces a ranking of intersections across the city. If a constituent had a concern about a particular intersection, TAMS would have a look at it. Sometimes that would involve people going out and having a look as well, but the traffic warrant system seeks to provide an objective analysis of where an intersection might sit in importance relative to other

intersections so that you can obviously allocate the resources to those most in need.

MR WALL: I have written to you regarding a number of them, minister, and some came through yesterday, so you may not have seen them yet. One that has been raised primarily by residents of Goodwin in Monash is exiting Cockcroft Avenue onto Isabella Drive. If you are coming along Isabella Drive there is a slip lane ultimately to turn into Cockcroft, whereas if you are trying to get out of that T-intersection there is a need to merge into the direct line of traffic. What consideration would the directorate be giving in that instance, given that there has been a large ballooning of aged residents that are still fairly mobile and still have the independence of having their drivers licence but sometimes do not necessarily have the confidence that a younger driver might have?

Mr Shoukrallah: Generally speaking, we look at all the traffic flows at an intersection. We also look at the safety records about a particular location. So if there are particular safety concerns or there are crashes with a certain type of movement, we know straightaway which corner of the intersection, if you like, we need to address—whether that requires a slip lane or not or what the benefits are of using a slip lane as a treatment of the issue.

Consideration is always given to the number of vehicles and also to the users at that particular location. So if you have aged persons and children crossing the road, they are taken into account, and also their ability manoeuvre at a particular location. So they are considered.

MR WALL: Whilst we are on that topic, I have a couple of other issues related to roads, line markings and the like. Minister, I wrote to you earlier in the year about the need for some timed sign parking down at Calwell, and I understand the intention is for that to be implemented. The other part of that was also the installation of some pedestrian crossings and updated line markings. In your response to me you noted that the pedestrian crossings were going to be assessed and the assessment would be completed in November. I was wondering what the result of those assessments was.

Mr Shoukrallah: I am not aware of the results. If we did make a promise that they would be available by the end of November, they would be in the pipeline. We will certainly be writing back to you with the results of the assessment. Generally speaking, it involves a set of surveys of pedestrian movements as well as the traffic volumes on that particular road. We need to reach a particular level of both manoeuvres before formalising—

MR WALL: Sorry, what manoeuvres?

Mr Shoukrallah: Both pedestrians and vehicles. They need to reach a certain extent before a formalised crossing is warranted.

MR WALL: What is that threshold?

Mr Shoukrallah: It is different for different locations. There are different numbers for a formalised crossing versus a school crossing. With school crossings, for example, you need at least 30 movements every half an hour. A formalised crossing is about 60

movements. There is danger in providing a facility where those numbers do not exist, simply because motorists get accustomed to the facility and to not finding people crossing the road, and there could be a danger in their not really paying as much attention as you want them to. So we need to make sure that the number of pedestrians that cross the road reaches that level before we actually—

MR WALL: The requests I made related to pedestrian crossings, ultimately, between traffic islands inside a car park. What would the thresholds be in that instance?

Mr Shoukrallah: I do not have the figure off the top of my head. It is also a different facility altogether if you are talking about inside a car park. It is not really a common facility, if you like, that we provide within car parks. But they have been provided in some situations where volumes are really high.

Mr Rattenbury: And the reason for that is because the traffic speeds are so low in the car park?

Mr Shoukrallah: That is correct.

THE CHAIR: Just on roads and traffic calming, there are some streets where people are not super keen on maybe the speed humps but there are the zebra lines before those big crossings that slow people down, those big lines across the road that you hear and feel, like on the Barton Highway. Are those an option for some streets in suburbs to slow people down before intersections? I have not seen any around, but I know people have asked me about them as an option for their streets.

Mr Shoukrallah: There are certainly a number of measures that can be used to slow people down. The reference you are making is to traverse line markings which are usually used at the approach to intersections on arterial roads. Generally, that is where they fit best; that is where they work best. You would not be wanting to put a speed hump on an arterial road, for example. Speed humps and speed cushions are used mostly in residential areas, much more than the traverse line markings that are more appropriate on arterial roads. And they are more appropriate at approaches to intersections.

While in many cases speeding in residential streets is really between the intersections, if you like—they are in the mid-block section where people pick up their speed—on arterial roads it is quite dangerous, especially at the approach to roundabouts, if they do not negotiate the roundabout at the slower speed. That is where the crash potential is quite high.

THE CHAIR: I just question whether it had been considered for some of those suburban streets, rather than putting in the speed humps to slow people down on longer stretches of road or blind corners. I am not a roads expert. I was just asking the question.

Mr Shoukrallah: Sure.

THE CHAIR: Mr Wall, are you done?

MR WALL: Yes, thank you.

THE CHAIR: I have a question regarding the maintenance and cleaning services.

Mr Rattenbury: Okay. Are we done with roads for the time being?

THE CHAIR: Does anyone have any other questions on roads?

MR COE: Yes, I do.

Mr Rattenbury: We are in your hands, Madam Chair.

THE CHAIR: I have a question on cleaning. We will switch over, do a switch.

Mr Rattenbury: That is all right. Give the roads fellows a break. Do you mean cleaning of shopping centres and the like?

THE CHAIR: On page 15 of the annual report it talks about horticultural maintenance and cleaning services that were brought back in house.

Mr Rattenbury: I will get Ms Flanery to come forward. Ready when you are.

THE CHAIR: On page 15 of the annual report, in the fifth paragraph on the left side, it talks about maintenance and cleaning services. It talks about horticultural maintenance and cleaning services for the inner north and Woden and Weston Creek being brought back in house. What does that mean? It also says that you have new urban development areas such as Crace, Bonner and Dunlop that have been added to the TAMS maintenance and cleaning services workload. I want to ask some questions about that as well. But mostly what does it mean when you say “brought it back in house”? Where were they before?

Ms Flanery: They were out of house, probably, is the very simple answer. Until this year, maintenance of shopping centres or cleaning and horticultural services was provided on a regional basis. Many of those services were provided by contractors who were contracted to look after a region. The inner north was managed by one external contractor, the Woden-Weston region was managed by another regional contractor, and the government managed different other areas. It was all a bit higgledy-piggledy and we changed the whole delivery approach. That change coincided with the cessation of those contracts. It was not anything to do with a contractor not providing a good service or anything like that; it was really just to streamline our business, to do it more efficiently and to take a more holistic approach.

THE CHAIR: The maintenance and cleaning services are for all the shopping centres as well as the urban ponds and grassed areas as developments are completed and then handed back over? Is that what that is about? That is what happened at Crace, Bonner and Dunlop?

Ms Flanery: Sorry, perhaps I am pre-empting your question.

THE CHAIR: No; go ahead.

Ms Flanery: When new suburbs are created, there is a period of consolidation; then they are essentially handed over to government to manage. Under previous arrangements, where we had different contractors, we had to adjust those contracts. We would go back to the contract and then negotiate a new price to manage those services. That was one of the reasons that we have taken a different approach in terms of assets and how we can best manage those assets rather than just doing it on a regional approach. When you look at the development around Canberra, there is development essentially happening in two main areas, and one of those areas was managed under contract. It became quite a difficult issue to manage in terms of always going back and changing contracts.

THE CHAIR: When they are handed back over to the government after the developments, for example at Crace, do they have to be handed back in a particular condition? Does TAMS go out and do an inspection and identify where all the dead trees are and get a price variation or anything?

Mr Rattenbury: Yes. There is a group in TAMS called asset acceptance. They are the ones who go out and make all those checks. That relates to a whole range of things: the landscaping, the street design, the guttering. All of those kinds of things are part of asset maintenance.

THE CHAIR: What happens when it is handed back over, though? If it is in a state where there might be some damage or if there are some trees missing or landscaping is not completed, what happens?

Mr Rattenbury: In that case TAMS does not accept the asset and the person who is responsible for developing it—it could be a private developer or whoever—is required to rectify those defects before TAMS accepts it. We obviously do not want to inherit an asset that is not up to scratch and then have to spend government money fixing it up.

THE CHAIR: I also had a question regarding Margaret Timpson Park and Emu Bank. It is about watering really and about the upkeep of those areas. Is that all right?

Mr Rattenbury: Yes.

THE CHAIR: I was reading through the report about the district parks, on page 15 again, that have the irrigation control systems in them. John Knight is one of the ones in Belconnen. I know that there is irrigation at Emu Bank and in Margaret Timpson Park, but it does not seem to be working. The grass does not seem to be growing very well; it is not beautiful and green and usable.

Ms Flanery: I can have a look at the specific issue there. I am not quite across why the grass might not be growing or if it is an irrigation problem or an establishment problem, but I could certainly have a look at that. It could be ducks. Ducks eat a lot of grass, actually.

THE CHAIR: I noticed it when the Belconnen Arts Centre had their spring kite festival and the grass was all dead. It was just coming out of winter and it looked as

though it had not been watered. It was not just the grass not being there; it looked as though it had not been watered. I asked people and they said that it was an irrigated park, but lots of people came up with different ideas about what was wrong with it. I thought I would ask the question, and maybe you guys can get back to us about what is going on with that particular spot, particularly along Emu Bank.

Ms Flanery: I am aware of the area. I can certainly find that out for you. I know we did have a problem with ducks there initially.

MR COE: And those district park upgrades have been delayed; is that correct? Does it say something in here about that or not?

Mr Rattenbury: I do not think so.

Ms Flanery: No.

Mr Rattenbury: Not that I can think of.

MR COE: Can I ask also about the shopping centre upgrades? Where are they up to and what is on the schedule?

Mr Rattenbury: Is there a particular one you want to ask about or just generally?

MR COE: It is just that I know that there are a number in the pipeline. I am just curious. I have written to you about them, minister, and you have written back to say that plans have been done for some of them and you were just waiting for approval or whatever your words were. I was just wondering what the forward plan is for that.

Mr Rattenbury: I guess the shopping centres are at different stages. We have had a number of completions in the past two years—Waramanga, Lyons, Red Hill, Farrer and Scullin. They have been completed. Then we have a range of sites that are currently in progress. I am happy to rattle off that list. It is Chapman and Charnwood. Griffith is getting a minor upgrade. Theodore, Banks and Cook are all due for minor upgrades, as are Kambah, the Mannheim Street shops and Rivett. We have a number of sites where forward designs have been completed; they then await budget funding to move them forward.

THE CHAIR: But the Charnwood one is not the main shopping centre. That is the one up on Tillyard Drive?

Mr Rattenbury: Yes. That is the local Charnwood shops, and it is a minor upgrade there as well.

DR BOURKE: Minister, what does a minor upgrade involve?

Mr Rattenbury: The difference between the minor and the major upgrades is that the major upgrades will be a significant upgrading of the public domain, including the surfaces and the like, and the car parking, whereas the minor upgrades are perhaps what might be more of a facelift: some landscaping, cleaning, those sorts of issues.

Ms Steward: What distinguishes between the two is that usually it is to do with improvements to some of the street furniture there, some repairs, perhaps improved lighting, public safety, better signage, replacement of some broken tiles and the like, and a little bit of landscaping. So it really is just something to make it a much more presentable shopping centre.

For a major one, it is usually in response to some characteristic change where the number of people visiting the shops has increased because there has been urban expansion or there has been urban consolidation. It might be driven by car parking needs. It could be stormwater issues. So there is a range of things that would determine when that would be appropriate.

DR BOURKE: So the work done at, say, Macquarie shops, where you have changed the traffic flow to one way, put in a whole bunch of bollards to reduce the risk of cars running into the shops, which had been happening regularly over a couple of years, that would be minor?

Mr Rattenbury: That would actually be happening through Roads ACT.

DR BOURKE: Right.

Mr Rattenbury: And that would be in their minor works program. Where a specific safety issue like that is identified, Roads will do that as a fairly quick project. I know it does work out somehow, but all these different people have different responsibilities.

DR BOURKE: It is one big government.

Mr Rattenbury: Ultimately I like to think so. We do our best.

MR WALL: Minister, in the list that you read out did I hear you mention that Banks was due for an upgrade?

Mr Rattenbury: Yes, in the minor upgrade category.

MR WALL: Okay. What is going to be done down at Banks then? Have you got the specifics of it?

Ms Steward: I do not have the specific detail of it.

MR WALL: Okay. Is the addition of any on-street parking or parking on the verge being considered as part of that upgrade?

Ms Steward: Can we take that on notice and then I can give you some exact information? I do not think that is the case, but I would like to find out to be sure.

MR WALL: Okay.

THE CHAIR: Mr Coe, do you have a substantive question?

MR COE: Yes. If we go to the bushfire operational plan, is that being done in

TAMS?

Mr Rattenbury: Yes, it is.

MR COE: Yes?

Mr Rattenbury: Well, TAMS certainly has responsibility. The strategic bushfire management plan is coordinated overall by the Emergency Services Agency, and out of that flows the annual bushfire operational plans. Certainly TAMS has a large part of the responsibility for the bushfire operational plan as both the land manager and as having the largest fire unit for bushfire fighting. So, yes, that is a long way of saying that the answer is mostly yes.

MR COE: Sure, yes. Are you able to give a rundown of where things are at, especially with this coming season?

Mr Rattenbury: Sure.

Mr Iglesias: This coming season or 2013-14?

MR COE: Sorry, this coming season.

Mr Iglesias: We are now into at least the seventh or eighth year of a running document, and what we feel we have is a comprehensive risk-based response to bushfire risk in the territory. So what we try and do, and we do this with a great degree of consultation with our colleagues in other directorates, is to form a picture of risk. That means that, where we believe that there is the most risk to the territory, we respond with a host of different activities. That could be prescribed burning, it could be access upgrades, it could be strategic grazing by domestic stock, for example. It could be upgrades of existing roads or even the construction of new roads. And this year's BOP has a mix of all of those in it.

