



**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY FOR THE AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL
TERRITORY**

**STANDING COMMITTEE ON PLANNING, TRANSPORT
AND CITY SERVICES**

(Reference: [Inquiry into annual and financial reports 2019-2020
and ACT budget 2020-2021](#))

Members:

**MS J CLAY (Chair)
MS S ORR (Deputy Chair)
MR M PARTON**

TRANSCRIPT OF EVIDENCE

CANBERRA

THURSDAY, 4 MARCH 2021

**Secretary to the committee:
Dr B Lloyd (Ph: 620 50137)**

By authority of the Legislative Assembly for the Australian Capital Territory

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

APPEARANCES

City Renewal Authority	128
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Amended 20 May 2013

The committee met at 8.31 am.

Appearances:

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

Transport Canberra and City Services

Playford, Ms Alison, Director-General

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

Haraldson, Mr Anthony, Acting Executive Branch Manager, ACT NoWaste, City Services

Fraser, Ms Shelly, Acting Executive Branch Manager, Roads ACT, City Services

Smith, Mr Jeremy, Executive Branch Manager, Infrastructure Delivery

Little, Ms Vanessa, Executive Branch Manager, Libraries ACT, Transport Canberra and Business Services

Alegria, Mr Stephen, Executive Branch Manager, City Presentation, City Services

Sturman, Ms Judith, Executive Group Manager, Transport Canberra

McGlenn, Mr Ian, Executive Branch Manager, Bus Operations, Transport Canberra

Bowdery, Mr John, Executive Branch Manager, Strategic Policy and Customer

Edghill, Mr Duncan, Chief Projects Officer, Major Projects Canberra

Cahif, Mr Ashley, Project Director, Light Rail, Major Projects Canberra

Dawson, Ms Jo, Executive Branch Manager, Light Rail Operations

THE CHAIR: Thank you for coming. Welcome to the third day of hearings for the Standing Committee on Planning, Transport and City Services for our combined annual report and budget estimates hearings. Today we will be hearing from Minister Steel and some of his officials about Transport and City Services and then later we will be hearing from Chief Minister Barr about the City Renewal Authority.

Have all our witnesses who are likely to speak had a chance to review the privilege statement?

Mr Steel: Yes.

THE CHAIR: Great. I will ask you, the first time you answer a question, to state that you acknowledge the privilege statement. We will then have that on the record so you only need to do it once.

I will start with the first question. Minister Steel, TCCS has a target of 90 per cent of territory roads being maintained in good condition, but we do not have a target for bike paths and footpaths. Why is that?

Mr Steel: I acknowledge and have read the privilege statement on the table before me. In the reporting period for the annual report we exceed our target in terms of road resurfacing, which is fantastic—the percentage of roads that are in good condition being, I think, 91 per cent during the reporting period. We are placing a greater focus now on the maintenance of footpaths and shared paths throughout Canberra. You may

have noticed this morning that I announced further funding for repairing footpaths as well.

I will hand over to officials to talk through some of the work that we have been doing to better audit our footpaths around Canberra and shared paths. I met with Pedal Power yesterday and discussed this very topic. They are very committed to making sure that we are focusing on maintenance of our existing assets as well. The work that will come from those audits will inform priority repairs based on a range of different factors. I will hand over to the team to explain what those factors are.

THE CHAIR: That would be great. Ms Fraser, a brief rundown of what you are doing would be fantastic, but can you then circle back to the question, which is: can we have an indicator for footpath and cyclepath maintenance in future reports, and when might we get that?

Ms Fraser: I acknowledge the privilege statement. With regard to the comment Minister Steel made, compared to previous years, we have increased our spend on path maintenance, both cyclist paths—*asphalt paths*—and concrete paths. We have also undertaken extensive condition audits of all shared paths—*cyclepaths* and *footpaths*—in the ACT region.

To date, we have audited around 700 kilometres of the 3,000-kilometre network. The purpose of that condition audit is to look at how we can program preventative maintenance rather than reactive maintenance. We have done a lot of work in the past year in that space. It is very promising.

With regard to your question about why we do not have a—

THE CHAIR: We have an indicator for roads maintenance. We have set a target. I do not know what the appropriate target would be for cyclepaths and footpaths, but it strikes me as a really good idea to also have a target for maintenance of cyclepaths and footpaths. Can we do that?

Ms Fraser: The current accountability indicator that we have for the road pavement in good condition relates to surface, bump counts et cetera. That is very difficult to manage for shared paths and even harder to audit for concrete. We are certainly looking at ways in which we can better indicate our performance with regard to maintenance, preventative and reactive. That is something we can—

THE CHAIR: Why is it harder for an asphalt cyclepath than for an asphalt road?

Ms Fraser: When we do the road condition audits, we have a vehicle with a machine that undertakes road bump counts.

THE CHAIR: You do not have the equipment. Okay.

Ms Fraser: Doing that on a small, shared path is much more difficult. It relies on manual inspections. It is a lot more resource heavy compared to how we can audit the road pavement surface.

THE CHAIR: I did not realise that you needed specialist equipment to do it.

Ms Fraser: Yes, we do.

THE CHAIR: You can probably expect the same question from me again, so it would be great if you guys could come up with a useful accountability indicator.

Ms Fraser: Yes; we will certainly look into it.

Ms Playford: Can I add one thing about the accountability indicator? I just want to note that in the next year or so, with the government, we will be bringing in the wellbeing framework and doing a comprehensive review of our accountability and strategic indicators. We are in the process of doing a new strategic plan for the directorate. It is around finding things we can work on with the Audit Office in terms of how we can measure these sorts of things. We will certainly take your feedback into account as we go through that review process over the next 12 months or so.

THE CHAIR: That would be great. Mr Parton?

MR PARTON: I get a sense that the discussion on this extensive audit of shared paths and bike paths is not one in a series of extensive audits, that it has been a long time since we have assessed this information. Is that correct or not?

Mr Steel: I think audits of our shared path network and footpath network have been done in the past. Shelly might be able to provide some further detail on the extent of those audits.

Ms Fraser: We have a proactive maintenance program. We have inspectors who are regularly inspecting our path and cycle network through a proactive program. We also have a reactive program. If we get specific requests or concerns, we respond to those on a reactive basis.

MR PARTON: As a cyclist, I have noticed a ramping up of maintenance on some of those cyclepaths, particularly down in Tuggeranong. Obviously, as a cyclist, I watch that pretty closely. I would say it is a good job; let us hope it continues.

Mr Steel: It is really important that we keep on top of the maintenance. We want to encourage people to get out and cycle and walk more in our community, and we have seen a huge number of people doing that during the COVID-19 pandemic. The funding I have announced today, allocating federal funding from the Local Roads and Community Infrastructure Program, is \$2.6 million in additional funding for repairs and maintenance of our footpath and shared path network. That is in addition to our existing allocation for this type of work, and it will go a long way. Of course, at the election, Labor made a commitment to invest more funding to this as well on an annual basis, noting it is a priority.

MS LAWDER: You mentioned proactive and reactive maintenance. I am aware of a few cases where there have been serious accidents requiring ambulance attendance and there has then been reactive maintenance where those raised paths or whatever have been fixed. Do you keep statistics on the number of injuries relating to the lack

of bike path maintenance? Do you have a goal for how quickly you would repair paths that have contributed to a serious accident?

Ms Fraser: There are a few parts to that question; I will answer what I can. If I miss something, I will come back.

We do not keep a register per se of accidents that relate to cyclist hazards. We rely on reporting through Access Canberra on serious or fatal incidents on the road network, not specifically just for cyclepaths or pathways.

In that regard, if we receive information, it is hard to determine what constitutes the cyclist's incident—whether it was rider error or driver error compared to a path defect. In our asset management system, we can trace where we have had requests come in and we can trace where we have fixed that defect or responded, or where it is up to in a works program or works order. We can certainly trace all that.

Did I miss any part of your question?

MS LAWDER: The part about how long it might take you to fix the defects that may have contributed?

Ms Fraser: We endeavour to fix immediate safety hazards within 10 business days. Ideally, we endeavour to fix them within 48 hours. However, due to competing priorities or the volume of requests, our target is for up to 10 business days. We are meeting that quota. Other repairs that are not immediate—so there is not a make safe such as grinding or cold mix—are packaged up into larger portions of work and delivered based on location, for efficiencies.

MR PARTON: I have a question that starts off being extremely specific, but I will make it wider.

A constituent in Banks suggested to me earlier this month that City Services staff had indicated to him that traffic calming measures, in the form of speed humps, were set to be installed on Forsythe Street in Banks. In the context of this hearing, are we able to get an indication of whether that is the case or not?

Mr Steel: I am not aware of that specific instance, but I will ask the team whether they are aware of it. If not, they can take that question on notice. The usual process would be that assessing whether those types of treatments were going to be useful on a particular street would be informed by some sort of traffic study on the street. Ms Fraser may like to comment.

MR PARTON: This goes to my wider question. What is the process to determine whether traffic calming measures are required? Which one is optimal? What is the actual start point of that process? Is that a process that is driven by community concern or by police concern? How does it happen from start to finish?

Ms Fraser: A range of factors contribute to our assessments of local area traffic management considerations. Usually, if we get a number of concerns from the community or police with regard to a range of factors—it could be speeding, crash

incidents or fatalities—we collate all that data and undertake studies to determine the average speed and whether there are implementations other than traffic calming. We try to utilise traffic calming as a last resort. In most cases it is a minority of vehicles on the network that contribute to speeding or unruly behaviour, so we try to promote that they are reported through police with regard to encouraging the right behaviour.

MS LAWDER: It is clearly difficult, though, isn't it, to catch those people?

Ms Fraser: It can be, I understand. That is not my role, but—

THE CHAIR: We heard from the CPO earlier in the week; maybe we can have a look at what he said.

MR PARTON: Yes. Further to that, with regard to the installation of traffic calming measures, are you guys able to measure the effects? Do we assess the effect—I guess in some cases the intended effect, and in some cases the unintended effect, which might be more difficult to measure? That is obviously diverting people onto other roads.

Ms Fraser: We certainly undertake follow-up audits, I believe on an annual basis, to determine the efficiencies of the implementation of those local area traffic management devices and whether it is warranted to install more devices, or remove or reassess, based on a range of factors, such as community feedback, speed surveys and police reports.

MS LAWDER: I want to ask about mowing. It has been a hot topic again this year. The annual report refers to the installation of a navigation satellite system to increase efficiency and operate in safety. Can you give us a bit more information about the technology and what impact it has had?

Mr Steel: Over the past eight months in particular, so not so much in the reporting period of the annual report, there has been a very significant amount of rain. That has resulted in a lot of grass growth that has had to be managed with the teams. They have been doing an incredible amount of work. We have been able to employ more staff to try and get on top of that, and we have run more regular mowing patterns around the city. We have also committed an extra \$2 million, or just over, in surge funding to try and get on top of it over the period. I will hand over to Stephen Alegria to talk about the particular technology that is being used to make sure that this mowing is efficient.

Mr Alegria: I acknowledge the privilege statement. The GNSS satellite system that we have on our mowers is an automated way for us to find out where the mower is travelling, whether the blades are up or down and whether they are spinning. Basically, we can track all the progress of an individual mower as it rolls through the day without any kind of operator involvement. That gives us, obviously, a wealth of data that we can then use to both provide to the community and inform our future planning and identify more efficient ways of undertaking the mowing. For example, you might be familiar with the mowing map that is on our website.

MS LAWDER: I am.

Mr Alegria: That data is collected by the system and every week it is uploaded. That gives you the mowing that has taken place in the recent past. Then we use our pre-programmed mapping to indicate what is going to happen in future. That system is always being refined. Sometimes a mower may have a particular box broken for a short period. We are always working to try and refine that information so that we can, hopefully, give the community a good sense of what is coming up. Then they can say, "I can see my suburb is going to be mown in the next couple of weeks. I will just wait for that to happen, rather than worry." It is a wealth of data that we use actively to try and plan ahead and get our operations to be as efficient as they can be.

MS LAWDER: For the 2019-20 year, how much space classified as urban open space was mown? How much needs to be mown? I do not mean over eight times, but just in one pass.

Mr Alegria: We mow around 5,000 hectares of urban open space in any given pass. We obviously do that multiple times through the year.

MS LAWDER: Does that include roadsides?

Mr Alegria: Yes. It is arterial roads, the suburban mowing program and the sportsgrounds. It is basically everything that TCCS mows. Of course, there is other mowing in the city, but not to the scale that we do. Education do their own mowing. Parks and Conservation do a bit of fire fuel mowing. Ours is obviously the largest by far.

MS LAWDER: What contributes to the increase or decrease in urban open space? For example, in 2007 about 6,000 hectares of urban open space was being mown.

Mr Alegria: There are a whole range of factors there. Obviously, urban growth, the growth of the city, adds urban open space. The other factor that many people are not aware of is that we alter our management regimes according to best practice. There are areas that we consider to be semi-natural urban space, for example, that do not get mown. They are not nature reserves, but they are areas with some ecological values. They are better left on a less frequent mowing cycle. As we understand more about land management and we learn from experience, we can change the regime to suit. I am not familiar with the statistics from back in 2007. We are always trying to adapt our methodology and prioritise our resources to give the biggest effect to the community.

MS LAWDER: How many staff are employed by the ACT government for mowing, and how many contractors might there be?

Mr Alegria: The mowing is undertaken by the place management unit, which is the biggest part of City Presentation. There are around 250. That is not an exact figure, but that is the gist of it.

MS LAWDER: Did you say 250?

Mr Alegria: About 250, yes. We have around 88 mowers in our fleet. That team collectively is responsible for undertaking the mowing. That is not to say that there

are 250 people on a mower every day. The minister mentioned the really challenging season we have had. We have had to run shifts and weekend work. That pool of people, or those who are trained, are put onto those mowers as required to deliver the services.

Mr Steel: The additional funding that we were able to provide for the surge capacity enabled us to employ 24 new staff. They were primarily employed on 60 of our arterial roads, doing the hard-to-reach work—brush cutting, weeding and so forth. That freed up the other staff in City Presentation to do the general mowing. It has made a big difference. Those staff will be in place until June this year to try and get on top of the extra workload.

MS LAWDER: When you say it is funding for more frequent mowing, what is the number of passes of mowing that you would expect to complete in the current financial year?

Mr Alegria: That is a great question. In a normal year we would just need to do around six mowing passes of the suburban mowing program. This year we are looking at probably eight. We are expecting that the mowing season will be extended, even possibly into May, due to the nature of the weather we are having—the rainfall and mild conditions.

Again, as the minister said, we have that extra capacity in our system now that will allow us to keep up with that demand but not impact on the things that we would normally do towards the end of the mowing season. We will then go into our winter phase where we do more weed control, the tidy-up works that the minister mentioned, and getting into the laneways—doing all of those important jobs that we cannot always get to immediately when we are focused very much on the peak mowing season. By having the extra resources, we can basically do both. We can keep up with the mowing program, even though it is extended, and we can also undertake those other tasks that we would need to do to prepare for next mowing season.

THE CHAIR: Ms Lawder, how many more supplementaries do you have on this?

MS LAWDER: I will do one.

THE CHAIR: Great. You can lodge the rest; lodge as many as you like.

MS LAWDER: Thank you. We heard about the expectation of additional rain due to La Nina this year, but we have had many years when we have had unprecedented rain. I think in 2006 there was a media release about more rain than the long-term average; in 2007, double the December average rain; et cetera. Almost every year we talk about unprecedented rain and high levels of rainfall. Why are we not planning better so that we do not get so many complaints from residents about long grass?

Mr Steel: I am not so sure that we have said this is unprecedented. There is clearly a precedent for this level of rainfall, but it has been significant over the last eight months. I think that is obvious to everyone in the community. I think the rainfall we have had has seen the city look more green than I have seen it for a long time.

