PORTFOLIO COMMITTEE NO. 6 - TRANSPORT AND THE ARTS

Tuesday 3 September 2024

Examination of proposed expenditure for the portfolio area

TRANSPORT

CORRECTED

The Committee met at 9:15.

MEMBERS

Ms Cate Faehrmann (Chair)

The Hon. Mark Banasiak (Deputy Chair)
Ms Abigail Boyd
The Hon. Anthony D'Adam
The Hon. Dr Sarah Kaine
The Hon. Sarah Mitchell
The Hon. Jacqui Munro
The Hon. Bob Nanva
The Hon. Natalie Ward

PRESENT

The Hon. Jo Haylen, *Minister for Transport*

The CHAIR: Welcome to the first hearing of Portfolio Committee No. 6 – Transport and the Arts for the inquiry into budget estimates 2024-2025. I acknowledge the Gadigal people of the Eora nation, the traditional custodians of the lands on which we are meeting today. I pay my respects to Elders past and present and celebrate the diversity of Aboriginal peoples and their ongoing cultures and connections to the lands and waters of New South Wales. I also acknowledge and pay my respects to any Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander people joining us today. My name is Cate Faehrmann, and I am Chair of the Committee. I welcome Minister Haylen and accompanying officials to this hearing.

Today the Committee will examine the proposed expenditure for the Transport portfolio. I ask everyone in the room to turn their phones to silent. Parliamentary privilege applies to witnesses in relation to the evidence they give today. However, it does not apply to what witnesses say outside of the hearing. I urge witnesses to be careful about making comments to the media or to others after completing their evidence. In addition, the Legislative Council has adopted rules to provide procedural fairness for inquiry participants. I encourage Committee members and witnesses to be mindful of these procedures. Welcome and thank you for making the time to give evidence. All witnesses will be sworn prior to giving evidence. Minister Haylen, I remind you that you do not need to be sworn as you have already sworn an oath to your office as a member of Parliament.

Ms TRUDI MARES, Deputy Secretary, Greater Sydney, Transport for NSW, sworn and examined

Ms TRACEY TAYLOR, Deputy Secretary, People, Communication and Workplaces and Chief People Officer, Transport for NSW, affirmed and examined

Ms BRENDA HOANG, Deputy Secretary, Finance, Technology and Commercial, Transport for NSW, affirmed and examined

Mr JOSH MURRAY, Secretary, Transport for NSW, affirmed and examined

Mr HOWARD COLLINS, Coordinator General, Transport for NSW, sworn and examined

Ms CAMILLA DROVER, Deputy Secretary, Infrastructure and Place, Transport for NSW, affirmed and examined

Mr ANTHONY WING, Commissioner, NSW Point to Point Commission, sworn and examined

Mr MATT LONGLAND, Chief Executive, Sydney Trains, affirmed and examined

Mr PETER REGAN, Chief Executive, Sydney Metro, affirmed and examined

The CHAIR: Today's hearing will be conducted from 9.15 a.m. to 5.30 p.m. We are joined by the Minister for the morning session from 9.15 a.m. until 1.00 p.m., with a 15-minute break at 11.00 a.m. In the afternoon we will hear from departmental witnesses from 2.00 p.m. to 5.30 p.m., with a 15-minute break at 3.30 p.m. During these sessions there will be questions from the Opposition and crossbench members only and then 15 minutes allocated for Government questions at 10.45 a.m., 12.45 p.m. and 5.15 p.m. We will hear from Dr Kaine before we begin.

The Hon. Dr SARAH KAINE: I would like to put on the public record that, in an act of contempt of this process, this Committee and this Parliament, Sam Farraway has substituted out in order to campaign in the Federal seat of Calare. This is completely inappropriate and it should be noted that that's how he holds this Committee.

The CHAIR: Order!

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Point of order: This is ridiculous. We had a Committee meeting prior to this and this member had the opportunity to raise that at the meeting.

The CHAIR: Order!

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: She knows this is out of order and she wants to set this tone.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: We swap all the time. Are you three the substantive members of this Committee?

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: People sub in and out all the time.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: Are all three of you the substantive members?

The CHAIR: Order! Ms Ward, do you have a point of order?

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: I have a point of order, Chair. There was an opportunity for the member to raise this in the deliberative earlier on. She asked the question and didn't raise it at that time, which is the proper method. She knows this. I don't know that those members are substantive members.

The Hon. Dr SARAH KAINE: Yes, we are.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: It is the practice of these committees to sub people in and out all the time.

The CHAIR: Order! Let me rule on the point of order. I uphold the point of order, potentially not for the reasons suggested. Yes, we should have discussed it, if we were going to discuss anything about this, in the Committee deliberative. Of course, members do sub out. That's what happened, and that was a little bit of grandstanding at the beginning of this Committee hearing.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: Never grandstanding.

The CHAIR: It definitely was, and nothing that obviously concerns the Committee in terms of its members. Sam Farraway is subbed in, and that has been organised during this deliberative. Let's proceed, shall we, with questions from the Opposition. Maybe that takes five minutes out of Government time at the end.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Mr Regan, can I say to you thank you very much for all your work on metro and thank you to all of your team and the workers out there who have brought that to fruition. It is a magnificent project which has had great reception from the people of New South Wales. Thank you and congratulations. Pass that on to everybody there, all the transport workers who have done such a great job. Minister, welcome.

Ms JO HAYLEN: Good morning.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Minister, what's the total capex budget for this financial year in Transport?

Ms JO HAYLEN: Over the forward estimates, the capital expenditure is $63 billion.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Sorry, Minister, just for this financial year.

Ms JO HAYLEN: And this year we will spend almost $18 billion, or $17.6 to be precise.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Thank you. Why is there a $3 billion cut to the Transport capex budget for this financial year?

Ms JO HAYLEN: I reject that there is a cut. Obviously, budgets over forward estimates move up and down relative to project milestones. I'm sure members of the Committee would appreciate that in fact your opening remarks pointed to a pretty big milestone for our city and our State in the last two weeks, and that is a part of a $21.6 billion project. Across the Transport budget there are big moving pieces of expenditure and you would expect that those numbers would fluctuate up and down. But our Government has a very healthy pipeline of investment as I've just outlined, including $63 billion worth of capital over the forward estimates.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: I want to be very clear about that question. Can we just talk about those two years, though. For this financial year, we had in your first budget $20.820 billion. In this financial year it is $17 billion. So that's a $3 billion cut, or there's $3 billion missing. What projects have been cancelled or deferred to account for that $3 billion? It's a big drop.

Ms JO HAYLEN: I appreciate you are putting the same question in a different way but, as I outlined, we have a healthy investment of expenditure, both in capital expenditure and operational expenditure.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Yes, just capex and just for this year?

Ms JO HAYLEN: I would highlight that actually our operational expenditure is up.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: I'm asking not about operational expenditure. This is just capex and just for this financial year.

Ms JO HAYLEN: You're asking about budget expenditure, and our Government is committed to not only delivering more public transport services but also improving the reliability of the ones that we have.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: We'll get to reliability, but my question is about the budget.

Ms JO HAYLEN: And our budget investment reflects those priorities.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Sure. This will be a lot faster and easier—these are not trick questions. It's a simple question on the budget. This is budget estimates.

Ms JO HAYLEN: However, Natalie, I'm entitled to answer the question as I see fit. I want to provide information to the Committee.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Do you accept, Minister, that there has been a $3 billion change in the capex?

Ms JO HAYLEN: What I have already outlined is that over the course of the forward estimates, as we move through the delivery and development of major infrastructure projects, numbers fluctuate according to the milestones in those projects.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: It's not a trick question. It's a yes or no. There is a $3 billion difference, isn't there, between the first budget and the second? Some $3 billion has been taken out. It's $17?

Ms JO HAYLEN: Now, Natalie, if you allow me to finish the question—I guess I will provide you with some more information that I think you are trying to get to and that is, yes, there has been a 2 per cent decline in the first year when it comes to capital expenditure. But, as I explained, these numbers fluctuate over the course of the forward estimates, and most importantly—

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: So 20 in the first year, 17 this year, a $3 billion difference. I might ask Ms Hoang. Has there been a change, and what was responsible for the $3 billion change?

BRENDA HOANG: There has been a change and, as you can appreciate, the budget fluctuates depending on the life cycle of the projects. Now, in this particular financial year we have had a number of projects that have come to completion: metro being one of them, Gateway, as well as Parramatta Light Rail 1. Therefore, as the projects come to completion, the budget allocated to those specific projects are reduced. A lot of the reduction relates to the fact that we have a number of significant projects that have finalised and completed.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Do those two projects account for the $3 billion difference between the two financial years? The first budget allocated $20 billion to this year and the second budget allocated $17 billion. That's a $3 billion difference. You're saying that those two projects accounted for the $3 billion difference?

BRENDA HOANG: I think, as the Minister was trying to convey, there are a number of things that go into our budget. There are ups and downs. The completion of our major projects will be a reduction in the budget. There's also a number of—

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Sorry, just to clarify your answer earlier—you pointed to those two projects. So you're saying Parramatta Light Rail and the opening of the metro saved $3 billion from the capex budget for this financial year?

BRENDA HOANG: They were a component of the reduction—including WestConnex as well—along with Parramatta Light Rail and, as I said, Gateway. There are four major projects that were completed in this particular financial year compared to the last financial year. That would be the majority of why the budget has been reduced.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: What were the other components?

BRENDA HOANG: Components relating to potential in-year underspends for projects that were delayed, and therefore some of that budget would have been moved into the forward estimates.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: But you can't say $3 billion was saved from the opening of projects when last year it was projected that $20 billion would be spent. This year it's $17 billion. You would have known what is coming online. You would have known what projects would be opened. Are you saying that those projects accounted for $3 billion worth of savings?

BRENDA HOANG: I'm saying those projects account for a large portion of the reduction and then the balance is a number of ins and outs within the budget for this year, including new investment decisions that were made as well as underspends.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: All right. You might take on notice where the underspends were and provide that back to the Committee.

BRENDA HOANG: I'm happy to do that.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Which projects were delayed as a result of this cut?

BRENDA HOANG: I wouldn't call it a cut, per se. It's a reduction in our annual budget.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Fine—a reduction, cut, missing or gone somewhere. Some $3 billion was there last year and it's not this year.

BRENDA HOANG: I'm happy to take that on notice because there are quite a few number of projects—anywhere from larger projects to smaller projects.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Yes. Were any of those projects delayed?

BRENDA HOANG: I'm happy to take that on notice.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: All right, so everything is on track?

BRENDA HOANG: Again, I'm happy to take that on notice.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: If I could have that answer today that would be appreciated, because it's quite a big amount. It doesn't seem that, other than those projects that are opened, we've got clarity about it. I would be appreciative if we could have that today—about what the other components were, and what's been delayed and what hasn't been delayed.

BRENDA HOANG: I'm happy to take that on notice and come back.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Minister, the total capex spend for Transport decreases to $11 billion at the end of the four-year forwards—I think you mentioned those earlier. How do you intend to keep investing in Sydney if the total capital investment is forecast to be half of what we're spending this year?

Ms JO HAYLEN: Firstly, I'd refer you to my earlier answer, and that is that our Government has a very healthy ongoing pipeline of investment in public transport and roads investment. I'd highlight a few of those in the budget that I know are, I'm sure, of interest to you. For example—

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: It's very specific, and I do have limited time, Minister. I just wanted to ask specifically about the change in the budget line item. It's half. It's $11 billion at the end of the forwards. How do you intend to keep investing when the investment is halved?

Ms JO HAYLEN: I appreciate I'm not answering the question in the way that you would like it, Natalie, but the fact is that our investment pipeline is healthy. We are making huge investments in public transport and roads projects, including $2.1 billion in the second stage of Parramatta Light Rail—

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: I'll get to that shortly.

Ms JO HAYLEN: —a project that your Government announced 17 times and didn't invest a single dollar.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Can we just deal with the budget, Minister? By my understanding—

Ms JO HAYLEN: It's a bit rich for you to suggest that there isn't ongoing commitment to an investment in public transport.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: I'd just like to talk about the budget. You're the responsible Minister. You've got a big budget here. This is budget estimates. I'm really interested in these numbers.

Ms JO HAYLEN: Thanks for outlining my job description for me.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Why don't we go through some of those given that you want to be transparent and accountable, and this is the opportunity to do so. So let's talk about that.

Ms JO HAYLEN: I'm happy to provide that information to the Committee. I will continue to do so if you don't interrupt me and the response that I am providing.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: It is helpful if we just direct the answers to the questions that are posed.

Ms JO HAYLEN: That's exactly what I'm doing.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: That's what we're here to do today. I look forward to it. Why don't we go to the financials. Let's talk about the three years of this year, 2024-25; next year, 2025-26; and 2026-27. That's the three consistent years between your two budgets. My understanding is, comparing the projected spending for those three financial years—and they're consistent between both budgets, and they're the comparison of the three years—that shows a $2 billion overall cut in funding. Which projects have been cut, reduced or deferred to account for that $2 billion change over the three years?

Ms JO HAYLEN: I've answered this question. That is that—

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: This is a different question, with respect.

Ms JO HAYLEN: There is a 2 per cent reduction in capital expenditure. As the deputy secretary has explained—with projects coming online and new projects beginning phases of construction—those different landmarks in those projects dictate the fluctuations in the budget.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: This is a slightly different question with respect, Minister. Just so you're clear, we've got three years that we can compare between your two budgets. There is a change in funding from $53 billion to $51 billion—so $2 billion has gone missing over the three years. How do you account for that?

Ms JO HAYLEN: It's not a matter of money going missing. As we've explained, the project milestones are reflected in the investment over time. There's a pipeline of investment—and I'm more than happy to take you through our pipeline of investment—

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: I'm aware of the pipeline. It was our pipeline. I'm aware of the pipeline. I just want to know where the money has gone.

Ms JO HAYLEN: Those numbers that you are looking at reflect—

The Hon. BOB NANVA: Point of order: Chair, it would assist with the fair and orderly conduct of this hearing if the Minister could be provided with a reasonable opportunity to answer the question without interruption by Ms Ward.

The CHAIR: Thank you, Mr Nanva. I will uphold the point of order. I do think there has been several times when the Minister has been attempting to answer the question and has been interrupted and has valiantly kept going, so I have left it at that point. Please allow the Minister to answer the question. But of course, Minister, if you're just talking for the sake of talking, I think it's fair enough to be interrupted to ask a new question. If we can both work to that, we'll do swimmingly.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: I do have very limited time, which is why I'm seeking to get the specific answers on the budget papers. I want to be clear that over these three years there is a drop. There is a difference of $2 billion. It's either missing or it's been cut or it's been spent. That's correct, isn't it?

Ms JO HAYLEN: No. I reject your characterisation.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Where's it gone?

Ms JO HAYLEN: As I've explained, these are forward estimates. They are in-principle allocations. As projects come online and are completed, you'll see a fluctuation in these numbers. Our Government—

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Of $2 billion from the projects that have come online—is that your answer?

Ms JO HAYLEN: We've answered this question, Natalie.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Your accounting for the $2 billion change in your budget forward estimates for the three years—this year, next year and the following year—is that projects have come online.

Ms JO HAYLEN: As I've made very clear, these are forward estimates. They are in-principle allocations. You were a Minister in government.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: It's not about me.

Ms JO HAYLEN: You'd understand that budget projections fluctuate according to investment. That's exactly what you are examining there in the budget papers before you.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: So $2 billion has disappeared from the budget for the next three years, and there's no explanation other than projects have come online. That's $2 billion worth of forward estimates that's just disappeared.

Ms JO HAYLEN: I'm sure others would like to characterise the budget in other ways.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: It's a line item.

Ms JO HAYLEN: That is my clear explanation for the figures in front of you. These are forward estimates—in-principle allocations based on our investment in public transport projects and road projects for the people of New South Wales.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Have any capital expenditure or projects been pushed back by the Government since the last budget?

Ms JO HAYLEN: Projects are reflected in the budget according to their milestones and both their current construction and development. They are both ongoing projects and new projects.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: With respect, Minister, that's not what I asked. My question was has any capital expenditure or project been pushed back by the Government since the last budget?

Ms JO HAYLEN: There are projects that we are dealing with that we have inherited from the former Government that are not on track. For example, the procurement of regional rail. That was a contract signed by your former colleague Andrew Constance, the former transport Minister. While those trains were supposed to have arrived from Spain by now, at the moment we are only in receipt of two of those 29 trains. That's a good example of how projects may fluctuate across the budgets.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Have any of the projects that are not in delivery been pushed back?

Ms JO HAYLEN: It's very difficult to deliver a train when it hasn't arrived yet from Spain.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Is that the only example you've got?

Ms JO HAYLEN: There are other trains. For example, the new intercity fleet—a large procurement, again, that the former Government purchased from overseas without consulting with the transport workforce and a project that blew out from $2.3 billion to $3.2 billion, almost a 40 per cent increase. As you can appreciate, depending on procurement decisions and the basis on which you determine those decisions, projects can fluctuate.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: It's your evidence to this Committee that only train procurement has been pushed back by the Government?

Ms JO HAYLEN: They're two examples that I've provided to the Committee.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Would you like to take it on notice and provide more detail?

Ms JO HAYLEN: They are two examples that I've provided to the Committee. I think they're pretty good examples.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Are there any others?

Ms JO HAYLEN: You asked a question previously of Brenda, and I'm sure that we'll provide further information if you'd like to ask a specific question about any specific projects.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Is the $2 billion provision for Parramatta Light Rail Stage 2 in the budget included in the $62 billion capex in the budget over the next four years?

Ms JO HAYLEN: The $2.1 billion investment is reflected in the budget. Did you want to add further to that, Brenda?

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Yes, but is it included, Minister? It's your budget; you're responsible.

Ms JO HAYLEN: I'll just refer you to Brenda for further information.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: I'm asking you. It's your budget. You're the responsible Minister.

Ms JO HAYLEN: I can answer the question as I determine. I've answered it and I'm referring you to Brenda for further information.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Is the $2 billion included?

The Hon. BOB NANVA: Point of order—

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: I've got Ms Hoang—

The CHAIR: Order! A point of order has been taken by Mr Nanva. We'll hear it.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: That's just running cover. I've got three minutes.

The Hon. BOB NANVA: Chair, in accordance with convention at budget estimates hearings, the Minister can refer a question to an official to elucidate an answer.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: She should know her own budget.

The CHAIR: Order! That's correct. I uphold the point of order. Ms Ward knows that is the case. A Minister can answer any way she sees fit and also direct to the officials at the table. How do you want to proceed, Ms Ward? That's what the Minister did. Are you wanting to hear from Mr Hoang?

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: I've got Ms Hoang all afternoon. I just wanted to know—clearly, it's not answerable in this context. You're not sure, or it is included or it's not included in your capex?

Ms JO HAYLEN: I've answered your question, Natalie.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: You haven't. Is the $2 billion provision for Parramatta—it's not a trick question. It's a straight-up question. Is it included in the $62 billion capex?

Ms JO HAYLEN: I'm really glad you're asking me about a project that your Government promised 17 times and did not invest a single dollar in—a single dollar—and $2.1 billion was our election commitment to complete the project.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Let's talk about the $2 billion. Let's talk about completing it, then. If the $2 billion figure is included in your capex, why does the line item in the budget for PLR 2 only say $475.1 million for the project over the next four years?

Ms JO HAYLEN: I appreciate your interest in light rail projects and the delivery of those. I'm sure, as Committee members would appreciate, it takes several years to build a light rail project. We're committed to completing the entire project. We don't just build half a project. We're committed to the people of Western Sydney.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Sure, but on the line item—this is budget estimates. If I can just ask about those two numbers.

Ms JO HAYLEN: As I was saying, it takes some time to build projects. Our commitment is that we have invested $2.1 billion.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Minister, I have two minutes.

Ms JO HAYLEN: Of course, as the final business case is developed, we'll understand the full cost of that project and its timeline for delivery. You will subsequently see that reflected in future budgets.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: You just said $2 billion, but now you're saying it's not included. Which is it? Is it the $2 billion or the $475 million?

Ms JO HAYLEN: That's your language, Natalie. I have answered the question.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: I'm not sure you have. These are not trick questions. These are just budget questions. This is budget estimates.

Ms JO HAYLEN: I've answered the question.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: You really haven't.

Ms JO HAYLEN: The question was where the money is in the budget. As I said, it takes some time to deliver these projects.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Let's talk about that, then.

Ms JO HAYLEN: The $2.1 billion investment—more than your Government ever invested in this project that you said you were committed to building.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: The problem is, Minister, the line item doesn't reflect that. That's what I'm asking about. It's $475 million.

Ms JO HAYLEN: Budgets reflect the way that projects are delivered over time. How long did it take your Government to build Parramatta Light Rail Stage 1?

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: I'm going to draw you back because I have one minute.

Ms JO HAYLEN: More than four years. Budget forward estimates are for four years.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Ms Hoang, over what period do you intend to spend the remaining $1.6 billion?

Ms JO HAYLEN: Over the course of the delivery of the project.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: How long is that?

Ms JO HAYLEN: We haven't developed the final business case.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: In the four years?

Ms JO HAYLEN: Once we develop the final business case, we'll have an indication of both the full cost of the project and the timeline for delivery.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Does the $2.1 billion provisioned by the Government fully deliver Parramatta Light Rail Stage 2?

Ms JO HAYLEN: No, because we haven't developed the final business case and we don't know the final cost of the project nor the timeline for delivery, but our Government is committed to deliver Parramatta Light Rail Stage 2, and we will do that.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: By when?

Ms JO HAYLEN: We will deliver Parramatta Light Rail Stage 2 in accordance with the final business case—both timeline projection and costing projection.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: When is Parramatta Light Rail Stage 2 expected to open for passenger services?

Ms JO HAYLEN: Sometime before the end of the year.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Before the end of this year—stage two?

Ms JO HAYLEN: Sorry, stage one will open before the end of this year.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Stage two was my question. When will that open for passenger services?

Ms JO HAYLEN: That will open in accordance with the final business case timeline in terms of cost and projection.

The CHAIR: Minister, I turn to the Bus Industry Taskforce final report. Why does it take so long for you to release the report when you are given it by government? The same thing happened with the second report that you received, I think, in early November. It wasn't released until very close to estimates. The final Bus Industry Taskforce report was, of course, released yesterday—the day before budget estimates. Why is it taking so long for you to release the report?

Ms JO HAYLEN: Firstly, thanks for your interest in the important work of the Bus Industry Taskforce. I appreciate people want to get on with fixing the bus mess that we inherited. All of the reports from the Bus Industry Taskforce, including the safety reports, need to be considered by government—including passed through the Cabinet process. Once that occurs, we release them in full for public consumption.

The CHAIR: That took about four months. You receive the report and it goes through the Cabinet processes. Are you saying that Cabinet could reject the report and then it has to be altered before you release it or, if Cabinet rejected it, you wouldn't release it?

Ms JO HAYLEN: They're Cabinet processes but, in relation to the final Bus Industry Taskforce, we received the report, it went through the government processes and we released it in the state we received it.

The CHAIR: When did it go through Cabinet?

Ms JO HAYLEN: They're Cabinet processes.

The CHAIR: Four months—you released it yesterday. It just does seem a little bit suspicious, if you like, that this report—which is extremely comprehensive and obviously takes a long time for us to go through it—is released the day before budget estimates when we've been looking out for it from 1 May.

Ms JO HAYLEN: I appreciate your interest. I understand that you would have wanted more time to ask me and the officials questions about it today. I acknowledge that and would be more than happy to provide you and other Committee members briefings about the taskforce report and its recommendations, the other reports similarly, and our implementation of those recommendations.

The CHAIR: Is that because, when you release it, you then want to be able to say at that time, "We've done all these things and we're implementing all of these things", on the day that it's released? Is there a difference between the Government releasing it yesterday and releasing it on 1 May in terms of what you've achieved in that past three to four months to say, "We're doing all these things"?

Ms JO HAYLEN: The reflections that I made in the media yesterday were in relation to the previous reports and our completion of 45 per cent of those recommendations and the progress made on the other recommendations. It was not in relation to the recommendations within the report that we released, so I just want to make clear that we're not holding it back, so to speak, so that we can say, "Haha! We've completed these recommendations." That's not our intention. There's no conspiracy here. This is a comprehensive report, as you rightly point out. It does require consideration across whole of government before we release it. We've done that and we've released it publicly. Again, I'm more than happy to provide you and other members with a briefing about it.

The CHAIR: Let's get to, as much as we can then, some of the content of it. The final report, as I think did previous reports, voiced some concern around the remit of the Coordinator General's role. The final report said that it's too broad—in fact, this may have been the second report—to provide buses the modal focus which was called for. Then there's a recommendation in the final report that includes:

> The inclusion of road and maritime operations in the remit of the Coordinator General has been to the detriment of bus passengers, as demonstrated by the recent uptick in driver vacancies and the resurgence of ghost buses.

The recommendation was "Organisational change at Transport for NSW to focus on service delivery."

What's your view on that recommendation? Are we going to see that recommendation implemented?

Ms JO HAYLEN: Firstly, the Government has accepted all recommendations in principle from the report. I recognise that the taskforce members have been very passionately and deeply involved in all of the elements when it comes to delivery of critical bus services across New South Wales—whether it's elements around the industry, fleet and procurement, workforce, passengers as well as the organisational structure within Transport to help us deliver those services. One of the key recommendations from the first report, as you highlight, was the

establishment of the Coordinator General. That has occurred and subsequent changes through the operating model at Transport have also occurred. I'm happy to pass to the Secretary or to the Coordinator General for further information for you.

JOSH MURRAY: I'm happy to address that. It is obviously something that has been canvassed throughout the workings of the bus taskforce, which is to explore the capacities and the division of Coordinator General. We've spoken about the creation of that role here in this Committee before, and I'm very pleased with the way we've been able to put operations at the centre of all of Transport's operations through the new operating model structure. The Coordinator General is standing up a number of roles underneath his division to enact bus, in particular. Two key roles at executive director level have already been appointed to take carriage of the public transport contracting responsibilities and also bus operations as a significant focus. Through that area, we would hope that we would address that particular element that's been highlighted over recent months in the bus taskforce. But I would also counter that I think it's a snapshot in time during the preparation of the report while we were still creating the Coordinator General division.

The CHAIR: Mr Collins, do you have any comments on that? Do you think that including road and maritime operations in your brief has meant that the bus networks, prioritisation of buses generally, within Transport for NSW has decreased?

HOWARD COLLINS: Thank you very much for the question. I live and breathe transport, particularly buses at the moment. If you look at the record now, ghost buses have been reduced significantly due to some excellent work that my team has worked on. The current infrastructure investment is on its way for new technology and also 550 vacancies occurred when basically I started the role. We're down to 231. It's a battle and I use this opportunity: If anyone wants to drive a bus there are still vacancies available. But I would say I have spent a lot of time on buses. I visit the managing directors and chief executives on a regular basis. I've travelled here this morning on a bus. I have visited Tweed. I've been to the back of Coffs Harbour and travelled on some of those rural routes. I am passionate about public transport.

Some of the roads division is transferring out of my portfolio into maintenance. The Sydney Harbour Bridge and Matt Wilson and the team from the end of this month are likely to transfer out, but one of the things the job says, Coordinator General—coordinating generally—is to make sure that we work together as a team, whether that's metro, Sydney Trains, and buses are a vital part of that. I assure you that the eight days a week that I work I will be spending a lot of that time on buses.

The CHAIR: Obviously, a lot of criticism is still coming in—frustrations, bus delays, buses not turning up—and we hear it almost every day on various radio stations as well as different forums. I just want to turn to one example, which is the regular delays of up to 30 minutes of bus services—this is the eastern suburbs, including the 392 from Redfern to Little Bay, the 370 from Coogee to Glebe Point Road and the 379 from North Bondi to Bronte. Lots of conversations in forums that I've had a look at about just how bad they are—they're labelled as the worst bus in Sydney in the past. What improvements have been made to those services? The forums that I'm looking at it almost looks like nothing.