Importantly, we also support a fleet of seasonal staff that come on hand in September and November who are specifically trained to deal with the risk of bushfire during the warmer months. I believe it is 60 seasonal—yes, 60. Fifteen. In total we have a fighting force of 150 but only 15 are seasonal. That is right.

MR COE: And the accountability indicators for the operational plan, in terms of the implemented activities identified under the plan—

Mr Rattenbury: Just remind me which page you are on, Mr Coe.

MR COE: Sorry, 67 of volume 1.

Mr Rattenbury: Thanks.

MR COE: That operational plan changes with the season? Or is that pretty much a document set in stone and the amounts of each get tweaked?

Mr Iglesias: No, it is a yearly document. So every season it will be looked at and

reviewed, and the activities that make up that yearly document are in response to a rolling process of risk assessment. Whilst there are similarities from year to year, there are also specific issues that are dealt with year on year.

Mr Rattenbury: And turning to your question on the performance indicators, I would focus on the fact that only 91 per cent—

MR COE: Yes, I am sorry. I am not saying that that we have neglected that 91 per cent. I wonder how effective a target that is, and really quantifying something—

Mr Rattenbury: Yes, as a performance—sorry.

MR COE: Is it quantifying something which is really hard to do so?

Mr Rattenbury: I think it is an odd performance measure. In the discussions I have with the directorate, some projects will be left aside because something might come up the list. The way the season unfolds, it might be that something that was not on the BOP actually becomes a more pressing issue, so those things will get lifted up the priority order. It is in that sense a dynamic document. And some other items may actually get left off the bottom, because, through the course of the nature of the season, they have become less pressing.

So, in a sense, work will have been done, but it might not have been the work in the BOP. When it comes to the performance measure, as it indicates here, only 91 per cent was done, but other works were done which filled up the program for the year, if that makes sense.

MR COE: Yes. I think the footnotes can probably do better justice to the directorate and to the team, by in effect saying—

Mr Rattenbury: Something like that?

MR COE: Yes.

Mr Rattenbury: All right. We will have a look at that performance indicator, because it is a fair point; it does not tell the full story.

MR COE: Yes, and whether it is actually required under the Emergencies Act, I am not sure as an indicator, but certainly some additional detail in there would be good.

Mr Rattenbury: Yes. It is good feedback.

MR COE: To alleviate any concerns that somebody might have of this nine per cent.

Mr Rattenbury: Yes.

MR COE: Is that nine per cent near their house?

Mr Rattenbury: Yes.

MR COE: Thank you.

THE CHAIR: Dr Bourke?

DR BOURKE: Thank you. I would like to talk about playgrounds, if we could, minister.

Mr Rattenbury: Yes, certainly. I will invite Ms Flanery back to the table.

DR BOURKE: Page 15. Can you tell me about the inspection regime for playgrounds? I note the report mentions that approximately 26,000 playground equipment assessments were carried out during the year, which, if you take the weekends off, is about 100 days, so that sounds pretty impressive.

Ms Flanery: It is quite amazing. We were all quite amazed when we worked it all out. We have 480-odd or 490 playgrounds. That is individual playgrounds. We have 1,600 individual play spaces. So you might go to a park in Kambah, for example, or a larger park, and it might have eight separate play spaces. All of those pieces of equipment have to be inspected under different regimes. So they are done. They are given a yearly inspection according to the Australian standard, monthly inspections, weekly inspections. Although it is not in my portfolio, something like the playground at the arboretum, which is extremely high use, might be given two inspections a day, looking at soft fall and all of those kinds of things.

We take a lot of pride in the inspection regime that we have. It does comply with the Australian standard, so it is not above and beyond.

DR BOURKE: So the number of inspections refers to items inspected, not just the playgrounds inspected?

Mr Rattenbury: Yes.

Ms Flanery: Yes.

DR BOURKE: Yes. Good. So what do you do with playground equipment that no longer meets Australian standards?

Ms Flanery: We try to mitigate the risk. If it can be fixed, it is fixed on the spot. If there is a bolt that is not tight enough it is fixed on the spot. Moving to the other end, if there is an item or piece of equipment that cannot be fixed within an available budget we will fence it off and see if we can get some repairs and look at the checks and balances—if we can repair it within that year or save it to another year.

DR BOURKE: People can get very attached to the playground equipment in their local parks, minister. Is there any facility for them to become involved in either maintenance or even pulling together to pass the hat around, run a raffle and buy some new stuff?

Mr Rattenbury: Yes, there should be. Certainly, that is something I am working with TAMS on—how we can improve our engagement with the community. I think it is

fair to say that there are a lot of people in the community who would like to do more. There is a level of community energy out there to achieve things. I am working with TAMS in a number of ways both to improve our ability to take that energy in but also to make sure that it is done in a safe and proper way.

For example, we have now a group called the Friends of Curtin Shops. They have come to us and they have said, “Look, we would like to do some things at Curtin that are a bit above and beyond the usual level of maintenance. How can we be involved?” We are working with them to deal with insurance matters, connect them with the right people in TAMS, so that they can do things that are consistent with the TAMS maintenance programs or that are not perhaps then undone by the TAMS maintenance person coming along and being unsure what has happened and perhaps undoing their work. It is a small example, but we are looking for opportunities to work with people in that way.

DR BOURKE: How would you manage those insurance issues, minister?

Ms Steward: It is the same with any community group that gets involved in any aspect of what we do. We have so many volunteers that assist us in terms of weeding and rabbits and all sorts of things. The same kind of diligence would apply if they were to be involved in any aspect of asset maintenance.

Precisely what that would be is something that we have got to explore. But at the same time, if, for example, in a school something needs a touch-up of paint, and there is a community group that wants to be involved in doing that—if there are some structures or play equipment that they would like to change the colours of and it is something that is easy to do—we are exploring all of this under the Healthy Parks Healthy People plan. That is going to be really the driving force for us planning into the next calendar year, just to see how we can get the community involved in active ways where they can really start to feel like they own and belong to the parks.

Mr Rattenbury: It would be fair to say, Dr Bourke, that this is not a forte of government. I think we have lived through an era in which government has, through concerns about insurance and the like, probably tended to put the barriers up a little more. That is the way the world has gone a little. I am certainly keen to work with TAMS to see if we can reverse that trend a little, because I think it is fair to say that there are lots of people in the community who are willing to do things. That can only add to the value of what government can do.

Parkcare is a great example. It is an established, ongoing example that really amplifies the efforts of our rangers. I think there is a lot more scope to pull the community in to work with government in that way.

DR BOURKE: And also some framework around community members so they know that what they are doing is actually the right thing to be doing, because—

Mr Rattenbury: Absolutely.

DR BOURKE: people may see something that should be done, or they think should be done, but it is actually something that should not be done at all.

Ms Steward: There are examples already where in fact it does happen through a community group. And the arboretum at Weston—

Ms Flanery: Featherstone.

Ms Steward: Featherstone Gardens; that is the kind of example where I would expect that you would get people actively engaged in managing that space. They have previously received grants for specific projects. Again, there is always somebody there who is a member of staff who supervises. There is always the orientation. There is always every care in terms of safety.

The concept of service clubs and community groups getting involved in projects which are more than just pulling out a few weeds, we want to explain that a little further, because it happens everywhere else. We do not see why we cannot do it and manage it safely here.

THE CHAIR: When you say that it happens everywhere else, do you mean that it happens through councils?

Ms Steward: Through councils, yes. Of course, as the minister said, the issue in terms of public liability is something that is a real concern for any jurisdiction. It is something that has to be managed really carefully. That is something that we would be looking at in terms of the extent of the risk that would be acceptable to this government, as other jurisdictions do. So we would be looking at what kind of activities they could do. I think Featherstone Gardens is one of those sorts of examples where that could occur.

THE CHAIR: When you volunteer for Clean Up Australia Day, you are covered by some sort of insurance. Why cannot that sort of thing be used—

Ms Steward: Yes.

THE CHAIR: for people who are volunteering? It seems fairly simple that you could just—

Ms Steward: Yes, that is correct. When a community group comes in and gets involved in a clean-up or something associated with whatever we are doing, then insurance does apply. If we are looking at the maintenance of playgrounds and play spaces, there are certain aspects in terms of equipment that requires a level of expertise in its maintenance. Of course, that would be done routinely through our contractors or the companies that produce or manufacture the equipment.

So we would not be contemplating somebody with screwdrivers and their drill bits coming down and fixing a swing. That is not the kind of maintenance that we would be looking at. It is really very much to do with, I suppose, the landscaping and the treatments. It could be spreading the bark. Whatever it happens to be, there would be some way to get people involved.

Mr Rattenbury: I think it is that space of value adding so that the community can see

that their contribution has made a significant difference. I was approached earlier this year by somebody who asked about flower beds at Macquarie shops. It was not on the TAMS program to do that, but I said to her that if the community wanted to do that, they could. They have now taken up that offer. TAMS has given them some guidance and assistance, but they have now undertaken that plan. I have not had a chance to go and have a look yet, but I hear that it is very nice.

DR BOURKE: I can tell you they are, minister. I was out there the other day having a look at them.

Mr Rattenbury: I am pleased to hear it.

DR BOURKE: Minister, TAMS works with 35 parkcare and landcare groups—

Mr Rattenbury: At least that many, yes.

DR BOURKE: across the territory. Can you tell us more about how you coordinate their work and the work of the watch groups?

Mr Rattenbury: Yes, in respect of the parkcare groups, the primary means we have is a parkcare coordinator. We have actually added a second one this term through some additional funding that I got. We have now had two parkcare coordinators. That has enabled us to add one or two extra groups. We had a group that were keen to establish on Black Mountain—a Friends of Black Mountain group. So through that extra capacity we have been able to do that.

Ms Steward was describing before how the ranger will go along and often bring some equipment or the pesticides. The ranger will provide both technical expertise and resources to those groups. Something I have been very keen to work with parks on is to ensure that what the volunteers are doing is consistent with the management plan.

Again, we do not want to sort of have the forces either pushing against each other or perhaps having some different priorities. We want to really make sure that the efforts are focused in the same direction. So the parkcare groups are also now contributing to the management plans for the reserves because often the groups have excellent expertise. They know their local area very, very well.

DR BOURKE: You are also undertaking an audit of the 19 skate parks across the territory, which I understand is due for completion. What have you found so far with that audit?

Mr Rattenbury: Sorry, I missed the start of the question.

DR BOURKE: There is an audit that you undertaking of the 19 skate parks. It is mentioned on page 15 of the annual report.

Mr Rattenbury: Yes.

DR BOURKE: It is due for completion. What have you found so far?

Mr Rattenbury: I will get Ms Flanery to speak to the audit in a second. One of the things we have had in the past year is that I was approached by a range of skaters who were having some issues, particularly at Woden—Ms Berry, you are nodding your head—and at Belconnen as well. One of the things we have done is identify a few—

THE CHAIR: I am not one of those skaters, just to clarify that.

Mr Rattenbury: Apologies if I insinuated such a thing.

THE CHAIR: In my dreams.

Mr Rattenbury: But what we have done is establish now a contact point with some people coming forward. Essentially, they are volunteering to be a contact point. We have got a group of people at TAMS now that, I guess, is a bit of a user group. We can actually consult on a range of issues.

Up until now we have not really had a consistent contact point because by their very nature skaters are a bit of an amorphous group. But now we have got some regular contacts that we are able to speak to as well about maintenance issues and other issues arising. Ms Flanery will respond on the audit.

Ms Flanery: Certainly, in terms of the audit, I will give a little bit of context. There is no Australian standard for the design of skate parks. We have a number of skate parks that have been designed. A couple of years ago there were some questions about what was safe. As there is no Australian standard to apply it to, we could not really answer that question comprehensively.

We are working with the skate group association that the minister has just referred to and we are auditing all our skate parks to look at gradients, material and how you get graffiti off. It is really gathering a lot of information. But then we are looking to develop it into an ACT standard for the design of skate parks.

That can be age dependent—what can young children do who are under five, six years old, then the next level up, and then to the more advanced areas. Skateboarding is an incredibly popular sport across the ACT. We are really just trying to develop our facilities to help support that growing trend of people that do it.

MR COE: When you talk about making skateboarding safe, doing a donut at 40 kilometres an hour on pretty small wheels is hardly going to be safe. Quite frankly, if they are watered down to be safe then they will go elsewhere. In the absence of an Australian standard, which I think may well be counterintuitive to what the demand is, how do you not end up being the fun police and scuttling what they are actually seeking?

Ms Flanery: It is a really good question, and that is why we are working very closely with the skateboarders, many of whom are champion skateboarders—not only state based but Australian and worldwide champions. So we are really trying to work it out. We can never make it safe; it is inherently risky, but making sure that there are no really sharp curves. I guess I am alluding to something in the Winter Olympics that many of the board riders were commenting on—that the sides were too steep to do

certain types of tricks and things like that. So when we talk about “safe”, it is making sure they can perform whatever acrobatic things they need to perform in a controlled way, or in a way that allows them to do that.

Mr Rattenbury: For example, Ms Flanery touched on before that the removal of graffiti has come up as an issue. The skaters have raised with us that if you do it in a certain way it makes the surface more slippery and does not coincide with what they are expecting from the surface. One of the things we are doing there is changing the way that graffiti gets removed so that it does not make it dangerous in the context of how they expect the surface to perform. That is the kind of safety issue that we are talking about as well.