MS LAWDER: Which is nice, in its way.

Mr Steel: It is great. It is great for the Arboretum in particular. It is great to see the dams full. I think three of the four are completely full. It has made a significant difference, and that is obvious. We provided surge capacity when we saw that rainfall pattern emerging, and that was immediately put on the ground. We were able to do that through the Jobs for Canberrans program as well. It was very immediate that we had those extra resources and assets available to us to be able to do it. We will do that in future years, of course, if there is such a significant level of rainfall. Stephen can talk about the planning that goes on.

Mr Alegria: I think we were well prepared this year. One example is that we had all of our staff trained and ready to go. We had mower blades ordered in winter. We started the mowing program very early in the spring, earlier than we normally would, knowing that we were going to be up against it. We employed all the staff we needed to employ. As the minister said, we got the extra surge funding because we were able to show that we would need that. I think we did a pretty good job of planning.

But the reality is that when you have a standard of mowing suburbs every four weeks, number one, it can be challenging to achieve that when you have the grass growing so fast, and number two, even if you do achieve it, by the time four weeks comes the grass is often quite high. That is, unfortunately, a reality of the natural world and the fact that we are dealing with living organisms; they will grow when there is rain and great weather.

In that context we always prioritise lines of sight, access and safety issues so that people can still move around and use open space safely. Motorists know, for example, that we are prioritising roundabouts. That is why, as you know, we often get queries where people say, “Why have you mown half this area?” The reason is that we need to get those lines of sight done and we will come back to the amenity-type mowing that makes a city look good but is not as high a priority as lines of sight and so forth. Those are some of the considerations we have in trying to keep up with peak demand.

Mr Steel: There has also been the consideration around the fire risk and the work that we do with parks and other agencies to make sure that we are managing that risk. That is obviously a concern because of what happened last year with the Orroral Valley fire as well. That has meant that at times we have had to prioritise managing grass growth that presents a fire risk as opposed to the beautification and amenity of the suburbs.

Mr Alegria: We also prioritise, obviously, the sportsgrounds—they have to be mown; otherwise they are not able to be used—and the big district parks where lots of people are impacted. Again, they are a priority, so that there is always sufficient amenity and there are facilities for people to use safely.

MR PARTON: Minister, the \$2 million you just mentioned is for a variety of things, isn't it? That is for road sealing as well?

Mr Steel: No; that \$2.1 million is for mowing, weeding and those types of works. The road resealing is an additional \$4 million. Stephen can talk a bit more about what the funding has been used for in addition to just the staff positions. There were some

other resources.

Mr Alegria: Regarding the \$2.1 million, we put it into extra mowing of irrigated parks, the really high-use ones. We have been able to mow them on a more frequent basis in order to keep them looking good and keep them accessible. We have done an extra pass of the south arterial roads with mowing contractors. That has been part of it. As the minister mentioned, we have had the extra staff that have been doing that hard-to-do, hard-to-reach work along guardrails and so forth, which is very labour intensive. Obviously, it has an amenity impact in not having long grass poking up. That has been a significant component.

THE CHAIR: I am sorry to interrupt, but we need to cover some other topics today. Maybe Ms Lawder will lodge some detailed questions on notice and we might get a really detailed response or perhaps have a separate briefing.

We were really pleased to see that some new nature play areas have been installed in Farrer, Eddison Park and Glebe Park. There are obviously a lot of run-down areas in Canberra. The old sportsgrounds and now the recreational ovals are not being maintained to the standards they once were. One that has come to my attention recently is Florey oval. That has been languishing for a long time. If community groups have an area they know really needs a refresh and they want some drought-resistant—not irrigated—plantings, maybe a play space, maybe some dirt bike tracks or something like that, how do they get that onto the program and have that happen?

Mr Steel: They can approach government directly with their proposal and it will be considered amongst other priorities. The ACT government undertook a deliberative democracy process called Better Suburbs in the last term of government. Part of that was a play spaces forum. In that play spaces forum, we brought the community members involved together to deliberate on the future of play spaces, including the allocation of a specific bucket of funding for play space upgrades and creating new play spaces. That has resulted in some new nature play areas and new playground upgrades around Canberra.

One of the elements of what they recommended was to undertake a play space strategy. It is a priority for this financial year, as noted in the annual report, to finalise a play space strategy, which will go out to consultation with the community over the coming months. That will look at all of the play spaces around Canberra and how we design for play spaces that meet a variety of different needs and are inclusive and available to children.

We know that children have a right to rest, leisure and play, so the availability of green space and play spaces is critical. We will be going out to consult with the community about this very topic. That may be another way where people can come forward and say, “We would like to see something placed here in our community.” This is a priority for us. I am certainly aware of Florey oval. I have gone out there myself and talked with members of the community about that decommissioned oval, which Mr Alegria’s team manages. Mr Alegria can talk about that specifically.

THE CHAIR: I asked Minister Berry the same question yesterday. We got some

information about the play space review, but we also got a lot of complexity about the different directorates involved. It is not clear how the community can do this.

Mr Steel: The government needs to think about future planning for some of these sites. Obviously, in that particular instance there is a school adjacent to the site that uses the oval.

THE CHAIR: Yes, there is.

Mr Steel: It already uses the oval. Those needs have to be taken into account if there are other uses that are proposed for those types of spaces.

THE CHAIR: Will you be doing the consultation later this year, through YourSay, perhaps?

Mr Steel: I am not sure whether it will be through YourSay, but we will be doing a consultation with the community. The community will be asked to come forward and see whether they like the draft strategy that is presented and whether they have any further ideas about how we can improve play spaces in the ACT.

THE CHAIR: When might that lead to the upgrades?

Mr Steel: The ACT government has committed to a range of upgrades, which we will be looking to fund in future budgets. They will be considered on a case-by-case basis. If members of the community come forward with ideas, they will, of course, be considered.

THE CHAIR: Have we got a priority list?

Mr Steel: Yes. This has been part of the work. There have been extensive playground upgrades in addition to the ones that you have mentioned. I think around 50 play space refreshers were undertaken just over the past year. A lot of the existing play spaces are ageing. We have been doing regular safety audits of playgrounds to identify what improvements need to be made from a safety point of view. I will hand over to Stephen to provide a bit more information about how we go about it in terms of auditing.

THE CHAIR: Well, probably just where the information is, where the list is. We will definitely have a look at it.

Mr Steel: There is a priority. There is certainly a list of priority playgrounds that we think need to be addressed.

Mr Alegria: They are based very much on planning level 3—a very high level, detailed audit of safety conditions. You mentioned at the beginning of your question the fact that playgrounds are not maintained to the standard; we do maintain them always to be safe. The fact that the playgrounds are old—they might have been there for 20 or 30 years—means they are not up to modern expectations, but that does not mean they are not safe.

For us, the challenge is about weighing up needing to keep those play spaces safe and fit for purpose versus providing new or additional types of play spaces. For example, it might be a new thing which would then obviously be something that we would have to fund and maintain versus something that is already there that we can upgrade.

The focus in the past has been on making the best of what we have, making it fit for purpose and upgrading existing playgrounds, primarily, or augmenting them with the nature play, for example. Any proposals for new things obviously need to go through the budget process, as the minister said.

Mr Steel: Minister Berry has announced nature playgrounds over the last week. That is another way of community groups and organisations coming together to be able to deliver these types of spaces in their community.

THE CHAIR: Whereabouts is that list of what is coming up and what has been refreshed?

Mr Alegria: I think on our website we have a list of what has been upgraded; I am pretty sure.

THE CHAIR: Is that on the website? Great.

Mr Alegria: Yes. As for the future, that is dependent on priorities in the budget. We do not necessarily have that available because the decisions have not been made.

MS LAWDER: I have a question about which ones may be upgraded. Which Tuggeranong playgrounds or play spaces are going to be upgraded? It is mentioned in the 2019-20 budget that there will be some.

Mr Steel: Do you have a page reference there, Ms Lawder? There was work undertaken, of course, at Richardson, at the local shops.

MS LAWDER: On the ACT government website, regarding the ACT budget and “What is in it for Tuggeranong” on 9 February 2021, there is a dot point about Monaro Highway upgrades, a dot point about a walk-in health centre in south Tuggeranong, and a dot point about playground upgrades in Tuggeranong.

Mr Steel: Obviously, Richardson shops saw a brand-new play space, which is—

MS LAWDER: That has already been done, though?

Mr Steel: Yes, which was obviously in the reporting period.

MS LAWDER: What is in the budget that—

Mr Steel: That work has been undertaken over this period. Hopefully, it will attract more business to and interest in that local shopping centre. Of course, over the coming years we will be looking at further investments in playgrounds in Tuggeranong in relation to those areas.

MS LAWDER: What is the budget one for, in this year's budget, as per the government website?

Mr Alegria: I think it is fair to say that we have 500 play spaces in the ACT. We have influences from the play spaces forum and we have some principles that we apply to priorities.

MS LAWDER: I understand that, but it is on your website. It is in the budget. Which playgrounds is it in Tuggeranong?

Mr Steel: Perhaps we can come back on that. I mentioned that we have refreshed a whole range of playgrounds, so we can come back with a list of those.

MS LAWDER: There was also a sponsored Facebook post saying, "Upgraded playgrounds," but when you clicked on it, there was no further detail. Why are you advertising it if you do not actually have a plan to do it?

Mr Steel: We have upgraded a range of playgrounds around Tuggeranong. At Kambah shops, we have built a new one.

MS LAWDER: Upcoming, not the past—the budget. We are talking about the budget, not the annual report.

Mr Steel: In the budget itself, we have announced that there will be upgrades to playgrounds around Canberra, including the installation of new fencing at a range of different playgrounds. That will include Kambah. There will also be shade sails installed at a range of different playgrounds around Canberra, not all of which have been determined at this point. If you have a particular playground in mind, Ms Lawder, we are always happy to hear about suggestions.

MS LAWDER: No; I want to know what it is that you are advertising—exactly what is in it.

Mr Steel: That is what we are advertising. We have made a significant investment in the budget to make playgrounds more inclusive, particularly through the fencing of certain playgrounds in the community for children with particular needs, and also making them cooler and safer through the installation of shade sails. That is being undertaken. There will be, of course, continued investment in playgrounds around the territory. That will be informed on an ongoing basis by the new play space strategy.

MS ORR: Minister, on page 85 of the annual report for TCCS, there is an outline of the achievements of the first two years of the Container Deposit Scheme. Can you provide an update on how many containers have been received since June 2020?

Mr Steel: I will invite Anthony Haraldson to provide some further detail in relation to the Container Deposit Scheme. It has been operating for a period of time, and 200 million containers have been collected to the end of February 2021, since July 2018. Approximately 50 per cent of all eligible containers have been collected, which is great. Over the last year we have seen an increase in the number of containers that have been deposited through the scheme. I think it is just over 20 per cent. We are

seeing Canberrans become more aware of the fact that the scheme exists and that it can be used to get their deposit back. I will hand over to Anthony Haraldson from ACT NoWaste to provide some further detail about the scheme.

Mr Haraldson: I acknowledge the privilege statement; I have read it and I understand it. CDS, from July up to December, has had an increase. Rather than the 50 per cent that we saw in the annual report, it is 57.6 per cent. As the minister said, since that time we have reached over 205 million containers, to the end of February. We have definitely had an increase in participation. The annual report showed 88 per cent participation in the CDS, with 83 per cent support for the scheme, as well as a 90 per cent satisfaction rate with the scheme.

THE CHAIR: The waste industry report material in tonnes but the annual report reports material in tonnes, kilograms, number of containers, number of plastic bags, number of logs, number of glass bottles, number of printer cartridges, number of mattresses, number of items, and litres. We are using a lot of different metrics and you cannot really compare them. In future annual reports, you could, by all means, use individual items, but could you also convert them into tonnes so that we can actually understand?

Mr Haraldson: Yes, we can look into that; definitely. With mattresses, it depends on whether it is weighed. With tonnages, often you need a weighbridge with these materials.

THE CHAIR: We do; but usually the industry has a conversion factor.

Mr Haraldson: That is right.

THE CHAIR: I come from the waste industry and we always report in tonnes. That is the way that you can use the same metric to say, "It costs this much per tonne." We cannot really determine whether something is working if we are reporting in 10 different units within the one subject.

Mr Haraldson: We can gather that information and have a look at that for next year.

THE CHAIR: That would be good. It became very clear to me when we were talking about the use of recycled material in road base. It sounds like an excellent program, but when I actually worked out the material, it looked as though there was 0.03 tonnes of recycled material per tonne of road base, which did not look so effective, to me. I think it would be really helpful for that—

Mr Haraldson: That is helpful.

MS ORR: Going back specifically to the Container Deposit Scheme, you mentioned that it is a 57.5 per cent increase, with 88 per cent participation. On that question that I asked, was there anything you wanted to add before I jump to my supplementary? I feel that you had not quite finished.

Mr Haraldson: We can probably say that participation has also gone up because of the additional depots that have been opened over the last six months. There is a

Fyshwick depot that is about to open. It is a depot that has moved. It is in a better location, near Bunnings, across from Toy World. You can see some benefits there with kids coming in, being able to redeem the value of their containers, jump over to Bunnings and buy their dad a mower, maybe, or go over to Toy World. There is the added benefit that, across the road, there is a recycled clothing business. That has been a big benefit as well.

Mr Steel: The Belconnen depot opened as well.

Mr Haraldson: Yes.

Mr Steel: We are hoping that will see more people using it.

MS ORR: With the deposit scheme, my understanding is that reducing litter was one of the objectives of the scheme. Could you go into how that objective is tracking?

Mr Steel: This is collated in a national report, the Keep Australia Beautiful National Litter Index report. It shows that in 2019-20 two per cent of litter in the ACT came from containers, and that is around a 17.5 per cent decrease from the previous year. The scheme is having a marked impact, according to that report, on the amount of litter that we are seeing in the environment from containers.

MR PARTON: One of the unintended consequences of such a successful scheme, according to people that we speak to out in the suburbs, is that a number of issues have been raised with what people describe as bin pickers. Are there any government plans to discourage people from going through other people's rubbish in the dead of night? Is it considered to be a problem from government? Is there anything that can be done to discourage that sort of behaviour?

Mr Steel: I think it is a difficult one to address.

MR PARTON: Big time.

Mr Steel: I would not say we get significant complaints about that. I have not received significant complaints about bin picking; certainly, it would occur. Do you have any comment on that?

Mr Haraldson: No, it has not been a major concern. We have had a couple of complaints from residents that people were going through their waste on the kerbside. There have been a couple of complaints about potentially some litter coming out as they do that. Once the bin hits the kerb it is the government's property. It is something that we want to keep an eye on, but it has not been a major concern whereby we have to go out there and have a major impact on it or have intervention.

MR PARTON: Is there anything that is done in other jurisdictions in that space? No-one is aware of any—

Mr Haraldson: There are education campaigns that can be carried out. In New South Wales, particularly in Sydney, in the metropolitan areas, there has been a high amount of bin diving, as we like to call it. But in the ACT we have not really experienced that.

Recycling drop-off centres occasionally have people who go to those centres and take bottles out of the bins, but there are CCTV cameras there, and there is signage as well. A couple of years ago we put in, rather than having large openings in the bins, locks on the back of bins, and chains, as well as small, round holes so that people can put in containers but it is very difficult to get containers back out.

MR PARTON: Is it actually an offence to go through someone else's bin?

Mr Steel: I am not a lawyer; I cannot provide you with legal advice, Mr Parton.

MR PARTON: I just thought you would know whether it was actually an offence or not, whether you were a lawyer or not. No-one has any—

THE CHAIR: Would you like it taken on notice?

Mr Haraldson: We will take that one on notice.

MR PARTON: Yes, please.

Mr Steel: There might be general offences that apply. Again, I am not prepared to provide legal advice.