Ms JO HAYLEN: Firstly, I acknowledge that those are some of the most challenging bus routes in Sydney and I also want to acknowledge my Parliamentary Secretary, the member for Coogee, Marjorie O'Neill, who's been engaged in the other element of the Bus Industry Taskforce work, which is the passenger forums. We've had forums all around the State and we have heard exactly this again and again. It is one of the key issues we're seeking to address. I would say that over time the reduction in the bus driver vacancy is improving on-time running, but there are significant challenges in the eastern suburbs. The contract that we are dealing with is one of those challenges, but also congestion on our roads is also an ongoing issue.

The CHAIR: I understand that they are timetabled every 10 minutes but are often full. Shouldn't consideration be given to more buses doubling the capacity, for example?

Ms JO HAYLEN: Obviously, we want to meet demand. Some of the work that Howard's team is leading is around looking at various contracts that we've inherited, route by route, and moving those resources to where they're best—

The CHAIR: But you set the timetables, Minister. The Government sets the timetables.

Ms JO HAYLEN: The allocation of resources across a contract, for example, does need to be negotiated. For example, if we want to add a route or move a route, that's a contract variation and that's something that Howard's team oversees. For example, what we are doing is looking at whether those contracts are fit for purpose. The one you raise particularly in the eastern suburbs has been very problematic. Moving resources to where they are needed rather than running routes that are not as well patronised is one of the things we can do. Allocating drivers—that has been a challenge. We are improving but the eastern suburbs, again, is an area where

cost of living is high and we have experienced driver vacancies at a greater proportion in areas like the eastern suburbs and the northern beaches compared to, say, some of the Western Sydney regions. I'm sure the Coordinator General would be able to add further to that.

The CHAIR: That's fine. We'll come back in the afternoon.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: I might just start with the Sydenham to Bankstown line. You announced on 29 August a bit of a timeline in terms of that conversion and you indicated that there'll be free buses until the completion date, which is estimated to be late 2025. How many buses and bus drivers does Transport for NSW require for that process?

Ms JO HAYLEN: Thank you for your question about the conversion of the T3 Sydenham to Bankstown line. We've had a real focus on making sure that those 60,000 passengers a day have alternative public transport options for the period of conversion. We require 200 bus drivers and 100 buses for the provision of those Southwest Link replacement services and we have both fee drivers and the fleet ready for the closure when it commences, firstly, on 21 September for the Bankstown section, between Bankstown and Campsie for the disconnection, and then for the entire line from 30 September.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: Are any of those buses being sourced from the private sector?

Ms JO HAYLEN: We are working with two private bus operators to provide those services, both Transit Systems and U-Go Mobility. Those operators are working with us to provide the necessary fleet and bus drivers.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: Do we have an estimated cost to the budget for offering this service free of charge? Where is that going? How is that going to impact the budget?

Ms JO HAYLEN: Just to be very clear, obviously that's revenue forgone. We have an estimate which is, for example, if every single one of the 60,000 passengers a day that use the T3 were to transfer to the free Southwest Link services for the period of the conversion, it would be about $11.5 million in forgone revenue. But our surveys and experience so far—for example, on this line these commuters, these residents, have experienced some 70-plus shutdowns of this rail line since 2019, so they're pretty well practised at catching replacement buses and we understand a lot of their behaviour when that occurs, as well as our surveys with them. It indicates that around 30 to 40 per cent of those passengers do move to other modes, including private vehicles. The cost of providing those buses free, we anticipate, would be significantly less than the $11.5 million estimate.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: So $11.5 million or below, that's based on it finishing in 2025? Is that correct?

Ms JO HAYLEN: That's right.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: When this is complete, obviously this is going to be a private-public partnership. How are we going to manage that in terms of pricing remaining accessible and fair for passengers?

Ms JO HAYLEN: Just like the opening of city metro, the Sydenham to Bankstown conversion—the south-west metro—will be on the Opal network and be subject to the same fare structure.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: Can I go to Sydney Metro. On 24 August rail operator MTS was forced to detrain 150 passengers near Castle Hill, and it's my understanding the emergency services were called off. Are there any conditions within the Government's contract with this operator around lost customer hours at all?

Ms JO HAYLEN: There are a range of provisions in contract around performance. I'll hand to our chief executive, Peter Regan, for further information.

PETER REGAN: Yes, absolutely. So the contract for the operations includes a number of different measures of performance and includes abatements against the contract payments if those targets are not met. To be clear, the revenue from the railway comes directly through to Transport and Sydney Metro; the operator does not receive the revenue and nor do they set the fares. Their performance payments are abated if they are not hitting those targets or for incidents where there is significant delay.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: On this incident on 24 August, can you explain to the Committee why emergency services were called off, noting that emergency services normally require power to be cut to the line to actually go down there? There's a concern that MTS is self-managing emergencies to avoid delays.

PETER REGAN: Could you repeat the date of the incident?

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: It was 24 August, near Castle Hill.

PETER REGAN: The reason the emergency services were not required was the train was able to be moved to the station under its own power, so there was no need to evacuate there in the tunnel. The train was moved to the station and the passengers were removed from the train at the station.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: On a separate matter, it was recently reported that a firefighter received an electric shock during Sydney Metro testing. It's been confirmed by Fire and Rescue NSW that no such records of the incident ever occurring on the network—can you explain why a serious incident like that wouldn't be reported?

PETER REGAN: To answer your question, I'm not aware previously of such an incident happening. Certainly the incident that did occur at an exercise in July was definitely recorded and investigated by both MTS—the operator—and Fire and Rescue NSW. Before the completion of the process of opening the new Sydney Metro line, we received a full sign-off from Fire and Rescue NSW and the Office of the National Rail Safety Regulator around the safety of the line.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: It's been reported to me that there is some issue with residual power in the railway line, even when the power is cut, and that this firefighter received approximately around 150 volts through them. Noting that 50 volts can be lethal, what is being done to address that residual power issue?

PETER REGAN: There is an inherent risk around residual electric current in direct current railways around the world, including most of the electrified railways in Australia. It is a very low risk and the risk is managed and maintained within a series of engineering standards, and those standards are common across the rail networks in New South Wales and generally direct current railways in Australia. On the Sydney Metro network, there are additional controls, including circuit breakers, voltage-limiting devices and other technology that automatically terminate power if the device measures voltage that's higher than the acceptable limits that are set within the standards, and so there's automatic cut-out if that is the case.

The particular incident that you referred to was during an exercise. The power to the train itself is disconnected when there are emergency services or operator staff within the tunnels. The pantograph itself disconnects from the overhead supply, and that is to prevent any risk of the train moving under its own power or of any contact. That power can then be turned off as well so that there is no high-voltage current connected to the train.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: To go back, you talked about the cut-off point. What's the cut-off point in the standards? You can take it on notice if you don't know.

PETER REGAN: I can answer that. The voltage-limiting devices immediately cut the power if there is 150 volts or above. If there is a voltage of 120 volts for shorter periods of time, it will also cut out. So there's an automatic termination at 150. Between 120 and 150, if that is sustained, it cuts out. After that particular incident, the train itself and the tunnels were tested and the voltage was within limits and it was below 120 volts.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: I might quickly change tack. Minister, where are we up to with the Point to Point statutory review that was supposed to occur two years after the passing of the legislation in 2022?

Ms JO HAYLEN: I think we are in process with that. I'd be happy to hand to Anthony Wing about those issues.

ANTHONY WING: I haven't heard a specific date. I think Transport for NSW has been preparing to hold it later this year or early next year, but I haven't heard a specific date.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: Do we have any terms of reference? Do we have any details on the process as to how it's going to be conducted? Are you going to be calling for submissions from operators, owners and drivers, and the various rideshare companies as well?

ANTHONY WING: I would assume that it will be run in the same way any other thing is—calling for public submissions, asking for input et cetera.

Ms JO HAYLEN: This was due to come in two years after deregulation came in, so we will absolutely be meeting that timeline and we will engage in the usual ways. I'm happy to provide you further information about that, Mark.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Minister, following allegations against the CFMEU on government construction sites, what specific steps have you taken, as the Minister responsible for a significant infrastructure pipeline, regarding these concerns?

Ms JO HAYLEN: Firstly, we take these allegations very seriously. The Government has taken swift action to ensure that, firstly, administrators are put in place. We are dealing with activity that is obviously not

welcome in any workplace, particularly not on a worksite. We obviously don't vet employees for their union membership. We don't enter contracts with trade unions and, of course, all contracts pass a range of probity and value-for-money tests. I think that it's really important to put on the record the distinction between the right of construction workers to be members of their union and to organise collectively—

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: No-one disagrees with that. I'm asking about your specific steps, Minister.

Ms JO HAYLEN: —and the difference between improper behaviour, which is of obvious concern. I have also, of course, been briefed by the Secretary of Transport and relevant officials about these matters.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: What specific steps have you taken as Minister in regards to your construction pipeline to mitigate these concerns?

Ms JO HAYLEN: As I said, I've been briefed by the Secretary of Transport and regularly updated about any of these issues.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: You can't provide any specific steps that you have taken as Minister to mitigate these concerns?

Ms JO HAYLEN: As I said, I've been briefed about these issues. I've been reassured that the processes that we have in place are robust. I've also, of course, made clear that if there are any further incidents or allegations we take action quickly, but my understanding is that there have not been significant issues of concern in relation to transport-related projects.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: So you've listened and you've taken advice. To be clear, no other proactive steps—and you're assured that there are no concerns on any transport projects.

Ms JO HAYLEN: Firstly, the Government doesn't enter into contracts with the CFMEU. I've made very clear that our Government has taken very swift action overall to deal with these matters—very swift action in concert with the Federal Government.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: But taxpayers pay for these projects, Minister Haylen. They're obviously concerned about this CFMEU activity. There is a significant construction pipeline under your responsibility, care and control. I'm interested in what steps you have taken, and I'm understanding that to be that you've taken advice, listened and you have no other concerns. Would that be accurate?

Ms JO HAYLEN: I'm regularly updated by the Secretary of Transport and, indeed, the relevant chief executives or deputy secretaries in relation to projects. I guess I would say that if you have concerns in relation to specific projects, I'd be more than happy to speak to you about them. I would suspect that they're probably contracts that your Government signed.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: I'm interested in what you are doing as the responsible Minister, given that there are very serious concerns out there about criminal activity on construction projects. I would have thought that would be something you'd be very concerned about also. Prior to the Channel 9 story on the CFMEU, have concerns regarding the CFMEU ever been raised with you or your office in the past?

Ms JO HAYLEN: The matters that have been in the media recently have been a subject of the briefings that I have received from the Transport secretary and other chief executives and deputy secretaries from Transport. As I said, we'll continue to be briefed and act in relation to any of these allegations, but can you be specific about what activity you're referring to?

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Yes, I'll be specific. Prior to the Channel 9 story on the CFMEU, were specific concerns raised with you or your office regarding the CFMEU?

Ms JO HAYLEN: Prior to the investigation by Channel 9, not that I recall, no.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: So no concerns raised. You're listening and taking advice, no proactive steps on any construction sites, and you're satisfied with that?

Ms JO HAYLEN: Nothing was brought to my attention that raised concern. However, if you're talking about transport projects in the pipeline, again, these are contracts that your Government probably signed.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: But, Minister, I'm interested in how taxpayers can be assured that these incidents are no longer continuing under your watch. That's what I'm concerned about and taxpayers are concerned about.

Ms JO HAYLEN: The Government has acted swiftly and comprehensively in relation to concerns about improper behaviour by the CFMEU or by the construction industry. We have appointed administrators.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Yes, you've said that.

Ms JO HAYLEN: We have the compliance unit doing investigation. We have suspended party affiliation. We have banned donations. This is swift and comprehensive action.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Mr Murray, were concerns raised directly with you before the Channel 9 report about CFMEU activities?

JOSH MURRAY: No.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: None at all?

JOSH MURRAY: No.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Ms Drover, were any concerns raised with you on any projects regarding CFMEU activities?

CAMILLA DROVER: I'm not familiar with exactly when the Channel 9 event occurred. There was some commentary in the press. We did undertake some due diligence relating to a particular project. That due diligence was also undertaken by the Construction Compliance Unit of New South Wales government. That due diligence was completed, we found that the arrangements were lawful and no further action was taken. We've also done due diligence into some of the other businesses which have been nominated in the press in recent months.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Synergy Scaffolding Services?

CAMILLA DROVER: There have been a number of scaffolding companies that we've looked into. Synergy was one where we did do a review of our projects and found that they had not worked on any of our projects that we know of. We've also been working—

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Sorry, just to be clear, I had understood that Synergy had worked on Sydney Metro projects.

CAMILLA DROVER: Not in the portfolio that I am responsible for.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Would any other witnesses care to comment? Does Synergy have any current contracts on metro or other projects within the Transport portfolio?

PETER REGAN: Ms Ward, I'm happy to try to answer that. Obviously, Sydney Metro itself doesn't employ scaffolding subcontractors. Our delivery contractors have a series of subcontract arrangements for scaffolding. We're not aware of any of those contractors utilising Synergy Scaffolding. However, we are aware that a number of years ago one of our subcontractors did utilise a scaffolding subcontractor that has a similar address to Synergy, and we have checked back. This was back in 2021 and 2022. We understand that subcontractor was audited by the NSW Industrial Relations Construction Compliance Unit that Ms Drover just mentioned. The reviews from that process were satisfactory, and the processes that had been applied with were regarded as consistent with the guidelines at the time. At the moment we're not aware of any further engagement with those companies.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: So nothing else to see here—radio silence, no issues. CFMEU is not doing anything wrong, Synergy is out and there's nothing for the taxpayers to be concerned about. Is that correct?

Ms JO HAYLEN: Our Government has taken swift and comprehensive action in relation to the allegations that you have raised. If there were concerns earlier, it would have been incumbent upon your Government to take action, but your Government didn't take any action. In fact, your Government and Minister Tudehope and yourself—

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: I'm interested, Minister, in your responsibility, your transparency, your accountability and what you are doing right now.

Ms JO HAYLEN: —actually met with the CFMEU, didn't you?

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: How can taxpayers be assured these incidents are no longer continuing?

The CHAIR: Order!

Ms JO HAYLEN: You met with the CFMEU after the officials were charged with offences.

The CHAIR: Minister, when I say, "Order!", I mean you too. If you are talking over each other, one of you has to stop. If I say, "Order!", both stop and then we'll proceed, so Hansard doesn't go nuts.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Let's move on to the bus taskforce report. We've had three reports, lots of expense, lots of talk and lots of reviews on buses. Let's talk about action has been taken. Minister, the first report issued had the recommendation:

> That a long-term growth funding program be established to improve bus services to underserved communities around the state …

You might remember that one. Where in this budget can I find the long-term growth funding program to support underserved communities?

Ms JO HAYLEN: It's an excellent recommendation from the Bus Industry Taskforce—a critical piece of work that we undertook, fulfilling our election commitment—because these parts of the public transport network have been forgotten, and the elements that make it work have not been brought together and listened to for over 15 years. I'm really pleased the Bus Industry Taskforce has provided us with a blueprint to fix the mess in buses that we were left by the former Government. That includes ensuring that there is growth funding for bus services. It's something that your Government took out of the budget.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Minister, let's talk about your Government.

Ms JO HAYLEN: And it's the reason why many suburbs that have grown, particularly in Western Sydney, are Uber-only suburbs and do not have bus services.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: All right, so let's talk about the recommendation and the long-term growth funding program.

Ms JO HAYLEN: Our Government has already made an investment in the most recent budget of over $24 million to start to address this problem. It is a down payment on the areas most impacted by the failure of your Government to invest the money to provide the additional services—the extension of the routes, for example, to the new parts of the suburb that were not serviced by your Government.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Minister, I'm happy to talk about that outside of budget estimates, but we're here to examine this budget, and that's what I'd like to ask you about.

Ms JO HAYLEN: And I'm talking about the budget—$24 million to provide new services to new communities that were built under your watch without bus services.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Minister, a long-term growth funding program—where can I find that? What page of the budget can I find the funding for the long-term growth funding program?

Ms JO HAYLEN: We have made a down payment of $24 million—

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Yes. Where is that?

Ms JO HAYLEN: —for the most affected bus areas that were neglected by your Government. That's the north-west and the west—suburbs like Blacktown, suburbs like Mount Druitt, suburbs like—

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: But, Minister, I just want to turn to the budget. What page is that long-term growth funding program on?

Ms JO HAYLEN: There is also an investment in the budget, again, of around $24 million to $25 million to develop a medium-term bus plan—again, a recommendation of the Bus Industry Taskforce—so that we have a plan to deal with the investment that is needed, particularly in these areas.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: So where in the budget is that?

Ms JO HAYLEN: It's an investment in the budget.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Where? What page?

Ms JO HAYLEN: If you need the specific page number or reference—

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Yes, I can't seem to find it. That's the problem.

Ms JO HAYLEN: —I'm more than happy to take that on notice.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: It's your budget, and you insisted on the priorities. I'm just wondering where we could find it. Could you get that answer to us today?

Ms JO HAYLEN: Maybe you should do the legwork and have a look yourself.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: I have, and that's the problem: I can't find it, Minister. You talk about priorities, but it doesn't seem to appear in there.

Ms JO HAYLEN: Well, it definitely wasn't a priority of your Government.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Mr Murray, can you tell me what page in the budget the program is? The long-term growth funding program delivered by your Government, as recommended by the review—where is that in the budget?

JOSH MURRAY: Thank you for the question. I'll take the actual page number on notice and perhaps refer that back to you shortly.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: It's not complex. It's your program, with respect. It's a budget estimates hearing.

JOSH MURRAY: There is $23.8 million in the budget for the medium-term business plan, as the Minister has just referenced, for the 10-year services, and $24.7 million over four years for the immediate backstop of services for Western Sydney. Those elements were called out at the budget time.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Mr Murray, in the department's view, is that money enough to ensure a long-term growth funding program, as recommended by the review?

JOSH MURRAY: The business plan that will be developed with the $23.8 million will service those long-term needs over 10 years. That will set out what is required. Certainly the bus taskforce second report called out that the scale of reinvestment that would be required in Sydney's bus services was not a one-off hit, that it required a long-term funding stream and that elements like getting new buses, building new buses, in particular, and getting enough drivers across Sydney would take a long time to rebuild. We are obviously ensuring that we get those initial investments into Western Sydney as the first step.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: But the $23.8 million isn't enough to cover it. That's fair. I'm in your corner; it's not a trick. We're all trying to help the bus industry. Clearly that's not enough.

JOSH MURRAY: The $23.8 million, I just stress again—I may not have spelt it out correctly—is for the business plan and the crafting of the medium-term bus plan so that we have a sustainable pipeline of investment for 10 years.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: There was also a recommendation in that first report that the Government further consider the prospects of developing a tripartite application to the Commonwealth for a bus driver labour agreement including in collaboration with other States experiencing driver shortages. Has a tripartite application been developed to address the bus driver shortages?

Ms JO HAYLEN: No, it hasn't. That hasn't been progressed. It was identified as not the best way to address our bus driver shortage. A range of other measures have been put in place. We have seen great success. In fact, we inherited a bus driver shortage of over 550 drivers from your Government, and we've subsequently reduced that to around 230. There's still a lot more work to do, and the Coordinator-General is leading that work.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: So the status of that is that it's not going to be accepted by the Government and it won't be progressed. Is that right?

Ms JO HAYLEN: At this stage, it has been accepted by the workforce and by the industry that that is not, at this stage, the best way to address the bus driver shortage.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Let's move on to the second report.

Ms JO HAYLEN: Can I just finish? We have actually had some drivers assist us from out of our jurisdiction. I'll hand to the Coordinator-General to provide you with that detail.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: I've got the Coordinator-General for this afternoon and I've got four minutes now, so I might just move on to the second of the three reports at great expense. The recommendation in the second report, one of the many, was that funding be provided in the short term for the following high-priority service improvements. It goes on to recommend—talking of dollars—$194 million of recurrent operational funding and $909 million in capital funding. That's the bus priorities, fleets and depots over three years in Sydney. Again I've been looking through the budget and I can't seem to see that. Where can we find that funding?

Ms JO HAYLEN: Firstly, I appreciate that there are lots of recommendations in the Bus Industry Taskforce. These all have been adopted by the Government, in principle. We are putting them into action through a variety of different means. That includes the rollout of new fleet through the zero emissions bus plan as well as the medium-term bus plan that the Secretary and I previously alluded to.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Sure, but I might draw you back to that specific one, in the three minutes that I have.

Ms JO HAYLEN: We do have to play catch-up here because, under your Government, you ripped over $300 million out of buses, removed growth funding and left the system in complete disarray.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Minister, I have three minutes. I'd like to redirect you. You're just taking up my time. These are legitimate questions.

The Hon. Dr SARAH KAINE: Point of order: The Minister is attempting to answer the question and is being repeatedly interrupted. Ms Ward is trying to use what we now know is not actually a redirection. Could you allow the Minister to answer?

The CHAIR: This time I won't uphold the point of order. I think the member was asking for something quite specific, and it did seem as though the Minister was going to potentially not go down the path of answering it in such a way. I'll ask the Minister to try and respond to the questions and let's see how we go.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Minister, is the funding there or not? It's a very simple question: Is it in the budget or not? Because you do the press conferences—

Ms JO HAYLEN: There is significant funding in the budget, which is in stark contrast to when your Government was in government, when $300 million was ripped out of it.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: I'll move on.

Ms JO HAYLEN: On your previous question, I have been provided with information that says that the line item in relation to the medium-term bus plan is on page 25 of the overview document.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Yes. Mr Murray, it's clear that you do these reviews, you do the press conferences and you ask for all of these things to be done, but we're concerned about the implementation of these recommendations. Given it's been 18 months, there have been three reports and it's at great expense, we would like to see, and these questions go to, where it is, that the industry can understand. In relation to the $194 million, is that on that page also, Mr Murray?

JOSH MURRAY: There are a number of elements on that page that spell out investment in buses.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Recurrent operational funding of $194 million, is that there?

JOSH MURRAY: I'll take that on notice.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: The $909 million in capital funding provided by the Government to Transport in the last budget, Ms Hoang, is that in there?

BRENDA HOANG: I'll have to take that on notice.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: So no-one here today can tell me where this money is in the budget. No-one can say where the funding is. After three reports, press releases—

The Hon. Dr SARAH KAINE: Is there a question in that, or is it just a diatribe?

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: No-one can tell us, from the finance—

The CHAIR: Order!

Ms JO HAYLEN: Twelve years, Natalie—12 years of complete neglect of our bus services.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Your budget, Minister, your press announcements, three reviews and $1 million for John Lee, and you can't tell us. You don't know if you've got $1 billion. You just don't know.

Ms JO HAYLEN: There is significant investment in this budget, including $327 million for buses to the new Western Sydney airport, a project that your Government said would be put in place—

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Did you get $1 billion or not?

Ms JO HAYLEN: —and again, you did not, in fact, allocate a single cent. Let's compare the pair here.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Minister, did you get $1 billion or not?

Ms JO HAYLEN: Not a single cent for buses for the new Western Sydney airport.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: So you can't tell this Committee whether you got $1 billion?

Ms JO HAYLEN: But $327.1 million—that's in this section of the budget here; it's *Budget Paper No. 3*.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Minister, I'm going to ask you about your budget. Did you get $1 billion for recurrent operational funding and capital funding? Where is that? Did you get it? I can't find it in the budget. No-one can answer anything today, and it's budget estimates.

Ms JO HAYLEN: They're in the budget. There is $1.7 billion in the budget, in fact, for zero emissions buses. There are a range of investments throughout the budget, far more than your Government ever invested.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: So 2023 was the year of the rort and 2024 is the year of the delay. No- one can answer a question about the budget.

The Hon. Dr SARAH KAINE: Point of order—

The Hon. BOB NANVA: Point of order—

The CHAIR: There are multiple points of order.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: I'll move on.

The Hon. Dr SARAH KAINE: No. Excuse me, I called a point of order. You don't get to decide that it's overruled.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Well, I have 30 seconds left and that is your sixth one today. Clearly you're running cover for this Minister, who can't answer a question about her own budget.

The CHAIR: Order! Ms Ward, you've got 20 seconds to go.

The Hon. Dr SARAH KAINE: Come on. Talk about grandstanding. Classic Natalie grandstanding.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: All spin, press conferences, review after review—tell us where the money is. That's what people want to know.

The Hon. Dr SARAH KAINE: Point of order: There was no question there. That was a complete commentary outside of the civility of the hearing.

The CHAIR: I've heard. Members are allowed to phrase a question by also giving some statement at the beginning. We're pretty relaxed about that. I think that's what the member was doing, so I won't uphold the point of order. Obviously that's used all your time up, Ms Ward.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Clearly—seven points of order from Labor.

The Hon. Dr SARAH KAINE: If you behaved, we wouldn't need them.

The CHAIR: Order! Now to go to questions from me. Let's continue with the Bus Industry Taskforce.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: How many points are you going to take? None now.

The CHAIR: Order! We've got some chatter over here. With the Bus Industry Taskforce rapid bus transit recommendations in relation to Western Sydney, do you have a timetable to roll out the recommendations from the bus taskforce in terms of Western Sydney bus services?

Ms JO HAYLEN: In relation to new services for the Western Sydney airport?

The CHAIR: Western Sydney is so much more than the airport, obviously. I think there's a lot of focus on the airport in terms of transport, but there's a hell of a lot more than that. So the question is, rapid bus transit, as recommended by the Bus Industry Taskforce—and PC6 held an inquiry into Western Sydney transport and found that for the connection, particularly between the north and the south, rapid bus transit was necessary, and there was a lot of criticism that this Government didn't seem to be prioritising that. Are you going to ensure that they're built?

Ms JO HAYLEN: Firstly, in terms of rapid routes or more frequent routes like the B-line, for example, or the T-way, the medium-term bus plan will be the plan that lays out for us what are the priority routes, in which order, and the investment pipeline to deliver those. We do need more frequent services across Sydney and across New South Wales. The Bus Industry Taskforce report makes that very clear as well as the work that Transport for NSW has already released about those different corridors.

The CHAIR: It may have been asked before, but can I just get a sense, with that medium-term bus plan, the $28 million or $26 million, whatever it is, going towards that—

The Hon. ROBERT BORSAK: The $23.8 million.

The CHAIR: —what's the time frame for that?

Ms JO HAYLEN: It will be developed over the course of the next 24 months.

The CHAIR: So no rapid bus networks to be agreed to—for example, the question was about Western Sydney. A medium-term bus plan will be developed over the next two years. That plan that will come out, let's say, September 2026. Then when do you think we can expect rapid bus transit? You're essentially saying to people in Western Sydney that it will probably be three years, four years, before they even get to see—

Ms JO HAYLEN: No, that's not—I appreciate that these are communities that are, in some respect, Uber-only suburbs and need services now. There are others where those services are not meeting requirements. Those services are not frequent enough. Those services are not sufficient. There are a range of programs that we're already putting in place—for example, the $25 million investment for north-west and Western Sydney, to deal with some of those areas, particularly those growth suburbs that don't have services. Those services will be rolled out over the next 12 months. The Coordinator General could provide you further detail around that announcement. I appreciate this is not just about Western Sydney airport, but those services that are we are putting in place before passenger planes land at the new Western Sydney airport will also serve other means.