Ms Flanery: There are other things we have done that have been quite basic but really important, in terms of turning lights on earlier so that there is more surveillance and the skateboard riders can ride for longer periods of time. It was something that we had not identified—that in winter it might get dark at 5 o’clock and we would have our lights set to come on at five, but they actually take half an hour to light up. So we have done things like that as part of the audit. It goes from basic to much more complex things that we want to assess.

DR BOURKE: What time do the lights switch off?

Ms Flanery: They go until quite late. I cannot answer that question specifically but I can find that out for you.

Mr Rattenbury: It is in the order of 10 pm, I think, for most of the sites. Again there is a tension there between the fact that particularly the teenage-type skaters prefer to be out later, but in some areas the skate parks are close to residences, and some of the nearby residents will complain about the light, the noise, music coming from the skate park. So depending on the location, there are some issues that we need to manage as well.

DR BOURKE: Residences have been built next to skate parks, such as in Belconnen.

Mr Rattenbury: Indeed, and that raises all sorts of issues about who comes first and what is allowed to keep going. It is the same with live music, of course, as members know.

MR WALL: I might go to domestic animals, if I can, while Ms Flanery is at the table. I know there have been some changes to the dangerous dog controls in the territory. Currently how many animals are held—or dogs primarily—under conditions in the ACT, or have conditions imposed on them?

Ms Flanery: As in how many dogs have been declared dangerous in the ACT?

MR WALL: Yes.

Ms Flanery: This year there were 10 dogs declared dangerous and four licences granted, so the other six dogs were surrendered and euthanised.

MR WALL: Were they surrendered under the owner's volition or were they willing to be surrendered?

Ms Flanery: I cannot give you that answer specifically, but some were surrendered by their owners. The majority were surrendered by their owners. So, of the six that were euthanised, the majority of those were surrendered by their owners.

MR WALL: How many were as a result of an order by you? Take it on notice if you need to.

Ms Flanery: Sorry, could you repeat that question?

MR WALL: How many were as a result of an order to be euthanised?

Ms Flanery: I will have to take that on notice.

MR WALL: What would be the instances in which an order would be made to euthanase a dog?

Ms Flanery: There are two parts to answering that question. First of all, the registrar has to take into consideration whether the dog is dangerous. So has it done some things that make it a dangerous dog? That can be declared by the courts or it can be declared by the registrar. That may be if it attacks somebody or if it attacks another animal. There is a range of situations that may make that dog dangerous.

The next part that the registrar has to take into consideration is if a person applies, once their dog has been declared dangerous, can that dog be released under conditions? Therefore a licence may or may not be granted. The registrar has a range of conditions that can be set, including enclosure sizes, muzzling the dog, not allowing dogs in open space areas unless they are on a leash and muzzle. If a person who has applied for a licence can meet those conditions a licence is often granted. There are situations, certainly, where they do not meet those conditions.

MR WALL: Going back to the first part of your answer, it can either be conditions imposed by the registrar or by the courts; is that correct?

Ms Flanery: Conditions must be imposed by the registrar. The courts do not have authority to impose conditions.

MR WALL: So the courts will refer an issue to the registrar for consideration?

Ms Flanery: Yes.

MR WALL: With the number of dogs that have been deemed dangerous, you said there were 10. Is that just for the reporting period or is that the number of—

Ms Flanery: Just for the reporting period.

MR WALL: How many licences are out there for animals—

Ms Flanery: I will have to take that on notice.

MR WALL: Going to a specific issue that constituents of mine have raised, relating to a dog attack that occurred in Grimshaw Street in Richardson, I believe you are familiar with this?

Ms Flanery: Yes.

MR WALL: I believe the lady that has contacted me was attacked by her neighbour's dog whilst it was on a leash.

Ms Flanery: Yes.

MR WALL: Sabbath, which is the name of this dog, attacked her in her front yard. I believe they have had a number of pieces of correspondence with the directorate or yourself directly, seeking some clarification as to why that dog was returned on licence, and what the conditions of that licence are.

Ms Flanery: Yes.

MR WALL: Have those conditions been given to the victim in writing?

Ms Flanery: They have not specifically been given to the person in writing, although the conditions were summarised initially, saying that these are likely to be the conditions that will be imposed. That included that the dog was to be kept in an enclosure inside the resident's house. There was a full fence inspection done by qualified rangers. So the perimeter of the owner's house was inspected. The enclosure was inspected. The dog has been to quite high levels of behaviour training, both before the attack and will continue after the attack. The owner has purchased a muzzle. The dog is to be muzzled at all times when in public spaces. It is not allowed in dog parks.

We do not normally give conditions to an affected party, but in this situation I took two, if not three, calls from the person personally. I spoke to that person for 48 to 49 minutes on the first occasion, and on the second occasion, on a Saturday, I spoke to the victim's husband for 32 minutes about why that dog was released. It was a very unfortunate circumstance, but the owner complied with all the conditions of the licence. If they can comply with that, the registrar gives them an opportunity to do that.

MR WALL: I understand that in some instances the victim would not necessarily be informed of those conditions. If you were, say, at a suburban park and an incident occurred with a dog, your chances of coming across that dog again as a victim are probably relatively slim. In this instance the victim was attacked in her own front yard. The dog resides at the neighbouring property. It is a battleaxe block situation, so not only is there a common boundary but the driveway runs the length of one boundary and the actual property is the second boundary. So whenever they are in their backyard they are looking directly at where this dog is kept.

For the victim it has been a very traumatic experience—not just personal injuries,

hospitalisation and surgery but time off work and the trauma. Their concern is that they are still not aware of what the conditions are under which this dog is being kept next door and whether or not, when they see the dog walking down the street, being free in the yard et cetera, it is in breach of or it is in accordance with those conditions. Wouldn't you think in that sort of circumstance it would be reasonable to allow, say, the victim to have access to or written confirmation of the conditions under which that dog is being kept on the neighbouring property?

Ms Flanery: There is certainly an intention to rewrite to the victim. There is also a question that there was a petition signed by many people in the street. Some of the petitioners have asked whether they could also know about the conditions of the release of the dog. I personally spoke to the owner of the dog and said, "This has been the request. I don't want you to feel as if you are a victim in this situation, but we are intending to release the conditions of the dog." There are two sides to that, in terms of whether everyone in that street is going to be watching and waiting for that owner to do something. The owner has two dogs. One of those dogs is declared dangerous. But we certainly have the intention to get back to the victim.

My understanding, when I spoke to the owner of the dog, is that they have also been trying to make contact, initially in the early stages, to ask for additional conditions. "Is there a time that you walk in the morning that you do not want us to be around?" So the owner of the dog and both the directorate and the registrar have really tried to work within the law that we have. It is an unfortunate situation.

MR WALL: The concern of the petitioners, I think, can easily be understood. It is a fairly safe street in Richardson. There are a large number of families that have young children. It is a low traffic street, so children are often playing out in the front yards or on the street—a bit of neighbourhood cricket and those sorts of things. This dog attack happened whilst the dog was being walked; it was on lead. I think it is natural for other families in that street to have concern about the safety of their children and their own personal safety if they are in their own front yards.

Ms Flanery: I would entirely agree with you, and we have done everything within our own power to make sure that happens. There has been a comprehensive fence inspection. Rangers have gone back to check if they are complying. So there is no intention in any way to not recognise the safety of this situation.

MR WALL: So your undertaking, Ms Flanery, was that you will be getting back in contact with the victim and her family to advise them what conditions that dog is being kept under?

Ms Flanery: Yes, to confirm the actual conditions and also to provide some kind of status on them.

MR WALL: And how will that confirmation be conveyed?

Ms Flanery: In written form.

MR WALL: In written form?

Ms Flanery: Yes.

MR WALL: Okay. And further to that, if they have concerns about the conditions that are being placed on that dog and want to have that decision reviewed, what is their opportunity to review or appeal those conditions?

Ms Flanery: They can appeal to ACAT, and that will be in the letter to them—or that is in the letter that is going to them.

MR COE: Is there a time frame for that appeal?

Ms Flanery: It is usually 28 days after the appeal is lodged, so not from the time the incident occurred.

MR COE: Yes, but the decision can be appealed. If the decision actually is not notified, is it not possible that the 28 days could have elapsed before they are actually notified, in terms of the victim of the attack rather than the owner?

Ms Flanery: Yes. We have been in contact with ACAT to discuss this specific situation, and that has been one of the delays in getting back to the people.

MR WALL: Okay. So although the time frame has expired—

Ms Flanery: No, the time frame has not expired.

MR WALL: Just to clarify, when does the time frame expire? Is it from when the conditions are imposed on an animal, anyone in the community has 28 days to appeal to ACAT or—

Ms Flanery: In this situation, it is a specific situation. They will have, as I understand, 28 days from the date on the letter that we go back to them to advise them that they can appeal the conditions—

MR WALL: Okay, from the date of the letter that—

Ms Flanery: That we send to them.

MR WALL: —that the directorate will be sending them, they will have a—

Ms Flanery: That we will also send to ACAT.

MR WALL: Okay. And when would that letter be expected to be delivered or posted out?

Ms Flanery: I anticipate it is done on Monday. It is in its very final stages of completion.

MR WALL: Will any consideration be given to the fact that, if it is posted on Monday and they have got 28 days to lodge an appeal, we have got the holiday season at the beginning of that 28-day period?

Ms Flanery: We will ensure that provisions are put in place. We will make ACAT aware of the situation.

MR WALL: Okay.

Mr Rattenbury: I trust that after this line of questioning you will convey to your constituents the considerable effort the department has put into this matter.

MR WALL: I will convey to my constituents what their rights are going to be following this inquiry, yes.

Mr Rattenbury: A little bit of credit where it is due, Mr Wall, would be most welcome.

MR WALL: We will wait for it to turn up, minister, and then we will give credit where it is due.

THE CHAIR: It sounds like there is a lot of work being done on that particular situation, but I did have a question regarding DAS.

Mr Rattenbury: Yes.

THE CHAIR: I wanted to ask about the volunteers out there—first how many there were out there and how they are recognised. But I also had a question about animals that are at DAS because there is a dispute with the owners. How long are they kept at DAS? Is there an indefinite period? Is there some sort of fostering arrangement for those dogs so that they are not just kept in a cage and are unhappy? So the first one is about volunteers and the second one is about animals that are part of a long-term ownership dispute.

Ms Flanery: My current understanding is we have around 70 to 80 volunteers. Some of them are more active than others. But on the whole we are incredibly lucky to have so many people that want to walk dogs in the morning and assist at DAS, so it is a fantastic program that we take a lot of pride in.

How they are recognised—funny you should ask—they just asked if they could get more visible T-shirts, because people love them. So they have a Domestic Animal Services T-shirt. They have a Christmas party, which was two weeks ago. There is a Domestic Animal Services newsletter which features different stories about the dog walkers and the volunteer program. So we really are trying to work with volunteers. It is nice; they bring forth ideas that we try to implement and vice versa.

The third question was?

THE CHAIR: The period of time, and sometimes it can be quite indefinite, where there is an ownership dispute or a relationship breakdown where animals are surrendered to DAS until the court proceedings happen, or however it works.

Ms Flanery: Yes. If there is a dispute over ownership or if there are court

proceedings, the time frame is variable depending on how long the court process goes.

THE CHAIR: Sure.

Ms Flanery: If a dog is dangerous or is a seized dog, that dog is kept in close confines. Just depending on work, health and safety issues and the behaviour of the dog, the dog may not be exercised by the volunteers. Maybe the kennel master is the only person that can deal with that dog. There is a small enclosure they can walk in. If the dog is really, really dangerous, it is not taken out and exercised.

THE CHAIR: No.

Ms Flanery: In terms of other dogs that may have some issues, there is a fantastic foster program that works. There is a lot of collaboration to ensure that the dogs are all exercised and well cared for.

THE CHAIR: I know it is difficult when there is a court dispute over, I suppose, guardianship or parental custody.

Mr Rattenbury: Custody.

THE CHAIR: Custody, yes.

Ms Flanery: You may have a specific example to bring forward but I am not aware of too many. One of the situations in which we have held a dog for a very long period of time—I possibly think it is too long—was over eight months. But there were significant court proceedings and really we were just put in quite a difficult position where we had to work with the police and the courts to try to make sure that this dog that was declared dangerous, or that is declared dangerous, was cared for. We take a lot of pride in our animal welfare issues. Surprisingly, this dog put on weight and responded incredibly well to living at DAS, so that was a good thing.

THE CHAIR: We are out of time now for now, so we will have a break for 15 minutes. When we come back we will move straight to public transport, ACTION, and the animal welfare authority.

Mr Rattenbury: Can I just clarify: are you right to let the Canberra Connect and the libraries teams go?

THE CHAIR: I will just check with the committee members.

MR BOURKE: I thought we would hear from the Office of Regulatory Services. I had some questions there.

Mr Rattenbury: That is all right. We will keep them.

THE CHAIR: Yes. Regulatory Services, public transport, ACTION, the animal welfare authority.

MR BOURKE: And I had another question about the mowing.

Mr Rattenbury: We will take that as well. That is fine. So I will just let Canberra Connect and the libraries people go and we will keep everybody else.

THE CHAIR: Yes. That is fine, thank you. We will adjourn for 15 minutes.

Sitting suspended from 4.02 to 4.21 pm.

THE CHAIR: Mr Rattenbury, did you have something?

Mr Rattenbury: Yes. Just to clarify from Mr Coe's earlier question, when he asked about the number of accounts the ACT government has, the actual number is just over 109,000. But those accounts are people who signed up for a range of things. That includes the digital newsletter, and it includes Fix My Street accounts as well as accounts for people paying bills. Essentially, you come in, you sign up through one account and you have access to all those services.