MS ORR: Going back to the Container Deposit Scheme and plastics recycling, with the corflute recycling trial, can you provide an update on that? I know there was a bit in the media after the election saying that corflutes were being recycled for the first time.

Mr Steel: This is a matter that has come up, maybe, in the regular four-yearly inquiries into the conduct of elections. I think there has been general community concern about the recyclability of certain items that are used as part of our flourishing democracy, and one of those has been corflutes. Of course, corflute materials are not just used by politicians; corflutes are also used by many community groups throughout the year on ACT roads to promote events. There are a variety of other different applications.

MR PARTON: There are a lot of those Chris Steel signs, it must be said.

Mr Steel: Probably not as many as for some of the other politicians! Certainly, the trial that we have run has been quite successful. That is working with one of the manufacturers of the corflute materials to recycle that content. People could drop those off at the Mugga Lane Resource Management Centre or the Mitchell transfer station. Those have been a combination of politicians' signs and other government and community signs. Anthony, do you want to provide some more detail on the outcomes?

Mr Haraldson: Yes. The trial is at the midpoint; it will go until June this year. It has been quite successful, with over 9,100 signs collected. A lot of those were collected over the election period. There are also real estate agent signs and older signs that get collected. One of the things we are looking at next is potentially tree guards. You will see corflutes being used for tree guards around the place. That is one of the things we

may target next. The issue with those, however, is having soil or dirt attached to them. They need to be cleaned. Cleanliness is a big thing with the corflutes.

Corex Recycling, which is based in Melbourne, is the company that has been receiving these; they turn them back into recycled corflute signage. They have a very low contamination rate that we have to meet—around 0.05 per cent. To date we have been able to meet that. We also appreciate the staffers, volunteers and others during the election, as well as the City Presentation staff, who remove the tin stakes and the metal rings. It is all about contamination and making sure they are clean, as well as the education that we put around that. There were some radio interviews at that time, and information was given to businesses about that.

We have approached creative agencies and advertising companies in the ACT to offer them a postcard or sticker that can go on their Corex products which says, “This is recyclable; please return, once you’ve finished, to this location.” It is about making sure that we are educating the business community.

MS ORR: So the trial is still going on and, if you have any Corex signs, you can drop them—

Mr Haraldson: You can still drop them off at both the resource management centres.

MS ORR: Until the middle of this year?

Mr Haraldson: The middle of this year; then we will evaluate over that time. So far it is looking fantastic. It is getting trucked up to Sydney, then to Melbourne, and it is re-used. I can see it continuing, but let us wait and see how the next six months goes.

Mr Steel: Six thousand corflutes have been collected at this point in time, which represents 3,250 square metres, apparently—quite a significant number.

THE CHAIR: Tonnes please?

Mr Haraldson: 974 kilograms. It is about a tonne, just under a tonne, which does not sound like a lot, but, 9,100 signs is a huge amount. I am sure you can put it into football fields, pools and things. It is a lot. You could probably clad this building with them.

MR PARTON: A number of constituents have contacted me to complain about the very recently completed resealing of the section of Monaro Highway between Isabella Drive and Johnson Drive. They are suggesting that this is the cheaper chip seal that has been used on this section. They have raised concerns about the sustainability—how that repair will hold up. There are wider complaints about the sealing choices that are being made.

MR STEEL: I will invite Ms Fraser to provide some further detail about that specific section of road.

Ms Fraser: I am not aware of the actual works that have occurred on that section of road. We are undertaking numerous road resealing and bitumen resealing works

across all of the ACT at the moment.

MR PARTON: I guess the broader question is in regard to the perception that cost corners are being cut with the resealing of major roads, that the choices being made about the type of resealing that is done are not going to hold up all that well and that it is pretty noisy when you drive on it.

Ms Fraser: With the two different treatment types for road resurfacing, they are determined based on a range of factors, such as surface area, road volume and location near sensitive facilities such as hospitals and aged-care facilities. Chip seal, as it is commonly referred to, is used predominantly because of its cost efficiencies, so that we can deliver road resurfacing to greater areas of roads compared to overlays or bitumen resealing.

In regard to the noise that you mentioned, it is certainly not a cost-cutting exercise. If anything, it could be seen as a benefit that we are resurfacing more roads, rather than focusing on smaller sections of road. With the bitumen seal, whilst the stones can take a few weeks or months to fully embed into the seal pavement, the decibel rating does go down over the months as those stones start to settle into the seal.

Mr Steel: We can come back, on notice, in relation to the specific treatment for that section.

Ms Fraser: The specifics—

MR PARTON: For that section; okay.

Mr Steel: I would note that there has been substantial work done on resealing ACT roads over the last year. That has included the pavement rehabilitation works on Northbourne Avenue, north bound and south bound. There have been significant recent works on the Tuggeranong Parkway as well, and it is a very high quality treatment. A lot of people have commented positively on how smooth it is and what sort of benefit it is providing. Again, it will depend on the section of road that is being sealed. We can provide some detail about what treatment is being used in that particular circumstance.

MR PARTON: In regard to the Monaro Highway, are you able to update the committee on the progress of the major upgrade for Monaro Highway and Lanyon Drive intersection, as was announced in the last 12 months?

Mr Steel: Yes, I can. I will invite Jeremy Smith to provide some further detail on where we are up to with this very significant roads project.

Upgrading the Monaro Highway will meet the growing needs of our region, particularly of south side residents, who use it when commuting from Tuggeranong, the growing region across the border in New South Wales, and as a major orbital freight link, linking us down to the south-east of New South Wales.

In the budget we have committed in the outyears further funding for the project, to extend the work. The first part of the project will be the new Lanyon Drive

interchange with the Monaro Highway, which will see grade separation there, where there are currently lights, particularly on the southbound carriageway, and a new intersection established onto Sheppard Street in Hume. I will hand over to Jeremy Smith to talk about that project.

Mr Smith: I acknowledge the privilege statement. As the minister said, we are progressing with the major upgrade of the Monaro Highway between the Alexander Maconochie Centre and the Isabella-Johnson Drive section of the highway. At the moment, as the minister said, we are working on the Lanyon Drive component, which consists of the connection from Lanyon Drive onto the Monaro Highway.

We are working through early designs and approvals on that at the moment, with a view to indicatively approaching the market for an expression of interest for a large design and construct contract on that. Those expressions of interest will go out in about May-June. We will assess those expressions of interest, then go out to market for the contract itself in about September-October this year, indicatively commencing works in the first quarter of 2022.

MR PARTON: That is pretty exciting. Obviously, it will cause a fair bit of disruption to Monaro Highway traffic, whichever way you do it. I am sure that there is some planning in place to deal with that, as much as it can be dealt with.

Mr Smith: That is correct. As much as possible we will do early communication with the community, to let them know about constraints that may come up in the road network during the construction period. That includes when we are surveying the road et cetera, and a lot of that has already been done. We had variable messaging system boards up at that time, to let commuters know that things were happening in the area. We have worked heavily with the stakeholders involved, including the Alexander Maconochie Centre and the ESA facility, to let them know what is happening.

MR PARTON: How much federal money has been allocated to this project and what does the mix of funding look like?

Mr Steel: It is a fifty-fifty partnership under the land transport act. The federal funding that has been committed is around \$30 million in partnership—\$15 million each. The original commitment was \$200 million, or \$100 million each—so \$115 million each, in terms of the investment in this major project.

While work has progressed more significantly on the Lanyon interchange, work is also being undertaken in parallel, in relation to the Isabella Drive component, and the future intersection-interchange there, which will also link potentially into a future Dunns Creek Road connection, to link into Googong. Work is also being undertaken to plan and design improvements to the various intersections along the Monaro at Hume, particularly around Mugga Lane, Tralee Street and other streets that go into Hume.

MR PARTON: And bike infrastructure as well?

Mr Steel: Yes, there is an active travel component to this. We have been consulting on that with the community as well.

MS LAWDER: Is this the session in which to ask about the southern memorial park?

Mr Steel: Yes, it is, but I understand that the committee has not invited the cemeteries and crematoria authority to the hearing to provide answers to questions.

MS LAWDER: If I ask the questions, are you able to answer them?

Mr Steel: We may be able to take them on notice, if they relate to the cemeteries and crematoria authority.

MS LAWDER: I will put some of the more detailed ones about the park and the progress on notice. Would you know which is the preferred or chosen site for the southern memorial park? I believe you have gone out to tender. Did it identify the site?

Mr Steel: There is an established master plan for southern memorial park, which has identified a site, which is along Long Gully Road in Hume. Technically, it is Symonston. That has already been established under the master plan.

MS LAWDER: I think it identified blocks 1677, 1676, 1673, 1520 and 1521 as possible sites. In terms of the tender, did you identify a specific site?

Mr Steel: The work that has been undertaken over the last year has been to look more closely at the master plan and staging future construction of various stages of the SMP development on the site that has been identified. That has looked particularly at the environmental aspects of the site. There are a number of vulnerable species on the site, including yellow box grassy woodland, and other habitat. I will hand over to Jeremy Smith to provide some further detail on the site investigations that have been occurring to inform the future development of SMP.

Mr Smith: As the minister mentioned, we are doing early investigations on the site, which includes services investigation, as to what is there now, what will be required to service southern memorial park, and what is there in the way of sensitive habitat.

MS LAWDER: I understand all of that. My question is: have you identified a block, out of those blocks?

Mr Steel: Why don't we come back on notice with the specific block and section numbers for you, Ms Lawder?

MS LAWDER: Thank you.

Mr Steel: The point we are making is that further work is being undertaken about what can occur on the site and where the development of the various amenities that are required for a memorial park would be able to be located, given the vulnerable species that exist on the site and so forth—

MS LAWDER: Understood.

Mr Steel: to ensure that we can minimise the impact on the environment. I also note that we want this to be a space that is connected with the natural environment—a place for natural burials as well, and it is about where and how that might be done. That has been part of the investigations as work has progressed. We are looking to go out to further consultation with the community on the future SMP site, and particularly the first staging of work that is proposed to occur to establish the basic amenities of SMP and how it might be developed over the next 10 years.

MS LAWDER: You are probably familiar with the general area. If you turn onto Mugga Lane from the Monaro Highway, you have the resource area on the right, and on the left you have the solar farm.

Mr Steel: Yes, correct.

MS LAWDER: Dog Trap Creek is in the middle; then there is a bit more solar farm. Are you with me?

Mr Steel: Yes.

MS LAWDER: Then there are those identified sites on the left. In the middle of the solar farm is Dog Trap Creek and a Landcare area. There is a big sign saying “Landcare area”, and there is a creek which leads further down to Jerrabomberra Creek and Jerrabomberra Wetlands, eventually. Why would you build the southern memorial park right there, in Dog Trap Creek?

Mr Smith: With the investigations of the site that has been located, probably the best way to describe it would be adjacent to the area of Dog—

MS LAWDER: Are you going to knock down the solar farm?

Mr Smith: No.

MS LAWDER: Why is the sign in the middle of the two solar farms? A great big sign was erected just before the election, saying, “We are building a cemetery here.” It is in the Dog Trap Creek Landcare area, which is in the middle of the two parts of the solar farm. Why would the sign be right there?

Mr Smith: The best explanation is that it is the location where we could get the sign in the safest place. There are a number of road conditions that we need to take into account when we put up signs, around sight lines and visibility.

MS LAWDER: So you are not actually going to build the cemetery there?

Mr Smith: Not on the solar farm, no.

MR PARTON: That is just where the sign fitted.

MS LAWDER: Right.

Mr Steel: One of the major access points to the future SMP is likely to be a road off

the current intersection with both Mugga Lane and Long Gully Road.

MS LAWDER: I think people are confused. It looks like you are putting it in the middle of the solar farm, on the creek, in a Landcare area, and knocking down the trees.

Mr Steel: I think it has been pretty clear in the master plan what is proposed for the site.

MS LAWDER: Your average resident does not look at the master plan. They look at the sign when they are driving.

Mr Steel: If they approach us, I expect there would be a reference to the master plan, to provide them with a response.

MS LAWDER: But the master plan will not tell you exactly where you are building it, either.

Mr Steel: It is pretty clear what is proposed on the site. It is very extensive. We are looking to go out for further consultation on the staging of works as we go forward. The community will have an opportunity to have a look at the plans and give their feedback.

MS LAWDER: Just to be quite clear, you are not building it in that Landcare area?

Mr Steel: We plan to build it as per the master plan, which will be updated and released to the community. That is very clear.

MS LAWDER: That is not actually my question.

Mr Steel: We have already taken on notice the specific blocks—

MS LAWDER: So you might be building it in the Landcare area?

Mr Steel: No, Ms Lawder. I think you are verballing both me and officials. I will come back with the specific block numbers and sections to make it absolutely clear. But I refer anyone that has concern about this to the master plan, which of course was developed following consultation.

MS LAWDER: Which so many people look at.

Mr Steel: Well, it is the plan for the area. It is very clear what we are trying to do. This is the site along Long Gully Road and we will have an entranceway at the intersection of Long Gully Road and Mugga Lane.

THE CHAIR: I am interested in the bulky waste collection service. I gather we have paid Suez \$9 million for that, which is quite a lot of money, and most of it is going to landfill. I understand it is a very popular community waste project but it does not get great recycling results. How does the recovery rate on that program compare to the previous program?

Mr Steel: To the contrary, Ms Clay; the recycling recovery rate has actually been higher than expected. The target we set of 30 per cent resource recovery under the scheme is a lot higher than what other jurisdictions have been able to recover through their similar schemes. Mr Haraldson can provide some data around that.

In terms of the scheme's rollout both to concession card holders across the ACT and generally across Gungahlin and in Tuggeranong where it has been rolled out thus far, the result has been 38.8 per cent. That is much higher than the target that we set and much higher than the benchmarks of other jurisdictions.

We are also the first jurisdiction that has been able to partner with GIVIT to make sure the items are paired with need in the community. That is quite a different approach to other jurisdictions and is promoting resource recovery and also a community service benefit to the community. We also work with other organisations like St Vincent de Paul and the Salvation Army to provide those items to people they work with and also sell to support their charitable purpose through their shopfronts.

We have had such a great recovery of items that we have not yet had a last chance Saturday event where people can come and collect any items that have not been taken. All of the usable items have been taken thus far, which is fantastic. Any other items then find their way into the landfill, which is probably where they were going anyway—or at worst being dumped in the community, which is a real problem and costs the community around \$2 million a year to clean up. We hope the scheme will continue that high level of recovery rate as we go forward to the Belconnen pick-up, which will occur in April, and the rest of Canberra from July.

In relation to the comparison rate for resource recovery just in relation to concession card holders, we can certainly provide that if we do not have it on hand..

THE CHAIR: So 62 per cent is going to landfill now. I am interested in how much went to landfill under the previous contract.

Mr Haraldson: I will take that on notice, the actual tonnages. But this contract has a lot better recording of materials. Every time we go with a new contract we are going to make sure we have best practice and improve. This one has a high emphasis on recording the resource recovery rates per tonne, which is great. Research we undertook prior to the scheme starting showed that across Australia the average resource recovery rate is around 10 per cent. New South Wales is at 12 per cent, Victoria 13 per cent and WA seven per cent. To be able to achieve 38-odd per cent is fantastic.

THE CHAIR: It is great for this kind of program, but these programs get very poor environmental results, generally. I am more interested in if it is getting better over time rather than how it compares with other not particularly high-performing environmental programs. So it would be good if you could come back with that information.

Part of my concerns with these sorts of programs is that they lead to higher disposal. They make it more convenient to get rid of old stuff and go out and buy cheap new

stuff. I am concerned that they are not locked into any of our more strategic waste reduction things like product stewardship. Are you using education or working in product stewardship with the furniture manufacturers and the people who are creating this waste so we have a longer term plan to have less than 62 per cent going to landfill?