Those services are going from Campbelltown, Liverpool and Penrith, and will cover a significant area in the south-west that, as you and your Committee rightly pointed out, are significantly underserved. So, yes, the medium-term bus plan is our 10-year plan, a business case for investment to catch up. A significant amount of catch-up needs to occur in Western Sydney and provide us with what those routes should be, but it doesn't preclude the investment that is already available in the budget now or other investment that could be made by the Government. The two things are important together; one doesn't exclude the other.

The CHAIR: Going by that calculation of 24 months, say you get the medium-term bus plan released in two years time, we're going to have an election before we see any investment in a 10-year plan, because the next election is in 2027. Is that what you're telling the people of New South Wales—that in terms of substantial investment, which is what is needed and what the Bus Industry Taskforce has said in terms of the paltry sum spent on buses compared to trains and metro in Sydney—they have to wait until after the next election?

Ms JO HAYLEN: No, one doesn't preclude the other. No, that's not the case at all. Each subsequent budget, of course, you'll see further investment in the public transport services that we need, and we recognise that bus has been the forgotten mode and needs significant investment. The Bus Industry Taskforce provides us with a blueprint to do just that. We're working on multiple streams to address the shortages and the gaps that we were left by the former Government.

The CHAIR: But it doesn't seem as though you are substantially investing more money in buses. In terms of the scale that's needed, we're not going to see that until after the next election—if we do.

Ms JO HAYLEN: No, that's not the case at all. In fact, we have significant investment in this budget. You'll see more investment in future budgets. But the medium-term bus plan gives us that long-term plan. One does not preclude the other. This is what has been missing for so long—that is, while there have been lots of maps about where we build metros, for example, there have not been lots of maps about where we need to deliver these bus services. That's what the medium-term bus plan does. But it doesn't mean that we just down tools until the plan is already. We're already investing in additional services in the north-west and the west. We're already investing in services to the new Western Sydney airport, which will provide significant uplift for these communities. But we are playing catch-up, Cate.

The CHAIR: I would have thought that developing such a plan would have been something that was a week-one task—that if there wasn't a plan when you came into office, you would have identified that there needed to be a bus plan and commissioned the consultants that get paid a hell of a lot of money to do that bus plan. Again, it's frustrating. Clearly, a plan is needed.

Ms JO HAYLEN: Yes, it is, and that's why we had a taskforce. For the first time in 15 years, we brought passenger voices, the workforce—very important; they had not been consulted—and the industry critical to delivering these services, all together to come up with a comprehensive plan. That hasn't happened in this State for decades—

The CHAIR: Let's go to specific—

Ms JO HAYLEN: —and that's the important work that we've done. While the taskforce has been doing that work, we've also been making significant changes and improving services, which is what the Coordinator General has been leading.

The CHAIR: That is what I want to get to right now. I want to get to specific examples of where people are tearing their hair out over the situation with buses—the northern beaches is one of those. Let's talk about the B1 bus; by the time it gets to Manly Vale from Mona Vale, it's almost always full. This is in peak hour. This leads

to regular queues of 150 or more residents waiting at Manly Vale. The same is seen at Dee Why, at Brookvale. Mr Collins, you are nodding your head as though you are well aware of this. What is being done in terms of the B1? More buses? This has been going on for some time. It has been going on since the day after the election, and well before the election as well.

HOWARD COLLINS: Thank you very much for the question. Yes, we've squeezed everything we can out of the existing fleet. We've added additional services for the B1. Yet, as you say, it is an extremely popular route, and we need more services. Each one of those vehicles is covering record numbers of kilometres, as they are almost operating on a 24/7 basis. But as the Minister said, there is significant investment. We are tools in the ground, shovels in the ground with Brookvale, converting that to an electric depot. We are rolling out even further zero-emission vehicles which will take some pressure off of those routes in the northern beaches.

The CHAIR: Starting from Brookvale? Mr Collins, when you say an electric depot in Brookvale—

HOWARD COLLINS: Yes, an overhead pantograph depot. We're doing that infrastructure work. This Government has put a huge amount of investment into zero-emission vehicles. You can't conjure these things up overnight, because you need to plug them in. So we're doing a lot of work in that area.

The CHAIR: Those Brookvale buses to ensure that commuters starting their trips from there can get on—when does it look like they'll be on the road?

HOWARD COLLINS: It takes around about 12 months from conversion to final delivery. But we're also reallocating the fleet wherever possible. We haven't ordered a new bus for a long time, apart from the small number of ZEBs which have arrived now.

The CHAIR: How many, Mr Collins? I'm keen on those numbers as well. How many electric buses do we have in place?

HOWARD COLLINS: I could give you a round figure, but I will take it on notice and give you the figure today. It's about 150 vehicles. People are seeing them more and more. The other thing, just as I may finish, is the investment for rapid buses. That will be delivered by 2026, working with my colleagues—$306 million. We are going to use over 50 new, zero-emission buses as part of that work. We think it's important that Western Sydney gets the benefit of these electric buses. We know the airport requires a workforce to operate it, and that workforce comes from Campbelltown, from Liverpool, and the only way you can get there is by having a good rapid bus service.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: I wasn't going to ask about buses, but I was provoked by Mr Murray's comment that we have a plan that is going to cost us $24 million. Can you give us some detail as to the itemised costing of that plan? What does $24 million get us in a plan? To the average punter, it seems a pretty obscene amount just to come up with a plan. What does it entail?

JOSH MURRAY: Thank you for the question. We will be detailing exactly how that plan will come about over the period that was just set out by the Minister before. I would stress that, throughout the allocations made in the budget, we are spending $3 billion over the next four years on all the elements that have been mentioned by the Minister and my colleagues in the past few answers. In terms of then how we take that 10-year investment forward, that's what the $24 million will start to set up and to craft out, and also to make the early investments in the structures that are required to deliver that.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: So that $24 million includes some investment in physical infrastructure. Is that what you're saying?

JOSH MURRAY: I'll take it on notice in terms of the timeline that we will come back on the exact makeup of the medium-term bus plan. But obviously we need the expertise and the long-term planning to put around that, and it will be an investible case that we can bring back to government to fund for a decade.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: Who is producing that plan? Is it being produced internally or is it going externally to consultants?

JOSH MURRAY: It's produced internally. We may require some additional support, in terms of planning, over that period. But it's a long-term position.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: Minister, I might just go to the Kamay wharves. In the last estimates in February, in response to the Chair's comments around disabled access for fisherman, yourself and Mr Collins said that was something you were going to go away and look it. Has any progress been made in accommodating fishers with disabilities at Kamay?

Ms JO HAYLEN: Yes. I appreciate your interest. This is something that we've been addressing across Maritime—people with disability and, also, older participants to have access to our waterways. I'll hand to Mr Collins for any further update.

HOWARD COLLINS: Thank you, Mr Banasiak. I always love these questions from you. This one is so important. I was there last Saturday, actually, standing on the wharf, and the project team showed me the excellent recommendation about accessible fishing. There are a number of spots now and there looked like some good fish down below that little area. So I am delighted to say that it will be fully accessible, step-free, for not only people who will be using the wharf in the future but for the fishing fraternity and, certainly, on both sides, we will see that available to our fishing community.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: When do you foresee that being implemented?

HOWARD COLLINS: The construction for that area—I've looked at the sites which give step-free level access—is almost complete. The project will be delivered by the end of this year, we hope, for the summer holiday season. Inspection on site now shows the fitting out of canopies, seating and guardrails, and most of the major construction work has been completed.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: Given that this has become a good resource for fishers—and while it's not determined when we'll get, or if we will ever get, a ferry wharf service going there—what are we going to do about the current rules that only permit six people to be fishing on a wharf at any one time? It seems like we've got this great big fantastic fishing wharf now. What are we going to do if only six people at any one time can fish on a wharf, in accordance with the Ports and Maritime Administration Act?

HOWARD COLLINS: I would take that away and take that on notice. Obviously the wharf also provides significant public vessel mooring, and we have gone out to expression of interest—that will be closed in the next couple of weeks—for operating a number of commercial ferry services. We have had a number of parties interested in that, so it will be a multi-user wharf. It is significant, as you know, because of the tides and the shallow depth, particularly on the Kurnell side. But I will take it away and, maybe outside of the estimates, we can have a discussion with the head of Maritime to see what is possible, considering the extent and size of that wharf.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: Yes. It seems a potential waste of a good resource there. Minister, I asked some questions of you on notice around your meetings and dealings around the cruise industry. You said you met with the Port Authority and the Tourism and Transport Forum around the future of cruising on 27 February this year. Have you had any other meetings with cruise industry stakeholders since then?

Ms JO HAYLEN: I'd have to check my diary and get back to you. I don't recall any other meetings. But I think our discussion previously was about the potential expansion of or a future cruise terminal. I'm happy to update you in relation to that important work because, while there is capacity at the Overseas Passenger Terminal and the White Bay Cruise Terminal in the short term, we do need a long-term plan. The industry has formed, with government, a group to look at those options and will be advising of their recommendations to government as well. It's important that we have made sure that we're engaging with the industry about a future plan for a cruise terminal.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: Are you able to tell us what options that group is considering?

Ms JO HAYLEN: They are considering options both inside of Sydney Harbour and up and down our coast, and they'll provide their recommendations to government.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: Do you have a timeline for when you expect to get those recommendations?

Ms JO HAYLEN: I don't in front of me. I'll come back to you. By the end of the year, I've just been told.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: Thank you. Can I just go to the announcement of the revamped Boating Now funding? Under the last Government, they announced round four—$28 million—four times and never actually paid that money out. What's going to happen to that $28 million that was promised to local councils and never delivered?

Ms JO HAYLEN: The announcement that you were present for in August at the International Boat Show outlined our new program. It's a $44 million investment. Those applicants have been contacted by Transport for NSW and informed about the new program and the process for being able to apply for funding. I think it's really important to note that this new program takes on board the recommendations of the review of the previous program, particularly in relation to transparency, that future grants will be done through the centralised grants

management process rather than some distinct avenue. Also, we want to make sure that they include consideration for maintenance—that has been a problem in the past—that they take into account relevant users, particularly people with disability, older boaters and recreational fishers, and that they also include good environmental and sustainability outcomes. That's the framework that has been incorporated into the new program, and there is $44 million allocated to that overall program.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: What you're essentially saying is that the $28 million that was promised to councils by the last Government—they've been told they're not getting that now and they'll have to apply through this new process. Can you see how that's potentially going to stifle councils applying for these funds when they've already been burnt once and gone to the effort of applying for this funding?

Ms JO HAYLEN: Transport has good relationships with many of these councils and is in contact with them. I think many of them understand the need for good processes, why we had the review of the Boating Now program and why changes have been made. I appreciate that there is urgency in many communities for investment in this type of infrastructure—wharves and boat ramps, for example—but it was incumbent upon the Government to make sure that the expenditure of taxpayer money was appropriate and that provision was made for the ongoing maintenance of these assets. We have inherited a significant asset base that has not been maintained, and there's no value to a community or a council in a wharf or a ramp that doesn't work.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: Is it just a coincidence that when you take your $44 million announcement and take away the $16 million for dredging, you're left with that $28 million figure? Is that a coincidence? It makes stakeholders think that's not really new money. It's just old money that hasn't gone out the door from the last Government.

Ms JO HAYLEN: I'm being very clear here that there are two components to the Boating Infrastructure and Dredging Scheme. One is $16 million for dredging and the other is a scheme that addresses the infrastructure and maintenance issues around wharves and infrastructure that allows people to access the waterways. I'm very clear about that, Mark.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: Minister, do you sign off on the regional transport and roads decisions, or is that all to Minister Aitchison? Where's the division of responsibility?

Ms JO HAYLEN: Yes, regional roads and transport projects are managed by the Minister.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: So you don't have any oversight? Do any of the senior executives here report directly to Minister Aitchison or does it all come through you?

Ms JO HAYLEN: I think there are a range of processes. Firstly, of course, Minister Aitchison brings her own proposals to Cabinet or indeed to the Expenditure Review Committee through the budget process. These things are dealt with separately. Regional projects are dealt with by Jenny.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: Who made the decision to dissolve the dedicated regional division within Transport? Was that you or her?

Ms JO HAYLEN: If you're referring to the operating model within Transport for NSW, that's the responsibility of the Secretary of Transport.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: But yourself or Minister Aitchison didn't have any say in that decision?

Ms JO HAYLEN: In relation to regional projects, that's for the Minister for Regional Roads and Transport. In relation to the operating arrangements across Transport for NSW, again, that's the responsibility of the Secretary of Transport.

The CHAIR: Minister, why do you think it's okay to keep taking money, in the form of the airport station access fee, from essential workers who are going to the airport? It's been a Labor election promise to scrap that fee, particularly for essential workers, yet that fee is still in place. I know there's a cap, but ultimately workers are still paying more. Why haven't you fixed this now that you're in Government?

Ms JO HAYLEN: Firstly, I recognise that there is an additional fee to access those two stations. It does mean that that part of the train network is more expensive than other parts of the network. It is a lower cost compared to other capital cities and other jurisdictions in terms of public transport access to the airport, although I do recognise that we want to encourage more people to use public transport to access Sydney Airport, and that, in particular, goes to the workforce. The contract that the previous Government signed is in place until 2030, but I have had discussions with Sydney Airport about how we support workers to catch public transport to the airport and I will continue to progress those matters. Unfortunately, however, it's a 30-year deal that was signed in 1995 by the Coalition Government. It's up in 2030.

The CHAIR: Thank you, Minister. There are no questions from the Government. We'll break for morning tea. We'll be back at 11.15 a.m.

(Short adjournment)

The CHAIR: Before we start, I acknowledge that we have been joined by a delegation, as I understand, from the Swedish Parliament to observe proceedings. So, we will be so well behaved.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: I can't promise anything, but I'll try.

The CHAIR: Not promising anything. We will move to questions from the Opposition. Ms Ward.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Thank you, Chair. Welcome back, Minister. Can I take you to the budget again, the line item regarding the south-west Sydney rail planning business case? That talks about developing a business case for potential future rail connections. Is that looking at metro and rail connections for both Bradfield to Leppington and Bradfield, Campbelltown, Macarthur?

Ms JO HAYLEN: Yes, it is an election commitment that we made and are enacting in conjunction with the Federal Government. That is a mode agnostic consideration of the connections needed for south-west Sydney, as you highlight, both south to Campbelltown, McArthur and also a connection to the existing heavy rail network at Leppington.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Both heavy rail and metro-level extension are on the table for that metro?

Ms JO HAYLEN: Yes. It's a mode agnostic study. We make decisions based on what is the best transport provision, the best mode, not ideology.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Can the people of Western Sydney expect to get both a metro and heavy rail, or are you not deciding at this stage? What do the people of Western Sydney say about mode agnostic? Don't they deserve a metro?

Ms JO HAYLEN: I think the people in Western Sydney would like services in their communities and unfortunately under your Government they were promised a range of infrastructure investment that they haven't received. So, our Government has put its money where its mouth is.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: But you are the Minister and I would like to understand what your responsibility is in your budget. It is your line item. I am asking you about your business case. I want to be clear about when it will be done.

Ms JO HAYLEN: We are doing the legwork to make sure that we have a plan in place for the future rail connections that south-west Sydney and north-west Sydney need.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: The funding is there, $65 million for these business cases. So Bradfield to Leppington, Glenfield, is the business case for that one assessing both metro and heavy rail?

Ms JO HAYLEN: As I said, this is a mode agnostic study because we want to make the best decision for the future of those communities and for our integrated public transport network.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: So Bradfield to Campbelltown, McArthur, is the business case for that one assessing both metro and heavy rail? Yes or no? Is it assessing those two?

Ms JO HAYLEN: This is a mode agnostic study that the State Government is doing in conjunction with the Federal Government.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: You have said that, but does that include both? It is a really easy question. You have got a business case, $65 million. Is it metro and heavy rail? Yes or no?

Ms JO HAYLEN: I think you have asked the question several different ways. My answer is still the same.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: The RTBU is against any more spending on metros, is that a factor in your decision-making?

Ms JO HAYLEN: We won't be making decisions about public transport investment based on ideology. That is something that your Government did. We will be making decisions based on evidence and based on need.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: And you are spending $65 million on a business case and you can't tell us what is in that business case?

Ms JO HAYLEN: That is the very nature of developing a business case. It is exactly why you undertake these processes. In fact, these are processes that have been in place under your Government and governments before to ensure that we are responsibly and effectively spending the taxpayer dollars of the residents of New South Wales.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Well, speaking of those taxpayer dollars, is heavy rail better than metro?

Ms JO HAYLEN: We will be making decisions based on what the evidence points to and what is needed for New South Wales. We won't be making decisions based on ideology.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: So, the RTBU gets no say in that?

Ms JO HAYLEN: The transport workforce is essential to delivering public transport services. I respect their frontline contribution each and every day. It is something that unfortunately your Government failed to recognise and respect and it is one of the reasons—

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: You keep talking about that, but I am interested in what you are doing.

Ms JO HAYLEN: It is one of the reasons why we inherited a range of contracts and projects that are failing.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: As I understand it, there is a possibility of heavy rail extension of the Western Sydney metro instead of a metro line?

Ms JO HAYLEN: The south-west rail study is mode agnostic. I don't know what other way I can possibly explain it, but clearly you don't understand it.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Why does Marrickville get a metro but Camden doesn't?

Ms JO HAYLEN: We are doing a business case for the south-west metro. This is a community that has been long promised and wants a rail connection to the rest of the rail network across Sydney. The south-west metro is a project that was conceived under your Government. That rail line hasn't moved.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: We can talk about that all day if you like outside, but I am here to ask you in your budget estimates about your budget, why it is. It was a very simple question. You could have said, "Yep, metro is in; absolutely, we support metro for Camden." That doesn't seem to be the case because you won't answer whether it is both metro and heavy rail. Nonetheless, I will move on. Seems like we are not getting anywhere. Mayors in south-west Sydney have said their number one priority is to get a metro and you are sitting here today telling this Committee that you are not sure if it's in or out, or you won't rule it in or out, or you won't prioritise it for those communities.

Ms JO HAYLEN: Both options are being evaluated because we want to make sure that we get the right connections and the right public transport options for the people of south-west Sydney. I agree that the people of Camden, the people of Campbelltown, the people of Macarthur, the people of south-west Sydney want rail connections and have been promised them for a very long time.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: They want metro.

Ms JO HAYLEN: Our Government has put its money where its mouths is to do the legwork to make sure that we get those options right. We are talking about long-term major public transport infrastructure projects that those communities deserve and they need.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Which is why I have raised it. When will the business case be complete?

Ms JO HAYLEN: The business cases are currently underway. I will refer that question to the Secretary of Transport.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: I can hear from him this afternoon, but it would be interesting to hear it from you. Nonetheless, I will move on. Let's talk about the south-west conversion then. Based on the current bus shortages, will the Southwest Link be able to deliver a service between two to four minutes during peak periods? That's a yes or no.

Ms JO HAYLEN: The Southwest Link is a series of different routes and services to ensure that the people who currently use—about 60,000 people each and every day—the T3 Sydenham to Bankstown line have alternative public transport services.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Yep, I know that.

Ms JO HAYLEN: Thanks to the work of the Coordinator General and his team, and their work with the bus industry, we have a fleet of a hundred buses ready to provide that service and a workforce of 200 drivers ready to drive those buses. But this will be a very painful and difficult period—

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: I understand. We have heard of all of that.

Ms JO HAYLEN: —for this part of Sydney.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: So, will it be—

Ms JO HAYLEN: I am just telling you what the experience will be for passengers, because that's obviously very important.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: We've heard all of that.

Ms JO HAYLEN: I care about passengers. That's my number one priority.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: We've heard the press release. We've heard the announcements. What I would like to understand is will it be two to four minutes as you have promised?

Ms JO HAYLEN: Yes.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: David Babineau from the RTBU, who was a member of the bus taskforce, has commented previously, "We haven't got the drivers, we haven't got enough buses." That is his quote. Who is correct: the workforce or Transport for NSW?

Ms JO HAYLEN: I have just provided evidence to this Committee to say, in fact in answer to multiple questions this morning, to confirm that the bus drivers have been recruited and trained and the bus fleet is ready.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: The RTBU says we don't have enough, you say we do, it will be two to four minutes and we have got that guaranteed today. That's good to see. Thank you very much. You have previously stated publicly that the metro conversion will be for 12 months only, but you have recently flagged it could be for longer. What is the current advice from Transport on how long the metro conversion will take?

Ms JO HAYLEN: We have a delivery program of 12 months and we will, of course, be holding our delivery partners, the contractors, to that time line.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Will it be longer that 12 months?

Ms JO HAYLEN: We will be holding our delivery partners to that 12-month delivery program. But, as I have made clear to the community and made comment, both in the Parliament and in the media, these projects are complicated and the conversion of a 130-year-old rail line is a very complicated project. In fact, I think it is probably one of the reasons why your Government was considering cancelling it.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Let's talk about your Government and what you are doing. It is your estimates here today. You seem very keen to talk about anything other than what you are doing. So, I will ask you the question. Minister, you keep saying these things, but have you had advice that it could be longer?

Ms JO HAYLEN: Yes, it is possible that it could take longer, and we are being upfront with the passengers in this part of Sydney. They have been subject to 70-plus closures of their rail line since 2019. They have already experienced significant disruption and this period is going to be difficult.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Mr Regan, have you had advice that it will be longer?

Ms JO HAYLEN: This is not *The People's Court*. You don't get to redirect. Look, I am answering the question. The question is we acknowledge—

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: We have limited time.

Ms JO HAYLEN: —that this is a difficult period, we will hold our contractors to the 12-month delivery program, but I am being upfront with passengers. I am being upfront—

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Well, be upfront. What was the advice you received? Mr Regan, have you had advice that it will be longer than 12 months?

Ms JO HAYLEN: I am answering your question, Natalie.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Mr Regan?

PETER REGAN: I can confirm we have let all the contracts for the south-west conversion and those contracts are on the basis of a conversion of up to 12 months.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: The advice is that there could potentially be, or you are hedging bets today. Minister, you are saying that it could be, but it's up to others.

Ms JO HAYLEN: You'd know about project delays, Natalie, wouldn't you?

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Let's talk about your projects, Minister.

Ms JO HAYLEN: You'd know about project delays, because the contracts that your Government signed—

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: We're here in your budget estimates.

Ms JO HAYLEN: —including the new intercity fleet and the regional fleet were all significantly delayed by years—not by months, by years—and budgets have blown out.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Minister, I have very limited time. Taxpayers would like to know what you're doing with their money. I'd like to understand what you, as the responsible Minister, are doing.

Ms JO HAYLEN: I think I've answered your question.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: I don't think you have by talking about previous governments. You seem very keen to talk about anything other than your responsibility in your budget estimates about your budgets and your projects. I'm just keen to understand, because taxpayers would like to know.

Ms JO HAYLEN: What's your question, Natalie?

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: I'd like to understand how much longer you think that delay could be. You've flagged delays. How much longer do you think they could be?

Ms JO HAYLEN: We want to hold the contractors to the 12-month delivery period. I want to see passengers on that metro as soon as possible. I don't want them stuck on buses a day longer than they need to be, but this is a conversion of—

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Is it months or weeks?

The CHAIR: Order! Let the Minister finish her answer.

Ms JO HAYLEN: This is a conversion of a 130-year-old rail line with a high level of complexity. We're talking about curved platforms on multiple platforms. It requires the installation of over 170 mechanical gap fillers. It is next to a freight line, and there are 15 overbridges that need significant work. This is a very complex project. It's one that was delayed by your Government. Remember, your Government's program was that this section of the metro would have been opened at the same time as the city.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Could you inform the Committee about what the delay might potentially be? Do you have advice on whether that could be months? Could it be weeks?

Ms JO HAYLEN: I've been very clear that I don't want this program delayed any more than it needs to be, but there are obviously elements that may be out of our control. It's very different to build in a brownfield environment than it is in a greenfield environment. Building a perfectly straight, perfectly level new platform in a new tunnel under our city and our harbour is very different to converting a 130-year-old rail line. I think the people of south-west Sydney understand that.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Let's talk about that.

Ms JO HAYLEN: In fact, they know that this project is complicated and, in fact, has been subject to delays that occurred under your Government.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: It's good that you're very clear, because you were very clear about the opening of the metro. Metro city was delayed, Parramatta Light Rail was delayed, the metro west has been delayed and Rosehill has been a thought bubble. How can people trust anything that you say about dates when everything is a target or a press release?

Ms JO HAYLEN: Do you have a question?

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Yes. Can anyone rely on what you say other than press releases about target dates and opening dates and delays? I'm asking you about your understanding—

Ms JO HAYLEN: I appreciate that you were inconvenienced because of the organisation of your fundraiser, Natalie. The rest of Sydney is really enjoying city metro.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Can I finish? Would you like a question?

The CHAIR: Order! Minister and Ms Ward, we're descending into talking over each other pretty much constantly again. I don't know how you are hearing the questions that Ms Ward is putting. Ms Ward, if you could just state that again.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Thank you. I'll go to the intercity fleet. Will the intercity fleet be on the tracks by the end of the year?

Ms JO HAYLEN: You talk about target dates. The target date for the new intercity fleet was 2019 for the Central Coast and the Hunter, 2020 for the Blue Mountains and 2021 for the South Coast.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Will it be open?

Ms JO HAYLEN: Now it's 2024. Because of our Government's work doing the legwork with the workforce and Sydney Trains, we will see passengers on the new intercity fleet by the end of the year.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: So the intercity fleet will be on the tracks by the end of the year. That was a yes.

Ms JO HAYLEN: I've answered your question.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Will it be open?

Ms JO HAYLEN: I think you're confusing the projects here. This is the testing, commissioning and accreditation of a new fleet of trains. It's not opening a project.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Can we trust anything will be on time under you, Minister? Will the intercity fleet be on those tracks by the end of the year?

Ms JO HAYLEN: I really applaud your political bravery for asking about a fleet that blew out by 40 per cent that your Government purchased from overseas.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: I am asking you about your control, your responsibility and your job.

Ms JO HAYLEN: Yes. My responsibility is to fix the mess that you left us.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Wow. Let's talk about what you're doing.

Ms JO HAYLEN: Trains left all across New South Wales for five years, sitting there idle, because—

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Okay, I'll try again.

Ms JO HAYLEN: —your Government purchased them from overseas and didn't get them on the tracks.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: I'll try again asking you about your responsibility in your time as the Minister.

The Hon. Dr SARAH KAINE: Point of order—

Ms JO HAYLEN: Yes, and I answered that question.

The CHAIR: Order! A point of order has been taken by Dr Sarah Kaine.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: I'm trying to ask you because your mates at the RTBU held that project up, and you know it.

The Hon. Dr SARAH KAINE: It's becoming increasingly difficult to hear the Minister's answer—and, indeed, for the Minister to give her answer—because Ms Ward keeps talking and making this inane commentary.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: The Minister interrupted my question.

The Hon. Dr SARAH KAINE: I don't know if there's some kind of justification, but it's unnecessary.

The CHAIR: I'll reluctantly uphold the point of order. The Minister does seem to be largely avoiding what the member is asking, hence, potentially, the member is interrupting to get the Minister to come back to what she's asking. I think there's a bit of quid pro quo here. I'll reluctantly uphold it though, because speaking over each other is disorderly. Ms Ward, we'll go back to you now.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: In the budget, the Tangara fleet extension line item allocates $441.5 million. I'll just read out this part:

> This will enable a longer term replacement to come online with >50 per cent local manufacturing content.

Are you familiar with that item, Minister?

Ms JO HAYLEN: Yes. We are extending the life of the Tangara fleet, and actually completing a project that, unfortunately, your Government was unable to realise.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Mr Longland previously provided evidence to the Committee—

Ms JO HAYLEN: We're doing that so that the passengers of New South Wales have a reliable fleet on the tracks, particularly the T4 line that is reliant upon the Tangara fleet. We're undertaking that work. It's a significant investment for the passengers of New South Wales.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Your budget states that that will have more than 50 per cent local manufacturing content. Mr Longland has previously provided evidence to this Committee that a target of 50 per cent, 75 per cent or 100 per cent was being worked through. Is it is now the Government's policy of at least 50 per cent local content?