MR COE: At a centralised database?

Mr Rattenbury: Sorry?

MR COE: Is it a centralised database? Obviously you have different sorts of front ends depending on whether it is Fix My Street or whatever.

Mr Rattenbury: Yes.

MR COE: But it is in fact the same system.

Mr Rattenbury: Anything connected to Canberra Connect, is my understanding, as opposed to government wide. It is through that Canberra Connect channel.

THE CHAIR: Minister, I want to ask a question about the work that you are doing with charity organisations regarding the collection of recyclable material from charity bins. I understand that the code of practice means that the bins are placed in different areas from where they were previously.

Mr Rattenbury: Yes.

THE CHAIR: Have you had feedback since the bins have been placed in different areas? If you have something from other areas, it would be good to have that for the committee, but I want to ask in particular about Kippax, where the bins are placed at Kippax and how the collection of the items that are placed at the charity bins is going. And are those charity companies, as far as you know, doing what they are required to do under the code?

Mr Rattenbury: Just by way of background, the code has moved. We used to have 55 sites across the territory where charity bins were. That has been reduced to fourteen. They are at group centres now. That was based on the trial we did in Weston Creek, 18 months ago now; they came out of all the little shops like Holder and Waramanga and just went to Cooleman Court. That proved to be more effective in

terms of both passive surveillance and the capability of the rangers to focus their enforcement efforts into a fewer number of locations. That has now been rolled out right across the city. The feedback so far is that it is better, but there is still some work to do. We have put new requirements on the charities in terms of expectations for collecting material. There are now new large stickers on the bin which give the public better information on who to contact in the event that there is material dumped.

I was with some of the charities yesterday on this matter; we were discussing it. They are still doing some work in bedding down the new timetable and just getting their trucks to the right places at the right times. I think there is more room for improvement. Specifically on Kippax, did we have any feedback on that one, Ms Flanery?

Ms Flanery: I cannot think of anything specifically on Kippax. Different shopping centre owners and charity bin owners or operators have made some specific requests about people picking up and not dumping and things. We are still in the implementation phase of the program. What we are anticipating doing, and the charities are all very supportive of this, is bringing them together in March-April to review the code and see if it needs any changes—and also going out and resurveying some of the business owners to see how it has affected their businesses, if they are happy and what other changes we can make.

We have put a particular focus on compliance. Our rangers are out regularly inspecting the areas. There is some material still being dumped. But on the whole the charities have said they have noticed a significant improvement. They are trying to work out their pick-up collections; some of the charities are also working together to combine their collections to save money.

THE CHAIR: On some of the other things that regulatory services are working on, regarding the introduction of legislation in relation to cat and dog breeding—

Mr Rattenbury: Sorry, can you start again?

THE CHAIR: It is on page 19. It says that in 2014-15 one of the priorities is the introduction of legislation for the regulation of cat and dog breeding.

Mr Rattenbury: Yes, that is right.

THE CHAIR: Is that to minimise the effect of puppy farms?

Mr Rattenbury: That is the intent, certainly. One of the things we want to do is ensure that puppy farms—and kitten farms, for that matter—are not operating in the ACT. At the same time, we are working with breeders to make sure that we have got the right set of standards, essentially to create a level playing field so that the good breeders are not being undercut by the perhaps less scrupulous breeders. It is taking a bit of time. We had draft legislation ready, but I have asked that the breeders be consulted now that we have actually got draft legislation—that there be another round of consultation. It is an area that requires a degree of sensitivity. It is taking a bit longer, but it should mean that it is better quality when it does come forward as legislation.

THE CHAIR: Will that include improved regulation or more regulation around pet shops and how people sell pets in their shops?

Mr Rattenbury: Not at this stage. This legislation is not targeted at pet shops. Last year, we did the code for the sale of pets in shops. That code is already out there. That is much more targeted at the pet shops, around the sorts of conditions animals should be displayed in, for want of a better word, and all of those sorts of things—water requirements, feeding requirements, exercise and those sorts of matters. They were dealt with under the previous code.

THE CHAIR: Mr Coe?

MR COE: Can I go to buses, ACTION?

THE CHAIR: Yes. I know that Dr Bourke has questions for regulatory services but that is—

Mr Rattenbury: I am happy; that is fine.

THE CHAIR: We can switch it around.

MR COE: There will be a fair exchange on ACTION.

Mr Rattenbury: We will just get the ACTION team up.

MR COE: With regard to patronage, why is patronage not improving, as would be the hope?

Mr Rattenbury: Are you referring to reporting figures for 2013-14 or do you just have a general question?

MR COE: It is in general but also for 2013-14. Page 9 clearly shows that it is trending downwards, albeit slightly.

Mr Rattenbury: That is disappointing, but what we have seen since the introduction of network 14, which was designed to improve the performance of the network—you have probably heard me say this a few times now, but I have a number of hopes for network 14, including on-time running figures and the like—is that there are some positive trends in the passenger numbers for network 14. On-time running has improved as well. Do you want me to go to the details of it?

MR COE: Yes. It was not necessarily when you were the minister, but each network has been promised to be the next big thing and the silver bullet for ACTION. This—

Mr Rattenbury: I do not believe in silver bullets, but I do believe in continuous improvement.

MR COE: That is a bit harsh.

THE CHAIR: Audis maybe.

MR COE: Audis? That is right—18,000.

Mr Rattenbury: What is the collective noun for 18,000 Audis, Mr Coe? My office is speculating gridlock, but you might know.

MR COE: Luxury. If network 14 was meant to improve timeliness and efficiency et cetera, how is it that the timetables were either poorly constructed or had numerous issues with them such that the timings need to be tweaked in what is in effect a revised network 14 in the next few months?

Mr Rattenbury: As you know, there are 3,400 services a day, and just the complexity and the interconnectedness of that mean that it is a very complex task. The network planners did the best possible job in putting that network together, trying to both be realistic but also be ambitious in producing the best possible network. It is fair to say that since the rubber hit the road, so to speak, there have been some issues that have emerged. Some services are running ahead of schedule, so they were too generous; others are not able to keep to schedule as was hoped. The responsible thing to do is just to tweak the network. We will do it once only. I have indicated to ACTION a view that we should not just be adjusting the network all the time. We will need to reprint the network booklet and things like that. It will be a once only.

MR COE: When network 14 was originally flagged and you had the consultative draft, that was going to come out at a certain point in time. It then got scaled back, in that there were fewer changes made compared to the draft, and more time was put on in terms of when it was actually released. So there were fewer changes but a delay occurred. Now the timings are not working. These concerns for many of these routes were articulated at the time. I understand that even the TWU raised some of these concerns about the timings. At what point did you realise that the scheduling really was not a reality and that it had to be tweaked?

Mr Rattenbury: In terms of your observation about the fact that there was more delay, ACTION went out with a draft network. We got around 2½ thousand pieces of feedback from various people. We then took some more time because people asked for a range of changes. So it is not that there was less done; actually more work was done after that, based on the feedback that came in, and a range of adjustments were made. I make no apologies for that additional amount of time that went in, because we were actually taking on board people's feedback and real changes were made as a consequence of that feedback.

MR COE: But the feedback in effect was, "Don't make as many changes."

Mr Rattenbury: I do not know that that was necessarily the case. It was a range of things about, "Can you please add this bit on," or "Do this, do that." There was a range of feedback. Some of the changes were wound back or people came forward and said, "No, this route is really important for such-and-such a reason." All of the changes to the network have been made in good faith. There was an example particularly around north Lyneham where the change in the direction of the route meant that a group of older people would have particularly struggled to get to Dickson

shops, for example. You could say that was an oversight in the proposed change. Once we got that feedback, it made perfect sense to turn that back to the way it was, and I think it is okay to do it that way.

MR COE: When did you first become aware that a redoing of the timetables was required?

Mr Peters: I can put a little bit of context around that. Network 14 was intended to basically do the things that attract patronage to a public transport system, which is to increase the frequency of services and increase the directness of the services. So the design of the network was done on that basis, which meant necessarily that some of the routes did not run in the same way that they did, which meant that there are new timings on those routes. We make an estimate of those timings and that is fed into the HASTUS software and that spits out a network.

Obviously, we need to cost it to make sure that we can afford it within the budget envelope that we have. That was the one that went out to the community. It came back with all the feedback that the minister talked about. We then needed to go back into the scheduling software, redesign it with the changes, based on the community feedback, that were reasonable, get that cost budget and make sure that it all matched up.

It launched on 1 September and then you actually saw in reality whether the estimates of the timings that were put in for the runs were what eventuated. When it was introduced, roadworks on Constitution Avenue, which is where probably more than 50 per cent of our services run up and down at some point, affected the timings of the network. So there was a certain amount of working out how much that sort of temporary roadworks affected the timings and how much the actual overall timings were right. Around that first week in September, when the actual services were running, we got feedback as to whether the timings were right or not.

MR COE: If some of these routes are taking longer than expected, does that mean there will be fewer services as part of the revised timetable?

Mr Peters: As the minister said, Mr Coe, some of them are taking longer and some of them are taking shorter times. Again we are balancing that up, running through the scheduling software and seeing whether that still fits within our budget envelope.

DR BOURKE: Minister, what did you get right with this network 14 that has already been achieved?

Mr Rattenbury: I think we have had very good feedback from areas where particularly frequency has gone up. If I were to try and categorise the most positive feedback we have had, it has been people saying, "I've actually got more choices of buses now. I can leave work at different times. I am less dependent." At the positive end of the spectrum that is probably the main feedback we have had. In some areas people have also appreciated that the route is more direct. So those are two things we set out to achieve. In some places people have really noticed that and been positive about it.

Obviously, there has been some negative feedback as well. That has predominantly been where a route has been moved. So somebody is not as close to the bus stop as they used to be. The second predominant area of negative feedback would be where the routes now feed directly to the interchanges. So some of the longer routes that went all the way from a suburb to the city now are designed to go to an interchange and then to the city, for example.

DR BOURKE: That varies at particular times of the day, too, doesn't it?

Mr Rattenbury: It does, and that is probably the second primary area of negative feedback.

DR BOURKE: Apart from what we have already talked about, what other areas are you looking to improve or change?

Mr Rattenbury: With the way the network has been designed, aside from this tweaking process that we have discussed a little bit already, the network has now been built in such a way that we believe we have the architecture of the network right, in terms of the routes not needing to change, and it is simply now a matter of increasing the frequency—having the buses go more often, as resources become available or as we are able to find more efficiencies.

MR COE: How has the 202 been received? I have seen people at Gungahlin not get on the 200 and wait for the 202, which suggests that it is a popular service.

Mr Roncon: Yes, very well received. I think the highest number of passengers we have had on any given day has been about 190. That is five services that are running from just before 7.30 through to about 20 past eight. The least number—and we are starting to get into that realm now, I guess, with school holidays—appeared probably at around the 130 mark. So it has been pretty well received. As you have identified, people are actually changing their travel habits and looking to get onto something that is a bit more of an express service, and it can cater for that.

The benefit of that, of course, with people that are going directly from Gungahlin through to the city and using the 202, means it actually frees space up on the 200s and the other services that run down Flemington Road to be able to pick up passengers on the stops along Flemington Road and along Northbourne. A lot of the feedback we have had in previous networks has been around the fact that a bus would leave Marketplace at 8 o'clock, for instance, and by the time it got to Wizard Street, which is the first street after the Marketplace, it was full and it would go past and leave people stranded. That was some of the learnings that we had made from previous networks—some of the things that we tried to address in this particular network.

THE CHAIR: Just on some of the work that you have done during the year on the incentives to get more commuters onto the bus, the \$1 fare and the change to the age for gold card users, how do you find out whether people are still staying on the bus or not, because you have changed the network now, as well?

Mr Rattenbury: Certainly for the early bird trial, which ran for eight weeks through May and June this year, there was specific research done on that. In terms of using

MyWay data, it was about counting the number of passengers at different times of the day, broken down by 15-minute blocks. The other was some teams that did surveys on the ground as people got on and off buses, to collect some more qualitative data.

The outcome of that, overall, was that we did see an increase in people travelling before 7.30, for the \$1 fares, but we did not see a commensurate increase in people getting on board after 7.30. The idea was to try and shift some people back to create more capacity later in the real peak hour. That is something I have not taken a final decision on yet, and I think ACTION is still reflecting on the outcomes of that survey. But I think we shifted passengers rather than adding passengers. There was a cost to that, of course, in the reduced fare take. I guess there is a weigh-up to be made there of whether it was worth it. I do not have a definitive view on that yet, but you might take from the tone of my comments a bit of a sense that perhaps it was not worth the money that it cost us, because whilst it was great for some people, overall it cost us money.

MR COE: It was a good experiment, and certainly worthwhile.

Mr Rattenbury: Yes, and we persisted with it. It was originally going to be for a month but it went for two months, to really give people time to get used to it and to see if there was a flow-out. On balance, I am not sure that we would keep spending that money.

THE CHAIR: I know there was at least one person that started catching the bus as a result of that. So there is one, at least.

Mr Rattenbury: I have no doubt there were a few, but probably not—

THE CHAIR: Yes.

Mr Rattenbury: I do not want to be definitive but my instinct is probably not enough.

THE CHAIR: When do you think the review will be finalised?

Mr Rattenbury: Of the \$1 fares?

THE CHAIR: Yes.

Mr Rattenbury: The review is there. We are just about to sit down and have a detailed discussion about it.