Mr Haraldson: An education program is attached to the bulky waste program. Mattresses are collected through the program as well; 44,000-odd mattresses are collected every financial year. The education is about the products you can put out and the size of the products. Some things are banned, such as hazardous materials. But if something is reusable, rather than potentially being thrown into the tip without being recovered, it is being picked up and taken to places like St Vincent de Paul or the Salvation Army.

A lot of these items potentially might go on eBay, Marketplace or what have you, but this scheme provides a convenient way for people to get rid of items that they would have gotten rid of potentially anyway. The biggest benefit from the resource recovery is that things are going to people in need.

THE CHAIR: Are you getting data to find out if the things that go in that program were definitely going to landfill anyway or whether they might have gone to charity shops, Green Shed, eBay or somewhere else—or maybe somebody would have kept it and not bought something new?

Mr Haraldson: We have not to date, but it is a good suggestion. That is something we could look into with future surveys. We could ask, “Have you used the service, and if you did not have the service, what would you have done with the waste item?”

THE CHAIR: I think that would be really useful. The other bit of that is about what we are doing with product stewardship at that design and production level so they are recyclable rather than landfillable.

Mr Steel: Various work is going on nationally in relation to product stewardship. We would certainly like that to go further than it currently does. It requires a national approach. Some of the other jurisdictions, particularly the commonwealth, are slower to act on this than others.

It is not so much a product stewardship scheme at this point, but certainly mattresses have to be recycled through Soft Landing to be broken down into their component parts, with the coils being compressed and going off for re-use and other components going off to various forms of recycling. There are opportunities to look at further product stewardship, but it has to be in collaboration. We cannot impose product stewardship as a territory government when we are talking about a national market for many of the items that would typically be placed out on the kerb for bulky waste collection.

THE CHAIR: Perhaps we could expand Soft Landing to have similar programs with some of the other common items.

Mr Steel: But, again, product stewardship is about accounting for that externality and

the cost of that in the price of the product when it is sold rather than putting that cost on the community. I am not sure that establishing a recycling plant for every single product created is going to be the best approach. Product stewardship is a better approach in terms of making sure the manufacturers take into account that cost in pricing their products so that it can be recycled.

The other issue with product stewardship schemes is making sure we do not have freeloaders in the scheme for various products. In many of the schemes the major manufacturers of products may be involved but not the smaller manufacturers. If they are not pricing product stewardship into the cost of their products, that is a problem. I would like to see more extensive coverage of those schemes to all manufacturers of those products.

MS ORR: The TCCS annual report mentions an increase in digital library collections. Can you provide some more information on digital loans and digital collections within our library services?

Mr Steel: I will invite Vanessa Little from Libraries ACT to provide some more information about what we have been doing with the digital collection. It has been quite significant over the period of the pandemic because for a time libraries in the ACT were closed due to public health directions and concerns. We had to make sure more content and resources were provided in a digital format but also make sure members of the community were able to engage successfully with those digital resources. A huge amount of work has been undertaken by staff, especially when the libraries were closed, to get people online, registered and trained to be able to use those resources. It has been quite an exercise in upskilling our own staff as well as upskilling the public to be able to access those digital resources.

Ms Little: I acknowledge the privilege statement. The minister is correct—we pivoted very quickly when COVID hit. In the financial year covered in the annual report, about 100 programs were put online, but we are now up to about 400 programs. We also saw quite a significant uptake in our digital resources use. Some of our children's resources went up in March 2020 by 219 per cent. That included things like the Story Box Library, Tumblebooks and those sorts of things. Obviously, that correlated very strongly with when schools were closed.

The digital loans in 2020 were 713,145 and for the year were only around 335,000. So we went up by about 200,000 loans of our e-resources. The greatest interest has been in e-audios; they are the books that are read rather than you reading them in print. That has been of interest to us, and we took that all on board. We were getting a lot of demand for those digital resources, so we allocated an extra \$131,000 for buying more digital resources in that COVID period, so we had 2,000-odd more resources available to people.

Staff have embraced it and during that period started to do online programming, as I said. We took our very famous Giggle & Wiggle online as well as our Story Times. I need to thank the authors and publishers of Australia for allowing us to do that. We were able to do that copyright free, which was a unique arrangement. Sadly, we have had to take some of those down now because the arrangements we had with the publishers and authors have ceased. However, thanks to the Library Association, we

now have another program where we are able to use specific titles by Australian authors. So a good outcome from COVID has been that we now have these arrangements so we can continue some of those programs.

We set up what we call our digital helpline so that people who had never used our e-resources before could call us on the telephone—the old technology—and be walked through how to download the app from our website and how to access electronic books or any of the other services. We have continued that program and it is very successful; we have been able to support a whole lot of particularly elderly people access our resources.

The really fun one, of course, was how you could join the library when you needed to prove who you were during COVID and you could not come in with your licence or your rates notice or anything. We instigated a program called Send Us a Selfie so you could apply online to join the library by sending us a photograph of yourself with your photo ID and then we would join you up in the library and you could use our e-resources. That turned into a bit of fun; we got some quite interesting selfies where people dressed up and all sorts of stuff.

MS ORR: A number of library upgrades were scheduled for the past year. How are they progressing?

Ms Little: Woden library has commenced, very exciting. The builders are in, and the upgrade will enable us to have a recording studio with video-recording facilities and podcast-recording facilities. There will be a facility that will have, in my technical word, a squishy floor which will enable people to do yoga and arts. There will be two meeting rooms instead of one, and there will be after-hours access, which the community was very strong on. All of those things came out of the co-design process that happened in late 2019 with the community. It is very exciting.

Mr Steel: And today I have also announced upgrades to Dickson library, particularly in relation to the courtyard. Work is also being undertaken at Kippax library.

Ms Little: A new door is being installed at the back of Belconnen library to assist with disabled access, something which came out of the library inquiry. So it is very exciting times for the libraries in terms of access and services.

THE CHAIR: We are now due for our next session. Thank you very much.

Short suspension.

THE CHAIR: We will now have questions on output 1.1, Transport Canberra. Some 10.5 per cent of Transport Canberra bus operators are female, but the Australian average is 13 per cent. What you are doing to improve on that?

Mr Steel: We have been going through extensive recruitment over the past year as we have expanded services, and part of that has been to try and make sure there are bus drivers from a diverse range of backgrounds coming into Transport Canberra. We have been doing that in a number of ways. I will hand over to Ian to provide some detail, but one of them is the come and try sessions where members of the community

who may not have thought about being a bus driver can come out and drive the bus with an instructor by their side and get a sense of whether they think it is something they can do. Having done it myself, I can say that it is a bit easier than it seems. There are a few things you have to look out for, and relatively extensive training is involved, but there is a very supportive environment for a range of different people to come into Transport Canberra.

As we grow the fleet over the next decade, with the growing city and the planned extension of services, we will need more bus drivers. We are looking for a diverse range of people to come into the service. It has been a predominantly male workforce, so increasing the number of women bus drivers is something we need to do. There has also been an increase in the number of people from multicultural backgrounds, which has been very positive.

Mr McGlinn: I acknowledge the privilege statement. In regard to our recruitment strategies, COVID has had an effect on bus driver turnover in that people were not leaving last year. Our attrition rate normally is between five to six people on average a month, but that fell away. We put that down to the fact that whilst COVID was around people had nowhere to go so they decided they would have some additional time within the workplace.

We have had recruitment open for a period of time. We have something like 500 applications from people wanting to work for us at the moment. We have upgraded the amount of work we do on weekends in regard to the reliability of providing that service. We recruited from those applications and asked people if they wanted to start as casuals in the first place. They undertook the same four-week training program you would do for driving a bus Monday to Friday. We have lifted the number of casuals we have working for us, and some of those are female. I do not have those specific numbers with me today, but I am happy to provide them on notice.

THE CHAIR: If you are a full-time or part-time bus driver you have to work the same five-day week?

Mr McGlinn: Yes.

THE CHAIR: Does that have a disproportionate impact on parents in general and women in particular? In other areas of the workforce, often people with caring responsibilities might like to work a five-day week that starts on Saturday, for instance, or that has a bit more flexibility. Have you looked at that as a possible barrier?

Mr McGlinn: We are certainly looking at that. This year our EBA is due, so negotiations will have to be done through an enterprise bargaining agreement period. That is about strategies around whether people need to work five days or whether they want to work four days. The casual workforce helps us there because people can dictate what days they are available.

Predominantly we are after casuals to work on Saturdays, Sundays and public holidays, but also at different times during the week. If you have made yourself available and we have a shortage of staff, we call you in on those days as well.

THE CHAIR: Not a set schedule?

Mr McGlinn: No.

THE CHAIR: If you get a phone call and you are a mum with a kid, that is not really going to work.

Mr McGlinn: No, exactly right. For Saturdays, Sundays and public holidays, you will know from Wednesday onwards that you have work available, so you can do that planning in the background. Rostered work comes down to the enterprise bargaining agreement.

THE CHAIR: Have you done some surveys with the women you have to find out what the barriers are to entering that workforce?

Mr McGlinn: No, but we have done a lot of community information sessions when we used to have the open nights. We did not have an open night last year due to the COVID restrictions. We take some of our female drivers to those sessions—some who have just started and some who have been in the business for a little while—to enable the female audience to talk to them individually and ask them about their experiences. There are a lot of questions about the night work and what happens if there is an aggressive person on your bus. The female drivers are great ambassadors for the business. They love it and they talk to them about all the positives—the interactions they have with the community, all the weather reports you get on a day like today—as well as the security devices within the bus for their protection and that of the travelling public.

THE CHAIR: There might be a bit more work to do on working out what the barriers specifically are, but I will leave that with you.

MS ORR: Page 88 of the annual report shows that the bus fleet emitted 38,166 tonnes of carbon dioxide for the financial year. What is your view on that figure?

Mr Steel: It is too high. The bus fleet is made up predominantly of diesel buses as well as a number of compressed natural gas buses. We need to change our fleet to transition to zero emissions buses. Last year we launched Transport Canberra's zero emissions transition plan which sets out a pathway to achieve that goal by 2040 or earlier, based on the technology available at the time.

We are currently out for procurement for the purchasing of 90 battery electric buses which we think will reduce the tonnage of carbon dioxide emitted by over 7,000 tonnes per annum or around 20 per cent. That will make a significant difference. We are also going to lease 34 buses to replace our ageing fleet of old Renault buses, which are significant emitters of not only carbon emissions but diesel particulate matter that is recognised around the world as having quite significant health impacts.

MS ORR: Can you take us through some of the specific actions to achieve that zero emissions bus fleet by 2040?

Mr Steel: Procuring the buses is a major part, but it is not the only part of the transition. What many people in the community do not realise is that we need to have the infrastructure around those buses to enable the transition to occur. Based on the work we have been doing with our partners, WSP, in the lead-up to developing the plan, that means looking at the infrastructure required in terms of bus depots.

Woden bus depot will be our most significant first electric bus depot. It has already started in terms of early works, but it will be constructed over the coming years. It will provide space for 40 buses to be charged initially; then further upgrades will enable that 110-space bus depot to be fully electric.

We are also looking at a fourth bus depot to be located in the north of Canberra, potentially west Belconnen or Gungahlin, depending on both the needs of the bus network and the growing suburbs and also the electrical infrastructure and proximity to it that will enable us to charge the buses. Then, of course, we need to look at how we can retrofit the existing bus depots, where possible, to enable charging to occur. There are charging stations at the Tuggeranong depot, where we are supporting the trial of the fully electric bus we were running up until last month. We will be looking at how we can transition those bus depots over time.

It is also the skills that are required to support the workforce development. That means transitioning our diesel mechanics so they can get the skills they need to work on fully electric vehicles. That is a big part of the plan as well. We also need to form partnerships with energy providers so we can deliver the energy required to service the fleet with electricity in the case of battery electric buses or hydrogen if that becomes part of future thinking.

Mr McHugh: I acknowledge the privilege statement. For those who have not had the chance to read the transition plan, it is a very interesting read. It is up on our website and available for everyone to have a look at. It sets out the decision-making framework for government to move to a fully zero emissions fleet over the next 15-plus years. As the minister has described in some detail, it focuses on infrastructure, the workforce and the technology as it evolves.

It sets out some more definitive pathways in the short term, where technology is established and well understood, and then allows flexibility as we move through the transition plan to take in new technology advancements and take advantage of those as they come online and become more reliable and tested in the city.

We are currently engaged in two procurement processes which are the first two steps around the bus replacement programs. We have very keen interest in the market sounding for the zero emissions process for the 90 buses. Over 100 people have submitted an interest in that process at this point. That will evolve into a formal tender process over the coming months and we expect to get very keen interest from the market to provide us with those first 90 electric buses over the next few years.

MR PARTON: I want to talk about the MyWay ticketing system. Earlier in the year it was revealed that the government's plan to move to a new public transport ticketing system collapsed after negotiations with that preferred supplier ended because there was a thought that it was too expensive. Are you able to explain the procurement

process the government undertook to find a provider for the new system and why it failed?

Mr Steel: A current confidentiality deed which was entered into by both parties unfortunately precludes any discussion in relation to the single select process or the parties involved in that process. All I can say is that we have closed off that single-source procurement and the ACT government's involvement in it. We will be going out to the market again to procure a new ticketing system. We hope that through that open market procurement we will see a range of providers come forward.

It has been some years since we went out initially for an open market tender for a new modern, flexible ticketing system. Since then there has been a significant change in the technology available, but also a difference in providers, with the potential for some local providers coming onto the market. We are still confident we can procure a ticketing system.

In relation to the My Way system we are hoping to replace, there were some initial risks which we were concerned about in relation to that legacy system. Some of those risks have now been mitigated. That was to do with both the availability of the physical MyWay cards themselves and also how we manage and operate the system. We now have more of a capability in house to do that rather than relying on the MyWay provider.

We are in a much better position than we were in relation to the existing system, and we are confident that we can go out to an open market tender around the middle of the year to procure a system.

MR PARTON: In regard to the failure of the initial process, you are telling me that, despite the fact that this was a fairly major promise from the government, you are not able to detail anything regarding why it failed and who was involved? You are telling me that you cannot tell me anything about it?

Mr Steel: For legal and probity reasons I am unable to comment on that. I expressed that in estimates last year to the then committee. I think Mrs Dunne was asking me around that. That has been known for some time.

MR PARTON: Yes, but at what point does that change? If I ask you that in a decade from now will that still be the case?

Mr Steel: For as long as the confidentiality deed remains in place, I am unable to discuss it. The ACT government has closed off our involvement in the procurement, but I understand that procurement is ongoing so I will not be commenting on, it for probity or legal reasons.

MR PARTON: In relation to that ticketing space—it is a suggestion that comes to me from a number of people—was there ever a genuine or an ongoing consideration of adopting the New South Wales government's ticketing system and just adapting it for the ACT?

Mr Steel: I will hand over to Ms Sturman to provide some detail. We are trying to

procure a modern, flexible ticketing system for the public but also support back-end operations of Transport Canberra, provide better information to customers, and replace the next-bus system that we have.

The current New South Wales Opal card system is an antiquated system. We want to procure an account-based system whereby a Transport Canberra customer can use a variety of different ways to get a ticket, whether that be through a mobile phone, a card, a QR code on some other platform or a range of other methods that are attached to an account. At the moment, the amount is attached to the card itself; it is not a separate account. That becomes problematic if you lose the card. It also is not very flexible in terms of managing multiple, different payment methods or if you are a family with children and you want to manage their accounts.

What New South Wales did effectively, I think, was to tack on the credit card payment to their existing old system. That is not best practice in terms of the modern ticketing systems that are now available on the market. We are hoping to leapfrog where New South Wales is at, at the moment, and provide a whole range of other, more flexible ways of accessing public transport through ticketing.

I will hand over to Judith to talk a bit more about New South Wales and why we have not gone down that route.