Ms JO HAYLEN: It has always been our Government's policy that new rolling stock procured beyond 2027 will have a 50 per cent local content requirement, and that is a baseline. We obviously want to seek to exceed it because we are committed to not only creating a quality product that works for the passengers of New South Wales but also rebuilding our domestic manufacturing industry.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Will the Government commit to the train carriages, or the shell, being part of that component being fabricated and locally built?

Ms JO HAYLEN: We are working through the details of the development of the future fleet. That includes a whole range of consultation with industry. Sydney Trains and NSW Trains currently have hundreds of contracts with local providers that help us provide all of the componentry and maintenance of the fleet. These are the kind of voices that we need to assist us to develop this future fleet. I'm not designing the train here, however. I'm not dedicating which bits will be purchased from where, only that our policy is that the trains and the future fleet will be comprised of 50 per cent local content.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: In relation to that policy issue which you've talked about, is it the Government's intention to build that shell here?

Ms JO HAYLEN: The Government's intention is to ensure that the passengers of New South Wales get a quality train that comprises 50 per cent or more local content.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Of the shell?

Ms JO HAYLEN: I'm not designing the train right here and right now. In fact, there are important processes going on to work with industry so that we can rebuild our domestic manufacturing industry and see trains roll off the tracks here again in New South Wales.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Minister, I have two minutes, so I'm going to move on.

Ms JO HAYLEN: Instead of having the situation where hundreds of trains are sitting in sheds for years on end, like what happened under your Government.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: That was your mates at the RTBU. We know why they're sitting there. That was your mates that wouldn't agree with that.

Ms JO HAYLEN: No, Natalie. Your Government signed that contract, and it was a total failure.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Wow. That is extraordinary to turn that around.

Ms JO HAYLEN: You want to talk about target dates?

The CHAIR: Order! Ms Ward, if you could just proceed and ask your next question.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Minister, where will the remaining non-local content come from?

Ms JO HAYLEN: Again, I'm not designing the train here. That is a process that is being undertaken under the Future Fleet Program. I'm really proud of that program and the work that's being undertaken.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: We could be building that shell in China and then we could put it together here and say that we've delivered 50 per cent local content.

Ms JO HAYLEN: No, Natalie. That's what your Government did.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Okay, but you are not committing today to not doing that. You won't identify what part will be built here—or what component part—and you won't identify where it will be built.

Ms JO HAYLEN: I am not designing and building the train myself.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: You're not telling us where the—

Ms JO HAYLEN: The Future Fleet Program is working through those details.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Okay, that's a non-answer. Mr Longland—

Ms JO HAYLEN: We can't rebuild an entire sector overnight.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Chair, I have one minute left.

Ms JO HAYLEN: It was completely decimated by your Government, because your Government said, "We're not good at building trains here."

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: You won't commit. You've said you won't say what components are built here, you won't say what's moved on and you won't commit to anything. It's all high level garbage. How can we trust anything?

The Hon. Dr SARAH KAINE: Point of order—

The CHAIR: Order! I know what the point of order is going to be. Ms Ward, just proceed with your question. When the member looks like she does want to ask another question, I would just ask the Minister to perhaps cease what she is saying if she is not directly answering the question. There is a tendency, I think, to fill time. I think that's what leads to frustration, and, inevitably, members will interrupt because we have limited time.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Mr Longland previously commented that the Government was still working through the definition of what "local" means to the procurement of the new Tangara fleet. Does the Government have a definition of what "local" means?

Ms JO HAYLEN: These are some of the matters that are being dealt with through the Future Fleet Program. The various consortiums will be able to respond to the guidelines that Transport provide.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Does that mean in New South Wales?

Ms JO HAYLEN: The definition of local content, under the current arrangements, is Australia and New Zealand. That's the agreement, but our ambition is that—

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: How do you define it, Minister?

Ms JO HAYLEN: —as much of the local content comes from New South Wales as possible.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: How do you define it?

Ms JO HAYLEN: As I said, I'm not designing the train here. The Future Fleet Program is consulting with industry about how we rebuild the domestic manufacturing industry in New South Wales.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: It could be like ferries; we could send them to Tasmania. We could send them elsewhere.

The Hon. Dr SARAH KAINE: You got everything offshore!

The CHAIR: Order! We don't descend into this shouting match every time the bell rings. It seems to get shouts from the Government. Minister, I want to go back to the medium-term bus plan and firstly question the 24 months. I just cannot fathom how you're sitting here today after the first report by the Bus Industry Taskforce floated the need for a medium-term bus plan. The second report said there was a critical need for a statewide medium-term bus plan. You've had the final report since May and now you're here today talking as though it's this new idea and it's going to take your department 24 months to produce a medium-term bus plan. How on earth can you be sitting here telling the public that that's okay and they should just sit back and wait?

Ms JO HAYLEN: I would hope that we would be able to deliver that medium-term bus plan sooner than that but, as I said earlier, Cate, one does not preclude the other. In this current budget, there is significant investment in buses, including for Western Sydney and including our transition to zero-emissions buses. As a result of the Bus Industry Taskforce, Western Sydney will now be getting zero-emissions buses. It's a change to our plan, but ultimately we need to make sure that there is a proper comprehensive plan. That's why we're enacting the recommendation of the taskforce to develop that plan.

The CHAIR: But that's not the step change that's needed and a comprehensive plan, as you said. It sounds like your Government is going to wait before making any substantial investments in new bus services. Again, that's an additional two years away, as I said. The next budget is after the next State election if that's the case. Why has it taken so long? Why didn't you put in place a team to work on the medium-term bus plan back when the first report came out?

Ms JO HAYLEN: There will be ongoing action and investment outside of the development of the medium-term bus plan. There are good examples in the current budget of exactly that. I'll hand to the Transport secretary to provide more information about that because I want to make very clear one does not preclude the other.

JOSH MURRAY: I will just add to that. The $24 million that we've discussed is for the medium-term bus plan, but that is funding for the duration of that program so that we can be underway very quickly in developing that. If I draw us back to the current budget, the elements that are funded, and will continue to be funded as we go forward, include developing rapid bus corridors to the airport.

The CHAIR: Yes, that's fine. We might get back to that later. I just want to stick to the medium-term bus plan and the fact that it is 24 months from the release, if you like, of this final report. At the last budget estimates, I did ask you about the number of senior executives within Transport for NSW who were paid a particular salary. There were, in questions on notice that you provided back to me, 1,357 executives at Transport for NSW who have a remuneration for a band 1 Transport senior service executive, which commences at $201,350. You've got 1,357 executives at Transport for NSW who earn over $200,000, and you are taking 24 months to produce a medium-term bus plan that you knew was floated in the first report early last year.

JOSH MURRAY: Again, if I could just draw the distinction, it's not to create a medium-term bus plan; it is for initiatives that are within the medium-term bus planning. That will include planning reforms, it will include changes to the industry and it will include route changes through the contracts. They are all elements that will be funded during that period from the $23 million to $24 million that has been put aside. It's not something that will appear at the end of next year.

The CHAIR: Therefore, with the medium-term bus plan, can we expect milestones similar to the Bus Industry Taskforce? Are you saying that we will receive an interim plan with some things that can be implemented before those 24 months in terms of those rapid bus transit routes that the public is so desperately crying out for—Western Sydney, Victoria Road, for example?

JOSH MURRAY: In fact, in the current bus taskforce work, some of those corridors have already been identified where we could go from a local service to a more regular service, or a regular to a rapid—more like a B-Line. Those are the elements that this funding then allows us to go into the planning mode around.

The CHAIR: Some of that isn't rocket science, is it, Minister, in terms of a rapid bus transit. It's not rocket science that Western Sydney needs it—Victoria Road, chuck one there. There are actually quite a few others that have been recommended already. Can't you just look at that and commit and say, "Yes, Sydney desperately needs these bus routes"?

Ms JO HAYLEN: I think we're in furious agreement, Cate. Just to be very clear, the Government is currently undertaking business cases for Victoria Road and Parramatta Road. I appreciate that, yes, there are long-term planning processes that need to occur, but it doesn't preclude us doing work right now. In the budget there was, I think, over $20 million—Howard's just finding me the figure—for Parramatta Road bus prioritisation. That's in the section between Burwood and Haberfield. We want to see bus improvements now.

Yes, B-Line projects take quite some time to develop, but we can also see improvements. There is an excellent program called the bus prioritisation program that looks at making sure that there is a light that gives bus priority and that has a lane to allow them to slip ahead of traffic. Again, one doesn't preclude the other. We are doing work right now on those critical pinch points to get buses moving. The best way to get people onto public transport is if they're stuck in their car and they see the bus going past.

The CHAIR: We don't need to go there. I want to turn to trains. I've got a document that I was hoping could be passed to you. I have extra copies for not exactly everybody but for each side of the table. This document is about the intercity performance reports, which are obtained from the website. The transparency on that is particularly good. I've been speaking to constituents who live on the Central Coast and who commute to Sydney for work. They've told me about the number of delays and service cancellations. In fact, a number of them are saying that this has gotten worse since the change of government in 2023. The words that they used, in terms of on-time running—one of them said to me it was "diabolically bad".

The handout that I have provided shows the Sydney Trains and NSW TrainLink overall. The intercity performance report—let's ignore September because of course September has just started. If you turn to the last page, which is the critical one, it's got the Central Coast line which, over the years from 2019 to 2025—you can see, generally, a decrease in performance to the point that one in every four trains doesn't meet the punctuality performance. It's down to 75 per cent. The Central Coast residents are extremely frustrated about this. Firstly, why is this getting so bad under your government?

Ms JO HAYLEN: Firstly, I would understand and reflect that these commuters are frustrated. I appreciate that. The Central Coast in particular are a predominantly commuter community. They rely on these public transport services to get to their place of work, so I recognise that it is a significant difficulty that they are confronting each and every day. We want to improve services overall. There are some significant challenges on this piece of our network, and that includes that it is shared with a freight line. We've had a number of instances with the failure of freight locos in this area. There is also the need for ongoing investment in this infrastructure. It's one of the reasons why the Federal Government is looking at high-speed rail on this connection, because this piece of our rail network is particularly vulnerable. I'll hand to Matt Longland for further information, though, about the specifics.

The CHAIR: We can go there in one second because I do, just while you're here, want to get your response to a couple of the stories. On one occasion—and you can't help this—a car drove onto the tracks at Woy Woy. His car was hit by a train—tragic.

Ms JO HAYLEN: Thankfully, that person got out of the car, which is a good thing.

The CHAIR: Right. The communication to commuters was to allow an extra half an hour to travel. That's what the commuters were told, but this time trains didn't come back into service until the following day. Hospital shiftworkers were stranded on the platform, not knowing whether they would be able to get home. Some had to get hotel rooms in the city. There are other examples of just really poor communication, so why aren't commuters being provided with accurate and timely information about this particular train service because that's what they're saying: that they're just not told? They're always told operational reasons when the train is delayed, and they're not told the truth in terms of how long that delay will be.

Ms JO HAYLEN: Firstly, I want passengers to have the most up-to-date information but, as I'm sure you'd appreciate, sometimes that information is evolving and changing over the course of managing an incident. We often refer to these incidents as operational as we are working through what the situation is. Passengers would also hear references to incidents involving emergency personnel and that is an indication that there may have been a self-harm on the network or that an individual is in corridor, and that is involving police, ambulance and our rail team.

There have been a number of incidents recently on the North Coast where that has been the case along with some other freight incidents. We have been doing a lot of work around rail crossings and Woy Woy is an example where this has occurred twice. Interestingly, some of the evidence points to the fact that Google Maps—I shouldn't single out Google, but directions software has put cars into the corridor. But we're doing a range of things to try and prevent those kind of incidents. I am very sympathetic to those passengers. They want up-to-date information. Often it might not be the case that that is immediately available to station staff or crew. As soon as it becomes available, it is provided. They obviously are dealing with the information that is provided to them at the time and inevitably some of these things take longer to manage than first anticipated.

The CHAIR: We'll come back in the afternoon.

Ms JO HAYLEN: But I'm sure Matt will be able to provide you more details about all those incidents.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: Minister, can I go to the boating fees? On 17 May your department announced an increase to a wide range of boating fees, which puts New South Wales now having the highest boating fees in the nation. In particular, personal watercraft is the highest in the world. This was being drawn into the Waterways Fund, which is a hypothecated fund that for decades had us at the best-funded education, compliance and enforcement in the nation when it comes to maritime. What's gone wrong with that fund that we've had to jack up the fees that much?

Ms JO HAYLEN: Firstly, there are a lot of questions in that. In relation to the fund, we've spoken about this both in these hearings and outside of them for a long time. The fact is that coming to government, I was very concerned about the health of the Waterways Fund. I agree that the way to fund our maritime infrastructure, our maritime enforcement, our maritime education is through a dedicated fund. We are well positioned to do that but that is only going to succeed if the health of that fund is also guaranteed. By that fund being depleted, through both COVID stimulus spending and through an increase in the asset base that needs to be maintained—over a billion dollars worth of assets was transferred into the responsibility of Maritime without allocation of funding to do that. Maintenance of wharves and maintenance of boat ramps was not provided for, nor was the responsibility around dredging. We've spoken a lot before about the need to do that as well as operating costs increasing.

All of those factors have contributed to pressure on the Waterways Fund where it was in a state that was of significant concern to me and that's why we've initiated a range of measures to make sure that the Waterways Fund is healthy and can do the things that we need to do. That includes making sure that we review all the expenditure; that we prioritise the critical activities, including safety and compliance activities; and that we reduce

discretionary costs. We've talked previously about making sure that we're spending this money appropriately. I guess that's summary for doing that, and the other element, yes, is making sure that there is a revenue base going into that fund that ensures its health. That does include licence fees and registration fees.

Every single cent from those fees goes into the fund and, therefore, goes into programs and infrastructure that are of benefit to the users of our waterways. In relation to fees being higher than other jurisdictions, I agree that no-one likes a fee increase, but 90 per cent of boaters paid no more than an additional $35. For most boaters, this is an increase, I appreciate, but a limited increase. Relative to other jurisdictions, it's not apples for apples. We have significant other responsibilities in Maritime that do need to be covered by the Waterways Fund and by, I appreciate, the taxpayer dollars of these waterway users.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: You'll probably have to take this on notice unless our boating guru, Mr Collins, has it in front of him, but from the financial year ending 30 June, how much did the fund receive in total revenue from boat licences, PWC licences, boat registrations, PWC registrations, private moorings, wetland leases, commercial leases and port fees?

Ms JO HAYLEN: I'd have to take that on notice.

HOWARD COLLINS: I think we'll take those on notice. Some of those, obviously, are commercially sensitive. You can imagine, particularly, commercial arrangements. But we'll take that on notice.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: I don't need them itemised in terms of who paid what. I just want a total figure in terms of how much revenue we got from commercial leases and private leases.

HOWARD COLLINS: I think, just to add to the point I think the Minister is making, all these fees, including the increases, go back into running and operating what is a very extensive Maritime portfolio.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: The concern for recreational boaters is that, in the past—and we go to the COVID stimulus—a lot of that money was being taken from that fund and paid into projects that they didn't see direct benefit for in terms of coming from their private vessel fees.

Ms JO HAYLEN: In recognition of that and other challenges, we have made the changes that I've just outlined to the Committee.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: Sure. When you were deciding on this fee change, why did NSW Maritime operations division take over the running of this process when in the past it was the policy and strategy team from the Centre of Maritime Safety? Why was there that switch in who took control of this process?

Ms JO HAYLEN: I think that's in relation to the operation of the department. I'd have to hand to the Secretary on that.

HOWARD COLLINS: It obviously was a combination of the extensive experience that the operational division has had in terms of workload activities and the wider ranging operations, but we did consult widely with a whole range of people across the client, safety and the Secretary about those changes.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: Are you saying that, in the past, the Centre for Maritime Safety probably wasn't the best team to be managing this, and that's why the operations division took over it?

HOWARD COLLINS: I don't know what the arrangements were in the past, but certainly—

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: For the last decade, the Centre for Maritime Safety has been the one that has essentially gone through this process of consulting with the industry about fee increases and it's always been in line with CPI. Now it's gone over to the operations division and it's 88 per cent higher than CPI.

HOWARD COLLINS: The last time it was changed above non-CPI was in 2001. As the Minister says, boat licensing fees, on average, for 90 per cent, are up $35. As you know, Mr Banasiak, what we have done is looked at the massive discounts we offered to those people who could afford a 10-year licence for PWC, which is over a 50 per cent discount. We felt that for those who need it to be more affordable, we've kept those increases for those people who normally buy a year or three years to a minimum, but recognising the significant uplift of work, particularly those people who buy a $22,000 jet ski, of which there are dollars. Many of them in the water now require a lot of work in terms of education and safety.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: Just sticking with the Centre for Maritime Safety, what's its current funding allocation and how many staff does it have? That's probably an operational question.

JOSH MURRAY: Mr Banasiak, I'll take that on notice. It shares budget funding with the Centre for Road Safety, in terms of their place within the organisation—within the policy unit—so I'll get that breakdown for you.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: Thank you, that would be good. Was the Recreational Vessels Advisory Group consulted on these fee increases at all, before the announcement was made?

Ms JO HAYLEN: My Maritime Advisory Council was briefed and—

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: No, the Recreational Vessels Advisory Group. I don't know whether that's even still meeting.

Ms JO HAYLEN: I have not met with them. I have the Maritime Advisory Council that includes a range of key stakeholders, that I'm sure you'd be familiar with. I'm happy to provide you with the names of those members and, yes, they were consulted prior to the Government's announcement.

HOWARD COLLINS: Yes, Maritime Advisory Council—I don't know whether that's the same or different—was briefed.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: No, but I've got questions on the Maritime Advisory Council too, so that's fine. So the Recreational Vessels Advisory Group wasn't—

HOWARD COLLINS: I haven't got a note but we will take it on notice and look at that. When it comes to consultation, Maritime Advisory Council were briefed about pricing changes, and we obviously briefed a number of other agencies and those involved in new policy.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: Were they briefed on the state of the Waterways Fund?

Ms JO HAYLEN: Yes.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: Given that they essentially have a role in overseeing this fund, and in terms of income and expenditure, was the question asked of this advisory council how the fund got to such a state under their watch?

Ms JO HAYLEN: The Maritime Advisory Council has been significantly engaged in the challenges that we confronted on coming to government. I've attended at least part of all of the meetings that they have held, and I really value their counsel and advice. I think it would be fair to say the concerns that I had once briefed about the state of the fund have been broadly shared by the members of the advisory council and were a part of the development of the announcements that have subsequently been made by the Government in this policy area.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: The Waterways Fund has a separate governance committee, is that correct, outside of the Maritime Advisory Council?

Ms JO HAYLEN: I'd have to take that on notice; I'm not aware.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: Okay. Taking it on notice, can you ask what their level of engagement was in this process when you looked at the state of the fund?

Ms JO HAYLEN: I'm happy to take that on notice as well, Mr Banasiak.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Minister, will there be strike action on Sydney's train network this year?

Ms JO HAYLEN: The rail agencies are currently in a period of bargaining with Sydney Trains and NSW Trains employees and their representatives. Workers have the right to collectively organise and to take industrial action. I will do everything in my power to ensure that those negotiations continue in good faith, that they are transparent and constructive. I'll also do everything that I can do to minimise any disruption to passengers across the network.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: What guarantees can you provide that this won't occur?

Ms JO HAYLEN: I'll do everything in my power to ensure that passengers have fair warning of any disruption across the network, and that we try to minimise that disruption.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: The latest budget shows a $50 million decrease in employment-related operating expenditure in Transport for NSW from roughly $2.061 billion to $2.014 billion in the last budget. That's a forecast drop of $50 million. With the EBA negotiations underway, which you just referred to, how do you intend to achieve that $50 million saving and provide the combined rail unions with an 8 per cent yearly pay rise, as they've requested?

Ms JO HAYLEN: Firstly, negotiations about pay and conditions are ongoing, and I'm not going to have those negotiations in this room. Those negotiations take place in the bargaining room. Sydney Trains and NSW Trains, like all parts of Transport, have undertaken a series of savings measures, because unfortunately we inherited a massive debt and we need to make sure the budget is under control. It's a responsibility across all parts of Transport, including our operational area. Of course, any of those measures are about making sure we continue

to provide reliable and improved services. Operations is obviously a key focus of our Government. I'm happy to hand to Mr Longland for further information about those measures.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: It's all right; we can talk about that, Mr Longland, this afternoon. Given that you've got $50 million less in the tank, as allocated, can a pay rise, at whatever amount, be absorbed within the current budget?

Ms JO HAYLEN: That's unrelated to the industrial relations negotiations.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: No, the EBA negotiations are underway. There's an allocated fund there. Can you accommodate both, the 8 per cent and the $50 million saving?

Ms JO HAYLEN: Those line items are unrelated.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: All right. So is a yearly 8 per cent pay rise to the combined unions on or off the table?

Ms JO HAYLEN: I'm not having the negotiations with the 13,000 rail workers in this room. I'll do that in good faith in the bargaining room.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: When do the taxpayers of New South Wales get some clarity on what's involved in utilising their money in their budget?

Ms JO HAYLEN: I think the taxpayers of New South Wales understand what our Government's priorities are, and that's making sure that we have a safe and reliable public transport network and that people can choose public transport more often, and also that we work constructively with our transport workers to deliver those services.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Has the Treasury provided an approved framework for the negotiations?

Ms JO HAYLEN: Those negotiations are taking place under some parameters that have been provided by government. Those negotiations are ongoing and are occurring constructively.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Sure, but has Treasury provided an approved framework for them? Have they said how much they're willing to pay up to?

Ms JO HAYLEN: We have started preliminary discussions with the unions about how the bargaining is being conducted. That's being conducted under our Fair Pay and Bargaining Policy. That's appropriate; it's how we conduct negotiations with all of our public servants across New South Wales.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Sure. Mr Longland, what are the parameters?

MATT LONGLAND: The parameters for our bargaining?

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Yes, the Minister's just said you have parameters. What are they?

MATT LONGLAND: That's correct. We are negotiating at the moment. We've made an initial offer to unions of 11 per cent over three years on wages and we're working through the union log of claims. We've had about 11 meetings. I was with the unions last week—progressing well. Once we've finished the union log of claims, we'll work through the agency proposals.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Sure, but is that 11 per cent per year or 11 per cent overall?

MATT LONGLAND: It's 11 per cent over three years.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Over three years. As a matter of fact, have any wage offers been made to the RTBU so far during this negotiation process?

Ms JO HAYLEN: Again, I'll be conducting those negotiations in the bargaining room, not in this room.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Right. So, Mr Longland, have offers been made as part of that? Or is that a fair gap between the union and the Government?

MATT LONGLAND: There are five unions we're negotiating with—the combined rail unions. The RTBU is one of those unions. We communicated our position on wages and the Government's position on wages over that three-year period in June. We've been working through in enterprise bargaining since then.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: So you've offered 11 per cent over three years and they are seeking 8 per cent every year, year-on-year.

The Hon. Dr SARAH KAINE: That's how bargaining works.

Ms JO HAYLEN: That's how bargaining works.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Just for clarity—these are taxpayer dollars, not yours.

MATT LONGLAND: The 8 per cent is included in the log of claims, that's correct.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: All right. So then why has the Government refused the RTBU's single-interest enterprise agreement?

Ms JO HAYLEN: Again, we'll undertake bargaining in good faith in the bargaining room. I think that's an appropriate approach. It's very different to the approach that the former Government took, which was a strategy which resulted in passengers being left stranded on platforms. So we'll take an approach, which is negotiating in good faith. The RTBU proposal around bringing in other elements of the transport network, including those elements that are privately operated, is not a priority of government. We'll continue to negotiate in the bargaining room on the agreement that is in place, which is with the Sydney Trains and NSW Trains employees. It's a government agreement.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Mr Longland, as a matter of fact, is it accurate that Transport refused the single-interest agreement at any stage?

MATT LONGLAND: Just reiterating what the Minister said, my priority and the agency priority is one agreement for both of the rail agencies, Sydney Trains and NSW TrainLink. The matter of a single-interest employer authorisation is a matter that's currently being reviewed by the Fair Work Commission. I don't think it's appropriate to comment on those matters while it's under consideration.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: But their website says so. The RTBU's website says that it's been refused, so who is telling the truth? Has it been refused or has it not?

Ms JO HAYLEN: That's a matter that's currently—

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: They've claimed it; it's on their website.

Ms JO HAYLEN: As Mr Longland has said, that's a matter that is being currently considered by the Fair Work Commission. The Government's view is to stay the course and to continue to negotiate in good faith to renew the 2022 EBA with its current parties, and that is Sydney Trains and NSW TrainLink. We want to make sure that that EBA is renewed and that transport workers have confidence about our priorities.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Are preparations underway to manage union-protected industrial action?

Ms JO HAYLEN: As I've said, I'll do everything in my power to ensure, if there is disruption to the network, that passengers have notice. There is a seven-day notice period which has been agreed, which I am pleased about, which will ensure if there is any disruption to the network that passengers have time to plan. Of course, we'll do everything to minimise any of that disruption.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: In relation to the 11 per cent pay rise, what's the quantum of that pay rise over the three years? How much will that cost?

Ms JO HAYLEN: I'm not going to talk to hypotheticals here.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: It's not a hypothetical; it's 11 per cent over three years. What's the cost?

Ms JO HAYLEN: That's not what is currently on the table. The parameters have been outlined.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: It's an offer you made to the union for 11 per cent over three years. What's the cost?

Ms JO HAYLEN: The parameters have been outlined by the chief executive, and we're currently in negotiations about them.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: What was the cost to the taxpayer of the offer of 11 per cent over three years, Mr Longland?

MATT LONGLAND: There hasn't been any cost yet because it hasn't been paid. The offer was communicated to staff, as I said, in June. The offer hasn't yet been agreed, so we're working through that process. There'll be the employee vote and there'll be a determination.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: But I'm not asking if it's been agreed, with respect; I'm asking what the cost is. This is a budget estimates hearing. We're endeavouring to understand what the taxpayer is forking out. What is the cost of 11 per cent over the three years? It's a forecast expenditure, it's absolutely part of budget estimates and you would have had a figure in mind going into that negotiation. What's the cost to the taxpayer?

Ms JO HAYLEN: If you had been engaged in these types of complex negotiations in the past, you would appreciate—

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: It's not about me, Ms Haylen; it's about you.

Ms JO HAYLEN: —the Treasury makes central provisions in accordance with—

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: It's all about you and what you are spending.

The Hon. BOB NANVA: Point of order—

The CHAIR: A point of order has been taken.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: You can keep talking about us as much as you like, but what's the cost?

The CHAIR: Order! Mr Nanva on a point of order.

The Hon. BOB NANVA: Chair, it's not courteous, under paragraph 19 of the procedural fairness resolution, to talk over the top of the Minister when she is directly answering a question.

The CHAIR: I uphold the point of order. You were talking over the top of the Minister, but my previous comments still stand in terms of answering the question as well.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Mr Longland, you made an offer to the union of 11 per cent over three years. I'm going to ask you directly: What was the forecast cost?

MATT LONGLAND: I haven't got those numbers on me. I'd need to check whether we can make those available.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Can you get those today?

MATT LONGLAND: I'll have a look.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Are you not able to ascertain that number today for this—

The Hon. Dr SARAH KAINE: Point of order—

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: I haven't finished my question.

The CHAIR: A point of order has been taken.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: This is interference.

The CHAIR: Order! It's not interference. A point of order has been taken.