Mr Roncon: Yes. The broader context of that question has been raised in these forums a few times over the years—about what ACTION is doing in terms of not only catering for the passengers that it does carry and its regulars but what it is going to do into the future about why people do not catch the bus. We have commenced some work around that. Obviously, there is the fleet replacement program that the government has committed to, to slowly phase out those old orange buses in favour of the newer ones. There is work around the park and ride and work around bike racks on buses. There is work around putting those bike and cycling facilities at bus stops, strategically placed so that people can ride to their bus stop and lock their bike up and

jump on a bus. All of those sorts of things are about trying to tap into a new market. As 2015 moves forward we will be looking at doing some more work like that.

One of the other initiatives that ACTION did, with the support of the minister, was a fare-free day for the Multicultural Festival last year. That was very popular and got a lot of people on buses that would not ordinarily catch the bus. So part of the work that we are proposing to do this year is a bit of a hybrid of not only that process but also utilising and trying to promote our park and rides as well as having Xpresso services into the Multicultural Festival and back across the day. Those sorts of things will cater for, and perhaps bring a level of patronage or a level of people that would not ordinarily catch the bus and allow them to bring families and experience ACTION for the first or second time.

THE CHAIR: Have you been able to see an increase in the number of people travelling on the bus who fell into that gold card age category? Is that data collected? Is that on MyWay?

Mr Roncon: Yes. People who have that gold card access are still able to tag on and tag off, which is the primary way that we capture data. For those that do not tag on, a transfer button is hit, so that we can actually record that particular passenger trip. That has proven to be quite successful.

In terms of some of the earlier discussion around the design of network 14—again we have raised it in a few of these forums over the years—previously it had been anecdotal and essentially networks had been overlays of previous networks. So if there was an error in the first iteration of it, it just continued to expand in subsequent iterations of that network. Network 14 was about going back to basics, using that MyWay data and being able to capture people’s travel habits and setting up a network that suits those. It probably has disengaged a few that do not have a service at their door, as they may have had, but it has really tried to address those travel habits and patterns of people, and to get the best bang for our buck.

THE CHAIR: As part of network 14, how have the connections into the parliamentary triangle been going?

Mr Roncon: Very well, Ms Berry. We have probably seen a significant increase in terms of tag-ons and tag-offs for people that are actually going into and out of the parliamentary zone. Part of the service and the review of network 14, particularly out of the Gungahlin area, was about what were previously the 50 series buses—the 51, for instance, that travelled from Gungahlin into the city and terminated. We are actually through-routing them. It actually becomes a 251 when it hits the Marketplace and travels all the way through to Kingston railway station. So we have been able to take advantage of, if I can use that term, the pay parking in the parliamentary zone and provide more through-service through there to give people a greater option. The figures are telling us that there has been a take-up of people travelling to and from the parliamentary zone.

DR BOURKE: On that issue of passenger information, I have a question about the introduction of the NXTBUS passenger information service, especially now that data has been released live online. Has that been well received? Is it changing behaviour?

What new app developments can we look forward to that will tell us what we need to know to catch a bus?

Mr Rattenbury: Certainly, NXTBUS has been taken up quite well. We are getting around 1,300 requests for information a day through the SMS service and online.

Mr Roncon: It is probably even greater online but certainly the SMS service has been very popular.

Mr Rattenbury: Yes, and as you have touched on, Dr Bourke, we are releasing the stream of data now so that people will make apps out of it. We had, I think, in the order of 30 organisations express interest in receiving that information. Yes, I am hopeful that we will see something creative come out of that and that we will see innovation in that space through the provision of the data and clever people doing clever things with it.

DR BOURKE: Can you draw any lessons from interstate or international jurisdictions where this data has become available, where it is being used, and whether it has had an effect upon patronage?

Mr Roncon: Yes, certainly. I think one of the smart things our government did in this instance was not to try and develop an app itself but actually give it out to the market and allow people, who probably we would have engaged for large sums of money anyway, to do that—provide them the data and allow them to do it. There have been a couple of apps that have been produced and worked pretty well. With the launch of the data process—it can go out now to anybody that might have an interest in developing that—I think we will get something really good.

They are probably some of the learnings, I guess. Some jurisdictions have gone about that themselves and tried to develop apps themselves as a business entity with a varying degree of success. But certainly, as the minister mentioned, NXTBUS has been a huge success in terms of giving people—I mean, in many ways even if your bus is late or even early, you know. You can be sitting in your lounge room actually locking it in in real-time and knowing that it is five minutes away. You can plan to leave according to that. It has been very well received and will continue to be I think as it rolls out.

MR COE: I have a supplementary on that. I think there might be some doubt about when real-time information is used as opposed to timetable information such as, for instance, the interchange display boards. Some regular users seem to think that it is actually more, especially for departures, timetable data as opposed to real-time data. Is that correct?

Mr Peters: I will start this. James may need to come in. If there is a service that is cancelled or dropped or if something is wrong with the equipment—not that that happens very often but if it does happen—the default position is to go back to the timetable. For instance, if the bus is still running around but for some reason the connection is not working into the real-time feed, the default position is the timetable. However, we were looking at—you might need to correct me here—sending a message to some of those information screens or via perhaps an app in future that says

that this is timetable information, not real-time.

MR COE: Yes, especially for services originating at the interchange, the real-time information is going to be marginal. It is not like it is feeding in the check points prior to it originating. It is tricky, I imagine, to do but if there is a service originating it would be handy to know that is going to be running five or 10 minutes late. But is the system capable of doing that now or are all those originating services actually just going off timetable?

Mr Roncon: As it currently stands at the moment, the information is live. We have been completely live, 100 per cent live. What we have been doing over the last month or so is almost an adaption of exactly what you are talking about. We have been trialling a mixture of timetable information and live information for the very reason of being able to say to people on those ports, "Sorry, your service has been cancelled." That actually gets input and fed through the system manually to be updated on those boards. If anybody has mentioned to you that they have actually been seeing timetable information, that might be why. It is because we have been trying to manage the system, I suppose, to improve its use.

MR COE: Say, for instance, there is a service originating at the city interchange. There is a bus coming from either the layover facility in City West or from, say, the Belconnen interchange. If that is running five minutes behind the start time, how does the system know if there are not any check points for the bus coming to start that route? What is the way point for a bus that is not going on a scheduled route—a bus going down Barry Drive, not making any stops, not in service?

Mr Peters: We might take that one on notice, other than to say that the information that you get on display is that the 202 is coming in, for example, five minutes.

MR COE: Yes, but the 202—

Mr Peters: So it will actually—

MR COE: I guess that 202 in Gungahlin would be a good example.

Mr Peters: The system knows where that bus is at any particular point in time. If it is caught at the layover, for instance, and it has not moved, the algorithm in the real-time information says that it is stuck there and that it is not going to get to Gungahlin for another five minutes rather than two minutes. But if you were a passenger there looking at the display screen, you would see, "202, five minutes," rather than "202, one minute".

Mr Roncon: The driver logs into the real-time console and once he has picked that particular shift, those devices are communicating with one another.

MR COE: Even if they are not going on a scheduled route, even if they are dead running, in effect?

Mr Roncon: If they are dead running they should have their "not in service" sign up so that it will not be recognising it as a run.

MR COE: Yes, true. But say there is a natural gas bus heading up the GDE to start the 202 and it is running 10 minutes late. How does the system know it is running 10 minutes late if there are no stops on the GDE or the parkway?

Mr Peters: The system knows that that bus is doing that shift. It knows that that bus running down the GDE is the one that has to get to Gungahlin to start. The system actually knows that it is still on the GDE. It works out that it has got five minutes to get to Gungahlin if it is at the top end of the GDE.

MR COE: Even though it is not travelling on a route, it knows that?

Mr Rattenbury: It calculates. Through the GPS tracking it is able to make a calculation.

MR COE: It is making a calculation based on the shortest route. In effect, it is using a Google Maps-type technology to work out the fastest route as opposed to actually going to a way point on a scheduled route.

Mr Peters: What you pay for with the real-time stuff is the smarts that calculate.

MR COE: I think that would be reassuring for a lot of people to hear. Is that the same for the onboard information or is that all scheduled? Is that all timetabled?

Mr Peters: It is all fed off the real-time data feed.

MR COE: Right, because—

Mr Peters: Phones onboard, displays—

MR COE: Something that has been put to me by someone as a theory is that in actual fact it knows for each stop how many minutes it is meant to be until the end of the shift. As it is going past that stop, it is simply putting in the scheduled time remaining at its current place as opposed to actually calculating the predicted time, if that makes sense.

Mr Peters: We can confirm that. My understanding is that the algorithm actually works out—via the speed, via the GPS pick up points, via how fast it is going—how long it is going to take. That is how it calculates whether it is five minutes, 10 minutes.

MR COE: Yes. I guess an example would be if you are onboard the bus and the time display is ticking over faster than real-time and whether that is just going off scheduled information or projection.

Mr Rattenbury: For example, if you get suddenly stopped in a traffic jam, is the time adjusting to match that?

MR COE: Exactly right, yes. I think there is doubt. That is not to say that it is not doing that but some people have queried that. So it would be handy to know if the system is at that stage.

Mr Rattenbury: We will check that and get a written answer to you so that you have got something definitive—

MR COE: Yes, that is great.

Mr Rattenbury: that you can circulate to people.

MR COE: That would be good, thank you.

DR BOURKE: We have talked a little about real running time before. Will that improve with the new bus depot? Given that ACTION is within a couple of percentage points of the national average for dead runnings, is it essentially part of the overhead of running the service?

Mr Rattenbury: What I can tell you is that dead running has improved under network 14. Dead running has reduced to 18.3 per cent compared to 18.96 per cent under network 12. That is one improvement that has already been made just through timetabling and networking improvement in the new network. That is a start.

Clearly, the intent is to have an additional depot and that would assist in reducing dead running. Woden has obviously been the intent there for some time. As members know, Woden was held up initially through issues around gas tanks in the ground. Remediation of the site was required. Now there is some more detailed work to get a really clear understanding of what are the best places in Canberra to have the depots in light of future changes to public transport networks.

DR BOURKE: Are you reconsidering utilising the Woden site?

Mr Rattenbury: I think reaffirming—a bit of a check to make sure we were coming up with the right answers.

DR BOURKE: When do you think that decision will be made, minister?

Mr Rattenbury: I am just being told it will be reached early in the New Year.

DR BOURKE: A decision will be made and then something will happen after that?

Mr Rattenbury: Yes.

DR BOURKE: What sort of time frame are we talking about—a couple of years?

Mr Rattenbury: I do not know at this stage. I need to get the advice from the directorate. Then we have the budget cabinet process and funding issues will be for consideration there as well.

DR BOURKE: Thank you.

Mr Rattenbury: Clearly there are opportunities to improve dead running just in terms of efficiency and reduced costs, as was canvassed in Monday's paper.

MR COE: What is it being used for now? There are buses there. Are they just retired buses? What is that?

Mr Peters: It is used for two things: one is that it is the transition place for buses. As new buses come in, they are stored there or if old buses go out, they are stored there. It also houses the special needs transport fleet and community transport fleet, which are one and the same thing, and the staff that run that fleet.

THE CHAIR: Supplementary, Mr Wall.

MR WALL: While we are on dead running, minister, in an ideal world, if every bus had a passenger on it, what would be the dead running of the fleet between depots and interchanges? What percentage of bus time—

Mr Rattenbury: If I understand the question, presumably none. If there was a passenger on every bus, there would be no dead running.

MR WALL: Okay, but the explanation that was given of dead running in the media at the beginning of the week was that a portion of that percentage is made from the bus driver logging in at a depot and driving to the interchange for the commencement of a run. That contributes to the dead running.

Mr Rattenbury: Yes; that is my understanding. That is the definition of dead running.

MR WALL: But if a bus runs from Tuggeranong to the Woden interchange and has no passengers on it on a scheduled route, that also contributes to dead running. If all the scheduled routes had passengers—

Mr Peters: Sorry, Mr Wall. Dead running refers to the time when the bus is going to where it is going to start its run or going home again.

Mr Rattenbury: So the answer to your question is—

MR WALL: So from the end of a shift to the depot or commencement of a shift to the starting point is not included in that 18.3 per cent.

Mr Rattenbury: That is that 18-odd per cent.

MR WALL: That is the 18.3?

Mr Rattenbury: So the answer to your question is that if a bus ran from Tuggeranong to Woden with nobody in it on a scheduled service, that would not be considered dead running, because it is a scheduled service. It is the bits that passengers cannot get on that are considered to be the dead running.

MR WALL: What portion of the running time of the bus is on a scheduled route but without a passenger?

Mr Peters: Probably the simplest way to answer that question is to say that the

national benchmark is that probably around 17½ per cent of scheduled time is dead running.

Mr Rattenbury: That is not the question he asked.

MR COE: No passengers on board in effect.

MR WALL: No passengers on board.

Mr Rattenbury: Do we have a measure of how many services run with no passengers on them?

MR WALL: Yes.

Mr Peters: We can measure it, but I do not have that information to hand.

MR WALL: Could you take that on notice?

Mr Peters: Yes.

DR BOURKE: And those are just services—

Mr Rattenbury: Some of those routes just got dropped out of network 12 and, again, that has been one of the criticisms.

MR COE: MyWay data can feed into that.

Mr Rattenbury: Particularly some of the late night services. Some of them literally averaged zero passengers over an extended period of time. Those services were dropped out of network 14. I have had a few letters from people. It seems that more people have written to me saying that they are disappointed about the loss of those services than actually caught those services. But that is the way of the world.

MR WALL: That is the nature of the beast.