Ms Sturman: I acknowledge the privilege statement. We have quite a lot of in-depth expertise in understanding the breadth of the current ticketing systems that are available throughout the world. We are lucky that we have people working for Transport Canberra that have that knowledge and that interest.

We have obviously looked at New South Wales. Being a much larger jurisdiction than Canberra, they have limitations as to how agile they can be in changing their ticketing system. We have a more ideal approach. We have not got such a large or such a multi-model task as they do, if you look at how their ticketing system operates, versus what we are looking at. As the minister said, the card-based system is what their system operates from, whereas ours would be account based, which means everything is in the account of the passenger.

The technology that they are using is from around 2009-10, whereas ours would be current technology. The technology has moved forward in leaps and bounds, especially with COVID. A lot of organisations and technology companies have taken advantage of developing much more cloud-based systems, expecting that they will be required, so there is the ability for people to be more active in that space and able to obtain information remotely. That has helped.

It is probably fair to say that their system is reaching end of life, which is the term that we would put, and is similar to our system. The new system that we would have would be a totally new system, which would be based on what we need in Canberra.

Really the credit card functionality that New South Wales has is a separate bespoke platform that has been added onto their current system. That makes it not part of the whole solution. It makes it a separate add-on—

MR PARTON: They are doing a complete digital Opal trial at the moment, are they not, in New South Wales?

Ms Sturman: Yes, but they are trying to use the current system to then put additional platforms on to enable those other systems to work, which makes it probably more difficult to realise a good outcome for those systems. It does not change the whole system for everybody all at once. I think concessions is one area where they struggle because of the calculations that are required for each concession-type transaction.

The system that we are looking to put in place would be credit card digital. Because it is a system that is account based, which means everything happens outside the actual transaction in the banking process, it gives greater flexibility for any changes. If we have fares for specific events, we can adapt very quickly to make things more agile.

Another thing which is probably important for our system is the real-time information. We have a journey planner online at the moment, which is very effective, but it does not link to real-time information. That is a major bonus that we will see from the new ticketing system. It is something that is probably the most eagerly awaited by passengers out of everything in the system.

THE CHAIR: I am interested in the cost of congestion—not congestion charges but the cost of it. We have a daily economic cost of road congestion set at around \$800,000 in the transport strategy. That looked quite low to me. It looked like a very low figure. Does that include the carbon cost of congestion? When you have one car stopped, all the other cars around it are idling at traffic lights. There is some quite complicated modelling that has come out of ADRE on that carbon cost.

Mr Steel: Do you have anything further?

Mr McHugh: My understanding is that the figures that have been used in the transport strategy around the cost of congestion do not include the carbon cost associated with that but our lost productivity cost associated with travel time delays to commuters.

THE CHAIR: That makes sense. That is why it is so low. Would you ever revise that? Is there any intention to do so, given that right now we are probably more concerned about carbon than productivity?

Mr McHugh: I think it is another issue that we can definitely look into in the future as we assess the success of the delivery of the transport strategy.

THE CHAIR: That figure may well shoot up, I would imagine.

Mr Steel: Possibly. This sits outside my portfolio directly, but there is work on zero emissions in the transport action plan, and that may be considered as part of future iterations of that plan, to look at the carbon costs of not transitioning and what that means, but maybe with a specific view around congestion as well.

THE CHAIR: As I said, every city that has done that modelling has been surprised at the results. It is probably worth doing. TCCS has a target of 71 per cent subsidy per

boarding with the buses. We understand how much our buses cost and we understand how much we are subsidising them. Have we included the benefits of reduced congestion in those figures, even the productivity benefits? We have a congestion cost.

Mr Steel: I do not think so. I think that is probably a second-round effect in terms of the accounting treatment that is being undertaken.

THE CHAIR: Is it too complicated to do or is it a sensible thing to do?

Mr Steel: It is a question around accounting. I think this is a direct look at the amount we bring in, in terms of fare-box revenue, as opposed to cost, yes.

THE CHAIR: But not all the other benefits of having people in buses, not in cars?

Mr Steel: No. That would be a useful analysis to do. The specific figure is just looking at the fare-box revenue versus the costs of delivering the transport system, which, from an accounting point of view, would be the best way to do it. And it would not include second-round effects associated with the benefit of investing in public transport.

THE CHAIR: Do we measure those greater benefits? I appreciate how complicated these things get when you start down those holes. Do we have any accountability indicators on those other benefits—the environmental and social benefits of bus use—that we are measuring?

Mr Steel: I think that some of those have been picked up through the transport strategy in terms of the outcomes that have been established during that strategy.

THE CHAIR: Maybe on notice you could provide that for me and my new team of staff who may be learning a new field?

Mr Steel: Yes.

THE CHAIR: If you could just draw our attention to which accountability indicators and we will keep an eye on them.

MS ORR: Can you run me through the public transport patronage use over the reporting period time, particularly noting that it takes in the COVID period?

Mr Steel: Yes. We have seen a quite a significant drop-off in public transport patronage over the past year as a direct result of public health directions that have been in force and that have provided specific directions with regard to public transport. Those have been consistent nationally as well. As a result we saw public transport fall considerably. It is currently at around 75 per cent of last year's numbers, noting that we are almost at the period where we are comparing one year of emergency with another, but not quite. We actually had a very strong February in 2020 for public transport growth. It was a bit unfortunate that, when the pandemic did end up affecting us in March and onward, we saw that drop off in numbers. I think that to February last year from July 2019 we had an increase of 7.7 per cent in patronage but then it did drop off considerably. I hand over to Ms Sturman to provide some further

detail.

Ms Sturman: There are two different ways of looking at it. If we look at journeys and trips, trips are when people tap on and tap off, individual trips, whereas journeys are multimodal sorts of trips. Going to the actual percentage of change for the financial year, if we look at trips in the financial year, we are seeing a 64 per cent comeback from April. That is heading towards 70-odd per cent. The calendar year has increased more. Just looking at it from this January to February, we are seeing an incremental increase in patronage month by month and week by week. Does that answer the question?

MS ORR: Yes. What is the government doing to support the recovery of those patronage numbers? It sounds as though there is quite a bit going on there.

Mr Steel: Yes. Eventually, once the public health directions are lifted in relation to public transport and the message is changed, we will be welcoming people back onto public transport. We have been developing a Transport Canberra recovery plan, which has been a working document which has supported Transport Canberra's response to the pandemic but has also included a focus on patronage and providing better information to customers so that they can help plan their journeys, particularly to try and avoid the peak times. I hand over to Judith to provide some further detail there.

Ms Sturman: The recovery plan has been a sort of living document. It has followed the Canberra government recovery plan in terms of where restrictions have been lifted. We have reviewed how we are delivering public transport. We have a number of measures that are currently in place across public transport vehicles and locations at stations that advise customers to keep their distance and not to travel if they are feeling ill, and also, on buses, restrict people using the front doors so that the interaction with the driver is reduced. The various measures that we have continued since April are all still in place.

We have seen an increase in patronage. We keep an eye on our feedback from customers, and there is very little, if any, customer feedback that is identifying any issues that people are seeing with the patronage levels. As the minister said, we have on the website an area that identifies where we have more loadings on services than others so that people can, if they are able to, choose a different service.

The recovery plan then sought to look at the future and how we transition—how we might remove some of those measures, and the principles around what that might be, whether it is the vaccine or whether it is no further community or no community transmission—and also looking at adopting some changes. Certainly the ticketing system will help with that in terms of what information we can provide to customers that we do not at the moment that will help them with their journeys.

Also it is looking at if we need to actually roll back. The important thing is not to just look forward but also to understand, if we do have community transmission, how we respond to that, which will obviously need to happen very quickly so that we can ensure that people are protected and we respond as per the Chief Health Officer's requirements.

MS ORR: I was going to ask what steps you had taken to manage the risks of COVID, but I think you have answered that.

MR PARTON: I have a brief supp on the non-use of the front door on the bus. My anecdotal experience is that that is a bus-driver-choice scenario in that some of them are going with that and some of them are not. Is that correct?

Ms Sturman: Their instruction is to only allow front-door loading for customers that have some sort of disability that stops them being able to access the rear doors. It is always within the driver's discretion. The reason that it was put in place in April last year was that it was at the height of the restrictions. We have worked with the union very closely in determining what they believe were the measures they would like to be retained and we talked to them regularly about those and how we will wind them back at some point.

The ultimate reason for putting this in place was to ensure that the driver was protected. In a lot of jurisdictions where there was infection, that was a really big concern. We followed suit in terms of making sure that that was in place for our drivers, our essential workers.

MR PARTON: But ultimately it is up to drivers, is it not?

Ms Sturman: Yes.

MR PARTON: I am not assuming they were considering that I was elderly—I do not know; maybe they were—but I am finding fifty-fifty, if not sixty-forty, in favour of the front door.

Ms Sturman: Certainly the drivers have a level of discretion. Obviously with schoolkids getting on school buses, it is difficult to expect those high numbers to use just the rear doors. If we were in a period when we were seeing community transmission, we would lock down to a much stricter provision of that rule.

MR PARTON: In the last quarterly update to the Assembly in August last year, Transport Canberra's advice was that it expects to further increase the frequency of local bus services on weekends in the first half of 2021. Minister, are you able to advise when you expect that this increase is going to take place?

Mr Steel: We have already increased bus services on the weekends. We did that as part of a network update that I think came into force in July last year, which saw more frequent bus services, particularly on Saturdays in the mornings and then through the—

MR PARTON: This specific update to the Assembly, though, was subsequent to that.

Mr Steel: Yes. We also are looking at the potential future increase to the frequency of bus services. That is still on the cards and that is dependent on a few different factors. One is around recruitment, recruiting enough bus drivers that are able to undertake shifts on the weekends and whether we have enough bus drivers to be able to deliver that. Transport Canberra continues to work on the recommendations under those plans.

I hand over to Judith to provide a bit of an update on where we are at.

Ms Sturman: I might hand over to Ian shortly but, just as an overview, there is an action plan which was put together over the last couple of years and which looked at what the key factors are in terms of providing that reliability and ensuring that we are incrementally increasing things like the number of drivers, if that is what is required, and also other areas. I hand over to Ian because he manages that team and he can talk about it in detail.

MR PARTON: While he is approaching, minister, that quarterly update in August 2020, when the suggestion was that we expected to further increase the frequency of local bus services on weekends, is not really correct, is it?

Mr Steel: That is correct, but what I am saying is that there was a two-stage approach. We actually did increase it. The interim timetable was put in place in, I think, November 2019, and that was based on the need to significantly increase the reliability of bus services. Then we undertook a significant recruitment process of staff, which resulted in our being able to increase the frequency of bus services on the weekend. That was in the July 2020 network update. That particularly saw an uplift on Saturdays.

We are now in the second stage of recruitment that will enable us to look at it further, the uplift, and we are in that process at the moment. Mr McGlinn.

Mr McGlinn: In answer to your question, the uplift that we undertook last year increased the number of drivers that we required every Saturday by 34. It is also about ensuring that we provide reliability of that service. It is not just about going and getting 34 drivers, because they might not want to work every Saturday. What we have had to do is increase above that.

Previously I was talking about how we have gone to casuals to assist us over the weekends. That is what has been achieved to date. At the moment, it takes us 220 drivers to undertake all the work on a Saturday. On a Sunday, it is 173; and it is 659 from Monday to Friday. That is how many drivers we need just for on the road, plus we need some spares.

Certainly the weekend reliability is there and has been proven. We are working on that increase and calculating in the background that, if it is another 34 shifts, it might not work out that way because the way the work is provided out through our scheduling system might make the shifts a little more efficient and we might not need another 34 to do the same six-hour period. From 6 am to 12 pm it was 34 drivers. Now we are going from 12 pm potentially up until 6 pm. We are working in the background on how to do that and what the calculations would be.

MR PARTON: Is there a perfect-world scenario of hourly services for all weekend buses that we are working towards?

Mr Steel: Just to correct the record, it was actually October 2020 when the last weekend uplift occurred, not July. I previously stated that an extra 236 bus services were provided between 6 am and 12 to increase the frequency of services on the local

routes in particular. The rapids have been running frequently at all times. They run, depending on the rapid service, every half an hour or thereabouts. Mr McGlinn may be able to provide some further detail there. What we are really talking about is the route bus services.

It really depends on which service you are talking about as well in terms of the frequency. Some of the streets have multiple different routes running on them and, because of that, you get your increased frequency as a result. Yes, we do want to try and extend the frequency further than what is currently provided, which is focused on the mornings on the Saturdays, so that we can provide better frequency of services, longer throughout the day, particularly on Saturdays.

In the network 19 implementation in 2019, we extended the span of services. The time that services run now goes much later into the night to enable more people to access services—people who are working late at night or going out to recreational areas late at night. Now the focus is on the frequency of services, and that will particularly look at the afternoon periods on a Saturday and into the evening. That is where we are at.

The focus in terms of objectives here is not just about the frequency but about the reliability. That was the fundamental reason why we put in place the interim bus timetable, to make sure that we prioritised reliability first. If the bus does not show up, that really affects someone's trust in their relying on the bus service to get around Canberra. If it does not show up, they will look at other modes of transport that may not be as sustainable.

What we have seen since we introduced, in October, the uplift on weekends with the more frequent Saturday route bus services is a very high reliability rate—99.5 per cent on average, which has been excellent. That is because of the work that Ian and the team have been doing to make sure we have enough bus drivers on board and trained to be able to deliver those services. We will not be further increasing the frequency of services until we can be absolutely sure that we can deliver that reliability rate throughout other times of the day.

MR PARTON: I would, in closing on that, personally congratulate, as a user, the individual drivers that I deal with on that network. From my experience, they go above and beyond, particularly in view of reliability and trying to make sure that people get to where they have to get to. I think they are doing well.

Mr McGlinn: Thanks.

Mr Steel: Thanks.

THE CHAIR: Great. Mr Davis, do you have a question about Tuggeranong?

MR DAVIS: I do. Minister, I received correspondence from a constituent who lives in an apartment building on the corner of Cowlshaw Street and Anketell Street in Tuggeranong who is concerned about what he describes as a recent decision to reroute buses into the depot in front of that block of apartments instead of where they had previously done it on Cowlshaw Street. He says, "This never used to happen. When we bought our property, the buses would drive down the other side of Cowlshaw

Street past the college or down Anketell Street past South.Point.” Neither of these routes have residential apartments along them. However, the buses have been rerouted from the depot to drive past units early in the morning. He complains of anywhere between 30 and 40 buses starting at 5 am and has suggested to me that he has written to a number of members and the department and is yet to receive a response.

MR PARTON: He got one from me.

MR DAVIS: There you go. What advice would you help me give this constituent?

Mr Steel: Following very extensive feedback from the community, including the Tuggeranong Community Council and members of the Assembly advocating for the rerouting of buses from Anketell Street to try and make that a more pedestrian-friendly zone, we did some transport planning as part of the network update that was introduced last year. That resulted in buses being rerouted off Anketell Street. They now run onto other streets around Tuggeranong, avoiding that particularly important area in central Tuggeranong. That was also supported by the businesses there that were concerned about the buses: the noise of the buses, the size of the buses, the diesel fumes coming off the buses.

The long-term plan is to transition every single one of our diesel and CNG buses to zero emissions buses. They are incredibly quiet, almost too quiet for some people. That will stop any fumes and will reduce noise in the area.

This is, fundamentally, an area where there is a bus interchange, and that is an incredibly important community facility for Tuggeranong. The bus interchange was there first. People then moved in, in various developments around the bus interchange. I appreciate that they may not have had as many buses running by them, but it was expected that services to that bus interchange would grow over time. We have made this change based on community feedback, and we will continue to listen to community feedback that comes in.

MR DAVIS: To be fair, though, my question did not have anything to do with the bus interchange; it had more to do with the decision to reroute buses going in and out of the depot alongside medium and high density residential apartments.