The Hon. Dr SARAH KAINE: The witness did undertake to take the question on notice and get information. To be continually badgered is not reasonable.

The CHAIR: I think the member was clarifying as to when that would occur in terms of getting the detail, so I won't uphold the point of order, but I will remind members that witnesses are able to take questions on notice.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Certainly. Mr Longland, do you think that you might be able to ascertain that number in the course of the next few hours today?

MATT LONGLAND: I would need to take advice about that number and the process which is underway with the Government currently around budget committee and Cabinet processes. If I'm able to provide any information and that information is available, I'll endeavour to do so.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Minister, what's the Government's policy on the issue of non-union members being required to pay a levy to the union if they benefit from union action or negotiation, as requested by the RTBU?

Ms JO HAYLEN: That's not something that is Government policy; it's not something that we support.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: The Government does not support that?

Ms JO HAYLEN: Correct.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: What are your thoughts on that proposal?

Ms JO HAYLEN: My thoughts align with Government policy.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Which is what?

Ms JO HAYLEN: I just answered your question.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: So you don't support that?

Ms JO HAYLEN: I've answered this question in the Parliament, and I just answered it now.

The Hon. Dr SARAH KAINE: Are they not listening?

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: I don't need the running commentary from the member, with respect.

The Hon. Dr SARAH KAINE: Only you get to do that, Natalie.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: I'm asking questions in my time.

The CHAIR: Order! I will say, Dr Kaine, that is true in terms of the commentary on every single response and question. Back to Ms Ward.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Minister, who gave Transport for NSW the approval to oppose the protected action ballot sought by the RTBU?

Ms JO HAYLEN: The negotiations are led by Sydney Trains and NSW TrainLink, and there is a team within Sydney Trains that is leading those negotiations. Matt is the head of that negotiation team. I'm happy to hand to Matt for further information.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: But that wasn't my question. Specifically, Mr Longland, did you oppose that protected action ballot?

MATT LONGLAND: Our agency opposed the ballot when it was before the commission. That's correct.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Who gave the approval for that?

MATT LONGLAND: The decision was my own as well as of the chief executive of NSW TrainLink, Roger Weeks.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: The RTBU clearly makes that claim. It seems that they're clear that they want their union members exercising their rights. Minister, there are a lot of different views on Sydney Metro. Do you think the new metro is an anti-worker attack on the RTBU or a positive step forward for Sydney's transport future?

Ms JO HAYLEN: Over 2.6 million Sydneysiders have jumped on board the new city metro since we opened it just over a week ago. It shows that public transport is the beating heart and future of our city. We are a global city of over five million people, and we will work better, function better and have a more productive economy. People will be able to connect to one another and to jobs and services that they need, and we'll reduce our emissions by using public transport.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Is it Government policy to prioritise heavy rail extensions over metro services?

Ms JO HAYLEN: I answered your questions earlier about these matters in relation to the south-west. I was very clear that the study in the south-west is mode agnostic because we'll base our decisions on evidence and on need.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: I'm just asking more broadly. If I can just clarify more broadly, not about that particular project, is it Government policy to prioritise those heavy rail extensions over metro?

Ms JO HAYLEN: Government policy is to make sure that we continue to invest in the public transport services that our growing city needs. We currently have a number of business studies underway, both in the north-west for the connection between Tallawong and St Marys, and south of the aerotropolis to the south-west. Both of those studies will consider metro connections. We have a range of other investments across other modes, as we've discussed today, like the second stage of Parramatta Light Rail.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: I might come back to that if there's time. We've talked about Parramatta Light Rail, but I'm interested in metro. It was reported that it was agreed at the ALP conference. Is it Government policy or not?

Ms JO HAYLEN: Sorry, what? I'm not clear on your question.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: It's been reported that at your ALP conference, it was policy to prioritise heavy rail over metro. Is it Government policy or not?

Ms JO HAYLEN: I've just answered your question in relation to Government policy. I don't know what you're referring to in relation to the New South Wales—

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: I'm just clarifying, because the RTBU claim it's now Labor policy, so I'm just wanting to understand who is correct. Is it lip-service? Is it the RTBU? Is it Government policy? Is it just lip-service to the unions?

Ms JO HAYLEN: I've just outlined Government policy, and that is that we'll be making decisions not based on ideology. The results of your Government's decisions based on ideology are very clear for everybody to see. In fact, you can see them at Kangy Angy, at Lithgow and at Broadmeadow. They are the new intercity fleet sitting idle for five years, costing taxpayers millions of dollars. That was decisions based on ideology. We won't be doing that.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Minister, you spoke of safety. There was a train operator or a train employee who was ringing in to a live podcast while operating a train. That's a clear safety issue and concern. What action did you take, specifically, in relation to that matter?

Ms JO HAYLEN: As I've answered to the New South Wales Parliament and publicly, that behaviour is completely unacceptable and very concerning. I'm pleased that Sydney Trains has taken swift action. That individual was identified and removed from duties. Our clear expectation is that people are focused on their work while at work, and individuals who are not doing that will be counselled and dealt with appropriately by Sydney Trains. I have confidence in the leadership and management to do just that.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: With respect to metro and the Tallawong to St Marys, is that metro only, or will that be heavy rail as well?

Ms JO HAYLEN: The Government's business case development in relation to the St Marys to Tallawong route is being led by Sydney Metro, and it is an important study that will allow us to look at the rail connections that are required in the north-west over the long term.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: My question was more specific than that.

Ms JO HAYLEN: I answered your question.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Is Tallawong to St Marys metro only, or is it heavy rail as well?

Ms JO HAYLEN: That is currently a study to extend the north-west metro and connect it to St Marys. It is the Tallawong to St Marys connection. In fact, that has been a line on maps for a very long time.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: That wasn't my question, Minister. I'm going to bring you back, in the one minute that I have left. Is the business case considering metro only, just heavy rail, or both?

Ms JO HAYLEN: That business case is considering a metro connection between Tallawong and St Marys.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: I know where it's between.

Ms JO HAYLEN: Some $40 million has been allocated to develop a business case for a metro connection between St Marys and Tallawong.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: And heavy rail?

Ms JO HAYLEN: A metro connection between St Marys and Tallawong. I don't know how many times you want to ask me questions about these things. It's quite amusing.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: It's budget estimates; that's the purpose of it. I'll move on. Is it still the Government's commitment to have Sydney Metro—

Ms JO HAYLEN: Which bit of my answer wasn't clear, Natalie?

The CHAIR: Order!

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Is it still the Government's commitment to have Sydney Metro West open by 2032?

Ms JO HAYLEN: Yes.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Has the Sydney Metro seen or been aware of cost escalation as a result of the Rosehill proposal ongoing tenders?

Ms JO HAYLEN: The Premier and I have been very clear that we do want to look at options to add additional stations to the current nine-station alignment, because we are refocusing Sydney Metro West to deliver the housing that our city needs. We want to make sure that housing—

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: That's not my question, Minister.

Ms JO HAYLEN: —is done in conjunction with transport investment. An additional station, be it at Rosehill or another location between Sydney Olympic Park and Parramatta, will be an additional cost.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Mr Regan, are you aware of what that cost escalation would be as a result of Rosehill being added?

PETER REGAN: At the moment we are doing work that the Government has requested to look at options for stations between Parramatta and Olympic Park, particularly focused at Rosehill. We haven't finished that work yet, so we are looking at different options for construction, and we need to take into account the planning and community issues associated with that. We are doing preliminary geotech and other assessment works onsite to also determine any risks associated with that construction. That work is ongoing and certainly underway at the moment.

Ms ABIGAIL BOYD: Good afternoon, Minister, and to all of you. I just wanted to ask about how we are going with making all of our public transport accessible. You'll recall this is something I ask about at every estimates. I understand that, as of March, we were looking at around 72.6 per cent of all of our suburban, intercity, metro and regional stations being independently accessible. You said last time that we didn't have an actual timeline for making the rest accessible. How have we developed on that?

Ms JO HAYLEN: I don't have an update to that percentage, but I'm happy to take that on notice. I'm very pleased that, in the intervening parts of our conversation here and otherwise, our Government has progressed our Safe Accessible Transport program. This is a combination of the former Transport Access Program—the TAP program—and the Commuter Car Park Program. It is an $800-million-plus investment and we have, earlier this year, announced the next seven stations for upgrade and also that there are a number—I think it is 16 or so—in the design phase, just to give you and passengers the reassurance that all of that $800 million will be spent on improving accessibility, particularly for people with disability, across the public transport network.

Ms ABIGAIL BOYD: Under the DSAPTs signed in 2002, the obligation was on all States and Territories to have all modes of transport, except for trains, fully compliant with accessible standards by 2022. Clearly, we are not at that.

Ms JO HAYLEN: That's correct.

Ms ABIGAIL BOYD: The previous Government didn't look at it until at least 2019, so you were behind before you even got started. However, what I would hope to see is some sort of schedule or timeline of when those things will be accessible. For example, if I was a person with mobility needs and I wanted to buy a house somewhere, it might not be accessible now, but I might be able to see, on the current trajectory, if we are looking at a five-year horizon or a one-year horizon. Has that work, of doing an audit and then a timeline, been done?

Ms JO HAYLEN: I'll have to come back to you on a longer term timeline. We have been able to provide the community with assurance around the seven stations that are currently in development and construction and then the additional stations that are now in the design phase. All of that information is public. We particularly have issues across our regional network. I appreciate that those communities would want certainty as to whether or not that upgrade was occurring. I don't have visibility of this at this time. If there are specific instances that you would like some clarity on, I'm happy to take that on notice. I have information in front of me that our initiatives have resulted in 73 per cent of the heavy rail network being accessible. Of course, many services are already 100 per cent accessible.

Ms ABIGAIL BOYD: I'm not taking away from that, but when you have mobility needs there is a lot of onus and burden on the individual to work out what is and isn't accessible. I'll give you a good example: I was at Tempe train station the other day and, because the community had basically made a big campaign around it, I know that they have a ramp on one side. So people with mobility needs are able to travel in one direction but then, when they come back, they have to get off at a completely different station and get some other mode of transport back. This is an absurd situation for these people.

Ms JO HAYLEN: Yes.

Ms ABIGAIL BOYD: I'm not asking you to have solved everything, and I'm not saying you've done nothing. Clearly, things are progressing, but people want to know what the timeline is, based on an audit having been done of what needs to be done. I guess that's what I'm asking for.

Ms JO HAYLEN: I appreciate that, and I know those steps at Tempe very well. I understand why it is absurd for those passengers, particularly those with disability. Again, I can give clarity on those stations that we have committed to in this round. We do have an across-the-network audit that we'd be able to provide some information on to you. I want to be very clear, though, it doesn't give you a specific timeline on when the steps at Tempe will, instead, be a lift.

Ms ABIGAIL BOYD: At least it will tell us what is to be done.

Ms JO HAYLEN: Yes.

Ms ABIGAIL BOYD: I think that's the first step.

JOSH MURRAY: Ms Boyd, if I could just add to the Minister's comments around the heavy rail stations that are yet to be dealt with under those programs—both TAP and the new SAT program. At the completion of the current level of investment, around 14 per cent of the 373 train stations would then remain not accessible, and a further 13 per cent would be accessible with access—so, potentially, like Tempe, which you've just mentioned. I'm sure we could provide you some more information on those, but then the next rounds of future assisted transport funding would have a much smaller list to go after.

Ms ABIGAIL BOYD: I guess that comes back to only going as fast as we have funding for. It would be nice to be able to project what the cost might be so that we can work out how far we need to go.

JOSH MURRAY: I think it's a question of both the funding but also some of the technical complexity with some of the—obviously, dealing with 373 stations takes us out into some elements that are very old on the network and where there may be engineering difficulties in getting to that. I might also just mention that we have had a program which has been receiving engineering approval throughout Transport, which is about gap filler around stations and around level crossings. It recently was recognised by the Australasian Railway Association—for the investment but also the innovation—and we hope that that will also enable people to move around rail stations with a lot more ease.

Ms ABIGAIL BOYD: Minister, last estimates I asked you about the Accessible Transport Advisory Committee receiving adequate compensation for their work. You said that had been brought to your attention and you were looking into it. Are they now getting paid for their work?

Ms JO HAYLEN: I understand that has been rectified, yes.

Ms ABIGAIL BOYD: Excellent. Thank you. One of the other issues I've raised before is in relation to taxi disability discrimination. We are hearing more and more stories of people, particularly with guide dogs, being refused service. It is really shocking and getting to the point where they are feeling very discriminated against. What's being done to rectify that?

Ms JO HAYLEN: This is a significant problem and one that we are confronting head-on. The commissioner and his team have been out with plain-clothed patrols and have issued significant numbers of fines. I also was pleased to join Guide Dogs NSW with some promotion and public information about the fact that guide dogs are permitted and should be included in all point-to-point transport, and including on public transport. We've had really good engagement with them. But I'll hand to the commissioner for further information.

ANTHONY WING: We've been attacking this from a number of angles and we're working quite closely with Guide Dogs Australia on the issue. Firstly, I have had my own staff out doing both overt and plain-clothes or covert operations, catching rideshares and taxis. We do see this behaviour, for example, with rideshare drivers who cancel on approach once they see someone has a guide dog, or taxi drivers at ranks. We have been doing that with volunteers from Guide Dogs NSW as well, which is very helpful. We have also been working with them on education and with the taxi and rideshare industry on education for drivers, and particularly we find a lot of drivers, when they have actually had exposure to a guide dog and the guide dog's handler, they are far more amenable to carrying people. The other thing that we are doing is I called in both Uber and DiDi in recent times and said to them that I want to see much better handling of reports. One of the things we hear from Guide Dogs NSW is that people don't like to make reports because they don't think anything will happen with them.

Ms ABIGAIL BOYD: Last time you told me—maybe you didn't tell me this; maybe I've just found it—that of the 21 complaints received by you in relation to this issue, just one driver was prosecuted, as of October last year. Has the number of complaints increased? Has the number of people who have been taken to task increased?

ANTHONY WING: Yes. We did a whole lot of covert operations a few weeks ago and, over the course of that period, we issued $1,000 fines to four rideshare and taxi drivers. We are going to continue doing those operations.

Ms ABIGAIL BOYD: Thank you. That's positive.

The CHAIR: I want to go back to the airport station access fee issue. Minister, you said that you were having discussions with Sydney airport about how to help workers. Are any solutions being proposed?

Ms JO HAYLEN: Sydney airport has—I guess I would characterise the change in leadership has—shown a renewed interest in the workforce's way to get to and from work, and I welcome that. They have opened conversations with us about that. I don't want to mislead you or the Committee to say that there is some immediate solution on the table. Unfortunately, we are hampered by the contract that is in place until 2030, but I am encouraged that there is an acknowledgement that we want more of the thousands of workers at Sydney airport being able to catch public transport, and acknowledge that the airport fee is a barrier for some in that case. I would still—

The CHAIR: Thank you, Minister. Contracts haven't stopped your Government from offering subsidies, rebates—let's take tolls as a very good example. Back in March 2019, the Labor Party made an election promise to cut the station access fee to $5 and scrap it altogether for workers. Obviously, a contract was still in place then. I have answers back from your department earlier this year that suggest the net revenue for the financial year 2023 was $45.7 million. I'm sure someone has a rough idea of how much of that $45.7 million was from essential workers and how much it would cost the Government to subsidise it. What about the airlines, for example? They're in such need of essential workers. Have they been in discussions with you? Are they keen for a solution?

Ms JO HAYLEN: I would welcome all stakeholders that want to see a higher usage of public transport to the airport, and in particular the workers.

The CHAIR: Have there been any discussions about subsidising essential workers?

Ms JO HAYLEN: I've had some of those discussions with Sydney airport, and this is the first time that that has been constructive. I don't have a solution on the table, but I'm encouraged by those conversations.

The CHAIR: Does "with Sydney airport" include the airlines who, I assume, would be quite keen to come to some solution so that workers can get to the airport without paying that ridiculous charge?

Ms JO HAYLEN: We're going to continue these conversations in good faith. I haven't had conversations with the airlines. In a perfect world, of course, I'd like to see the station access fee modified to assist those workers. But I don't have a solution on the table right now.

The CHAIR: All of the recommendations of the Bus Industry Taskforce were supported "in principle". What does supporting in principle mean?

Ms JO HAYLEN: It means that we take the advice of the Bus Industry Taskforce very seriously. This is a piece of work that, as I've outlined to the Committee earlier, we saw as absolutely essential and provides us with a road map going forward. We're going to work through the implementation of those recommendations. We have already implemented 45 per cent of the recommendations that we have received, including critical recommendations that have allowed us to reduce the bus driver shortage, for example. We have completed the implementation of the regional seatbelt program, run campaigns to make sure that people know that on buses they need to put a seatbelt on if it's available to them. We are acting on these things as quickly as we can when we receive them, and working them through, and we'll do the same with the remainder of the recommendations.

The CHAIR: One of the recommendations was around a mode share target—that the Government sets a clear target for what the mode split should be in the future. The report even suggests a future mode share target. For example, currently, cars are 65.2 per cent of mode share; the taskforce suggests 40 per cent instead. Bicycles are currently at 0.8 per cent; this report suggests 4 per cent. Will the Government adopt that recommendation? Is that supported in principle and we'll see a mode share target at some stage?

Ms JO HAYLEN: I recognise the benefits of a mode share target. Our department, Transport for NSW, wants to double the number of walking and cycling trips by 2030. That is in the Active Transport Strategy. There are a range of programs and investments being made across the Transport portfolio to increase mode shift, and ultimately, in fact, all of the things that we have discussed in the public transport space today rely on people being able to take up public transport and active transport journeys to make our city work. I guess you can take from that commentary that I am open to and supportive of mode shift targets. Of course, you'd expect the Bus Industry Taskforce report to suggest an increase in mode share to bus being a good thing for our public transport network. Ultimately, we want the public transport network to work as a network and to work together.

The CHAIR: Most global cities have mode share targets. For example, London has a mode share target of 80 per cent of all trips to be made on foot, by bicycle or using public transport, by 2041. Can we expect a very clear mode share target by your Government?

Ms JO HAYLEN: I recognise that targets have a really important role. In terms of mode shift, you will see a range of policies that our Government has already announced and is implementing that will assist us in this journey. That includes things like transport orientated development; specifically saying that we believe that housing should be built on top of or next to public transport is a really important lever to allow people to choose public transport more often. That is the journey that is immediately available to them.

The CHAIR: Is there reluctance coming from somewhere within the Government? You said you support it. Is there reluctance to put in place a clear mode share target?

Ms JO HAYLEN: My colleagues, I know, want to see more people be able to choose public and active transport journeys.

The CHAIR: So what's stopping you, Minister, from committing to it?

Ms JO HAYLEN: I've just provided a range of answers that indicate that I'm open-minded to and supportive of mode shift.

The CHAIR: You're the Minister, so will you be advocating a mode share target, as recommended by the bus taskforce?

Ms JO HAYLEN: The bus taskforce recommends a higher percentage of people using buses, and I definitely want to see that.

The CHAIR: Minister, the Parramatta Light Rail Stage 2 delays suggest that there are kinks in the system that need to be ironed out. What are the kinks in the system?

Ms JO HAYLEN: Sorry, is this stage one?

The CHAIR: Yes, sorry. Yes, it is—stage one.

Ms JO HAYLEN: We're currently in testing for Parramatta Light Rail Stage 1 moving towards passenger service. There have been a number of issues that we have confronted when it comes to the technology—the systems that communicate between the trams and the control centre, the passenger information on platform and in the tram, and the payment system as well. This is the system that allows you to see the tram on your travel app as well as communicate that same information on the tram, on the platform and for the payment as well. There have been some issues with that system. We're ironing through those, getting rid of the kinks in the system, and we want to make sure that those systems are working well before we put passengers on board. We don't want a situation like we saw on the CBD and eastern suburbs light rail. We had passengers being used as guinea pigs. We want to make sure that the system is reliable and safe and has also, of course, received accreditation before we put passengers on board.

The CHAIR: Have those issues that you just raised been identified more recently—in the past four weeks, for example—and not known about five months ago?

Ms JO HAYLEN: Yes. There are issues that we have discovered in the testing phase, and that's exactly what testing is all about.

The CHAIR: But it has been tested since late last year?

Ms JO HAYLEN: Yes. These are recent issues that we've confronted. I'm happy to hand to Camilla about some of these issues.

The CHAIR: We will come back in the afternoon, thank you. The Committee for Sydney report into buses, *Plan B: Better buses for Sydney*, was released in July. It suggested integrating land use planning with transport, which your Government is wanting to promote a great deal with the TOD program. Is there a plan to develop the TOD program further so that it's also around bus corridors and not just trains?

Ms JO HAYLEN: Firstly, land use planning and the implementation of TODs, for example, is the purview of the planning department. In terms of its ongoing rollout, your questions are best directed there. More broadly, however, our Government's priorities are really clear. We want to see more housing, and the right place to locate housing is next to public transport or on top of public transport that provides those communities with the services that they need. Again, at the moment, those TODs are focused on mass transit options, but in the long-term all public transport is a really important service and housing should be located near it.

The CHAIR: Thank you. Back to questions from Ms Ward.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Thank you. Minister, you've committed to opening the Western Sydney metro when the airport opens. You've been clear about that.

Ms JO HAYLEN: When passenger services start for the planes, yes. That's right.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: I just wanted to clarify what "opening" means. Does that mean all stations on the route, or is that St Marys and the airport only?

Ms JO HAYLEN: All stations on the route.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: All stations at the same time that the airport opens?

Ms JO HAYLEN: Yes.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: And so, that will include Orchard Hills and Luddenham? They will all be open at the same time?

Ms JO HAYLEN: Yes.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Are you absolutely sure about that?

Ms JO HAYLEN: That's the information that I have in front of me.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Okay. It's not a target opening? It's all of them at once or none of them? It's not going to be staged in that sense?

Ms JO HAYLEN: Are you planning a fundraiser on one of the stations?

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: I'm asking you about your Government's intention for a very large infrastructure project, and I think it deserves an answer.

Ms JO HAYLEN: Yes, they're big and complex projects. That's right.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: So will all of those stations be opening?

Ms JO HAYLEN: I've answered your question.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: You could happily answer it again if you're committed to transparency, but I'll move on. Mr Regan, your evidence from earlier this year was that the scoping studies concerning new stations for metro west would be provided to the Government by the middle of this year. Has the Government received that further information?

PETER REGAN: Yes. The work is ongoing, so we have been working with the Government around those options and are continuing to do so.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: So has it received those scoping studies, or are they midway? What stage are they up to?

PETER REGAN: As I said, we've been providing that information progressively and working across agencies, and that work is still ongoing.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: What are the next steps for those studies?

PETER REGAN: As I said in my answer to your question earlier, we are doing further work around the geotechnical aspects, the contamination aspects and design options. There are different ways a station, particularly at Rosehill, could be constructed, so we're continuing to work up those options to refine for the Government's further consideration.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: When will that work conclude, in your estimation?

PETER REGAN: It's ongoing at the moment. Certainly we are working to have, by the end of this year, a good sweep of options for further consideration, but the timing of that is a matter for Government decision.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Okay, but obviously that work needs to finish at some time and you hand it over. Do you anticipate that that'll be this year?

PETER REGAN: It may be that there are further questions and iterations, but we're looking at those options and, as I said, working across agency and time frames for Government consideration.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: For Rosehill or for other opportunities?

PETER REGAN: Our focus is primarily Rosehill.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Anything specific on that in terms of cost escalation to the rest of the project?

PETER REGAN: We're looking at that work separately to progressing the project itself, which remains on track for 2032. I think Government's consideration has been pretty clear on that. They would then have to look at Rosehill and the costs.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: That would delay the project, obviously, to add it in.

PETER REGAN: No, I didn't say that.

The CHAIR: Let's come back to that, if we need to. We'll go to Mr Banasiak.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: Minister, I might press you a bit further on the Maritime Advisory Council. They're supposed to overview maritime finances. Would you say that they failed to do that appropriately, given the state of the Waterways Fund when you came into government?

Ms JO HAYLEN: The Maritime Advisory Council that I've been consulting with is the one that I appointed when I became the Minister.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: Did you sign off on the new one in 2023? Is that correct?

Ms JO HAYLEN: The membership, yes.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: Given that they oversaw the finances prior to you becoming the Minister and the Waterways Fund was in such a poor state, why did you support re-signing off on six out of the 10 existing members, one being the chair, given that they oversaw the depletion of that fund when that was probably one of their core responsibilities?

Ms JO HAYLEN: Firstly, I would say that it was the Government's responsibility to ensure the health of the Waterways Fund, and the former Government made decisions that jeopardised the health of that fund, and we've discussed that previously.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: But isn't the Maritime Advisory Council there as a stopgap in making sure that the Government is held to account? Given that it's made up solely of government agencies, surely they have a duty to provide frank and fearless advice. I've spoken to Mr Collins about frank and fearless advice in the past. Surely they have a responsibility to provide frank and fearless advice to the Minister of the day and say, "Hey, we're not managing those finances well. The fund is being depleted." It seems that they failed in that duty, and they've now been reappointed for another three years.

Ms JO HAYLEN: The Maritime Advisory Council that I'm referring to—and I'm happy to provide you with the detailed membership of them—are representatives predominantly of key stakeholders across the maritime sector. It is a committee made up of individuals from outside of government, not of government agencies. I took the opportunity to refresh that advisory council when I came to government, but I also—

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: But six of them are returning from the previous council, it seems. That's not really a great refresh.

Ms JO HAYLEN: I've really valued the advice of the members of the advisory council, but ultimately the decisions rest with government.

The CHAIR: Minister, I understand the Government has remained committed to the restoration of the 445 and 370 bus services in the inner west. These were made as election promises, as well, from you. What are the expected time frames for meeting those commitments in relation to those bus services?

Ms JO HAYLEN: We'll ensure that we meet our election commitments in this term of government.

The CHAIR: Thank you. No questions from the Government members? Thank you very much, Minister.

Ms JO HAYLEN: Thank you, everybody.

The CHAIR: That is the end of your time with us today. We will break for lunch. We'll be back at two o'clock, when we will hear from the officials for the rest of the afternoon.

(The Minister withdrew.)

(Luncheon adjournment)

The CHAIR: Welcome back, everybody. We will proceed straight to questions if we are ready, going to the Opposition. This time Ms Sarah Mitchell.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: Mr Murray, I might direct it to you but I am happy if it goes to any of your colleagues. I have some questions in relation to the regional rail fleet testing. My understanding is that two trains were due to undergo testing for eight days this month, but that has been cancelled. Is that correct?

JOSH MURRAY: I will ask Ms Drover to comment on that. She was with the trains last week, in fact.

CAMILLA DROVER: We now have two trains, six cars each, at Dubbo. One of those trains, the first train, will be making its way later this month down to Sydney to start its dynamic testing. That testing will start on the Sydney electrified network, because you will remember the regional rail fleet is bi-mode. It needs to be tested both on the electrified rail network and also on the diesel network across regional New South Wales and eventually down to Melbourne and up to Brisbane et cetera. We are still planning to start that testing later this month in September. It is obviously subject to some approvals. There are three different RIMs, rail infrastructure managers, between Dubbo and the city, so we need all of those approvals to take what is a brand-new train and put it on the existing physical infrastructure, which is the rail network.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: Just to be clear, is that for both trains or one—the testing?

CAMILLA DROVER: We start with the one train. We do, if you like, type testing on the very first train. It will start its very extensive testing process, hoping later this month.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: My understanding was it was originally flagged for starting on 5 September through to 13 September. Will any testing occur then, or is it later in September?