Mr Rattenbury: It does seem an odd thing to say, but ACTION brought me the data in canvassing whether those services would be dropped. Literally the average was zero, one or two passengers over a period of several months.

MR COE: The ultimate in vocal minorities.

MR WALL: Just going to the operating costs of ACTION, what impact has the repeal of the carbon tax had on ACTION's bottom line?

Mr Rattenbury: James, do you have those figures?

Mr Roncon: Not to hand, no.

Mr Rattenbury: Take it on notice if you need to.

MR WALL: Yes. My understanding is that it has been reported as somewhere in the vicinity of half a million dollars.

Mr Roncon: I would not want to hazard a guess. I would like to provide you with a—

MR WALL: Of any savings that may have been derived from the repeal of the carbon tax, what is being done with those additional funds? Are they being seen as an efficiency or are they being reinvested back into the fleet? Is that something you are able to provide any detail on?

Mr Roncon: Generally speaking, with any savings that we were able to make, whether it be because of reduction in fuel prices or something else, I guess it is swings and roundabouts in terms of what we do. ACTION has its operating budget, which it needs to live within. Yes, sometimes you have windfalls and sometimes you do not. Essentially we try and manage within our budget. There has been no specific purpose to which those funds have been allocated.

MR WALL: You mentioned the ebb and flow of fuel prices, that they go up and down. How is ACTION procuring the fuel for the fleet? Is it done on a day-to-day or week-to-week basis? Has ACTION got the ability to hedge against a certain price?

Mr Roncon: ACTION operates under the New South Wales government procurement process and piggybacks off the back of that fuel contract. The current contract is for about three years. I think we are in about the last stanza of that, so we are in the position where we need to go back out to the market over the coming year.

MR WALL: That then secures you a fixed fuel price per litre over that period of the contract, does it?

Mr Roncon: It secures you a contractor—BP, for instance. If the prices go up, we obviously pay for that; if the price goes down, we have a bit of a windfall. Often when we think that it is not appropriate or not enough in terms of what is happening in the market, we will get on to BP and negotiate and discuss with them. We are not locked into a concrete price that cannot be changed, but again there are those ebbs and flows.

MR COE: In terms of getting back to us, I asked a question on notice in 2011 about that \$500,000 figure for the carbon tax, for reference.

Mr Roncon: Thanks.

THE CHAIR: Did you have a substantive question or was that your substantive?

MR WALL: That was tied in with that figure.

THE CHAIR: I want to go to bike racks on the buses. I know that there are quite a few buses that now have bike racks on them. Apart from actually seeing the bikes on them being used, do you measure it somehow?

Mr Peters: The answer to that is no, but just recently we have had approaches from a number of organisations that might want to help us measure that. We do not have the

technological smarts to be able to know whether there is something on the rack or not, so it is very much a physical survey process. That would be—

THE CHAIR: A clicker. I am sure the bus driver would love a clicker.

Mr Peters: That would be the—

Mr Rattenbury: Imagine trying to get that through the EBA.

THE CHAIR: I am not suggesting that.

Mr Peters: That would be the way. We are certainly interested in seeing that, but anecdotally they do appear to be pretty well used.

THE CHAIR: With the park and rides and the bike and rides, is that the same? Are you measuring that or is it something where you are looking at finding out how you can measure it better?

Mr Peters: There is a survey underway to look at exactly that, being led, and I might stand corrected here, by the Environment and Planning Directorate. It will help us work out planning for future ones. Whilst the bike cage access is via MyWay, and we can probably get stats on use via that, the physical survey of the rails and stuff in front really needs someone to go out and survey them.

THE CHAIR: On the park and rides, I know that at Kippax some of the people who use the park and ride facility do not park in the park and ride area; they park in another area of the car park closer to the shops and closer to the bus. Have you heard anything from people about that? And how is ACTION speaking to the other parts of municipal services around parking operations to make sure that these people are parking where they are supposed to be and not taking up car parks for shoppers.

Mr Peters: I look after roads as well. Rifaat works in that parking space. On the actual regulatory side of it, the people enforcing that sit in JACS with the Office of Regulatory Services. If we get a complaint through or an issue raised with us, we will go and investigate it. There are certainly coordination mechanisms within my division, with James and Tony, to look at issues, work our way through them and come up with the right answer for the community.

THE CHAIR: As part of the park and ride, have you considered having water refill stations where the bikes are stored?

Mr Rattenbury: No, I have not, actually. That is the first time someone has raised it. We are in the process of installing drinking fountains across the city at the moment. We have got a program to roll those out. They have been focused on either sports fields or other high activity places. They tend to go more near the bike paths around the lakes and places like that. As you might recall, we had a bit of a voting process, and they are the sorts of places people said they wanted them. It has not come up as a specific suggestion.

THE CHAIR: It might not be a viable one.

Mr Rattenbury: Yes.

THE CHAIR: Mr Coe?

MR COE: Minister, there was an incident which occurred on 4 November whereby a school student might have sat on a syringe.

Mr Rattenbury: Yes; I am aware of the incident.

MR COE: Are you able to give a rundown of how ACTION responded?

Mr Rattenbury: The student actually got off the bus. The incident was then reported to the driver by students who remained on the bus. The actual student who possibly suffered the needle stick injury did not report the incident. Then the parent was contacted and the student was taken to hospital for medical checking. I do not know the status of those medical checks. I am not sure if I would be able to give out that information anyway even if I did have it. And then the bus will have been dealt with under ACTION's usual protocols for removing an instrument like that. I cannot think what those are, whether it involves getting a new bus or simply removing that item.

Mr Roncon: Once an incident like that is notified, the bus is quarantined and parked. A new bus comes into service to replace that and carry on with whatever the next service would be. Then there would be the appropriate kitting out. All our transport officers and drivers have access to gloves and tongs and those sorts of things to be able to check through the bus. The full process is to check the bus for not only the syringe that was found but anything else that might be on there as well.

Mr Rattenbury: I just discovered why my alarm did not go off this morning. It was on the pm function.

MR COE: There you go.

Mr Rattenbury: There is my excuse for sleeping in today.

MR WALL: So you have come clean: you had a sleep-in this morning, minister.

MR COE: It begs the question: why are you getting up at 5.10 am, but that is—

Mr Rattenbury: That is a whole other story. I had four hours of TAMS hearings this afternoon; I was geeking.

DR BOURKE: I am surprised you were asleep at that time, minister.

Mr Rattenbury: Exactly.

MR COE: Cramming in the morning—like uni days. So if there were a blood-borne disease that can take time to manifest in someone, is there a register or is there a process by way of the government, if not ACTION, or Health or some agency in effect taking over the situation and managing the communication?

Mr Rattenbury: I will take that on notice, Mr Coe. You will recall that we had an incident a couple of years ago where we had somebody bleed on a bus, and that forced ACTION to really take a closer look at those kinds of issues, and the protocols were updated. I think the organisation is much better prepared to deal with those incidents now in terms of the immediate issue, and it is some of the stuff that Mr Roncon just spoke to.

MR COE: Yes.

Mr Rattenbury: The longer term issues, I am not sure; I will have to take that on notice. It may be that this has also been followed up through the Education and Training Directorate and/or the Health Directorate, so we will do some checking on that. But I think you are right to allude to the fact that it will be out of ACTION's hands now and it would be somewhere else in government, I would anticipate.

MR COE: Yes.

Mr Rattenbury: But I will have a look and get more information on that.

MR COE: Yes. Where there is, in effect, a handing over of the case, until there can be a high degree of confidence that the issue is resolved.

Mr Rattenbury: Yes. You are right, because there can be some period of time until there can be clarity on possible infection or not.

THE CHAIR: Dr Bourke.

DR BOURKE: Thank you, chair. I just want to come back to land management and mowing, if I can, minister.

Mr Rattenbury: Yes, of course, we will just go the mowing team. Not the actual mowing team, but—

MR COE: I have got one more question for ACTION, but that is all right.

THE CHAIR: That is fine.

DR BOURKE: Minister, I want to know how accurate the online schedules of the mowing program are. Are they regularly updated or are they just more indicative of what you are planning to do than actually what is going to happen?

Ms Steward: The mowing schedules are planned in advance. We make sure that our website is up to date. From time to time we have had to change the schedule, and it is usually because of wet weather, and it might be a case of it being too soggy to get the equipment in. There could be a range of reasons. If for some reason there is some equipment failure or some such like that, again we will aim to update the schedules so that people can know where there is any sort of change to their local area. Fleur, do you want to say anything?

Ms Flanery: I just missed the exact question you asked, sorry. I was getting up as—

DR BOURKE: Sorry. It was in regard to the mowing program, the online schedules. Are they regularly updated or more indicative of what you are hoping you can do rather than what you are actually going to do?

Ms Flanery: I think Ms Steward has answered that. There are times when the scheduling may not be 100 per cent accurate, but we do revise it every week.

DR BOURKE: So it is weekly?

Ms Steward: Yes.

Ms Flanery: It is quite a dynamic program.

DR BOURKE: Good.

MR COE: You want nxtmow to go with NXTBUS.

DR BOURKE: We will get there.

Ms Flanery: I think NXTBUS is easier.

Mr Rattenbury: Given the interest in grass mowing, it would be very popular.

DR BOURKE: So is there a notion of how much area of the territory is actually mown as a result of this program?

Mr Rattenbury: What I can tell you is that we have a fleet of 80 mowing vehicles, plus additional contract mowers on the arterial roads. In the last month or two they were pushed up to six days a week to catch up with some of the backlog. Just in terms of that broader interest in what has been happening, the actual area that has been mown across the city accounted for 4,542 hectares of urban open space, which includes 420 hectares of sportsground mowing, which is probably in a slightly different category, as it gets a different treatment, but that is the scale of the job.

DR BOURKE: So 4,542 hectares?

Mr Rattenbury: The other thing is that that is a constantly increasing number. Public open space increased by 149 hectares over the 2012-13 to 2013-14 year. That comes from, primarily, growth in Molonglo and Gungahlin, so essentially new suburbs. We were talking earlier about areas being handed over. Part of that handover includes new areas of urban open space that TAMS then has to take responsibility for mowing.

DR BOURKE: What strategies are you exploring for grass management other than mowing, such as burning off?

Mr Rattenbury: I missed the last part of that.

DR BOURKE: Burning, or other strategies for managing grass?

Mr Rattenbury: There is burning that takes place, but that is confined to the nature reserve areas. The urban open space is not burnt in that way, for fuel management. In the reserves, and in areas that have to be dealt with under the bushfire operational plan, Mr Iglesias spoke before about the diversity—it could be slashing, burning or grazing. They are the main techniques used for grass management outside the areas of urban open space.

DR BOURKE: Does mowing have a particular impact on grass species and diversity within the areas that you mow?

Ms Steward: If it is an area that is environmentally sensitive, we would be aware of the characteristics there and what areas need to be protected. I suppose we would look at a management regime that is going to ensure that the ecological values are not going to be undermined. If it is in the urban area and there are arterial roads and those sorts of things then of course we mow. In most cases we do mow—if it is for line of sight and safety, if it is to create a barrier as part of our bushfire operations planning. So mowing can have one of a number of objectives, and it can be for amenity as well.

DR BOURKE: The question was: does that practice of regular mowing impact upon whatever species of grass that may be able to live there? For instance, native grasses may not respond particularly well to mowing as opposed to other exotic species.

Ms Flanery: Dr Bourke, there are some areas that are environmentally sensitive, and we certainly have grasslands that we mow differently, in a different frequency. You might have some particular grassland species that is identified that needs to be protected, so that is mown on a different mowing schedule.

The mowing program is an incredibly complex program. We are continually trying to refine it and look at ways so that we can tell mowing operators, “This area here, 20 by 50, don’t mow it every month, mow it every six months.” Certainly it is something that we take into consideration, and we do work with parkcare groups and other groups to make sure that we are aware of those areas and there is signage around some of those areas.

The Apex park that was recently opened near the Federal Highway—it opened earlier in the year—has some environmentally sensitive plants in it, so it is on a slightly different mowing schedule and we do try to make sure that all the mowing operators in those areas are aware of it. We also do things so that grass, particularly when they have weed species in them, are not blown onto other areas that will increase the weeds in the areas. We have a program that washes down the mowers. To answer your question very directly, yes, we do take that into consideration when mowing.

DR BOURKE: Is there any discussion on new suburb design? You are talking about 4½ thousand hectares now, minister. Are you talking about more hectares in the future? This is a considerable investment for the territory to continue into the future, if we are just going to create more and more maintenance for ourselves. Is there much consideration in the design of new suburbs to reduce the amount of mowing or maintenance that is required along these lines?

Ms Flanery: The turf industry is quite massive, so we are looking at species that do not require as much mowing—all the fescues, couches, buffaloes and things. There are pluses and minuses about all of those kinds of things. There is also a massive area. The issue with mowing often has to do with weed species or things like wild oats. It grows very quickly in a very short period of time. Certainly in new areas we try to put in grass species that require less mowing. It is difficult because you always compete with plants that are opportunistic. We also very actively try to not get weed species coming into the ACT, such as fireweed. We have had a problem with this, so we really try to be very careful when we are assessing the types of turf that come in, and mulch.

THE CHAIR: I have a supplementary on that. When you said that you wash down the mowers, are the slashers—the tractors with the slashers on the back of them—part of your 80 fleet?

Ms Flanery: It depends where they are operating. Our arterial and connecting roads are mown under a contract arrangement. So they use slashers and a whole range of mowers. We also have slashers. In total there are about 100 mowers operating at least five days a week throughout the mowing season. It depends where they are mowing as to what equipment they use.