Mr Steel: The same principle applies.

MR DAVIS: That is right. I agree with the original decision made to not run buses down Anketell Street. I am curious to probe why the decision was not made to instead reroute buses down Cowlshaw Street, where, as this constituent identifies, there are not residential apartments. It probably would not cause as much concern.

Mr Steel: There are good reasons why that was the case. That was explored quite extensively. I will hand over to Mr McGlenn to talk through why there are challenges in relation to Cowlshaw.

Of course, that is a street where there is quite a bit of activity happening. There is the college on Cowlshaw Street; there is a community centre and an arts centre. There is a lot of activity happening along there, so it has some significant constraints. I will

allow Mr McGlinn to explain those.

Mr McGlinn: I have been speaking to the residents down along Cowlshaw Street and Anketell Street. I do not know whether the person who spoke to you directly is one of those people or not, but we have had some discussions around what has been taken into consideration. One thing is the new government office blocks along Athllon Drive that we are now servicing. We have been able to put some more bus stops along the front there—high-use stops, productivities. All the buses that are coming into Tuggeranong will now come up and around: come along Athllon Drive, go down, and then turn right into Anketell Street.

Between Anketell Street and Athllon Drive, Cowlshaw Street itself is quite a wide road. We have spoken to residents. There is a lot of traffic in there. There are a lot of driveways. There is a government department building. There is the club and the basketball area. The local residents were more concerned about accessibility across the area. We have been speaking with road safety and we have asked for a road safety audit, for pedestrian movements to be taken into consideration through there.

Another issue that was raised was that at times buses will lay over on Cowlshaw Street, at that top end that we have been talking about. We have put out a drivers notice to say that they cannot lay over on the street before 7 am or after 4 pm. That is to help with what they believe is the noise. There is a lot of other ambient noise in that area, because there are a lot of trucks delivering to facilities. It is a high-use street. There are a lot of cars going in and out of that government building as well.

MR DAVIS: To give full disclosure, I live on Cowlshaw Street myself, so I am aware.

Mr McGlinn: There you go. I am going to make it safer for you to cross.

MR DAVIS: Perfect. I appreciate that.

THE CHAIR: I would like to ask about the flexibus services. I have heard mixed reviews from people. I understand we have the special needs transport and the flexibus initiative. Can you dial those and have them arrive at your house at a certain time?

Mr McGlinn: They are not on a real-time system yet. That is something that we can look at. We are trying to design for a better level of predictability and shorten the booking times. The booking time arrangement is that you need two days. You can ring up and just say, “Listen, I have an emergency,” and we can see if we have a vehicle in the area.

THE CHAIR: When you say two days, does that mean that if I need a flexibus it will come sometime on Wednesday or Thursday?

Mr McGlinn: We will book the time for you.

THE CHAIR: So it comes at a certain time.

Mr McGlinn: Yes. We give you a window of opportunity, but not precisely. We will not say, “We’ll be there at 9.21.”

THE CHAIR: How big is the window?

Mr McGlinn: It is about half an hour. For some people, we will actually ring them. Some people using this service have genuine disabilities and need to get themselves geared up to come down to be near the front door. We will ring those people and say, “The bus is about 15 minutes away.” They can prepare themselves so that when the bus arrives, they have all their stuff ready and we can help them onto the bus.

THE CHAIR: The feedback I have had from people tends to be from older people who are not driving. That is exactly who should be using these services.

Mr McGlinn: Yes; that is what it is designed for.

THE CHAIR: They cannot walk a long way to a bus stop. This is our target market. The impression was that it was not really working for them because they would have appointments, they would be told to wait all morning and it was not reliable enough. They were told, “Just wait and we will come sometime on Friday morning.” That does not work when you have a specialist appointment you booked three months before and you need to get there on time.

Mr McGlinn: I totally agree.

THE CHAIR: So it is a 30-minute window? If you book it, it will be there within a 30-minute set time?

Mr McGlinn: Yes. If you can give me specifics, I am happy to have a look. There is a window of opportunity. Because they have a list of who they have on board, they can estimate it. If the bus has been rerouted following its SNT service, after it has dropped the special needs children off, we recycle some of those into this service. If you needed to get to Dickson and the bus was at Black Mountain School and you lived in Lyneham, we could say, “We have a 10-minute window of opportunity to pick you up; then we are going to go and pick up Mrs Jones in north Lyneham and then we will go over to Dickson. What time is your appointment?” They do ask them: “If you have an appointment, tell us what time the appointment is. We might pick you up first if we have five other people to pick up afterwards. It is not a one-for-one service.

THE CHAIR: It is not a taxi.

Mr McGlinn: It is not an individual service; it is one based in the area. But we can make adjustments. When somebody says, “I need to be here at that time,” perhaps I can reroute another bus on the way past, pick them up, and take them to that doctor appointment, specialist appointment or whatever it may be.

THE CHAIR: I will be happy to feed in directly to the individual.

Mr Steel: We are also looking at the future of the system. At the election, Labor committed to introducing an on-demand flexible bus service. Booking two days in

advance is not very convenient for many people. We have seen some trials. I think nine trials were undertaken in Sydney in relation to on-demand transport. We are looking at how we can potentially implement that in the ACT. There will be some planning undertaken over this year to explore those options, potentially with the use of an Uber-style app where you can book a service within a much more reasonable time frame and where, shortly before you get picked up, you can see the service coming to you and you know how far away it is. There would still be the option to call for a service for people who do not use mobile phones. We are looking at those options. They seem to be working quite effectively in other jurisdictions.

We have also rolled out the first of the low-floor accessible small buses in the fleet. There are two Hino Ponchos operating as part of the SNT fleet and the flexible bus service. They are similar to the ones that are being used in Ginninderry that you might be familiar with.

THE CHAIR: Yes, very familiar. That sounds like the right direction—more of an Uber service.

On the future planning for the flexibus services, we had a Kangara Waters automated bus trial recently. Are we looking at more automated bus services to increase our coverage, our network?

Mr Steel: I might invite John Bowdery to speak about the work we are doing in relation to automated transport. This is a national piece of work. There is work happening on motor accident injury insurance in relation to automatic vehicles across jurisdictions. There is also work nationally happening between transport ministers and officials in relation to a framework for the introduction of automated vehicles into Australia and potential national or harmonised legislation that might facilitate automated vehicles.

A number of trials have been undertaken here; that is not the only one that has been undertaken. We are home to the successful innovative company Seeing Machines, which does a lot of work in this area as well. John can provide some detail about that specific trial.

Mr Bowdery: I acknowledge the privilege statement. In terms of automated vehicle trials in particular, as the minister said, there is a lot of work happening nationally in this space to try and understand that. Within the transport strategy, we have identified automated vehicles and learning about automated vehicles as a priority for us. Opening up opportunities for this technology is really important. It will bring sustainability and, in particular, a great deal of efficiency to our transport network. It is a key priority.

There is a lot of excitement about automated vehicles. At the moment we are trying to develop an evaluation framework in which we can look at these trials and assess their impact and their contribution so that we can take the maximum amount of learning out of what is a limited network and a limited opportunity overall. If we invited all trials to come, the impact of each individual trial would not be as great as we might hope. We are working through that evaluation framework at the moment. We hope to have it in place towards the latter half of this year, which will allow us to guide

through that.

It is important, though, to talk about the national context around these trials. There is an enormous amount of work going on between jurisdictions to share learning and to share opportunities as to how we might engage with some of these. A lot of that goes on. It might be that a trial occurs in New South Wales or Queensland and we can take that learning without running that trial ourselves.

A second point the minister alluded to is the work which is happening nationally around the safety of automated vehicles and bringing those into Australia as a whole. The commonwealth holds authority over the Australian design rules, which will regulate the standards that these vehicles need to meet. Separately, there is a much bigger piece of work which is looking at the regulatory environment to ensure that the vehicles, once imported into Australia, are safe for use on our roads. People are currently going through work to develop that legislation, to develop the regulation that will go around it. We anticipate that at the moment there is probably a four-year time frame to ensure that there is a degree of consensus across Australia and the technology can be managed and implemented safely. Safety will always be the key driver in terms of introducing that technology.

While there will be trials involving particular technology, it is important that we get the proper regulatory environment to ensure the safety of those vehicles before they become mainstream and embedded within the transport network.

THE CHAIR: They will all be electric, I am assuming?

Mr Bowdery: I think that is a fair assumption.

THE CHAIR: Yes, I would hope so.

MR PARTON: Minister, can we talk about the replacement bus services provided in January this year along the Capital Metro corridor between Dickson interchange and Gungahlin Place. Why were those services provided by Qcity and not by Transport Canberra buses?

Mr Steel: Significant work has been occurring and will be occurring over a seven-month period in relation to the installation of the new Mitchell light rail stop, which is known as the Sandford Street stop. There will be periods of disruption that will require replacement bus services. There is another period coming up on 13 and 14 March which will require some replacement services. They will be operating in a slightly different way from the arrangements in the previous period you mentioned.

There are a certain number of bus drivers and a certain number of buses available to Transport Canberra. They are utilised across our transport timetable and network. When we need to deliver extra services, we need to bring in extra buses and extra bus drivers. In this case, it made sense to flex up using an external provider of services through Qcity. There has been quite a bit of enjoyment from using the double-decker bus that was available as part of the replacement services.

They are provided for a short period. The future growth of the Transport Canberra

network will be supported through government-owned buses and government-employed bus drivers, but in this specific case, it has been contracted in to support us during this period of construction.

I will hand over to Jo Dawson to provide more detail.

Ms Dawson: I have read and acknowledge the privilege statement. As the minister said, the important thing during rail replacement is to maintain a reliable and available service for our customers. This is the first planned disruption we have had with construction on the light rail network. We closely consulted with Ian McGlenn and bus operations to ensure that we would have sufficient buses and drivers to maintain that level of reliability during rail replacement.

During rail replacement, we ran more frequent services to make sure we maintained capacity equivalent to light rail. With the advice of bus operations, and utilising the existing support contract we had with Qcity, which supports us with other special events, the decision was made to utilise them and to work collaboratively with Canberra Metro operations, the transport officers and Ian's support staff, and to maintain that frequent service during rail replacement to look after our customers.

MR PARTON: How do the arrangements change for albeit a smaller disruption this month? How do they change for that disruption in terms of the replacement services?

Ms Dawson: For the 13th and 14th, we are utilising Qcity again, using their DDA-compliant fleet to provide services along the alignment while the canopy of the light rail stop is craned in as part of construction. Those services operated successfully during the two-week shutdown. We have taken some feedback, working with bus operations and light rail operations, to tweak the timetable slightly to make sure we hit early services and support customers to continue that frequency during the weekend service. We are running on about a 7½ or eight-minute frequency rather than the normal 15-minute frequency.

MR PARTON: Obviously, this all comes at a cost. Minister, are you able to tell me how much the replacement Dickson and Gungahlin services provided in January cost the ACT taxpayer?

Mr Steel: I will ask Duncan Edghill or Ashley Cahif to provide some further detail.

Mr Edghill: We might need to go back and get the exact numbers. Could we take that on notice?

MR PARTON: Yes.

Mr Edghill: Within the budget for establishing the new stop in Sandford Street in Mitchell, part of the budgeting exercise involved including the cost of bus replacement services, so it is within the total budget of the project.

MR PARTON: Were any steps taken to ensure that passengers on the replacement services in January provided correct COVID-19 contact tracing information to ACT authorities? I ask that because only New South Wales government QR codes were

provided on the buses that I rode in. All the material on the buses referred to New South Wales services.

Ms Dawson: For contact tracing, we would normally be utilising MyWay ticketing data where possible, from tapping on and tapping off. We were encouraging the public, where possible, to register their cards. Because the bus services were provided for free during our rail replacement services, we do not have that tap on, tap off data. In the event of any community transmission, we would identify the time of day and provide information from our normal Transport Canberra contact information and through our web channels.

I will look to make sure that we cover any QR codes for any future rail replacement services, but if any stickers were left on board, I apologise for that.

MR PARTON: A constituent wanted me to ask whether it was mandatory for face masks to be worn on these replacement services? The notices on the bus, which were NSW Transport notices, suggested that it was.

Ms Dawson: Again, a lot of signage was removed from the New South Wales buses prior to rail replacement services; there may have been some that were left on. It was not mandatory, no.

THE CHAIR: I will ask one more question that Minister Steel will have to answer yes or no to, because we do not have much time. In the last sittings, I asked you whether you could confirm that we would be providing bus, light rail, minibus or shuttle bus to every single new suburb and subdivision. I got a lot of detail about some great things we have done in the past, but can you confirm, yes or no, whether every new estate will have accessible public transport from the very first day people move in?

Mr Steel: I said no. They will be provided with transport services, absolutely. We are planning to do that as early as possible in the life of the suburb so that people can establish good patterns of behaviour in public transport use.

I noted the example of Ginninderry. We have partnered with Ginninderry to deliver a bus service very early in the life of that suburb—not from day one but when a sufficient number of people are living there to justify the delivery of that service. That has been very successful.

We are looking at potential future partnerships for future suburbs. Whitlam is one of those; we look to provide bus services there. Some infrastructure is required to enable us to deliver services in certain suburbs. That includes the northern suburbs of Molonglo, Whitlam and future suburbs. They will need the bridge to be built in order to have a connection through to the Molonglo commercial centre, Cooleman Court and further south of the Molonglo River.

In the case of Lawson, stage 2 will need to be built for us to provide a bus service through that suburb, because of the constraints of the road geometry. In the interim, we have provided bus stops on streets next to Lawson and we are looking at putting in a footpath as soon as we can, to provide better access to those bus stops.

In each circumstance, it will be different. We will look to provide those services as soon as we can, to provide better access to bus stops.

THE CHAIR: I am assuming that if people can drive in, a shuttle bus would be able to get in. That should be acceptable.

Mr Steel: Our buses are quite long. They have got longer over time, which has been a problem for housing them in our depots. They do need a certain amount of road space, and certain roads are better than others to ensure that they can operate effectively. While they can operate across Coppins Crossing at the moment, it is not ideal. The bridge will provide a much more reliable piece of infrastructure. We can then plan and timetable a route south from Whitlam. We are looking at what the options might be in the interim before the bridge is built; we look forward to updating the Assembly on that as it progresses.

THE CHAIR: We might run into trouble with Lawson stage 2. We heard yesterday that there does not seem to be any end date for that. That apparently is sometime in the future. We have had two failed tenders. There is not a clear answer on when that might happen. If we are waiting for Lawson stage 2 before we get good public services routes in there—

Mr Steel: We will continue to work closely with the Suburban Land Agency on the timing of land release, but at the moment, there are bus services that are provided adjacent to the suburb on surrounding streets.

MR PARTON: Minister, I thought that the Ginninderry transport services were provided pretty much at the time the first residents moved in.

Mr Steel: Yes.

MR PARTON: It was not after a certain period. I think they were dismayed that it was not the exact same day, but they only missed it by a week or so.

Mr Steel: Yes, it was very early. Where we can get in, we do it as early as possible. That is where we want to go. But we need to make sure they are being used. When I went out there for the launch, quite a large number of homes had been built out there. We are not talking about a small number of people.

I do not think anyone is living out in Whitlam at the moment, so we have a bit of time to plan the future of services to that suburb. We will be using that time to work out what the best solution is in the interim while the bridge is being built.

THE CHAIR: We will suspend.

Short suspension.

Appearances:

Barr, Mr Andrew, Chief Minister, Treasurer, Minister for Climate Action, Minister for Economic Development and Minister for Tourism

City Renewal Authority

Snow, Mr Malcolm, Chief Executive Officer

Gillman, Mr Craig, Chief Operating Officer

Suburban Land Agency

Dietz, Mr John, Chief Executive Officer

THE CHAIR: The committee now welcomes the Chief Minister, in his capacity as minister with responsibility for the City Renewal Authority. Thank you for coming in this morning. When witnesses first speak, could you please acknowledge that you have read and understand the privilege statement. That would be very helpful for the record. We will be taking questions on the City Renewal Authority statement of intent and the Suburban Land Agency statement of intent as it relates to declared urban renewal sites.