CAMILLA DROVER: The first step is to move the train from Dubbo to Sydney. There will be some static testing that we will do in Sydney as well and then it will go out on the electrified rail network for dynamic testing. That testing will be done largely at night so there will be no impact to passenger services. It is part of a continuum of testing. Every aspect of that train needs to be individually tested and that needs to be tested with its interface with the existing rail network, both, as I said, on the electrified network and on the diesel network. So, it is just part of a continuum of testing and, like any good testing process, if issues arise, they will be addressed before it progresses along the rest of the testing plan.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: But has the testing been delayed? I have been advised of a document that talks about the regional fleet train testing cancellations and there were specific dates in West Ryde, Epping, St Marys, Blacktown and also again back to West Ryde and Epping, starting from 5 and 6 September and it is an indication that that testing has been cancelled. Is that correct, and has it been delayed until later in the month?

CAMILLA DROVER: I'm not sure what document or what information you're referring to. I am happy for you to table it and for me to have a look at it. As we have always said, we're hoping to start that testing from September, but the first step is actually to get the train from Dubbo back into Sydney. The Auburn heavy maintenance facility will be where it is stored and from there it will travel out on to the dynamic network. Part of that is to get those approvals from those various RIMs to allow that passage of the train. It will be loco-hauled as well on the rail network.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: Do you have a date for when you expect the trains to come from Dubbo to Sydney?

CAMILLA DROVER: As I said, we are targeting September, but it is subject to some approvals. It is the first time a train of this nature has ever travelled on the rail tracks in New South Wales and in Australia. We haven't had a bi-mode train travelling in Australia before, which is why it is loco-hauled for its first trip to Sydney.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: But there is no firm date for Sydney as far as you are aware, just some time in September?

CAMILLA DROVER: Yes. There are quite a few moving parts to this: as I said, those RIM approvals, obviously coordination with Sydney Trains, NSW TrainLink, the consortium, the operator, et cetera. We also have got to get ONRSR. They are part of the picture as well. We are working through that. It is the first stage of what will be a very comprehensive testing regime for this new fleet of trains.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: Thank you for that. I will quickly go to you, Mr Murray. Coming back to one of the issues I raised earlier with the Minister about the regional division within Transport, who signed off on that decision?

JOSH MURRAY: That was my decision as part of what we have called the operating model refresh at Transport. Having done some internal consulting and speaking to stakeholders, we officially launched that process around mid-March this year and we will conclude the leadership elements of that by the end of the year. That is to refresh and simplify the Transport operating model to give greater clarity on accountability and to reduce the number of operating divisions from 10 to seven.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: Did you brief any of the three Ministers that you work with in relation to that decision?

JOSH MURRAY: Yes, I did.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: Was there any input or feedback from those Ministers?

JOSH MURRAY: Yes. All three Ministers asked plenty of questions during that process.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: I am sure they did.

JOSH MURRAY: And, as a team as well we were discussing it widely at the time to ensure that the lessons that had been learned through the previous restructure of Transport, which occurred when Transport and RMS were brought together, and some of the wins that had happened through those changes could be kept but also the efficiencies could be delivered back to the organisation. In terms of the question you asked earlier about regional, we were very concerned and I was concerned, having joined the organisation, that in a big agency that had 10 operating divisions, just one was solely dedicated to regional. Two-thirds of the State was notionally sitting with one area of the organisation to deliver and that had impacts on both a resource basis, but also a perception that regional could just handle regional things. We wanted to ensure that the statewide model meant that the skills were being used wherever they were needed across the agency.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: I just wanted to clarify that a little bit. Obviously, you point around moving from one specific region to across the department. But if there is a conflict, say between Minister Aitchison and Minister Haylen around the regional aspect of things, how do you manage that? What is the process if both Ministers or all three Ministers don't agree, which may happen from time to time? How does that get prioritised in terms of who gets the final say on some of those decisions?

JOSH MURRAY: Again, that is a little bit of a hypothetical in terms of what we might be dealing with. Certainly, the deputy secretaries and I and their team members report into each of the Ministers on a regular basis and advise them on programs that sit within their relative jurisdictions. There will also be people that sit within various teams—for example, the planning and integration division will have regional members, who will be very specifically targeting regional programs to make sure that focus continues on what we do outside of the greater metropolitan area.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Welcome back. Thank you for joining us in the afternoon. Mr Murray, or anyone dealing with this, will Transport for NSW be providing all of the documents in relation to the Standing Order 52 request regarding government reviews by close of business tomorrow when it is due?

JOSH MURRAY: Thank you for the question. We are working hard through that. In fact, I can advise the committee that 30 staff members are dedicated to the extremely large task of returning the Standing Order 52 on the across transport reviews. There are other agencies, like Sydney Metro, who are also returning separate to our return. We will be advising that that will be in a tranched basis. We believe we can cover more than 60 to 70 per cent of the requirements in that first tranche, which will be provided by tomorrow. There will be some elements around tolling, in particular—

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: There has never been any agreement by the House, it was an order of the House. There was never any agreement or order by the House or opportunity to come back before the House to seek to have those documents in tranches.

JOSH MURRAY: We will be doing everything we can to table everything possible by the end of business tomorrow. I am answering your question that there may be some elements not available and I particularly raise tolling because it is subject to Cabinet in confidence and it is the most recent return with a huge number of documents. So far, more than 100,000 documents have been reviewed by the teams and they are being processed around the clock to meet the demands of that SO 52.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Mr Murray, with respect, this is an order of the House. You are flagging that you will be ignoring the order of the House?

JOSH MURRAY: No, I'm advising that I don't think we will be able to make the full return by close of business tomorrow, but you will have everything possible to be processed in that time. As I say, a team of 30 has been working around the clock.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: With respect, it is not an either or. It is an order of the House, Mr Murray. This is what the House has ordered and there has been previous experience with Transport having to respond to the then Opposition's calls. I will leave it at that. But, I don't think it's an optional extra to choose what you produce. When will the full return be available?

JOSH MURRAY: I understand all those matters will be closed out as quickly as possible, but they are being reviewed for Cabinet in confidence at the moment.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: When will the full return be? When do you anticipate that will be so?

JOSH MURRAY: I couldn't give you an answer on that today. Once we table tomorrow, I'd hope to be able to provide more detail in a cover note.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: By the end of this week?

JOSH MURRAY: I can't answer that today.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: That's extraordinary. Let's get onto the budget. Does Transport for NSW still track the capital expenditure for projects for each financial year?

JOSH MURRAY: Yes, we do.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Does it still estimate the expected expenditure over the four-year forwards and beyond for those projects?

JOSH MURRAY: Yes. There's a range of elements that take place in that—both the budget papers processes, which set out those multi-year funding proposals, and also through our internal processes with our financial advisory committees that make sure that projects are staying on track and that high-profile projects are particularly closely watched.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Perhaps on notice—and I think we did this last time when we went through this process—can you provide the estimated expenditure for the previous financial year, 2023-24, and the estimated financial expenditure for each year over the next four-year forwards for each of these projects? I put them into a table. If it's helpful, I might table that. I think we did this on a project last year. Are you able to provide those to the Committee?

JOSH MURRAY: I'm happy to have a look at that and take it on notice, yes.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: In relation to the RTBU negotiations, can I come back to that? I'm not sure if that's you, Mr Murray, or who might be best at dealing with that.

JOSH MURRAY: I am happy to take it between myself and Mr Longland.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Sure. We'll share the fun. What is the framework? I wanted to come back and elaborate on that a bit more—about what Transport is currently bargaining with within those negotiations.

MATT LONGLAND: I'm happy to take that question, thank you. Just to go back to our discussion, the questions and the responses we had before lunch, the rail agencies communicated with our staff on 5 July. That was to include details about the wage offer associated with the current round of bargaining. That included a 4.5 per cent wage increase, including super, in year one, then 3.5 per cent, including super, in year two, and 3 per cent in year three for a total of 11 per cent over a three-year period. That was in July. Since then we've probably had about six or seven meetings. Bargaining is progressing. There is quite a lot of detail to work through, particularly on the union log of claims.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: I've had only limited exposure to that, but I understand the complexity of it. Who is responsible for those negotiations? Is that you, Mr Longland?

MATT LONGLAND: It's myself and my colleague Mr Weeks. We are jointly the chief executives of Sydney Trains and NSW Trains. Obviously, we have bargaining representatives in the room.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: In terms of the approvals, what approvals have Treasury provided to Transport to fund any new EBA requirements?

MATT LONGLAND: The discussions with Treasury to date have been about the initial parameters. That was the wage offer I just spoke to. I think we acknowledged—and as you'd be familiar—as these processes work their way through, there are a number of submissions to Treasury and to government over that period. We're expecting that there will be further discussions about claims, about the proposal and ultimately about what's offered to employees.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Approval has been provided, obviously, for that first 11per cent over three years offer. Have there been any other approvals for further offers? What stage is that at?

MATT LONGLAND: Not at this stage, no.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: You'll be putting those to Treasury as they come along?

MATT LONGLAND: Yes.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: What's the anticipated timeline for that?

MATT LONGLAND: We're hopeful that we can continue the good pace of bargaining that we're currently working through. We've probably got another month or so of bargaining to finish the combined union log of claims, to discuss a number of our proposals and then to work through some of that final detail. We would be hopeful that later this calendar year we will be in a position to work with unions to get an offer to employees.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: In terms of funding anything over and above what Treasury has approved so far, how do you anticipate funding that?

MATT LONGLAND: We haven't offered anything beyond that at this stage. Certainly the discussion with Treasury—I wouldn't want to pre-empt what might occur in those discussions.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: I'm going into bat for you, Mr Longland.

MATT LONGLAND: There would be an expectation, I would imagine, around what we can do around productivity. Any efficiencies that we could bring to our operation that could offset some of the expenditure around the offer for employees, all that is ahead of us. Whilst we are working well, there is a lot of detail that we're working through.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Just the one wage offer has been made so far?

MATT LONGLAND: That's correct. It was communicated with employees. Effectively, we haven't put an offer to vote yet. It's really been an update for our staff about the parameters that government has approved.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: On the employee-related expenses in the budget, what percentage of those in Transport are covered in the EBA negotiations?

MATT LONGLAND: I would need to probably take that on notice to take a look at the detail. Certainly, the budget of Sydney Trains—in terms of our operating expenditure—sits aside from Transport given that we are a public not-for-profit corporation. All of the detail sits in our annual report each year around what is allocated for each of our expenditures.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Off the top of your head, what's your percentage?

MATT LONGLAND: Of employee-related costs?

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Yes.

MATT LONGLAND: Roughly, probably about a third of our total expenditure.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: How much of those are covered in these EBA negotiations?

MATT LONGLAND: I'd have to look at the detail. It's not just our staff; it's also NSW TrainLink. As you know, there's employees that are covered under the enterprise agreement, and there's employees that are either managers or executives, like myself, that aren't covered under the EA. Employee expenses also includes overtime, and it includes allowances. It's not as simple as dividing one number by another.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Sure, but you are the CEO. You're in charge of this. You'd have a rough idea of if it's a third. Is it a half, or is it a percentage? What's the rough cut?

MATT LONGLAND: Of the Sydney Trains annual operating expenditure, around about a third, I would have thought, would have been related to employee expenses more generally. That covers all of our employee costs.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Yes, you've said that. And the EBA negotiations are covered in that third?

MATT LONGLAND: Staff that are covered under the EBA are our frontline and frontline support staff. They would be about 90 per cent, or thereabouts, of our staff. The remainder would be those that are not covered by the enterprise agreement.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: What is the current position in relation to the combined rail unions' request of the single-interest enterprise agreement we touched on earlier?

MATT LONGLAND: As I mentioned earlier, the request for a single-interest employer agreement is a submission that the RTBU have made to the Fair Work Commission. That matter will be considered by the

commission in due course. I have made it clear, as has my colleague Mr Weeks, that our priority is to continue bargaining. We don't want to stop. We want to keep the momentum and we want to actually get an outcome on the rail agency agreement.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Do you have a current position on that? How would that change the industrial relations structure between Transport and the union?

MATT LONGLAND: Currently, both rail agencies are covered under the one enterprise agreement. Our proposal, and our preference, is that that remains the case—that we have an agreement that combines all of our combined staff. A single-interest employer agreement has the potential to bring other entities into that agreement, which are obviously not employed by us and, frankly, probably aren't a key focus for us. My staff and my people are my focus.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: What is the Transport for NSW position, Mr Murray or others, regarding restricting the use of CCTV on Sydney Trains employees? Specifically, how does that improve safety outcomes for passengers? Under claim 58, it's talking about restricting the use of CCTV against employees.

JOSH MURRAY: The issue of CCTV is one being considered under the Rail Safety National Law and has had a longstanding discussion going on amongst all the States, the Commonwealth and ONRSR in regard to that. Matt, did you have anything further?

MATT LONGLAND: I'll try to be brief. I think claim 58 that you're referring to—

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Yes, it's in the log.

MATT LONGLAND: I am familiar because I've been in the bargaining room quite a bit for this round of bargaining. That refers to the use of existing closed-circuit TV. We've got about 13,000 cameras across the network on trains and stations. I think there has been some concern from staff that we're using camera footage to catch people out or to monitor their behaviour. We obviously have very strict controls around the use of cameras. That's something that we support, so we have agreed and we will work with unions about more effective and transparent controls about who can view footage under what circumstances so that, if there is any manager out there who is viewing footage on their iPad, that's not something that is appropriate.

The CHAIR: I want to firstly ask about the issue of bus shelters. I think I've raised this in a previous budget estimates hearing. I want to check whether there is any update around providing support to councils to improve their bus shelters. There's been a number of reports now, including the industry taskforce report, about the diversity in bus shelters—some are absolutely terrible and obviously that means less people catch buses. I think last time there was a response along the lines of "Councils are responsible for those bus shelters", but we know that it's impossible for many of them to upgrade those shelters as required. Is there anything afoot within the department around even just scoping out what is required?

JOSH MURRAY: Thank you for the question. As you point out, this is primarily a council responsibility. I know Blacktown council, for example, has engaged across both its own stakeholders and also with Transport to look at what can be done, in particular in regard to heat mitigation. However, it's not something that the department has prioritised in terms of the expenditure on buses to date. Ms Mares, did you have anything further about the community work?

TRUDI MARES: No, I think that's correct. The Minister has stated publicly that the commitment sits with councils. We will look at all infrastructure needs as part of the medium-term bus plan, though. It doesn't mean it will be put forward by the State Government for funding, but we will look at all infrastructure.

The CHAIR: At this point, particularly in terms of Western Sydney—you said that you've been contacted by or are in discussions with Blacktown City Council. The Government has said very clearly that that's really the Western Sydney councils, which have limited resources—and there are a hell of a lot of bus stops out there. It's getting to, as we know, low 40s—actually, high 40s in places. It's just left to councils. That's the message that's been sent internally?

JOSH MURRAY: No. I think, as the Minister has said before and has been clear on with the department, the best result for getting someone out of the heat is a bus that turns up more regularly or has more space on it to enable the people to move on quickly, rather than redirecting that bus funding into shelters by itself. However, we do have a range of other mechanisms with councils through grant programs and through our active transport links, where we are attempting to improve amenity around transport hubs. There may be other avenues that we can explore in that regard.

The CHAIR: I want to get to active transport. Who's responsible for active transport? What does that unit within the department look like?

JOSH MURRAY: That sits within Ms Mares' division.

The CHAIR: Ms Mares, is there somebody who has overall responsibility under you for active transport?

TRUDI MARES: Yes, that's correct. I have an executive director for Cities and Active Transport.

The CHAIR: What's the team like under that person? How many FTEs?

TRUDI MARES: I would have to take that on notice to give you the exact numbers.

The CHAIR: The Get NSW Active program, which I understand has closed to further applications—do you know off the top of your head, Ms Mares, whether all the funds have been allocated in those previous three rounds?

TRUDI MARES: I'll just check that for you. I understand that, yes, they closed at the end of last year. There was $60 million in grant funding available. We have allocated all of that funding, and we allocated $50 million in the previous financial year.

The CHAIR: Is it your understanding that the Get NSW Active program is ongoing? Was that in the budget? I don't have the relevant part of the budget on me. Is that grant ongoing over the forward estimates?

TRUDI MARES: I'll need to check the budget papers for that. I've only got the current year in there. I don't know that we've got it allocated in the budget papers in the forwards, but we are looking internally at allocations—yes.

The CHAIR: If you could also take on notice—because I assume you will need to for this question. You said that the full grant amount of $60 million was spent in the last round. The round before that was $50 million. Where does the funding that isn't allocated or acquitted go to?

TRUDI MARES: I believe we have used all of the funding allocated for the program. I can just check where that's gone. I'll take that on notice.

The CHAIR: My next question is in relation to the issue of ships docked at White Bay and the fumes that come from those ships. Who can I direct that to?

JOSH MURRAY: We may need to take this on notice for you. NSW Ports is not directly under the umbrella of Transport for NSW.

The CHAIR: I'll see who to submit that to. That's fine. Going back to the intercity trains issue, Mr Murray, I think it was you who was talking about the Spanish trains in terms of two out of 29 trains that had been delivered. In fact, that could have been the Minister. That's right? Is that to date?

JOSH MURRAY: Yes, Ms Drover was actually commenting on that as well.

CAMILLA DROVER: We were talking about the regional rail fleet, which is two of the 29. The intercity fleet is the Mariyung fleet, which has not been built in Spain.

The CHAIR: Yes, the regional fleet. With the two of the 29, is there an expectation of when, or by when, the next trains will be delivered?

CAMILLA DROVER: Yes, we're expecting another train to arrive later this year. Then, from about Q1 next year, trains will be arriving every couple of months.

The CHAIR: The delivery of the first two—when did each one of those arrive?

CAMILLA DROVER: The first train arrived in February, I believe.

The CHAIR: This year?

CAMILLA DROVER: Yes, this year. The second train arrived at the end of August—or by the end of August.

The CHAIR: That time frame again—you said you're expecting to receive how many each few months from next year?

CAMILLA DROVER: From early 2025, there will be trains turning up regularly every couple of months.

The CHAIR: They turn up. Where do they go to?

CAMILLA DROVER: They'll go to Dubbo in the first instance, but they will also have to go through an extensive testing process across the full network.

The CHAIR: Yes, you're predicting my next question. Regarding the extensive testing process, is it the case that the testing that has been underway on the first two, for example, is going to iron out some of the overall system kinks, if you like, and that the testing of each train hopefully won't take as long as the first one or two trains? You're testing the individual train this time as opposed to everything else? You're expecting things to hasten in terms of the delivery time?

CAMILLA DROVER: That's right. Whether it's light rail or heavy rail, we do the individual testing of the train itself and its power systems and traction systems and how the doors operate et cetera. Then we measure its interface with the surrounding network. That goes through a series of tests. Then there is obviously testing with the human interface—the drivers and the guards et cetera. All that has to be done.

This train goes outside New South Wales, so it needs to be tested both within New South Wales and then up to Queensland and down to Victoria. Then, as I mentioned earlier, we've got the bi-mode components so we're testing on the electrified network and on the diesel network. It is a very comprehensive testing process. When we're satisfied that it's ready for passenger service, there's still the crew testing and familiarisation with the new train and then we'll need to go through the accreditation process for the train. That is the process that ONRSR does to validate that the train is safe for that first passenger service.

The CHAIR: Is it expected, then, when you're saying for the first passenger service, that it's a staggered implementation of different trains on different timetables?

CAMILLA DROVER: Yes, so it's like the Mariyung fleet as well. That has a staged rollout. The regional rail will be exactly the same.

The CHAIR: What has been committed to in terms of the time frame for the first passenger service, ideally, internally in terms of your targets, and when you are expecting to have the full fleet, ideally, in service?

CAMILLA DROVER: We're not committing to a time frame for first passenger service, given the nature of this train. It's the first time it has run in Australia. We will need to go through that testing process and that accreditation process before we put a time frame on when we're expecting first passenger service. There's quite a journey to go before this train goes into service.

The CHAIR: Have any lines been identified to take those first trains when they do come in, in terms of lines to have the new trains on within the State? Has that been identified?

CAMILLA DROVER: We're still finalising the deployment strategy for the regional rail fleet. As you may be aware, it's both a regional fleet but there are also intercity aspects to the fleet, so we're coordinating with Sydney Trains and NSW TrainLink on that deployment strategy.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: I'll go back to questions around the Waterways Fund. Mr Murray, you can direct it as you see fit. Who are the senior officers who sit on the governance committee of that fund?

HOWARD COLLINS: In terms of Transport, obviously the ED of maritime services is accountable for producing and working through the Waterways Fund. It goes through the normal Transport for NSW financial approvals and committees, including Brenda, who chairs, and the Secretary who chairs a number of financial committees. It obviously is protected and, as you know, hypothecated so those funds can't be used for other purposes. But due diligence and assurance is carried out by Transport for NSW.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: Is it the Minister that signs off on the expenditure of the fund?

HOWARD COLLINS: It may be worth the Secretary or the finance CFO explaining that, but certainly the Minister is fully aware of the funds and does become involved in consultation of those funds.

JOSH MURRAY: Mr Banasiak, my understanding would be that that would be signed off through our financial accounting process through the FIA Committee, which the executive runs.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: Who's on that committee?

JOSH MURRAY: Most of the people you see in front of you are members of that committee.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: What was that acronym—FIAC?

JOSH MURRAY: FIAC. Finance Investment and Assurance Committee.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: Outside of the Kamay ferry wharves, has the Waterways Fund recently been used for other commercial ferry wharves in terms of funding?

HOWARD COLLINS: We've done a lot of funding on a number of wharves, many of them multi-user wharves. I can get you the details of the list of all those wharves that we've used for the fund.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: I'm just after specifically ones that have come from that Waterways Fund, or have they all come from that Waterways Fund?

HOWARD COLLINS: Some funding of wharves is outside of the Waterways Fund. Transport for NSW obviously looks and assesses those, but the majority of those wharves that are managed by Maritime obviously are covered by that Waterways Fund. I can provide that list of which wharves have been either upgraded or the expenditure has come from the Waterways Fund.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: I'm just after the Waterways Fund component. Has any money from the Waterways Fund been used to build the Eden wave attenuator? If so, how much?

HOWARD COLLINS: That was a project from the previous Government, I understand, which has now been completed. I will get you the details of how that was funded and provide that information to you.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: Is any money from the Waterways Fund going to fund the Eden maritime precinct?

HOWARD COLLINS: Not that I am aware of. That proposal—I understand the Federal Government has expressed an interest in—is us working together with the Federal Government, but I do not believe at this stage funding has been committed.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: Committed from State or Federal or both?

HOWARD COLLINS: From Federal or State.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: Do you have a projected cost of that precinct?

HOWARD COLLINS: I don't believe we have at this stage. It is early days, I understand, and early discussions with our Federal counterpart.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: Can I go to some specific questions around some of the COVID stimulus projects that the Minister alluded to? One of those was the Manly Sea Life upgrade. What's been the expenditure on that to date? I know the Minister at the time, Andrew Constance, said $9 million would go towards it, but I note that work commenced on it only recently and I think from November 2023 you indicated $2.9 million had been expended. Do you have an update on what that total cost is?

JOSH MURRAY: Ms Drover, do you have any further detail on Manly Sea Life?

CAMILLA DROVER: I know we're focused on the demolition of the existing very aged infrastructure at that location, but I'll need to come back to you with exact funding to date and what's been spent.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: Additionally, Double Bay, Greenwich and Darling Point, if you've got an update in terms of the costs with those projects. My understanding is that Greenwich wharf was delayed because of sourcing construction materials. I am just wondering whether we've got an updated cost on that.

CAMILLA DROVER: I do. Perhaps if you move to the next question, I'll come back.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: Sure. There was $3 million that was supposed to be spent on the Wentworth Point maritime facilities, which included a 63 wet-berth marina, dry storage for 228 boats, retail cafes, car park, a three-storey rowing club for training teams, a restaurant, a function room. How is any of that a benefit for recreational boaters, given that it has come out of the Waterways Fund?

JOSH MURRAY: That's a proposal that is slightly changing in its development, led by Landcom at the moment, and we are liaising with Landcom about the overall precinct.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: Are you still confirming that $3 million of the Waterways Fund will go to that?

JOSH MURRAY: I'd have to take that on notice because we are looking at the overall improvement of that area and ensuring that all parties involved, of which there are multiple government agencies, get the most out of the redevelopment.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: Are we going to ensure that recreational boaters get the most out of the development as well?

JOSH MURRAY: As you are aware, there are a number of facilities planned, not just the one that you've referred to. Obviously the Parramatta Light Rail developments, the education department commitments to that area and the recreational space that would be provided, they are all elements under discussion at the moment.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: The $2.1 million that has been earmarked for the Woolooware Bay Aquaculture Precinct, who's that supposed to be supporting? Is that supporting the oyster industry? Is it for privately owned enterprises, or is there going to be some benefit to recreational fishers and boaters?

JOSH MURRAY: I think we'd have to take that one on notice for Woolooware Bay.

CAMILLA DROVER: If I can just respond on the wharves, I think you mentioned Greenwich Point. That's due for completion early next year.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: What's the projected cost of that, given there were some delays?

CAMILLA DROVER: I will need to take that on notice. I think you mentioned South Mosman. That's also due for completion early next year.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: If we just get projected costings on those.

CAMILLA DROVER: Yes.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: The $3.1 million for the Manning River entrance, where are we up to with that?

HOWARD COLLINS: That's dredging.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: I believe so.

HOWARD COLLINS: I'll dive into the details. Obviously, as you know, the new bids process for dredging projects and other schemes—

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: So that will come under that $16 million for dredging?

HOWARD COLLINS: I will double-check and make sure with Manning River and give you the details. I haven't got it immediately to hand.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: Out of the 28 projects that were part of that COVID stimulus $205 million, have there been further projects added to that since Minister Constance made that announcement?

JOSH MURRAY: We'd have to take that on notice. I'm not aware of the extent of that fund that the previous Minister laid out, and in terms of what may or may not have moved in terms of that in recent years.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: He promised $205 million be allocated from the Waterways Fund for all of these projects. I'm trying to ascertain whether we've hit that $205 million or we've gone past that. I think last estimates we were at about $145 million. I'm just wondering where we're at now—if you give me an overall figure.

JOSH MURRAY: I'm happy that we provide an update on that fund, the COVID measures and the completion of those projects and funds.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Can I come back to Mr Longland about the CCTV? Will cameras remain in the train driver carriages—those CCTV?

MATT LONGLAND: Onboard cameras we have in the passenger part of trains. We have them on front-facing and rear-facing on the newer fleet, but none of our fleets contain CCTV cameras inside the driver cab.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: The one with the driver who was checking in to the podcast, all those—we got that information through the podcast, didn't we? There wasn't a camera there.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: Was it a good podcast?

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Yes, I dialled in. Can I go to Sydney Metro? Last month *The Sydney Morning Herald*'s Matt O'Sullivan reported:

> … an underground metro station at Rosehill will have to be retrofitted. The boring machines will have passed the site …
>
> That means engineers will have to crack through the newly dug concrete-lined twin tunnels to build a station there if, indeed, it goes ahead.

Is that correct, Mr Regan?

PETER REGAN: Yes, I can certainly answer that. Across the metro network, there are a number of different construction techniques that we've used to build different stations in different circumstances. It depends on the geology, the location and the development in and around. We have made a change to the alignment of the tunnels. One of the key features of a station on the new metro is that it needs to be flat and straight. We were, as you'd be aware, already intending to tunnel under Rosehill racecourse. That tunnelling has yet to commence, so we've been able to straighten that alignment so that the section under there is indeed flat and straight, and so that that preserves the potential for the station. We have constructed stations across the network to date using different techniques. I mentioned this morning that one of the issues that we're looking at, at Rosehill, are the different options for building a station there.