THE CHAIR: Do the slashers get washed down as well?

Ms Flanery: Yes.

THE CHAIR: They are a bit different from the ride-on mowers.

Ms Flanery: Yes. There is a very comprehensive wash-down program. I cannot say it is completely faultless, but it is there in all the standards.

MR WALL: I have a supplementary on that, whilst we are on mowing. Minister, you mentioned that different treatments are given to public open space as against the sports ovals. Is the mowing still done by the same fleet and the same contractors from the same branches?

Ms Flanery: In short, yes. Sport and recreational services contract their mowing to Territory and Municipal Services. So they are mown by our internal fleet of mowers and they are funded through sport and recreational services.

MR WALL: Say they are out to do a mow on a sports field, to use an example. A couple of weeks ago I was down at the Gordon playing fields. The playing surfaces had been mown within a couple of days. From where they had finished mowing the field surfaces, there would have been two slasher widths between that and the Koppers logs on the nature strip. That was unmown. Why would that be the case, and wouldn't it be more efficient, while the mowing contractor or the individual is there, to just do those last two up-and-backs to alleviate the need to come back potentially in another week or so to do the nature strip?

Ms Flanery: Yes. From a perspective of whether it would be more efficient to use the equipment when it is there, sometimes—and most often—the playing surface is

different. It is more manicured than the area around it. So there may be a need for different equipment. Sportsground mowing is quite specialised, so you do not want to have basically something that cannot take rougher surfaces because that mower may be damaged. It may not; I am not quite sure. Sometimes there can be different frequencies. But we can certainly look at that.

MR WALL: That example sprang to mind. Looking at it, there seemed to be no substantial difference in the quality of the ground between the playing surface and the lead-up to the verge.

Mr Rattenbury: We will have a look at that. Which oval was it?

MR WALL: The Gordon playing fields, next to the primary school. It just struck me as something that seemed a bit obscure.

Mr Rattenbury: Sure, yes.

MR WALL: The other one was the mowing of reserves where a residential area backs onto a nature park. How often is the territory side of that boundary serviced, mowing-wise?

Ms Flanery: Without a specific location I could not tell you, but in general, in terms of areas that abut onto reserves, they are mown every four to six weeks throughout the growing season. That depends on climate—rain. We try to schedule them in every four to six weeks. If you have a specific example of where that has not happened, I am happy to—

MR WALL: No, that is all right. Ms Flanery, they are included on the online mowing schedule—the nature reserves?

Ms Flanery: Yes. The nature reserve mowing? We do not tend—

MR WALL: Adjoining—where there are suburban blocks backing up onto the reserve.

Mr Rattenbury: Usually there would be a buffer zone. So TAMS would be responsible for that buffer zone. Once you cross the fence into a nature reserve there is a different regime. But the buffer zone is TAMS's responsibility, and that is what Ms Flanery was talking about.

MR COE: With the in-house mowing, are the staff there casuals? What is the employment arrangement?

Ms Flanery: There is a mix. Across the area that manages the mowing, the management area within city services, at the moment 70 per cent of the people in that area are employed on a permanent basis. So it is extremely high. The mowing program is organised into people that regularly mow. They obviously cannot sit on mowers all the time because of work health and safety issues, so then they change into litter picking, playground maintenance or park maintenance. We do try to rotate people around. Some equipment requires specialist drivers. So there are people with

different levels of skills and ability.

MR COE: How much did that area increase in size following the taking back of the mowing work from contractors?

Ms Flanery: Could you clarify the question?

MR COE: A couple of years ago when the mowing was brought back in house to a large extent, did that area balloon in size accordingly or was it done with existing resources?

Ms Flanery: We redefined the way that services were delivered. For arterial roads and areas in which we wanted a specific maintenance regime—we want A to B mown every four weeks, or Northbourne Avenue mown every week—we contracted out that service so that we could manage that contract.

In terms of whether we added more or less, I am not sure. We still have the same area. We added more land this year, so it is a little bit hard to determine if we got more or less. We arranged the program differently. But on the whole, you would assume that because we added two more whole regions we added more mowing area to our current workforce, and we also increased the size of our workforce.

MR COE: Minister, I can recall you saying that you were changing the way that mowing was going to take place in the territory by bringing more of it in house. Can you recall that?

Mr Rattenbury: It would have been part of that earlier discussion about bringing a couple of areas back in house.

MR COE: Yes. This was a couple of years ago. In synch with that, I am trying to find out whether there was actually a significant increase.

Mr Rattenbury: Why don't we take that on notice and get you a specific answer on that?

MR COE: Yes.

Mr Rattenbury: As best we can, anyway. As Ms Flanery said, there were some different pieces of the puzzle.

MR COE: I think it would have been about 18 months ago or thereabouts.

Mr Rattenbury: I recall the timing. We will provide you with the best answer we can in terms of those moving parts.

MR COE: Yes, thanks.

THE CHAIR: Mr Wall, your substantive question.

MR WALL: Can we go back to roads, if possible?

Mr Rattenbury: Yes, we can go back to roads. This is good. These guys have time on the bench, time off the bench.

MR WALL: I want to go to Majura parkway. I was wondering if we could get a bit of an update as to how that project is progressing.

Mr Peters: Thanks, Mr Wall. You can see on site that it is progressing very well. There was a fun run along that section of road in late November, which demonstrated to the public how far progressed that section of road is from Fairbairn Avenue north up to the Federal Highway interchange. That section is essentially in what is called the defects correction phase at the moment. That means that we inspect it, because we have to take the asset over at the end of the day and make sure it is all of appropriate quality. All things being equal, we would be looking to open that section sometime early next year, as a general time frame. So the actual roadway bit of it is progressing very well.

MR WALL: Yes.

Mr Peters: You can see the bridges taking shape, particularly the one over the Molonglo. There is a northbound bridge, which is the one that is being constructed at the moment. There are essentially 11 segments to go out over the river with that span. There are about seven of them in place at present. When they build the southbound one, it will be the same sort of technology. It is launched from the side. The first one is pushed out till it gets to the other side, more or less. They will come back and build the other one. Then, probably in the second quarter next year, the girders will go on the bridge over Fairbairn Avenue, and that will be that bridge complete.

Physically, progress on site is going very well; we are happy with how the project is proceeding.

MR WALL: So the project is currently on schedule?

Mr Peters: Yes; certainly on schedule and certainly on budget at this point.

MR WALL: Have there been any variations to the project that have varied the cost of it or varied the budget?

Mr Peters: I would put those in three classes. In the contract, there is a schedule of rates for all the items—how much dirt is moved around, how many pipes are laid, how much kerb is laid. Then there are estimates made of the quantity of those during the design. That is what the contractor prices on. Some of those items can vary in what is called a schedule of rates. There is a measure up of the quantities; if the design was slightly out or they had moved things, got more of a certain thing, there are variations in that. They are normal variations.

In addition, there was a severable portion put into the original contract to put signals at the Federal Highway interchange end of the job, which was an additional piece of scope which was ordered up. You may be aware that there was a fatality there. It was nothing to do with the roadworks, but it happened shortly after the contract was let at

that particular location. We were in the process of reviewing the safety aspects of that interchange at that time, so that piece of work has also been ordered in the contract as a severable portion.

The third thing I was going to mention was that there is what is called a rise and fall on material prices—steel, asphalt, bitumen and all that sort of stuff. Depending on where the market is, we pay that.

They are the principal sorts of variations, as I guess you could call them.

MR WALL: Outside of those there have been no variations that have had an effect on the bottom line price of delivering the project?

Mr Peters: No, not at this point.

MR WALL: As far as the traffic signals at the northern end are concerned, who is bearing the cost of that variation? Is that the territory, is it the commonwealth, or is it shared?

Mr Peters: We are looking to fund that within the project contingency. We are in discussions with the commonwealth around that example.

MR WALL: We are now a number of months down the road since the collapse of Hewatt. Have there been any implications or any issues that have arisen from losing one of the major contractors on the project?

Mr Peters: There are two parts to that question. I guess the first part is that Hewatt was a subcontractor to Fulton Hogan, who is the main contractor on the project, so the government does not have any direct exposure to that particular issue. But within the contractor's own program, that is something he has had to manage.

MR WALL: When you say he has had to manage it, to what extent has the principal contractor needed to manage that? Do you mind elaborating, Mr Peters?

Mr Peters: Again there are two aspects to that. One is that obviously Hewatt employees no longer work in Hewatt, and someone needed to do that work. One of the contractor's responsibilities was to make sure that they had appropriate, capable staff to complete the section of work that still remained to be done by the earthworks subcontractor. That was one of his accountabilities. Again, it is the contractor's issue to manage, but he managed to pick up a lot of the existing staff on the project, so there was no long discontinuity through that.

The second is that whilst they were doing that there was obviously some delay to their program which they needed to catch up.

MR WALL: As far as the construction of the first bridge over the Molonglo is concerned—which is the northbound bridge?

Mr Peters: Northbound bridge.

MR WALL: How is the construction of that going? Have there been any issues in the construction of that portion?

Mr Peters: There was one issue with a bridge bearing which pushed out when they were actually launching one of the spans. Again, the contractors stopped work on the bridge whilst they made sure that everything they needed to have in place to manage that issue was in place. Other than that, it is a very safe technology for building a bridge; it is actually launched out off a platform, which means you do not necessarily have construction workers working above live traffic or anything like that. This contractor has built a number of these bridges before; it is a very safe way and you can see the way that it is progressing on site.

MR COE: Has that issue with the bridge been fully rectified?

Mr Peters: The contractors—this happened about a month or so ago—reviewed all their safe work method statements, reviewed how they actually do it, and looked at what they were doing elsewhere where they had never struck this issue. They expect to launch the next segment shortly; they are either in the process of doing it now or they will be doing it shortly. So yes, they have rectified that issue.

MR COE: So work on the span stopped for the last month or so?

Mr Peters: Stopped for approximately the last three weeks, yes—three weeks to a month.

MR COE: They are not quite working on it again?

Mr Peters: My understanding was that they were supposed to launch another one before Christmas. I might just take that on notice to confirm it for you.

MR COE: Sure. Again, that is at no cost to the territory? That is all borne by the—

Mr Peters: No; that is within the contractor's ambit.

MR COE: In regard to Hewatt going under, has the ACT government engaged Mr Hewatt to do any other work for the territory?

Mr Peters: I can only answer for myself, I guess, Mr Coe. I have not.

Mr Rattenbury: So that is the answer to TAMS. I could not give you a definitive answer for other directorates. The other directorate that had contracts with him is EDD, of course. There has been public comment on Horse Park Drive. There were one or two others. The last I saw of commentary on that was that those projects were at a point where they were able to be sorted out. I cannot imagine that any new ones have been let. Beyond TAMS, I cannot say definitively.

MR COE: Sure.

THE CHAIR: Just regarding that work out on the bridge near the Molonglo, before that work started out there, there was a mass of fossil things found out there. I do not

know what you call that.

Mr Peters: Yes, geological.

THE CHAIR: How has that been managed as the project has grown and gotten bigger? I suppose that in some ways it will probably be safer because it will be less accessible to people getting souvenirs and things like that. But how is it?

Mr Peters: We have a stakeholder reference group which has a representative from the Geological Society on it. He has been providing us with good advice about how to protect that site on the way through. It is fenced on site, and there are exclusion zone protocols to be followed by any of the contractor's employees if they potentially go anywhere near it. That has been working successfully to date. The off ramp from the parkway coming down to Fairbairn Avenue which people can see now is relatively close to where that site is; that protection has been working well whilst they have been in that vicinity doing work. So it has been protected on the way through, and we expect to leave it in a state that is pristine.

THE CHAIR: As pristine as it can be beside a roadwork.

Mr Peters: Yes. It is a couple of hundred million years old.

THE CHAIR: Yes, that is right. I know that other people have more questions on ACTION, but I did want to ask some questions about the animal welfare authority?

Mr Rattenbury: Is that the Animal Welfare Advisory Committee, AWAC?

THE CHAIR: Yes.

Mr Rattenbury: Fire away, and between us we will do our best.

THE CHAIR: Okay. Just let me get to the report. There is an issue in here about the—

Mr Rattenbury: The page you are on, Ms Berry?

THE CHAIR: I beg your pardon; 253.

Mr Rattenbury: Yes.

THE CHAIR: About the burn injuries in a grooming parlour.

Mr Rattenbury: Yes.

THE CHAIR: I can see there that they are still being investigated. It did happen quite some time ago. I know that there were some pretty horrific injuries received because of a process that was used in that grooming parlour. Through those investigations, minister, have you considered or talked with the industry about whether or not it needs to be regulated as a result of this particular issue? I do not mean regulated in a whole way but perhaps the way that these dryers were used on these animals, whether

that needs to be regulated or licensed in some way.

Mr Rattenbury: I am going to have to take that on notice, Ms Berry. My advice is that the RSPCA have the lead on the investigation of this matter, so I think we should confer with them and then give you a detailed response in writing.

THE CHAIR: Okay. I will just leave it then and wait for—

Mr Rattenbury: Yes, sorry about that.

THE CHAIR: No, that is okay.

Mr Rattenbury: That is where that responsibility sits. We will try and give you not just an answer to your immediate question but a report on the whole situation.

THE CHAIR: Yes, that would be good. Thank you, minister. Mr Coe?

MR COE: I have got nothing further on that, but—

Mr Rattenbury: Who is next?

MR COE: ACTION.

Mr Rattenbury: ACTION is fine.

MR COE: Sorry.

Mr Rattenbury: This is exercise for the TAMS team.

DR BOURKE: It is an active bureaucracy at least.