I will begin with the first question. I note that we have had a lot of city renewal in Civic CBD, but obviously we have a lot more CBDs around. Belconnen is certainly in need of a refresh. We have had a lot of pubs and bars come and go. We have a new gallery there, which is great. We have bits and pieces, but things are not joining together, necessarily. We have the Belconnen bikeway, but the access to that is a bit impeded by the fact that cars have to drive across it to access the fast food. There are some difficulties with pedestrian access getting up to those recreational facilities. I am wondering whether Canberra has a bit of a plan for city renewal expansions in other CBDs.

Mr Barr: The legislation allows for new precincts to be declared, but there are no plans at this point for new precincts to be declared.

THE CHAIR: Do you think that might be something that we would do at some stage?

Mr Barr: It is feasible in the future. If there were to be a renewal authority for each town centre then we would need to invest hundreds of millions of dollars in order to resource those. So the priority has been the CBD and the light rail corridor. There have been similar calls for Woden, Tuggeranong, Gungahlin and Jamison, and Dickson, obviously, as part of this particular—

MR PARTON: Tharwa.

Mr Barr: There is also Cooleman Court and Mawson. We cannot have a renewal authority for every single precinct in the ACT. Those that fall outside the dedicated areas are the responsibility of either planning or Transport Canberra and City Services, principally. The City Renewal Authority's precinct is defined in legislation and it is obviously the principal focus for this agency.

MS ORR: The upgrades to City Walk: how have the reactions been to those?

Mr Barr: Very positive. It was clearly a project that required a significant amount of consultation and engagement with businesses in the precinct, in order to minimise disruption. I think they have benefited from being able to be undertaken in a way that did not impede access to shopfronts within the immediate precinct. The bulk of work was able to occur during, I guess, peak COVID, when there was not a lot of foot traffic and activity within the CBD, and the timing of the opening was such that it has worked well with the re-emergence of a significant amount of foot traffic in that area. The feedback from businesses and users of the precinct is very positive and it is very clear that there are more people utilising the space and dwelling in the area than was the case prior to the upgrades.

MS ORR: What are the businesses in the area? How are they responding to those upgrades?

Mr Barr: There has been a very positive response. There are a number of businesses that have relocated into that area. Clearly, there is a renewal underway. That has been led by some major national tenants moving in, particularly into the Centrepunkt building. That has activated a number of parts of that building that were previously underutilised and had been empty for some time. So there certainly appears to be a correlation between investment decisions of the private sector and the decisions that the City Renewal Authority have made after consultation with property owners on complementary upgrades.

MS ORR: Why were the upgrades important, and what do they add to the space?

Mr Barr: They obviously rejuvenate an area that has had some difficulty in attracting people. They have provided a level of amenity that allows and really encourages people to stay longer. Adding new lawns and significant additional plantings into what was otherwise a very paving and concrete-focused area has, amongst other things, reduced the heat island effect in that particular precinct and allowed for a range of different spaces for people to utilise at different times of the day. So it is an important small-scale but practical example of a public works project. It is not only creating jobs but it was sourced, in terms of procurement, through an Indigenous supply company, Rork Projects, which won the tender and provided a really first-class project and outcome for the city.

MR PARTON: I might, as part of the old pal farewell tour, pass my question to Mr Coe.

Mr Barr: One last time, talking about city renewal.

MR COE: That is right. What is the CRA's scope or vision for Braddon?

Mr Barr: There are a number of projects that are underway within the Braddon precinct. By "Braddon", do you mean the commercial precinct or also Haig Park and the public spaces?

MR COE: Yes, commercial; so west of Torrens Street.

Mr Barr: Yes.

MR COE: What is in the remit of the CRA as opposed to all the other government agencies?

Mr Barr: The CRA is coordinating precinct works within Braddon, and that includes an appropriation to undertake capital works improvements. Those works improvements will include investment in improving footpaths, street furniture, plantings, lighting and other safety improvements within, initially, the Lonsdale Street precinct. It will also include better pedestrian connectivity to Haig Park that builds on the Haig Park improvements that have included better pedestrian access, lighting, improving the maintenance of the park and addressing sight lines and other community safety concerns. There is a specific pavilion renewal project associated with the old works depot in Haig Park.

On Lonsdale Street the works will be minor in nature so as not to be disruptive to businesses during the COVID recovery, but will include two mid-block pedestrian crossings north and south of the roundabout on Lonsdale and Elouera streets, and pedestrian connectivity improvements, as I have mentioned, to Haig Park at the north end and then at the southern end into the CBD. There will be improvements to plantings. There are bits of the footpath that are public land that will be improved. There has also obviously been a program as developers have renewed particular blocks. They have been required to bring the footpath and public realm up to an agreed standard. That is the process that has been underway. There will be more works undertaken in the 2021-22 fiscal year and the authority is, as I understand it, about to undertake some further consultation on the very fine detail of the proposed projects.

I have given guidance based on my own view and the feedback that I have had from businesses that the public works should not be disruptive. I have advised the authority that it should not be undertaking long, expensive, arduous public works that will restrict access to businesses in the street. So they will be doing fairly short, sharp interventions that get an outcome quickly and minimise disruption in the street.

MR COE: Does the CRA actually sell any land?

Mr Barr: The CRA can. It has not, at this point, but it does have a couple of blocks that are clearly part of the Indicative Land Release Program, either for this fiscal year or next.

MR COE: Going to the more substantive part of my question, why is it that the SLA sold Braddon Place rather than the CRA?

Mr Barr: Interesting question.

Mr Gillman: It was before my time, but it was a legacy of the asset recycling initiative. It had been flagged at that point—I am looking at John to confirm—as an asset recycling initiative project, and it did not really make sense to transition it once

that project had ceased.

MR COE: I understand, but it was sold in mid-2020. The marketing all began in 2020. This is a fair time after the—

Mr Barr: It is still part of the asset recycling initiative.

MR COE: I realise that technically that is right, but you have a city renewal agency that is charged with responsibility for, and has this great vision for, the city and Braddon, and then you have a whole new website dedicated to Braddon hanging off the SLA's website with no links whatsoever into the CRA. To me it seems as if it is undercutting the purpose of the CRA.

Mr Barr: I will take that on board. I do not think it will be an issue going forward, as the asset recycling initiative has expired, but thank you for raising it. I will take that on board.

MR COE: I am guessing there are other ACT government assets in the CRA remit, either in Braddon or on the other side of Northbourne, or—

Mr Barr: Land assets?

MR COE: Yes, property assets that at some point may well be sold. That is just the nature of—

Mr Barr: Yes. There is one current example of that.

MR COE: Yes, so what role is the CRA going to have with regard to the sale and developing the scope for that block—the release conditions?

Mr Barr: Malcolm, would you like to talk to that?

Mr Snow: I have read the privilege statement. I thank the member for the question. The CRA does have ACT government land assets under its care and responsibility. A number of those currently sit under, or are managed by, other directorates—for example, the large surface car parks that are around London Circuit. Surface car parks are managed by TCCS, which receives the parking revenue for that. But as we all know, at some point in Canberra's continued growth those will be development sites. Indeed one of those sites, the large surface car park next to the courts opposite the Melbourne Building, is currently out for an expression of interest. Our other property assets are picked up through the Indicative Land Release Program, as the Chief Minister has just said. Not all of them, but certainly those that are in the forward years have been identified.

Another example would be that the government has made the decision to retain a two-hectare site immediately adjoining the site reserved for the UNSW in Reid. Of course, the other significant site that will be a major catalyst for renewal in the city centre is Acton waterfront. But there will be no further development there, or no initial development there, until at least the middle of the decade.

MR COE: What about the city west bus layover facility? Has the lease already been signed with the ANU?

Mr Snow: Thank you for the question, Mr Coe. The settlement with the ANU on what is called the ANU exchange site agreement is in April this year. I think it is around 22 April. That site, a very prominent corner site, and two other smaller sites, are due for settlement at that time. The agreement with the ANU is that they would, with reasonable haste, then proceed with development of that site, but we have also agreed that in the interim, once that settlement has occurred, that will be turned into a temporary urban park at their cost.

MR COE: I am guessing that the original intention by the ANU was a mixed-use facility, probably with a lot of student accommodation; is that right?

Mr Snow: You are probably correct, but I would say that as part of the university's own due diligence, as part of that sale, they shared with us some of their intentions. Indeed it was an obligation on them that, as part of that agreement, they tell us their future intentions vis-a-vis uses. At this stage it will be primarily university uses, with a residential component, possibly, but they have also talked about a number of other university-related uses that could potentially be integrated on that site.

MR COE: When you say "residential", do you mean university accommodation, built to rent, or do you mean potentially a unit title and sold?

Mr Snow: No, university accommodation, possibly for graduates and families, and perhaps a different offer from the mix of other accommodation they have on campus.

MR COE: Is that likely to be put on hold, given the state of university student numbers?

Mr Barr: Ultimately, that is a matter for the ANU.

MR COE: Is there a lease condition that they must commence in a certain time?

Mr Snow: I believe there is, and I think what was agreed was within five years of settlement.

MR COE: Will that become a rateable property as of late April?

Mr Snow: Once settlement has gone through, they would—as they do with all their property assets—start to pay all due taxes.

MR COE: Will that be at the full value, according to that lease, or will it be at the value of a park?

Mr Snow: No, it has been deemed that the sale to the university would be on the basis that it is for university purposes only, so it is not at the full commercial rate; it is at the rate that is already set between the territory government and the university for that category of use.

MR COE: Most of the other land will be commonwealth land, and therefore treated differently to most other university land. So this may well be different to some of the other university properties, I would imagine.

Mr Barr: Conceivably, yes.

MR COE: Therefore I wonder how that valuation is going to occur, in light of it being purely ACT land rather than in that federal jurisdiction.

Mr Snow: The negotiations with the university around the sale figure have already occurred, and the advice from the urban renewal section of EPSDD, which handled the direct sale process on our behalf, was that they were adopting the policies that had previously been applied to similar transactions with the university.

MR COE: I am not advocating one way or the other; I am just curious as to how it would be valued.

THE CHAIR: I am interested in the City Renewal Authority grants, contractors, supplies and services. We have about \$7.9 million there. How much of that was provided to contractors versus in-house?

Mr Snow: I will ask Mr Gillman to respond to that.

Mr Gillman: I omitted to confirm that I have read the privilege statement. We have spent about \$4 million on consultants across the financial year. That is, significantly, design consultants—Hames Sharley on Acton waterfront and Oxigen on City Walk. They are principally design-related consultancies.

THE CHAIR: Were there open tender processes to find those consultants?

Mr Gillman: Depending on the value, yes, typically. If they were less than \$25,000 they could be direct-sourced.

THE CHAIR: So you followed the guidelines?

Mr Gillman: Followed the guidelines.

THE CHAIR: There were no variations in those guidelines?

Mr Gillman: No. We had a couple of exceptions to those guidelines, which get published in the procurement register. Off the top of my head, I think we had two exceptions in the last year, which were approved by the CEO under the procurement act.

THE CHAIR: You are not sure which ones they were?

Mr Barr: We will take those on notice.

THE CHAIR: Yes, thanks. We are interested in how you go about finding those consultants—where they come from. You are often going externally—to other parts

of Australia—and it looks like we are hiring a lot of design consultants. We are wondering whether we need more in-house expertise in this area.

Mr Snow: It was the government's intention from the very outset of the creation of the authority that it would remain small, agile and nimble—I think that was the term—and that is why a significant part of our operating and capex budgets are on the engagement of consultants to assist us. That is not to say that we do not have in-house design expertise. We have a number of designers with the ability to produce designs, but at the same time we have an ambitious program, and we look to source and secure the very best design advice we can, given the importance of our program.

THE CHAIR: I do appreciate a small and humble authority; that is great. Circling back to some questions that Mr Coe was asking before about the Lonsdale Street area, I assume we got some design consultants there. Have we had a look at turning that into a one-way, and perhaps using some of the shared-zone building design that we have elsewhere? Is that what we are doing?

Mr Barr: Yes, that has been examined. A one-way street is not proposed, but the issue has been examined.

THE CHAIR: Examined and dismissed?

Mr Barr: Yes, at this point.

THE CHAIR: Why was that?

Mr Snow: I have worked in many cities that have looked at or examined one-way. I actually believe that one-way streets are counterintuitive to creating great streets. What has happened in the city centre recently is that speed limits have been dropped to 40 kilometres. Certainly, the long-term intention is to improve the median of Lonsdale Street—not yet. As the Chief Minister said, that is for a later stage.

Certainly, if we can get speed limits down and we encourage a different behaviour by drivers, particularly car drivers, there is no reason why the available carriageway width cannot accommodate cars, cyclists and pedestrians. That is the experience from similar treatments in other cities, and we are confident that that design solution will achieve the better balance between the different travel modes that are important to that precinct.

THE CHAIR: But we already have a design solution like that at the edge of Civic, where we have a slow speed, and we have all the paint and the signage on the road that is all designed to make cars drive slowly. That gives pedestrian and cyclist access. Are we not using that kind of treatment?

Mr Snow: I do not think that we need to necessarily paint things on the pavement. I think that we can change driver behaviours and actually get that balance, as I said, by slowing cars down and introducing physical changes which change the psychology of people using the street. That has been shown to work, as I said, in many other similar districts with that combination of things. It is really important, we think, in Lonsdale Street, that we have cars. Cars can be retained as long as they are managed

well, but certainly cars and access to kerbside parking is a really important part of the ongoing success of that part of the city centre.

THE CHAIR: I am sure you have much more up-to-date information than I have, but I remember when the Civic redesign happened. The reason for that was that it opened up the pedestrian access. The traders loved it because it brought more business in. It did all the things I imagine we are trying to do in Braddon. That was seen to be the best practice. Is that no longer best practice?

Mr Snow: The view that we have formed, based upon the best technical advice we can get, and based upon experience, as I said, at other locations, is that this treatment of the cross-section, the introduction of new pedestrian crossings—that rebalancing that I talked about—is well matched to both the uses and activities for Braddon. Braddon, for us, is a very special part of the city centre, and the design approach we have taken is to touch the ground lightly, if I could describe it as that. We do not want to alter detrimentally what is already working very well in that part of Braddon. Lonsdale Street is a great street, and we have to be very careful about any interventions.

THE CHAIR: I agree; it is a great street. It is a fairly hazardous street to navigate, on foot or by bike. Recently, a staff member got run over by a garbage truck right there. It is pretty high risk. From my uneducated eye, when I look at other treatments that we have elsewhere in this city rather than other cities, I can see other things that I think would work better. I am pleased that it was considered, at least. I am glad it has been considered. I would encourage further consideration. Crossings are great, but crossings do not really help if somebody is not on that crossing light thing. I have seen some better design that I think we have had 10 years ago. I will hand over to Ms Orr.

MS ORR: On the Haig Park markets, what role has the CRA been playing in the establishment of those markets?

Mr Snow: Only a minimal role. The producers of that market did apply for a CCMIL grant. They were unsuccessful, but we reached out to them and said, “Look, we would be delighted to support you with this initiative.” We think it is a great initiative. It did not quite meet the criteria for a CCMIL grant. Certainly, my staff have been in direct contact, both prior to the commencement of the markets and during their operation. It has been a great boost to Haig Park, but it is consistent with our approach, which is that we should not continue out of the public purse forever the funding of the upgrading of Haig Park. There comes a point in renewal where, once we have started the movement—in this case in a space that was particularly underutilised, where we have now made really strong, new connections between the community and that space—we step back and let the community come in and, together with other entrepreneurs, of which the market operators are an example, take over the activation of that important public space.