At Central Station the approach that was referred to in the Sydney Herald was used, where the tunnel-boring machine goes through first and then a hole is dug from on top and comes down into the tunnel from the top. That's definitely a technique that's been used. Victoria Cross Station in North Sydney is a different type of construction, where the tunnels go through first and then the actual cabin for the station is mined out from within the tunnel. That is another option that we're looking at. That's something that's been used a number of times—where you would tunnel first so that the TBM machine is through and it can continue on its journey. Once that tunnelling is finished, you can construct out the necessary part of the station. So they're some of the issues we're looking at at Rosehill. There are different options and they would have different timing depending on which of those options is adopted.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: As a matter of fact—just to be clear—has Sydney Metro ever had to retrofit a metro station into an existing tunnel, including breaking the new concrete lining in a similar proposal to that?

PETER REGAN: Yes, absolutely. At Central station that's how we constructed it. It's not retrofitting post-opening; that's just—we can dig through the tunnels. There's been a number of examples where the tunnel itself goes through and then the station is constructed after the tunnel has gone through. That's not uncommon.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Does that option affect the delivery date?

PETER REGAN: Depending on which option, that actually leaves a greater degree of flexibility as to earlier delivery dates.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: So breaking through the twin tunnels could mean adding an extra station—means we're delivering it early.

PETER REGAN: Certainly the sequence with the stations generally can be one or the other of digging a station box top down and then tunnelling into the box and tunnelling out the other side or, alternatively, tunnelling through and then digging the station structure. We've used both options in different examples across the line.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: None of those options take longer?

PETER REGAN: No. The quickest thing to do in the Rosehill context would be to continue the tunnelling through that area first and then insert the station once that tunnelling has gone through. Those tunnel-boring machines will leave from a launch site at Clyde, go under Rosehill and then go to Parramatta and Westmead, so there is an advantage to the program for them to go through first so they can keep tunnelling, and then the station can be constructed in behind those machines.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: So no delay—in fact, might be faster. More cost?

PETER REGAN: Not necessarily more cost, but that's why we're looking at those different options at the moment: to see what is the best combination of time and cost. It does depend, obviously, on other decisions that the Government would need to make around Rosehill. The focus that we've been keeping a very close eye on is preserving optionality, but also ensuring that the work we're doing there does not affect the overall time frame to open the railway, which is targeted for 2032.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Did that realignment of metro west—that path—have cost implications?

PETER REGAN: Not a major cost because that's an area we hadn't tunnelled yet. It was very minor.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: What do you mean by a major cost?

PETER REGAN: As you know, the metro—

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: It's not a small change, the metro.

PETER REGAN: It's not a small change but it's millions of dollars, not anything more than that. The tunnel was already going through there. It's just design costs, so probably not even that full amount. It's really just a matter of straightening that alignment up before the tunnelling went through.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: So it's straighter, faster, easier and doesn't cost much?

PETER REGAN: And it preserves the opportunity, and that's the key here that we've been looking to do. That's why we are looking at a number of different options for the construction. The other stations clearly have started earlier but we've been working—it's a different opportunity to build in that sort of space so those options remain available to the Government.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: I'll come back to that if we have time. The metro review said, on the line-wide contract, should it "not be in the market by early 2024 as originally planned, there will be extensive time and cost pressures on overall delivery". At what stage is the tender for the line-wide and systems contract for metro west?

PETER REGAN: At the end of last year we advised potential bidders of a down selection to shortlists for those contracts for the trains and systems, the operations and maintenance, the line-wide systems and the remaining stations. We've been working with those shortlisted bidders in that time since earlier this year on what we call early tender involvement processes—design, enhancements, sharing information. We have commenced the detailed tender process for what's now known as the trains, systems, operations and maintenance contract. That commenced last month. That's in the detailed tender phase and we expect we will, in the very near future, move to the next of those. That one's a combination of packages. The line-wide package is next, and I expect that to be in the coming weeks.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Are you aware of any escalation of the time and cost pressure on the overall delivery of the project?

PETER REGAN: At this stage we're still tracking to the revised target opening date of 2032, and we've got to procure those contracts and the station contracts, but certainly at the moment there's been no further change to the end date and the operating date. We're still looking at opportunities to streamline that program, and one of the key differences that we're applying on metro west is a different sequence of the procurement of the different element of the railway, which reflects some of the lessons learnt from some of the challenges we had in the city. We're sticking very much to a sequence that effectively is property, then tunnels, then systems, then stations, so that there's less need to change design on the way through, and then it gives us more flexibility on the program.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: You've done a few now, so you know what you're doing. You're pretty experienced with metro.

PETER REGAN: Yes, I think it's been one of the great things around the city project, and thank you for your comments at the start of the day. It has been very challenging, but we have also learnt a lot which we can now apply on metro west.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Are there cost pressures with that realignment and redesign, with the delay?

PETER REGAN: No, the focus at the moment and the involvement with tenderers is actually looking to do the opposite—to find a more efficient program and also utilise the bidders to bid back potential savings opportunities, both in terms of time and cost and scope. Again, that's trying to build on what we've just done. We've now seen where the real pinch points are, and most of the parties who are bidding to build metro west have been involved, one way or another, in the previous metros. There's a fair bit of knowledge that's developed over the last 10 or 12 years, and now we want to give the market the opportunity to bid that back.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Yes, I hope so. That's good to hear. Just to be clear, though, your evidence in relation to the line-wide contract is that it's experienced no escalation on the tender to date?

PETER REGAN: We're still working within the same overall budget. We are, on each of the contracts, expecting that the bidders are going to have to bid back some savings as well. That's not necessarily just to do with time; that's just the overall scope and to get the right combination of what we're referring to as a safe, functional railway at the systems level but make sure we're not buying anything that we don't need to buy for this phase of the project.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Just to be clear, though, it's correct, isn't it, that you can't award the tender for the contract until you know the final scope—until you know the situation with the stations. That's right, isn't it?

PETER REGAN: We have the option to include options in those tender processes for certain aspects. Certainly, the trains and systems and the line-wide contract, which is basically the railway system prior to the stations—that can be procured with options to potentially include the addition of another station. Same with the trains—the same number of trains would be needed, but it's just some of the future work around how it's operated. One of the things we've been working with industry on is how best to include optionality so that we're not delaying the procurement now but we're still preserving the opportunity to have an option to go ahead with that station.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: All right, but can I just understand that? How can you be tendering on a project if you don't know the scope of it? Is it an either/or—you bid one price for without Rosehill and one with? Is it a two-part tender?

PETER REGAN: I'm sorry to be technical about it. The contracts that run horizontally across the project—which is basically the trains and systems and the line-wide packages, which is the track and the power—can be procured on the basis of a minimum nine stations with an option for a tenth, for example, and that can be exercised subsequently. The actual stations themselves are being procured in different combinations so that they're not all being bought in one package. That would be too large. There is one package of five stations; there are four packages for individual stations. If another station is added, it can be procured separately and added in, using those options, to the other contracts.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: What happened to the other station scoping study that the Government announced?

PETER REGAN: As you'd be aware, we've been looking over the years, on metro west, at a very significant number of options along the alignment. We have done further examination, but our focus at the moment is on the option at Rosehill.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: But there was another station as well. You announced Rosehill plus another possible station. What's the other station?

PETER REGAN: Yes, we were asked to look at different options. The focus and what we're doing for the Government is Rosehill.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: The announcement was for another station. Is there still that other station option?

PETER REGAN: There are other options that we've looked at, but the work that we're doing at the moment is focusing on the Rosehill option.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: So there is no option for another station?

PETER REGAN: No, as I said, there were other options we looked at, but the work that we're doing at the moment is focusing on Rosehill.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Has it been ruled out, then?

PETER REGAN: No.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Where's the other station?

PETER REGAN: Between Parramatta and Olympic Park, we've looked at a number of options.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: How many options have you looked at?

PETER REGAN: A number.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Two, three, four stations?

PETER REGAN: There were a series of them. Right along that alignment from Parramatta into Olympic Park, it's quite a long stretch—about seven kilometres. We've looked right along that alignment at different options for stations. The work we're doing at the moment is focusing on the Rosehill option, but the other options are not precluded at this point.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: I understand the Rosehill option; I'm just trying to understand what you're saying about the other ones.

PETER REGAN: No, it's not precluded at this point.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Potentially a couple of stations, but—

PETER REGAN: Yes, certainly, as I said, there are some minimum requirements. There are other sections of track that are flat and straight, and we were careful in looking at that. But certainly the work at the moment we're focusing on is at Rosehill.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Just to be clear, has that other station work been completed and parked, or deprioritised?

PETER REGAN: We've done that work. It's part of the work that we've given to government for further consideration.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Okay, so that's with government now and that work has concluded, from your perspective?

PETER REGAN: For now. We may be asked to do more.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Regarding Rosehill, then, you've been on record regarding the levels of contamination around the Rosehill site and the costly amount of remediation work required. Is it fair to say remediation work to acceptable standards is always difficult to accurately forecast? For example, in a house renovation, you don't know what's there until you start digging. You don't know what you'll find. Is it fair to say that that's difficult to accurately forecast? It's not a trick question. Literally, you don't know until you dig.

PETER REGAN: No. In principle, that's exactly right. Until you've done both the geotechnological investigations and contamination testing, you don't know what you don't know. We apply contingencies against that. What we do know at Rosehill is that the land surrounding the Rosehill racecourse has been heavily used for industry for the last 100 or 150 years—clearly, the land at the racecourse itself less so because it's been a racecourse all that time. But we're doing testing at the moment of the land.

Some of the sites around there where we have been already constructing have been very heavily contaminated, but they were heavy industrial sites, so we do need to work that through. It is one of the reasons we're being very careful to make sure that we have that information before trying to put hard dollar numbers on it, for the reasons that you indicated, because it certainly is unlikely that there is zero contamination on any site in that area because of groundwater and things underneath. Certainly the fact it has been a racecourse does differentiate it from the adjoining sites.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Talking hard dollars, though, I know you can't give a figure, but how do you go about factoring that uncertainty about the contamination risk into the business case?

PETER REGAN: We do tests on the site to work out what kind of potential risk there is—what kind of contamination. We've done that on adjoining sites. Unfortunately, sometimes you don't know until you're right there, digging and excavating, and it's been a significant challenge on the site further south where we're building the stabling and maintenance facility.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: So you factor that in by some form of testing.

PETER REGAN: You do testing and then you apply contingencies, and then you work to see—also, depending on the volumes that are found, some material can be treated onsite, some material can be stored onsite and capped and protected, and other material has to go offsite. We don't know at this stage exactly what that would be. But certainly, as I said, the expectation is there is less contamination on that site than surrounding sites, but we just need to continue to work that through.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: I might come back to the methodology. This is likely one for government but, if the Rosehill proposal is contingent on the USP and also a vote of the members, how does that uncertainty impact on the delivery of metro west?

PETER REGAN: That's why we're continuing metro west in parallel to that process. We're continuing on with metro west on the minimum nine-station process that we've described before. We're doing these preparatory works around Rosehill to keep that option available, but it's a separate process that Government is running with the turf club and the unsolicited proposal process. I'm not involved in that process.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: No, they're quite separate contingencies.

PETER REGAN: They're quite separate.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: I'm just wondering how you factor those in? It's got to have some impact.

PETER REGAN: No, that's fine. We're giving Government the options around what can be done at Rosehill that they can then consider alongside that other proposal. But we structured it in a way—and we've done a lot of thinking on this, as to how to retain the flexibility so that the rest of the procurement is not delayed while

those Rosehill considerations take place. We are in the market now, as I said, for the train and systems, the line-wide to come.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Thank you. That's helpful. Finally, in the last bit of time I have, for the two metro business cases—the south-west Sydney rail planning business case and the Sydney Metro Western Sydney Airport northern extension—when will those two be completed?

PETER REGAN: We are working on those now. The northern one, as the Minister mentioned earlier, is being done by metro, and it looks at a connection between the metro and the metro. It is being taken forward, on that basis, as an extension of one or both of the metro lines—Tallawong and St Marys. The one in the south and south-west we are working on with Transport for NSW. It's a bit more complicated because we are actually looking at connecting three points—Bradfield, heading directly south and to the south-west—so there is a metro connection and a heavy rail connection. Hence, we're looking at it on a multimodal basis. We are doing that work, keeping Government updated and working with Transport. I think it's over the next year or so that it will be completed.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: It's a year or 12 months to complete those.

PETER REGAN: Yes, I think it depends which options they want to go with as well, in terms of further work. Certainly, the money is scheduled over the next couple of years to do both those business cases.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Final business cases.

PETER REGAN: Yes, the money is set aside to do final business cases. I think the challenge with projects of this scale is how far that final business case goes before you start ruling options out. But the priority focus is to identify corridors, to identify station locations, to identify the mode, and to be able to start developing up options for taking it to that next level.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Mr Murray, will those be done, in your view, in that time frame?

JOSH MURRAY: Yes, that's right. We would anticipate having perhaps not the completion of those services but to be able to start reviewing options by the end of next year.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: On those final business cases.

JOSH MURRAY: That we would have options worked up to a point where we could be having discussions with Government. The work may be continuing in parallel.

The CHAIR: We will come back to that if we need to. I think this is for you, Mr Regan. I'm just wanting to get a bit more detail about the issue with the electric shock that the firefighter received in August. I've been contacted by members of the FBEU and met with them about safety concerns, which, of course, have been widely reported in the media. They say that, despite several years of consultation between Fire and Rescue NSW and Sydney Metro, the investigation report into that incident in August confirms that there is a significant and uncommunicated or unmitigated electrical hazard within the metro rail corridor. That's in the form—which, again, has been widely reported—of the 150 volts of residual power. MTS refer to this risk as touch potential, and you have cited that particular European standard that you claim renders the 150 volts safe.

The FBU, of course, disagrees with this, and they refer to the Sydney Trains doctrine—which I have in front of me as well—which says anything over 50 volts is, in fact, unsafe. If we have got this in place within New South Wales, within the Sydney Trains, and that's what the workers have been comfortable with and that's been in place for a long time, why has Sydney Metro, firstly, decided that 150 volts is safe, when everything that the workers have been working with, according to the Sydney Trains, is 50 volts?

PETER REGAN: A couple of things—and we're keen to try and answer that question. Firstly, we use the same standard as Sydney Trains. It's a standard that's set by Transport for NSW—the standards authority that sets the standard. We are both using the same standard. That's a standard that is consistently applied.

The CHAIR: What's that standard called, when you say the same standard?

PETER REGAN: It's EN 50122-1.

The CHAIR: That's what they sound like! That's a standard!

PETER REGAN: That standard. We are adopting the same standard, and that is something that is applied. We have procedures—and Mr Longland can talk to this as well—around how different circumstances adapt to different exercises or different activities within the tunnel. But the key thing is, we are not operating a separate standard. We have some different elements of technology in the metro—because it's been more recently installed—that allows some of the electrical isolations to be undertaken remotely rather than needing to go on site.

As I mentioned this morning, we have a series of automatic detection systems that limit and reduce voltage where necessary and cut power out where necessary. That is all in line with the context that is set out in those standards.

The CHAIR: Just explain to me then why there is a Sydney Trains document—*Engineering System Integrity - Electrical Network Safety Rules*, date in force: 1 February 2022—which outlines everything in terms of safety. I'm at 6.2, Safety Criterion, and it says: "The 1500 Volt DC OHW"—overhead wire, I assume—"structure is considered safe to touch if the measured structure to rail voltage does not exceed 50 Volt DC." Is it not overhead wires?

PETER REGAN: That's right. This issue was not an overhead wiring issue. This is an issue to do with potential residual electric current underneath the train and, in this circumstance, the overhead wire has been detached from the train, so they are not in contact with each other. Sydney Trains has a very similar procedure: If there are people working in the tunnel or rescue workers in the tunnel, you detach the power supply from the train itself. They are different issues, I believe. What I think is important to note is that we work very closely with Fire and Rescue NSW. Before this incident but also after this incident, Fire and Rescue NSW gave a formal sign-off that they were comfortable that issues they had with the railway that needed to be addressed before opening had all been addressed, and that was provided to the Office of the National Rail Safety Regulator, who then also provides the accreditation that the railway is safe and accredited to operate.

There was a lot of work done. It is a very technical area, and I can't profess to be an expert in all of this but, certainly, within metro, within Metro Trains Sydney, within Sydney Trains, Fire and Rescue NSW and the regulator, a lot of work has been done in a lot of different areas around the overall safety system. But the individual components, including in this area—that sign-off was one of the issues from Fire and Rescue. The overall sign-off was one of the last sign-offs received before ONRSR provided its sign-off to the railway and, certainly, it is an absolute priority that the railway is both safe for passengers and for other workers in and around that. Certainly, the railway would not be in operation if those sign-offs had not been received.

The CHAIR: Thank you, that is useful. I want to go to a question now about air quality in train stations. Mr Longland, I think we talked about this during the last budget estimates and that was in relation to, at the time, *The Sydney Morning Herald* investigation into air quality at stations, which was quite concerning. You talked about an investigation or testing that the department was either going to do or commission. Did that happen?

MATT LONGLAND: Yes, thank you for the question. The independent hygiene testing did take place in 10 underground stations on the City Circle and also on the Eastern Suburbs Railway. That testing is now complete. It related the air quality to what's called the Safe Work Australia workplace exposure standards. The results did demonstrate that the air quality is well within the limits of respirable, inhalable and metal particulates within those workplace exposure standards, so there was no safety risk for our people working at those stations, which is really good news. The reviewer recommended that we undertake that testing periodically, so I think we're looking at an annual process to ensure that the levels remain under those standards.

The CHAIR: Mr Longland, is that information public?

MATT LONGLAND: I know we circulated and shared the information with our staff and with unions. I'd be more than happy to check whether we could table it, if that's something that you would want to have a look at?

The CHAIR: Thank you, yes. Particularly when it comes to air quality, I think it matters where the source is, where you test, at what times, for example, and how frequently, especially of course if it's in relation to safe work, which is exposure over a period of time. Yes, if you could, that would be very useful. Mr Regan, we were talking before about the metro west stations. I'm sure we have covered this at a previous hearing. With the metro stations on the line that has just opened—the Sydney line?

PETER REGAN: City M1 line, yes.

The CHAIR: How much were the stations, on average, each? They're beautiful stations, there is no doubt about it—world-class.

PETER REGAN: Yes, the stations are functioning very well and, certainly, they are moving the volumes of people. The reason I pause is that the stations were very heavily impacted during COVID, and so the cost of the stations is certainly more than was originally intended and the budgets had to be adjusted for those stations during COVID. I don't have the exact numbers in front of me. I can take on notice the cost of the stations for you.

The CHAIR: The ambition for the stations for the Sydney Metro West, the ambition for the Sydenham to Bankstown stations, are we expecting similarly grand stations that wouldn't be out of place in the heart of London, for every single station, like we have with the latest line that's just opened?

PETER REGAN: I think, to be honest, Chair, there are options and decisions to be made around those stations. We haven't procured the stations yet, around the scale, the finishing, the art and the architecture. We haven't purchased them yet and, certainly, that is one of the things we're looking at around what is the appropriateness of stations, suburban versus city, and seeing whether there are opportunities to look at those differently going forward. Certainly, I think they are great, wonderful architectural statements and people seem to love them, which is great, but there are cheaper ways to build functional stations as well that need to be taken into account as we are looking forward. So I think there is a range of options to be looked at there.

The CHAIR: I'll come back to that, thank you.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: I just need to correct myself to Mr Collins. The $3.1 million for Manning River Entrance was, on my understanding, for a feasibility study as to whether to dredge or not.

HOWARD COLLINS: Yes.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: I believe there were some recommendations. Could you tell us what those recommendations were and whether any of them have been accepted or progressed?

HOWARD COLLINS: Certainly, I've got a bit more information my side as well. I understand dredging was carried out by MidCoast Council in 2021. As you know, we have started a statewide long-term maintenance dredging program. We have reviewed and are reviewing a number of sites and that is where, over the next four years, $16 million is being allocated to key locations along the New South Wales coast. That does not include Manning River or The Entrance. But, obviously, dredging works are currently occurring in Swansea, Myall River, Ettalong and Coffs Harbour. We have done a significant amount of dredging, and we're also open to councils coming forward with submissions for further funding.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: Did you say Myall River?

HOWARD COLLINS: Yes, I think there is a proposal, if not committed funding, for Myall River, Ettalong, Coffs Harbour and Swansea—as we know, that's been a difficult site for many years. But that's not exclusive or extensive. We are very keen to ensure we focus on this area, which we think has been lacking for some time, and ensure that we get the opportunity to work with councils. As you know, a lot of this is provided by grant funding or support funding for councils to undertake that work.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: Out of the $16 million that was announced as part of the revamped boating grant process, how much has been allocated to Coffs Harbour and Swansea? I know the Minister specifically mentioned Coffs Harbour and Swansea as being part of that $16 million.

HOWARD COLLINS: Yes. I have here a little bit of a breakdown. Under the Boating Infrastructure and Dredging Scheme, a total of $16 million has been allocated to dredging works over three years to support two dredging subprograms: $7.5 million is committed to the Priority Dredging Program funded by the Maritime Infrastructure Delivery Office; and their new dredging projects for critical boating and safety waterway navigation—it doesn't specify where—$8.5 million.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: Was that $8.5 million for new dredging?

HOWARD COLLINS: It's $7.5 million for that Priority Dredging Program, which will be put together by the MIDO office, and then $8.5 million is allocated to the committed dredging projects, which are Swansea, Ettalong, Coffs Harbour, Myall River and the development of a 10-year environmental planning approvals process for nine other high-priority sites. Again, I am sure we'd be delighted to share with you, outside of this meeting, obviously, the details of that program. It's been a recent announcement, as you know, by the Government, as part of the $44 million funding boost. But we are specifically focusing $16 million over the next three to four years on the dredging and waterways infrastructure projects.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: But roughly half has already been, essentially, allocated to projects?

HOWARD COLLINS: Yes, $8.5 million has already been committed to dredging projects.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: And the $7.5 million is still up for grabs?

HOWARD COLLINS: And some of them, as you know, are fairly small schemes. Others, we are working with councils where we need to ensure we understand the committed funds. The other thing is we are saying, "We need to look at this in a 10-year strategy." As you know, there was a lot of argument in the past about whether the State or Feds dealt with dredging—for many, many years. This now gives a commitment to have a 10-year plan. I'm sure we would love to consult with you and other bodies as to how that plan rolls out over the next 10 years.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: This is going into the nitty-gritty a bit, but is the dredging at Coffs for the regional boating facility or is it for the main harbour? There have been concerns about the main harbour being part of the problem in terms of the build-up of sand.

HOWARD COLLINS: Yes, and having been there a couple of times with Mark and the team and Nicole, I understand the challenges. When you clear a main harbour then you can actually pass on the problem to around the corner, as it is at Coffs. But we have been working with an in-site temporary pumping scheme to clear that boating area. You know that we built beautiful new ramps and everything, and then it started filling up with sand. I understand we are now working on ensuring that that new facility is kept clear and available, and again, more details of how we're doing that. But I know there is a lot of proactive work in that area because, obviously, it's a great new scheme and a great opportunity to provide better access for boaters and other users.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: So this 10-year dredging strategy is to replace the one that expired this year—the NSW Coastal Dredging Strategy?

HOWARD COLLINS: Yes. I think it is part of a new look and understanding of the strategy going forward, rather than this perhaps in the past sort of kneejerk reaction to local immediate issues. The idea is to be able to look at and allocate funding over a 10-year period and also work with all the environmental planning approvals which are often needed at some of these quite sensitive sites, and particularly the nine priority areas.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: That was going to be my next question: How are you dealing with the environment? Quite often, councils express an interest in needing dredging, they go to you for funding, you might want to give them the money but Environment says no.

HOWARD COLLINS: Yes, and that is important. We have been working very closely to understand how we can satisfy those two requirements. As you know, dredging means, sometimes, a risk of damaging the environment in the area. But if it's done properly, it often can mean that alternative sites are used for critical vegetation or other activity, and we're working very closely with our environmental colleagues now.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: Is Environment going to step in a little bit early in this approval process in terms of the grants?

HOWARD COLLINS: Some good signs certainly are that, now that we have this strategic view, we can work very closely with environmental planning and the process so that, as you say, we don't end up promising to do something and then it gets stopped or delayed for a number of years.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: The other part of the funding announcement the Minister made was about community grants around ageing and disability facilities. It's something we've been pushing and campaigning on for a while. How would this be managed differently than the former Boating Now program where money was given to councils, councils didn't really consult with the community and stakeholders as to what should be built, and then what you get is often an inferior product that doesn't support the elderly and disabled? How are you going to engage with elderly and disabled stakeholders in this?

HOWARD COLLINS: I understand past issues and fair criticism. We know, as you found this morning, the Minister is very passionate about supporting Maritime and supporting accessibility, whether that's rail or wharves or other public infrastructure. I know that the head of Maritime and myself and the Secretary have regular dialogues and regular meetings to update the Minister on the progress, and often those subject matters about accessibility are talked about. I do feel there's a new focus on accountability in that area.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: But how do we get that accountability down at the council level that will probably be building these things? Quite often it's very silly things, like they put in a stair and put in round stair legs, you know, and then you put it in water and you wonder why people are slipping off and hurting themselves. Often it's very simple things that they just don't think of.

HOWARD COLLINS: One of the things with our specialist MIDO team, which is now headed up by Nicole Watts—we are giving pretty good, frank advice to a number of councils and having good discussions about what is suitable for a maritime and marine environment. As you say, sometimes councils are used to building these things away from a maritime environment. Corrosion, slip test and durability are all those things that we have to take into account.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: I'm not suggesting that you micromanage them, but is there going to be a greater level of checking on their design work and whether it is suitable for marine infrastructure?

JOSH MURRAY: Mr Banasiak, if I could add on that, it's one of the elements that the Coordinator General, the Deputy Secretary for Infrastructure and myself have been working on because we want to make sure that projects are managed from the right area of Transport. What we have seen in the past is a real mix of large

and small projects handled in varying parts of the organisation. Under our changes that we spoke about before to one of the questions, it has been a centralisation of projects so that Maritime can handle maritime-specific, especially grant funding and supervision, and then projects with engineering complexity are dealt with under the right governance framework.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: You were going to come back to me on the $3 billion gap in financial spending for this year. How are you going with that answer, Mr Murray?

JOSH MURRAY: We've taken that on notice, and we'll aim to come back and have that discussion. To echo the discussion from this morning, there is a range of elements that make up those capital forecasts and programs—projects coming in and out—and that's a fairly large download in terms of what we would want to get back and discuss. We're looking at it, but we have taken it on notice in regards to your question.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: I thought you had undertaken to give us what you could today, out of Gateway, WestConnex and the projects that have opened, and whether that was the entirety of it or if there were other components as well. Are you able to indicate that by this afternoon?

JOSH MURRAY: Not wishing to delay but, in terms of that detail, the people who are responsible for that are all sitting here. It's very difficult for us to be witnesses in the hearing and also doing that work.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: I'm sure Ms Hoang has a group of people back in the office who might be able to look that up. It shouldn't be a surprise to anybody about where the gap is and the $3 billion.

JOSH MURRAY: It could perhaps help us if there were more direct questions about individual projects. When you look at projects like metro city, when you look at Parramatta Light Rail Stage 1, which is drawing to the end of its capital outlay, when you look at WestConnex—

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Sorry, Mr Murray. In the time we have, we were very clear on the question this morning. There was a difference in the line items for the financial spend for this year. You were going to specify what those were and whether it was just those projects that have come offline—Gateway and the others noted by the Minister—or whether there were others. You had undertaken to try and get an answer to us today.

JOSH MURRAY: Yes, and we'll take the question on notice. As a general principle, I'm saying that once we look at that—I mean, we are bringing 40 new projects online this financial year. All of those are part of that changing dynamic of what's inside and outside the capital envelope.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Which is why we're asking. It's a big difference. I'm interested in whether that's just projects coming offline or whether it's other component parts of that. I want to be clear on that.