Mr Rattenbury: We try to do our best to look after them.

MR COE: I do not think this is quite what the former Chief Minister had in mind about an active workplace.

Mr Rattenbury: Ready when you are, Mr Coe.

MR COE: Page 13 states that there is a review into operations and performance for ACTION and that was done by one of the big four, is that right—one of the big accounting firms?

Mr Rattenbury: Yes, it was.

MR COE: Yes. So where is that up to?

Mr Rattenbury: That work is still underway. I expect to receive the report from that committee in the new year.

MR COE: Which firm is doing that?

Mr Peters: McCormick Rankin Cagney

MR COE: Is it? I thought it was one of the other firms. Minister, has the government progressed any plans or ideas to license out or privatise ACTION?

Mr Rattenbury: No.

MR COE: I asked Mr Barr this question and he said:

We are contemplating significant change in relation to ACTION buses as part of our overhaul of public transport.

I said:

So licensing or privatising?

He said:

That is under some consideration, yes.

Mr Rattenbury: Well, that is true. Your question was “have you progressed anything?” I guess it is a definitional question.

MR COE: Okay. Yes, sure.

Mr Rattenbury: There are ideas being canvassed as part of the expenditure review committee process, but nothing is being progressed at this point in time.

MR COE: Sure. If you can expand on that, that would be good.

Mr Rattenbury: At this stage I am waiting for the details of the expenditure review committee. They are canvassing ideas. At this stage I have not had that report so I am not in a position to comment on what their ideas are or what their suggestions are, other than I know they are looking at a range of possible options.

MR COE: So this expenditure review committee, who comprises that?

Mr Peters: The expenditure review committee is an agency in the Chief Minister’s directorate. It essentially reports to the Under Treasurer.

MR COE: And what information has ACTION had to provide to the committee to fulfil their requests?

Mr Peters: There is a comprehensive review into ACTION, so we provided whatever help we possibly can to the committee—everything: operating costs, patronage, network design, our processes, our procedures, how we do work in the workshops. It is a comprehensive review of the business, so we have provided whatever assistance we can.

Mr Rattenbury: In terms of where you started the question, the committee was given quite a broad remit to find ways to improve the efficiency and the performance of ACTION. In terms of your question “are various options on the table?”, yes, they are. Everything was on the table. The committee was given that very broad remit to find ways to improve the service.

MR COE: Does this committee have any people with transport experience, or is it simply a financial or economic assessment?

Mr Peters: The consultants are very well known—McCormick Rankin Cagney, a well known public transport firm. They actually did the original network design in transport for Canberra. They have got experience in bus operations, bus planning, bus scheduling in a number of areas.

MR COE: Sorry, I am a little confused. What work is the firm doing, as opposed to the expenditure review committee in CMD—or CTD, or whatever it is?

Mr Peters: The expenditure review committee are essentially responsible for the review, and they have engaged the consultants to provide them with an analysis of the performance of ACTION and suggestions for how it might be improved in the future.

MR COE: And who initiated this review? Was it by request of—

Mr Rattenbury: It was initiated by cabinet.

MR COE: Right.

Mr Rattenbury: Cabinet established four reviews. I think that is known publicly. One of them was into Parks and City Services, which was completed first. The others are into emergency services and Corrective Services.

MR COE: When do you expect to take this to cabinet? It is not taken by you. Is it taken by the Treasurer and Chief Minister?

Mr Rattenbury: Yes.

MR COE: Do you know when that is going to be?

Mr Rattenbury: The first part of next year.

MR COE: Sure. In the event that there are recommendations that are adopted by cabinet, are ACTION in a position to implement those?

Mr Rattenbury: It depends what the recommendations are.

MR COE: Sure. Is the scope of the review so broad that it could involve privatisation through to present operations?

Mr Rattenbury: As I said before, yes, the ERC was given a very wide scope to look at options to improve the performance and there was no limit on the scope of that

investigation.

MR COE: And how much is the review costing? It is not your agency, I realise, so—

Mr Rattenbury: It is in the order of \$400,000 to \$500,000, if I remember correctly. Again, if I go away and think I have got a different answer, I will provide that to the committee, but it was that order of magnitude.

MR COE: Sure. And has this firm done any consultation with drivers or other stakeholders?

Mr Peters: Yes, they have. They have consulted with James and me, who sit on the steering group, to make sure they have got access to the data. The consultants have also been out talking to workshops and they have spoken to the drivers on occasion as well.

MR COE: Do you have a view as to whether you would support the licensing out of some services or privatisation?

Mr Rattenbury: I do not at this point in time, no.

MR COE: Okay. Thanks.

Mr Rattenbury: I am trying to enter the review with an open mind and see what they suggest to government.

MR COE: Yes, sure.

THE CHAIR: Dr Bourke.

DR BOURKE: Thank you, chair. My question is about regulatory services, minister.

Mr Rattenbury: Yes, certainly. Ms Flanery will again attend the table.

MR COE: I have got no more for ACTION.

DR BOURKE: It is a high level question to start with, minister.

Mr Rattenbury: Yes, sure.

DR BOURKE: These, I presume, have been affected by the changes to the administrative arrangements or administrative orders. There are some new justice functions coming from JACS. Could you go through what that is and what it means for the directorate?

Mr Rattenbury: Yes, they are not directly related to TAMS in the sense that, as part of the admin arrangements, my role got redefined as minister for justice, which means that I still have Corrective Services. Added to that is a range of policy functions in the regulatory services space relating to matters that were in JACS. In a sense, I have added to the JACS part of my job.

DR BOURKE: But is there a TAMS flavour to those regulatory services as well?

Mr Rattenbury: There is certainly some crossover. For example, a part of the JACS areas that I have taken on is transport regulation and road safety, which obviously provides some synergies with Roads ACT. That will make some of those things easier under a single minister.

DR BOURKE: And you will be speaking to those areas as justice minister rather than as TAMS minister.

Mr Rattenbury: Formally, yes. But I like to think there are fewer barriers than that in my own office and in my own head.

DR BOURKE: Let us get specific then: shopping trolleys.

Mr Rattenbury: Yes.

DR BOURKE: The report on page 19 states that there was an increase in the amount of work relating to abandoned shopping trolleys and illegal sites. Can you tell us what that work was?

Mr Rattenbury: Yes.

Ms Flanery: We undertook 11 shopping trolley collection days in the reporting period. I will check on the specific number of trolleys that we picked up, but it was close to 300 trolleys. I will check the actual numbers, but over 80 per cent of those were picked up by the retailers involved; 82 per cent were collected by the retailers involved. Regardless of whether the retailer picked them up and took them back or did not pick them up, they were charged \$112.50. I guess that the amendments to the Litter Act are working in terms of a lot more compliance. Of course, there are still shopping trolleys on the street, but it really did change the way many of the retailers—not all—collected trolleys.

DR BOURKE: Which retailers, can you tell us?

Ms Flanery: Certainly Coles and Woolworths' trolleys were the predominant ones. Obviously they are the largest supermarkets, but many of their trolleys were picked up and also collected.

DR BOURKE: Any Aldis?

Ms Flanery: No.

DR BOURKE: Because they charge for them, do they not?

Ms Flanery: Pardon?

DR BOURKE: They charge coins to take an Aldi trolley.

Ms Flanery: All retailers have the option of having a coin system. Some choose to. Some choose not to. It is at their discretion. They may look at the system in the ACT and think that it could be worth them doing it, but that is their discretion.

THE CHAIR: But that is interesting, because at Kippax Woolworths have introduced a coin system as well. There has been a noticeable drop in the number of abandoned trolleys in the area, as well as Aldi down there. Yet it seems as though they have been reluctant to introduce that system in the bigger town centres or in other places, like Charnwood, where the same problem exists of these abandoned trolleys. I wonder whether the \$112.50 is enough of an incentive for the retailers to implement another system which clearly works. Do you talk to them about that?

Ms Flanery: Certainly, we send the invoices, which they do not want to pay. We certainly make sure that we do follow up in recouping the cost, because it is expensive having rangers go out, taking trolleys and having the collection days.

A lot of the retailers contract out their collection services. We did things—not necessarily tricky things—but we tried to look at the compliance program that we needed to address shopping trolley collections. For example, if you have two happening at once, is there capacity for the collection services to pick them all up, and there was not.

That is obviously where we got lots of trolleys on certain days. There is a capacity issue. We do talk to them regularly and we do continue—I think there is another shopping trolley collection day scheduled this week if not today—to pick up trolleys. There was one earlier in the week.

MR COE: How do you know it is working? Surely if you have got all these days when you are picking them up, does it not mean it is not working?

Ms Flanery: It is working in terms of—I guess it is counterintuitive. It is working in terms of our recognising that the collection services were not sufficient to pick up all the trolleys. When we had the collection days in both areas we got a lot of trolleys. From that, the collection company increased the number of collections that they were doing.

MR COE: But is that actually suggesting that these rules are not working. They might bring in more money for the government, but in terms of actual rogue shopping trolleys, they are still out there.

Ms Flanery: They certainly still are out there, but there has been a noticeable drop in numbers out there when we have had these collection days. Where we may have collected 20 in, say, Kippax, as an example, the numbers have now decreased to, say, six to 12, or something like that.

THE CHAIR: You would not get many from Kippax because—

Ms Flanery: No, I just use Kippax as an example, but—

THE CHAIR: Because that number is—

Ms Flanery: Certainly, the numbers from when we started doing this to now have decreased.

DR BOURKE: Do you get much community feedback about this, minister?

Mr Rattenbury: Not as much as we used to, no. It does seem to be a source of agitation for some in our community that there are shopping trolleys around. I think people get particularly frustrated when they see them in creeks, drains and the like.

DR BOURKE: Do you have any plans to review the current policies, particularly with regard to the \$112.50 fine?

Mr Rattenbury: I was just reflecting on that as Ms Berry asked the question. The trick is that you have to keep it at a level—I do not know what a shopping trolley costs to buy, for a supermarket to buy one. You have to keep the fee at a level where it is worth them paying the fine and retrieving the trolley rather than just buying a new one.

THE CHAIR: Yes.

DR BOURKE: Presumably you would be fining them regardless of whether it is collected or not, minister.

Mr Rattenbury: Yes, that is a different matter. It depends where you—

MR COE: If it is not collected, you do not—

DR BOURKE: Yes, you do; you fine them. You fine them whether it is collected or not. Can I seek clarification, minister? I understood from the evidence before that they are fined whether the trolley is collected or not; is that correct?

Ms Flanery: Yes. We always collect a trolley, once it is identified, as part of these collection days. If the retailer chooses to pick up the trolley, they get a fine. If they choose not to pick up the trolley they also get a fine. From memory—and I could be corrected; I will check it—they are at a slightly different level. So if you were a retailer and you did not pick them up, you still get the fine.

DR BOURKE: So there is a baseline fine there, minister, that they are going to get whether they collect their trolley or not. Perhaps that should be reviewed.

Ms Flanery: We did look at the cost of a trolley and ensure that the fee that was set was higher than the cost of the trolley, so it is worth their while in terms of replacement to pick it up.

Mr Rattenbury: But I will take that on board.

DR BOURKE: Thank you, minister.

MR WALL: I am not sure exactly where it relates, if it is parks or roads, but it relates

to Boboyan Road and Mount Franklin Road. There might be a bit of a crossover.

Mr Rattenbury: It all leads to Mr Iglesias. Ask away, and we will see.

MR WALL: On Boboyan Road, can I have an update as to whether any further consideration had been given to seal the dirt sections of that.

Ms Flanery: Is this to do with sealing roads?

MR WALL: That was one part, and the other bit was access.

Mr Rattenbury: Someone has actually asked me this. The last time I saw data, and Mr Cloos might assist me, the vehicle counts were so low that in terms of priorities for Roads ACT it was well down the list. That is my recollection.

Mr Cloos: That is correct, minister. Basically we do a traffic management count, so we actually count the number of vehicles using the roadway. We also look at the accident records and what types of accidents have been involved. Those counts were so low that it just was not feasible for us to look at resealing of those roads, whereas we would increase our grading operations to improve the surface quality of those roads.

MR WALL: The other one, with the limited time we have left, related to Mount Franklin Road. It has been a few months since I travelled down it, but at about Mount Ginini the gate was closed. I believe there was a sign on the gate saying that the fire trail was undergoing some maintenance and would be reopened at a later stage. I was wondering what the time frame for that is, or if it has in fact reopened.

Mr Cloos: That is a different area.

Mr Rattenbury: It reopened at the end of June.

MR WALL: It reopened at the end of June? So with respect to access, you can now go virtually all the way from Brindabella Road, down Mount Franklin Road and come back out at Boboyan Road, down towards Tharwa, or is access not available all the way through?

Mr Farquhar: The final section of the upgrade of Mount Franklin Road is part of a 60-kilometre section of looking after the Cotter Hut Road as well as Mount Franklin Road; it is the final section of 20 kilometres. It is upgrading it to rigid flat status which allows us to get small dozers in in the event of a fire. So it takes the sharp corners out, removes steep gradings and that sort of thing. It is with a view to a completion by the end of June.

MR WALL: June 2015?

Mr Farquhar: 2015, yes.

THE CHAIR: Thank you, minister, and thank you to all of your officials. It was quite a long session today, so thank you for coming along and answering all of our

questions. Before we adjourn, members need to have supplementary questions to the committee office within three business days and any answers to questions taken on notice and supplementary questions are to be submitted by Monday, 2 February.

Mr Rattenbury: Sure, that will be fine.

THE CHAIR: The hearing is adjourned.

The committee adjourned at 6.00 pm.