MS ORR: You said you reached out to them. What support have you been providing them with?

Mr Snow: Helping them to navigate the red tape, if I could be so bold. They perhaps were unfamiliar with the way government approvals work, so it was very much a case

of offering them assistance in relation to gaining their approvals as easily and as straightforwardly as possible. I know they have come back to my staff and said, “Could you help with this particular issue?” We have been very pleased to do that.

MS ORR: What has been the reaction so far from visitors to the markets?

Mr Snow: I was there last Sunday doing a short media interview. It was a magnificent day, with a great selection of stalls and all age groups, including pets and children. I was delighted with what I experienced. Clearly, the linkage between the location where the markets were established and Braddon is a very deliberate thing on our part. Diversifying the experiences that people can have in that part of the city is really important. It is a really important green space in our precinct, and we want to make sure not only that more people use it but that the connections and linkages—going back to Ms Clay’s comment—are strengthened and improved, and are safe.

Mr Barr: Given that it started life as a wind break—that is what it was built for—and that it was, at one point, ranked the least safe public space in Canberra by many public safety surveys, it is now at a point where people feel comfortable. There are more people utilising that park than in the 40 years I have been living in Canberra, for three years now. So it is well on its way, but I think there is more that we can do, and that is why there are some extra projects underway, including the better pedestrian linkage at the top of Lonsdale Street to connect into the existing park infrastructure. The new community pavilion project will see, in the old works depot, the barbed wire come down and it will become a place that people can use.

Mr Snow: I am pleased to report that an ACT women’s network group who have been monitoring the history of Haig Park have reported that, for the last six months, there have been no reported incidents within that park, compared to previously, when it was, as the Chief Minister said, one of the highest reported areas of assault, crime and other issues that required police attendance.

MS ORR: Will the markets become permanent?

Mr Snow: Based on their early success, I would hope so, because it is a great utilisation of that space. We have to be extremely careful that we do not do anything, nor do those people using the park, to impact upon the heritage values. We are not allowed to dig holes in the park. We are not allowed to do a whole series of things under the conservation management plan that we prepared and which is now being endorsed by the ACT Heritage Council. So, accepting all of those constraints, there is still a great range of things that can happen in that park, as our experimental program showed. The community did respond to that very positively.

MR PARTON: Has the City Renewal Authority done any work on obtaining feedback from the community, from levy payers, about the Heart + Soul campaign?

Mr Snow: Thank you for that question, Mr Parton. The answer is yes. We are still going through that work. It is really important that the marketing dimension of our renewal is something that we have been focusing on, particularly over the last 12 months. It has to be marketing for effect and it has to be marketing that actually changes perceptions of our precinct as a place particularly for investment attraction,

but also something that, as the Chief Minister said a moment ago, drives more people to our precinct not only to shop, but also to experience everything else that it has to offer.

The Heart + Soul campaign grew directly out of the post-COVID recovery effort. It was our attempt. We think—anecdotally, and yet to be confirmed through the further survey work that we will be doing—that the campaign has achieved its target. The Canberra Centre is reporting back to us that customer numbers are as high as they were in pre-COVID times and, in fact, on some weekends higher. That would indicate that that particular campaign has achieved its aim, which is to drive footfall back to the city centre, but, more particularly, to support small businesses who were doing it tough through that period.

MR PARTON: What were the costs of the videos that were produced as a part of that campaign?

Mr Snow: I do not have the information in front of me, but I would be very pleased to provide it to you separately.

MR PARTON: All right. Additionally, I would love to know where those videos were advertised and what their reach was.

Mr Snow: Yes.

MR PARTON: You may have to take this on notice, too: how much was spent on the social media influencer program?

Mr Snow: I will take all of those questions on notice, if I may, and provide you with the detailed figures.

MR PARTON: Excellent.

MR COE: You were not approached to assist?

MR PARTON: No, I was not. My phone is always open, or you can just message me on TikTok, if you want.

Mr Snow: I should add that we have our own videographer on staff. He has all of the equipment.

MR PARTON: Okay; so do I.

Mr Snow: On many occasions we ask him to produce that material.

MR PARTON: That is handy to know.

Mr Barr: You are a one-man media outfit!

MR PARTON: We try, despite the great budget that we have in our non-executive offices, Mr Barr.

Mr Barr: I know; yes.

MR COE: Supporting independent media.

THE CHAIR: Mr Coe?

MR COE: With regard to how the SLA prices land—

Mr Barr: It is not in this session. This relates to urban infill projects, not general SLA land pricing.

MR COE: I understand.

Mr Barr: Okay.

MR COE: With regard to pricing land, how do you establish a market value for a renewal site, noting that often there are other caveats on the site, such as affordable housing and the like, in light of pretty much the mandate for selling at market value?

Mr Dietz: I have read and acknowledge the privilege statement. The valuation process for all of our sites, both infill and greenfields, ensures that we gain independent market valuations from valuers. Those valuations are informed by any information that may restrict what is able to be completed on the land. Therefore all of the information that would be provided in a tender for an infill site, including affordability requirements, would be provided to the valuer and that information would inform the valuation that is provided.

MR COE: But in terms of that time line, when is the valuation undertaken?

Mr Dietz: It would depend on the release methodology, and we would value it as close as possible to the point before we close the book. That would depend on whether it is an auction or a tender. If it is an auction, it is completed before the reserve price is set prior to the auction.

MR COE: It has been put to me that, with some of the larger urban renewal sites, if it is pretty much a blank canvas then maybe the valuation of the reserve will hold up, but when all of these additional caveats are put on those sites it then makes the site uneconomic compared to the reserve. I gather that was one of the contributing factors to the sale being quite a lengthy process. Is that your understanding and, if so, are there any changes or improvements that need to be made to that valuation process for the setting of the reserve?

Mr Dietz: No. I am confident that the restrictions—for example, affordability et cetera—which do affect the usage of the site and therefore the valuation, are captured in the valuations that we have. I can agree with you, though, that industry does not always agree with the prices and the valuations that we provide.

MR COE: For a large site like Braddon Place, how many valuations would you get?

Mr Dietz: We get at least two. If we have further questions on those valuations, sometimes we may get a third.

MR COE: Do you average those or do you pick one?

Mr Dietz: It is specific to the site. We have a valuations team which work firstly with the valuers. If there is a discrepancy between the two valuers then they would ensure that both valuers were fully informed of all the information and had taken it into account. Often values are still within five per cent or so. My independent team will then make a recommendation based on the view of the valuers. As delegate, I would make the final call.

MR COE: At any point does the board get involved in any of these decisions?

Mr Dietz: The board get involved in the release methodology. They do not get involved in the approval of the valuation price.

THE CHAIR: I will circle back because I am finding it very difficult to understand the different principles in place. We have pedestrian priority and low speed limits on the edge of Civic in an area that we are trying to activate with shops and cafes. We have had that established for a decade now, for quite some time, and it has worked really well. There are a lot of particular design features that were hot at the time and are now quite well indoctrinated. We are not looking at that kind of design for Braddon at all; we have already dismissed it.

Mr Barr: I would not characterise it in that way, no. I think most of the principles are around slower speed and providing safe passage for pedestrians, both north-south and east-west. The next phase of infrastructure works improve both connectivity at the southern end of the precinct that attaches to the city and the future QIC development site that is the surface car park opposite the BP service station and the Cooyong Centre. Obviously, that is slated for development as well. It is from the eastern side of Genge Street that then becomes Lonsdale and then on the western side that has the Greek restaurant on the corner, from either side of the road, heading north. The east-west connectivity at the moment on Lonsdale Street is principally at the roundabout on Elouera Street.

What is proposed is two additional east-west crossings, one in the southern half and another in the northern half. Then at the top, where Lonsdale Street meets Girrahween and that forms the border with Haig Park, there will be the other pedestrian access point. Along the duration of the street, though, there will be works undertaken to remove some of the clutter. There is some historic post signage et cetera. Countering that, though, has been a need to put in more bicycle parking, more seating and the like.

Part of the decluttering has freed up space to enable more use of the pedestrian access point, noting that, depending on the building, there may be a setback of outdoor space. That is most common on the part north of the roundabout. There is Lonsdale Street Roasters. There is a whole section that has an outdoor area that does not encroach on the dedicated walkway on the western side of the northern precinct of the street. On the eastern side, where the new buildings are, they still obviously have outdoor seating, but they are required to keep a sufficient space that enables pedestrians to go

through. The preferred street for the trunk cycling route is, in fact, Mort Street, not Lonsdale.

THE CHAIR: So separated cycling down Mort Street, separated from—

Mr Barr: Yes, down Mort Street. There is more room on Mort Street and it better connects into the existing city network.

THE CHAIR: Mr Snow, when you were talking us through all these designs and works that we were going to do, you mentioned that we would like to reduce speed limits. Are we not going to yet?

Mr Barr: No, we are going to. I have asked for that to occur.

THE CHAIR: Great.

Mr Barr: Either to 30 or 20, depending on advice from TCCS, but that is my preference. How I would summarise our approach here is that it is incremental. What I am endeavouring to do this year is to have the lowest cost, least disruptive interventions in terms of public works. I do not want the street to be a construction site in a COVID recovery year.

I have been very clear with the authority that we are not going to spend the next two years and \$8 million digging up Lonsdale Street and making it a construction zone. The interventions are going to be light touch for the next period. We will have a further consideration once that work is complete, probably in 2023, as to what else we might do. But I want time for lower speed limits and better pedestrian connectivity to be embedded before we undertake any further public works.

I am also very conscious that the available budget needs to stretch to do the work in Mort Street that is necessary, as well as other parts of the renewal precinct. For example, in Dickson we have a Woolley Street project that is also going to take place in a roughly similar time frame to the Braddon work.

MR COE: With the easement that goes down the western side of Mort Street—that very wide easement which I gather was a public transport easement back in the day—what does it get used for? Obviously, there is a bit of parking there, in part.

Mr Snow: Yes.

MR COE: But it is deep.

Mr Barr: Yes. That is why Mort Street is preferred.

Mr Snow: It is. When we commissioned this work, Mr Coe, we asked our consultants to not just look at specific streets but to step back and look at the entire Braddon mixed-use precinct. They have already started to think about, for that side of Mort Street, how we might carefully reclaim parts of that very wide asphalt area. As you know, that shows potential for us to reinstate that very strong tree reserve that runs from Bunda Street all the way to Haig Park. It was originally set aside as a tree

reserve, not as a rail reserve. The rail reserve was in Lonsdale Street under the original Griffin plan. Certainly, in our concept planning work it would appear, subject to advice from TCCS, who manage the parking in the city, that there is scope to reclaim asphalt for more green amenity.

MR COE: Going to the SLA, would you please give an update of the sorts of issues that would be discussed in the litigation updates aspect of the board meetings?

Mr Dietz: Thank you for the question. The litigation updates in our board meetings would usually be a discussion of disputes or other litigation topics that may have occurred that the SLA is dealing with at the time.

MR COE: What is the nature of some of those issues?

Mr Dietz: At a very high level, they can be legacy issues that the SLA is dealing with.

MR COE: ATO or other issues?

Mr Dietz: None that I am aware of specifically with the ATO. Some may be around tax-type issues; others are around tender-type issues from years before.

MR COE: How many of these risks are reflected in the SLA accounts?

Mr Dietz: We work very closely with the Government Solicitor's office. At the end of each year, moving into the accounts, they provide us with an exposure estimate for the litigation, and that is captured in the accounts.

MR COE: What is that exposure at the moment?

Mr Dietz: I do not have the number off the top of my head, but I am happy to take that on notice.

MR COE: If you could. Generally speaking, are there currently any historical systemic issues, such as an issue with a type of contract that got rolled out dozens of times, or are we talking about one-offs?

Mr Dietz: It is more diverse one-offs.

MR COE: Is there any one risk that is particularly significant or is it just cumulatively being worthy of the board's time?

Mr Dietz: Cumulatively they are worthy of the board's time.

MR COE: Yes.

Mr Dietz: I think that litigation is a risk that, in many cases, is worthy of any board's time.

MR COE: As an example, what is the size of one of these litigations? What is the litigant looking for? As a ballpark, are we talking \$200,000 or are we talking

\$10 million?

Mr Dietz: I think there is a very ranging degree between what a litigant is looking for and what, through working with the GSO, our exposure is captured at, based on the legal arguments of the two.

MR COE: But there are individual litigations where claimants are looking for over \$1 million, or millions?

Mr Dietz: Yes.

MR COE: How long has the longest one been drawn out, just roughly?

Mr Dietz: I would say roughly three to five years; longer than three years. That is not for the length of the dispute; that is from when the event happened that is now under dispute.

MR COE: Do you use SLA lawyers, the Government Solicitor or external lawyers?

Mr Dietz: Predominantly, we work with and through the GSO. There are times when, under the legal services direction, with the GSO's approval we also bring in external lawyers. For certain projects, when there is assistance with those projects, with the GSO's approval we bring in external lawyers.

MR COE: Have any of these litigations been settled in court or at ACAT?

Mr Dietz: None that I am aware of.

MR COE: Have any, or many, been settled outside court or are they all, generally speaking, still up in the air?

Mr Dietz: There are some disputes that have been resolved.

MR COE: Have any of those resolutions involved the SLA either refunding or making payments?

Mr Dietz: Yes.

MR COE: To what sort of tune?

Mr Dietz: I would not mind perhaps taking some of this in camera. I note that in certain dispute resolutions there are often clauses to ensure that information is not made public.

MR COE: I am not sure that in camera is going to happen.

Mr Barr: It is probably best to take it on notice and we can release what is—

MR COE: Yes. I am sure the response is going to be, "We have taken legal advice and no information can be provided." However, at some point, some committee, be it

this one or another committee, I reckon—

THE CHAIR: Mr Coe, apparently we can have a discussion in camera; it is at this committee's discretion. Would you like that?

MR COE: Your call.

THE CHAIR: Ms Orr and Mr Parton, did you want a discussion in camera?

MS ORR: In five minutes or less?

THE CHAIR: Yes, it is going to be in five minutes or less.

Mr Dietz: My only wish is to ensure that I am acting as per the terms of any resolution agreement. I am not sure that I would know within the next five minutes exactly what I would say.

MS ORR: Maybe just take it on notice.

MR COE: Sure. I think it is for this committee, PAC or one of the other committees to consider; it is just a transparency or integrity measure. If you are able to give the committee any understanding of the type and quantum of the litigations, that would be handy. As they report to the accounts, it should be relatively easy to access.

THE CHAIR: Mr Coe, are you interested in the quantum of damages we are exposed to or are you interested in legal costs, or both? We would probably want separate line items on those.

MR COE: I guess so. It is the cost and the exposure.

THE CHAIR: Legal costs but also damage exposure?

MR COE: Sure.

Mr Dietz: I will take that on notice.

MR COE: Thank you. Does the SLA have a view about whether minutes should be published on the SLA's website?

Mr Dietz: In presenting my view, I can present what we do. Minutes are taken at every board meeting and they are a detailed set of minutes. We then publish a summary of those minutes on our website, which is consistent with the open access requirements of freedom of information.

MR COE: However, somebody could just go and request a copy of those minutes on FOI and, therefore, get those documents. I would have thought the best practice would be just to publish the minutes.

Mr Dietz: Often our minutes include legal sensitivities, commercial sensitivities or personal sensitivities. Some of those, too, are temporal based, so time based.

Something that might be sensitive within a month of the meeting will not necessarily be sensitive six or nine months later. It is not an insignificant amount of effort to go through each of the detailed sets of minutes to redact what should be redacted at any point in time; hence we take the freedom of information legislation as the guide and produce a summary. You are correct: if someone then requests certain sets of minutes then we go through the effort of ensuring that we are redacting the appropriate information at the time the request is made.

THE CHAIR: Thank you very much for your time.

The committee adjourned at 11.59 pm.