JOSH MURRAY: We're taking that on notice and will provide further detail.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Thank you. That's interesting to know. Mr Murray, are you aware of the ongoing community concerns regarding the Sydney Harbour Bridge cycleway?

JOSH MURRAY: Yes, I am.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: I've been advised that they continue to write to you and they're receiving responses from other public servants. Will you undertake to do an onsite meeting with the concerned residents?

JOSH MURRAY: I'm happy to take that matter on notice. There are a lot of stakeholders involved in the Sydney Harbour Bridge cycleway and we are currently in the process of setting up for construction, so I would take advice on where we're at.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Are you not able to meet with those concerned residents at the site?

JOSH MURRAY: I know that other members of Transport have certainly met with varying groups. I'm happy to look into that.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Will you meet with them?

JOSH MURRAY: I'm happy to look into it and ensure that the right person has met with them.

The CHAIR: Going back to the cost of the metro stations, there has been some reporting about the costs. *The Daily Telegraph* reported that the Martin Place metro station was $745 million dollars. The Waterloo station was $525 million. The Sydenham station redevelopment—but that's a redevelopment—was $1 billion. And, of course, Central station, which is just—we won't even. That's half a billion to three quarters of a billion to one billion. Mr Regan, is there an active discussion within Sydney Metro and Transport for NSW to reduce the costs of the stations going forward? Would that be fair to say?

PETER REGAN: I think it is a very good question and very fair to say that there is active consideration. I know a lot of people have different views, but there's quite a range of options when it comes to buying infrastructure at that scale. People are very focused on the art and the finishes but, actually, it's other characteristics as to how they are built—the level of capacity that's built on day one versus what might be provided for to go in at year 10 or year 20. There is quite a range of options. You can even see across the metro stations on the network already that different choices have been made at different times. It's a discussion, yes, very much between metro and Transport and also with the Government. We haven't bought the stations yet for the metro west, so there are still some decisions to be made.

The other point I would make is that some of those big city stations, Martin Place being a good example, were procured as part of an arrangement where the development rights to above that were also sold at the same time. Some of what you see at Martin Place would not be a station we would buy alone. That has been funded by the developer as part of a broader development. There's quite a horses-for-courses approach that needs to be applied, and there is a difference between what's needed at a suburban station versus, say, the new Hunter Street station right here in the city. I absolutely understand the question.

The CHAIR: Thank you. It's good that you said you're in discussions with Transport for NSW and the Government because, Mr Murray, the Bus Industry Taskforce just handed down the percentage of money spent on buses, for example, compared to the metro. An earlier question about the fact that there are bus shelters—well, there aren't even bus shelters. There are bus stops in Western Sydney that have no bus shelter. There are no bus services in so many places. What are you doing to ensure a more equitable distribution between, say, Sydney Metro and buses?

JOSH MURRAY: Absolutely, and thank you for the question. It's a high-order priority of how we allocate funding in the organisation. While Sydney Metro West has a budget allocation already, as the CEO has outlined, value for money about rolling out the next steps in that package is very much one of the considerations that we are working together on, as well as our colleagues in Treasury and other parts of government. For us, it's also not just about the allocation of money between modes, but we are very conscious when we look at integrated communities—and Parramatta is a great example—where metro, ferries, buses, T-way buses and heavy rail are all represented, that we are also getting the best performance out of precincts like that so that more money over time can be freed up for other government departments like Health and Education, rather than starting afresh each time with new transport options. That is very much on our agenda in terms of how equitable the spending is for each community.

(Short adjournment)

The CHAIR: We will go straight to Ms Ward.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Who can I talk to about ferries?

JOSH MURRAY: The Coordinator General can take questions.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Mr Collins, what does Transport for NSW plan to do with the old RiverCat ferries that are being retired and decommissioned?

HOWARD COLLINS: Thank you for the question. The whole series of RiverCat, SuperCat, the 25-plus-year-old low-draft ferries—we have had a number of options. Some have been sold to third parties. I think one or two of them have gone to Queensland. For those who are perhaps completely life expired, there may be a recycling opportunity. But some of these vessels do have a second life after they have served in Sydney.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Some community members have indicated that they feel they are convenient for commuters and are larger vessels that carry more passengers. Is there a plan for those RiverCat ferries to be refurbished?

HOWARD COLLINS: We are replacing the RiverCat ferries with the Parramatta River class ferries, of which the first two obviously have entered service, and there is a third one on its way from Tasmania very soon. That's seven vessels in all. Obviously that's part of the fleet of 40 of various sizes and shapes, from our historic Freshwater class, our First Fleeter, the Emerald 1s and 2s. So, there is a mixture. What we are trying to do is rationalise and ensure we have, rather than small numbers of special vessels manufactured over a life, a fleet which is pretty easy to maintain.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: I am appreciating that but, just in relation to the RiverCats, we have had some community concerns about those. Will Transport consider refurbishing those RiverCats and keeping them on the Parramatta River route, considering that the additional population targets given to councils are bigger than the new river class vessels?

HOWARD COLLINS: They are only slightly bigger. The other thing is the new river class ferries—the first versions are being retrofitted with air conditioning. The Australian-built versions will have air conditioning from get-go. The other thing is they are significantly efficient in terms of fuel whilst maintaining the same sorts of speeds, if not comparable speeds, to the older class of ferry. And there is also the risk with the older class RiverCats of obsolete components, which are very difficult to refurbish. We believe we will have more than sufficient ferries for the ever-growing population of Parramatta, and there is further work that government has asked to look at in terms of electrification and other forms of support for the growing demand of ferries. Over 60,000 people make journeys on ferries during the busiest times.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Yes, so there are concerns there about that growing population. Following on from my colleague's questions about ferry wharfs, is the Government committed to delivery of the Rhodes ferry wharf?

HOWARD COLLINS: Again, I know most about ferry wharfs but I'd need to take that on notice. I may come back to you on that in terms of Rhodes and its wharf.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: In doing that, Mr Collins, could you also indicate what the intended opening date is for that Rhodes ferry wharf?

HOWARD COLLINS: I'll certainly come back to you on that.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: In relation to the funding, why was the funding put aside in the former budgets for the delivery of the Rhodes ferry wharf but in the last two budgets—that's 2023-24 and 2024-25—Rhodes ferry wharf was removed as a line item?

HOWARD COLLINS: I have now found the page that I want to refer to. Obviously, there was an investigation into the status of both Birkenhead Point and Rhodes Wharf—no plans to start the investigations for a wharf at this location, given other priorities.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: At Rhodes?

HOWARD COLLINS: Yes, at Rhodes. We're looking at Elliott Street wharf—both a low-budget and low-cost exercise to reinstate that wharf at Elliott Street—and a more long-term solution which would be served by the F10 route. We certainly believe that that will include some additional opportunities for services. The Rhodes precinct was rezoned in 2021 following finalisation of the Rhodes Place Strategy. Obviously, we're looking at whether there are new proposals with interchange at Leeds Street, Rhodes, as part of that place strategy.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: In relation to the F3 Parramatta River route, the Committee has given us an indication that, on weekends, eastbound ferries are often full at the first few stops on the F3 route—Parramatta and Sydney Olympic Park. Are there plans to start ferries further along the Parramatta River at Cabarita or at Abbotsford?

HOWARD COLLINS: We often supplement during the busy summer periods—as that route is very popular, as you describe—with additional ferries. Now we are growing and building the new fleet which has much more reliability than the old services. We are looking at what the short-term summer operational plan will be, as we know that's in high demand, and also looking further with the mid-term ferry fleet and service strategy to ensure that, whilst we see ferry usage grow, that we are particularly focused on the Western Sydney and inner-harbour services.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Sure. You can appreciate—and you've acknowledged, thank you—that it's difficult when you get down there with families and the kids are all excited and you're packed up and ready to go, and you can't get on a ferry there. It's a challenge.

HOWARD COLLINS: It is. Obviously, as Olympic Park becomes much more of a transport hub, we've got to make sure that the river services match that transport-hub approach.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Thank you, much appreciated. In relation to buses and the 439 bus route, will Transport restore the 439 bus route?

HOWARD COLLINS: I will, again, take that on notice. As I mentioned earlier, buses were in intensive care, as I call it, when we arrived. Even if we wanted to add another route or another service, we didn't have enough bus drivers. To be honest, our fleet is ageing and is due to be fully replaced. We are now in a position where we've made those local changes, as the Secretary described, through the contracts. Local changes where we've reallocated services where some are underutilised and where demand has increased. My colleague Trudi Mares is working on the medium-term bus plan, along with government, which will look at these, including individual routes which have been identified as those which people obviously have concerns about.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: And you'll come back to us on that one, though?

HOWARD COLLINS: Yes.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Thank you. In relation to school bus services, do you have an update? Correspondence has been sent by Mrs Tina Ayyad, the member for Holsworthy, on 10 May. Do we have an update on that, Mr Murray, regarding the school bus services for students living in Sandy Point, Pleasure Point and Voyager Point?

HOWARD COLLINS: I'm aware of that particular inquiry. Again, I haven't got the actual details of the response. I'm certainly aware that that was raised as an issue, and it has come to my department.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Given it was May, and there are school students involved, is that something that you would be able to expedite, Mr Collins?

HOWARD COLLINS: I'd like to think I've got my fingertips on everything, but I would just need to check with my team and take it on notice. They may well have responded, and we may well have given an answer—whether that's the right answer that they want—but I'll certainly double-check and make sure we've got that one. That's Sandy Point, did you say?

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Yes. Sandy Point, Pleasure Point and Voyager Point in Mrs Ayyad's correspondence of 10 May 2024.

HOWARD COLLINS: Let me check and see whether we can get back to you.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: In relation to Greater Sydney Bus Contract 10—GSBC10—how many complaints have been made about operator U-Go Mobility between 1 January 2024 and 30 June 2024?

HOWARD COLLINS: The actual number I will be able to provide. I would say U-Go Mobility has been a really interesting and good story. When we first started that contract it was in a really bad place. Due to new management coming in from Singapore and a whole new series of executives being appointed, that organisation and the services serving the shire and south-west Sydney have improved dramatically. The numbers of complaints have fallen significantly in the last few months as services—

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Just to those, then—these are really specific and I'm happy for you to take them on notice. How many—

HOWARD COLLINS: We will have the details of those complaints and compliments.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: I might just give you four, then. That one is the complaints between the first six months of this year, January to June. It would be helpful if we could have complaints made between July and December.

HOWARD COLLINS: Last year?

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Yes, last year. That's right—so last year's six months. If that has improved then that's terrific. In relation to cancelled services, how many cancelled services were there between January to June this year, and also by U-Go in July to December last year. That would be helpful if you are able to provide those.

HOWARD COLLINS: Yes. Whatever information we can provide, certainly when it comes to customer complaints and services cancelled, we'll look to provide as much information as possible.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Thank you, Mr Collins. In relation to the Bus Industry Taskforce reports and recommendations—I'm sorry, there are extensive recommendations. These are pretty quick fire, so as best as you're able given they are extensive. In the first report, there was the recommendation:

> **1.1:** adopt a more collaborative approach in the way it manages bus services, by actively consulting with bus operators, the workforce and unions. This should include regular (e.g. quarterly) performance meetings with all operators in relevant geographic areas.

Mr Murray, has Transport for NSW established regular performance meetings with bus operators?

JOSH MURRAY: Yes. We are in constant discussion with the operators. They are often visited by the Coordinator General and his team.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Sorry, in relation to regular performance meetings with them.

JOSH MURRAY: Yes, that does occur.

HOWARD COLLINS: My contracts team meet with each of the regions on a very regular basis. In addition to that, we've held executive meetings directly with myself and my colleague, Liz Ward. Also, we've

held a number of forums where we've shared information, for example, on driver recruitment, vehicle maintenance and spares, audit and safety. We've probably been more extensively communicating with our contract suppliers than we have for many years.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: How are those meetings structured and documented?

HOWARD COLLINS: Some of them, like forums, are informal, but in the contract meetings we obviously record and ensure that records are kept. These are, obviously, about commercial contracts, so they are confidential and wouldn't be widely circulated for other purposes.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: What clear and documented steps have been taken to increase the transparency of performance information to the public?

HOWARD COLLINS: We are working, and recently examined the modification of the public reported performance measures. We do believe it is important to have measures which are clearly understandable from a bus-user point of view. We are going through that process, and I believe the first set of that data will be published shortly.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Are you able to indicate—or take on notice if you prefer—what steps have been taken so far to increase the transparency?

HOWARD COLLINS: We've been through a whole series of discussions with both the bus operators and also community to understand what is best published, because as we know, in the past, operators sometimes can publish data which is only understood by those people who publish it. We've focused on some of the simple measures of measuring, for example, on time running or cancellations—the details of which will obviously be shared in the near future as we publish these new sets of performance measures.

JOSH MURRAY: Ms Ward, on our website we have the data and analytics portal. The regional and metropolitan bus service contracts data is represented on those pages. That, as Mr Collins said, will be added to as we go. As we put new datasets on, they are on that webpage.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Thank you, that's helpful. Also in the first report was the recommendation:

> **1.3:** develop a framework to undertake meaningful and comprehensive consultation with communities and stakeholders before network and significant service changes are implemented, both when proposed by a bus operator and by Transport for NSW.

Regarding the upcoming timetable change scheduled for later this year, where can we find the comprehensive consultation with communities and stakeholders as recommended by the report?

HOWARD COLLINS: For bus service changes? You were suggesting there is a timetable change?

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: I understand that there is an upcoming timetable change, so I'm wanting to understand where we can find information in relation to that.

HOWARD COLLINS: Obviously we have a whole series of timetable changes that I described earlier. Some of those are minor changes to routes that we are modifying within the contract. We have made some changes and consulted with community on those in the north-west of Sydney, connected with the metro opening, and even on the North Shore.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Just to be specific on that, where can we find that information?

HOWARD COLLINS: Certainly we can provide the information. One other area which I think is very regularly available is the level of community consultation we have been involved in with the temporary transport plan for the Bankstown line, where a whole series of community drop-ins, information to user groups and also local councils has been shared. We've obviously been ensuring that as many people understand those changes as possible.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: So you will provide that. Also in the first report:

> Recommendation 2: That a long-term growth funding program be established to improve bus services to underserved communities around the state.

We have talked about that earlier.

HOWARD COLLINS: We have.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: We're just trying to identify the priority areas that have been identified in that.

HOWARD COLLINS: That will be the work done by Ms Mares on the medium-term bus plan as described earlier. We will be working with the planning parts of Transport and obviously government to understand those priorities. It is a big task because it will cover a number of areas—particularly, as mentioned earlier, the areas of growth or where bus services have been underutilised or provided in the past.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Mr Collins, this first report has been available for over 12 months. It sounds like it's still being developed. It's been there and available. Are you saying it's still being developed?

HOWARD COLLINS: I think the important thing to understand is obviously our initial focus—and our initial focus for the taskforce recommendations—was actually on safety, particularly following the terrible tragedy of Greta. We've worked through that.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: I think it was said that it was outside the terms.

HOWARD COLLINS: The other issue was that—as I said earlier—with the bus provision in intensive care, changing things or leaping into a growth-funding strategy would probably not have been advisable considering we were firefighting to deal with a significant lack of bus drivers and vehicles. We are now, as the Secretary has said, focusing on developing that medium-term plan, which will look at things like growth buses and obviously the Government's assurance on funding.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Does Transport for NSW support seatbelt installation for school buses?

HOWARD COLLINS: Absolutely. Significant work has been done in the installation of school buses, particular for those vehicles which needed modification.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Is that for all school buses?

HOWARD COLLINS: It is for all school buses which are required to provide them. There are a few exceptions when urban buses are used for school runs, of which there are a few—that's the two-door or the local buses—but school-specific buses and coaches are now all fitted with seatbelts.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Has the new division or unit focused on bus, ferry and light rail services being created within Transport for NSW, Mr Murray?

JOSH MURRAY: I know they are elements that are within the Coordinator General's remit.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: So Mr Collins is heading that.

JOSH MURRAY: That's correct.

HOWARD COLLINS: Yes, and we're in the design level of our branches, which includes a combined public transport and contracts team. We are in the middle of designing and also appointing people to those roles in the next few months.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Has a project team been established to focus on improving rural and regional contracting arrangements? That was recommendation 1 on the second report.

HOWARD COLLINS: We certainly now have a specific team which is working with particularly rural and regional contracts. There are over 600 of those contracts, and the team is working through that to ensure that we renew those contracts in a timely fashion.

The CHAIR: Mr Collins, or Mr Murray, this may be for you. I'm sure you're aware of the high rate of dog ownership in Sydney. In fact, we're one of the cities with the highest rates of dog ownership in the world. You would be very well aware of the campaign to get pets onto public transport. What work has the department done internally to firstly weigh up the pros and cons of, for example, allowing dogs on trains and, indeed, the new metro?

JOSH MURRAY: Thank you for the question. It is certainly an ongoing discussion point. We have had a number of different examinations of the pros and cons of some of these elements. Certainly the position that we've taken across the agency is that, while there are benefits of people being able to move more freely around the city, in particular with their pets, there are also capacity and just the operational requirements that occur if you have particularly larger animals coming onto the suburban and intercity rail network in particular, but also buses and trams, where there is more restricted room. We've looked at all these elements and we've consulted with the workforce as well. We're continuing to look at those policy items. No changes to the current policy have been proposed as yet.

The CHAIR: Have you looked at this across all modes—buses and trains? Was it considered in the new metro at all, Mr Regan?

PETER REGAN: On the metro, we rely on the policy positions of Transport for NSW for what is allowed on the metro so it's a consistent approach to what's applied across heavy rail and light rail.

JOSH MURRAY: Metro throws up its own particular considerations because, by its design, it is more of a standing service. We've already seen at-capacity running coming through the north-west, through Epping, through Chatswood, into the city, and headed the other way, even on weekends. So injecting animals to that does propose its own set of concerns that may not be the case on, say, a Sydney ferry.

The CHAIR: Would it be fair to say that Transport for NSW is providing advice on the options to the Minister?

JOSH MURRAY: Yes, we continue to have an open discussion with the Minister and her team around these elements. There are obviously a number of representations that come through the Minister's office and come to Transport directly. We're continuing to look at that. One of the other elements that we have had some response to is the companion animals. There are some concerns from those groups that having pets on transport as well as companion working animals can cause distraction or interaction that's not very helpful when people who require those animals for their own assistance are onboard.

The CHAIR: Those animals are extremely well trained to travel anywhere and be around other animals. That's the training they receive. Big crowds—in terms of that being a reason, I think the animals themselves are trained, aren't they?

JOSH MURRAY: They are. I'm not sure it's the companion animal that would be the concern but, if you had multiple animals on a crowded metro carriage travelling under the harbour, we do need to have a consideration of what that scenario would be like for other passengers, but also those companion animals. I just flag it as a concern that's been raised.

The CHAIR: I wanted to just go back to a few of the different issues with some of the services. I have been contacted by a member of the Lane Cove community who is talking about the changes to the bus services as a result of the metro. The changes to the buses in North Sydney require commuters travelling to the CBD to change from a bus to the metro. Those bus services are the 115, the 252 and the 261, which now terminate at North Sydney. Constituents have reached out to me with concerns about changing from the bus to the train and mobility issues. My question about this is: What did the Government do to consult with disability advocacy groups about these changes and what is being done on the ground to assist those people who may be finding this quite inconvenient in terms of mobility?

JOSH MURRAY: Thank you for the question. Both the Coordinator General and I have spoken to a number of groups in regard to these elements. Overwhelmingly the transition for the Gore Hill corridor and the M2 corridor to the new bus services has gone very well. We are really grateful for the way the community had a look at the messages, engaged with communication that went through in those areas and overwhelmingly made the switch to the new bus routes. But we're also aware that any change of that scale also results in people who would have preferred it to stay the way it was. We do invite those people to make contact. We are assessing the ongoing bedding-in of those bus services. In the north we have also been providing augmented services during the first two weeks of metro running to make sure that there were supplementary services in those particular corridors that you mentioned so that no-one was left behind or was hoping to use a bus all the way through. They would still have some of those services.

The CHAIR: Did you communicate and consult with disability advocacy groups, for example, about what was needed to ensure that that transition was as smooth as possible at the different places where their service was going to experience disruption?

JOSH MURRAY: I'd have to take on notice exactly the forums that were used for the disability groups, but certainly we had a comprehensive engagement plan around the bus transitions that were rolled out over significant months to be ready for metro.

The CHAIR: That would be good if you could take that on notice, please. I've asked this question at previous budget estimates. It's around the lack of wheelchair accessible taxis in New South Wales. There's been a 23 per cent drop between March 2023 and March 2024. Of the more than 6½ thousand taxi licences in New South Wales only 754 are wheelchair accessible. That completely drops when you get to regional areas. The statistics are horrendous. Of course they're not just statistics. The Physical Disability Council undertook a survey. It is really impacting people by increasing isolation. They can't get around. Particularly in regional areas, people are waiting two hours, seven hours and sometimes 12 hours or are just unable to get to places. Has the number of wheelchair accessible taxis increased? I think that was maybe committed to or you said you were working on it last time. I am just wondering what the update is with this issue.

JOSH MURRAY: I might ask Mr Wing to comment, not from a policy perspective but due to his engagement with multiple sectors of the industry and also we have held a number of forums in particular in regional New South Wales. Sadly, I think the answer to the main point of your question—has the number gone up—is no, it hasn't.

ANTHONY WING: No. You're right. The numbers have not been going up. Unfortunately, the rest of the industry is increasing and we have some more ordinary taxis on the road in recent times as well. We are not seeing more wheelchair accessible taxis on the road. They've continued to drop since the pandemic, essentially, in numbers.

The CHAIR: I'd appreciate those stats or numbers if you do have them, say, the most current, because I've got them up until March 2024, I think. But of course it is just that in terms of the time it takes for the drivers, they have requested much more financial assistance. The upper House passed a motion in May that I moved which called on the Government to recognise the need to increase the financial incentives for drivers. Is anything being done in this regard in terms of getting a policy recommendation to the Government about this? Let's phrase it another way: Have you been asked to look at what financial incentives are required?

JOSH MURRAY: That's part of the engagement that we've been doing with those communities. While slow, we are getting some different proposals potentially using the community transport sector, that we may be able to find some incentives working with those operators that may help new vehicles get back out onto the road, but it's very early days at this point.

The CHAIR: So nothing is happening in a concrete fashion to say this much money per trip for somebody that needs a wheelchair, for a wheelchair accessible taxi, will make it financially viable for that taxi driver to continue driving a wheelchair accessible taxi. Is that being done—an incentive for the taxi drivers themselves?

JOSH MURRAY: I'm not aware of anything that drills down to that level of detail.

The CHAIR: Mr Wing?

ANTHONY WING: I think there's work going on, but the issue is that there's actually a number of different problems. One is the cost to the driver of running the service, and that's what you're getting at here. There's also very high cost to the operator of the vehicle in the cost of modifying the vehicle and of getting one in the first place. So it wouldn't be a simple change—one subsidy. It would have to be looking at a whole range of them.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: Mr Collins, the 10-year dredging strategy, is that a funded policy, or is it just going to be done through business as usual?

HOWARD COLLINS: The strategy—that is, getting people together and getting that strategy together—is funded. Part of that second part of the $16 million that I talked about—I think $7.5 million—the internal funding for staffing and supporting that strategy being developed is there.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: How much of that $7.5 million—

HOWARD COLLINS: I don't know the details. It won't be significant. It's just making sure we've got funding to allocate members of staff to and dedicate time to and maybe getting some additional specialist resource in. But obviously, following that strategy, that will be one of the documents which will be shared with the Minister to look at then what are the opportunities for funding that longer term dredging program and how we work with councils, particularly on those grants, to ensure that those programs are prioritised.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: That's fine. I just wanted to know about the funding part. and you've covered that.

HOWARD COLLINS: Okay.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: Can I just go to the various advisory groups?

HOWARD COLLINS: There's lots of them, isn't there, Mr Banasiak?

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: There is. The Commercial Vessels Advisory Group doesn't seem to have met since August 2020, or at least the publicised minutes reflect that. I am wondering if you can give us an update on that.

HOWARD COLLINS: On the Commercial Vessels Advisory Group?

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: It seemingly hasn't met since August 2020.

HOWARD COLLINS: Okay. I will come back to you and confirm when they last met.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: The Regional Boating Advisory Group doesn't seem to have met at all. There's a terms of reference on your website from 2016, but no documentation as to what they've done, or even whether they still exist or not, so an update on that would be good.

HOWARD COLLINS: Sure.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: The Recreational Vessel Advisory Group seemingly is only meeting once a year. Is that the case? There are minutes from March of this year and November the previous year.

HOWARD COLLINS: I believe they have. As you say, their last meeting may well be in March. I'll just double-check that, but they have actually met.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: That would be good. The Maritime Advisory Council, which we spoke about before, why is there only the most current minutes of 10 April this year? Why hasn't there been the previous iterations published on the website? Seemingly it's only from the new council, not the old council. I'd be interested to see what decisions were being made by that council prior to then.

HOWARD COLLINS: I don't know the reason. Again, Mr Banasiak, I'll get some information on why that wasn't published, or whether it needs to be.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: That's fine. Can I have an update? In the November 2023 estimates I asked around some staffing figures of Maritime and you indicated that there were 22 positions vacant within Maritime. I'm just wondering whether you could update us as to whether those positions have been filled. If there are still vacancies, where exactly in Maritime do those vacancies sit?

HOWARD COLLINS: On a regular basis—in fact, on a weekly basis—I go through a vacancy request from each of the executive directors. Only last week I think we approved—obviously there is a turnover, particularly of boating safety officers—a number of vacancies being filled. Also, I've seen today a particular job role being advertised externally and internally for Batemans Bay, for example. We are in a better position than we were when we last spoke, with more officers being present and recruited. I can give you the total number, I'm sure, on notice, but I assure you that we have been focusing on these critical frontline roles, the ones that we want to keep filled. Quite a few of those boating officers have gained promotion, and obviously we've started another Aboriginal cadet recruitment program for this area as well.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: I think that probably covers off my Maritime stuff for the moment. Can I just go to you, Mr Wing? I'm just interested in the fines and infringement notices that have been issued within Point to Point since deregulation. I'm just wondering whether you can provide a breakdown since the deregulation occurred, how many infringement notices in total have been issued, maybe a breakdown of what they are for and, if possible, a breakdown by provider—Uber, Lyft; and the different taxi service providers, GM and 13cabs et cetera—if you have that data available at all.

ANTHONY WING: I could give you a high-level number. I think I'd have to take—

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: I'm happy for you to take a lot of that detail on notice. I appreciate you might not have that to hand.

ANTHONY WING: This is at a high level. We've issued, in the last financial year—

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: I'm interested going back from 2022. I want to see how it's tracking since the deregulation in terms of the number of fines.

ANTHONY WING: Full deregulation of the taxi industry—numbers commenced in August last year—

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: Let's do it from August last year, if possible?

ANTHONY WING: Okay, I'll take a full breakdown in notice. We've issued 1,845 infringement notices or penalty notices in the last financial year, so that's most of that period. More will have gone to rideshare companies because there are more rideshare drivers on the roads than taxis. The number one infringement notice we hand out for rideshare drivers not having a retro-reflective sign in the back of their vehicle. The second highest in numbers these days is for taxi drivers who have overcharged. Police also hand out some infringement notices as well. They tend to hand them out when they stop people at testing stations, for example. I'll give you a breakdown which goes back to that particular date.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: I'll appreciate that breakdown. Just on the issue of taxi drivers overcharging, obviously it's received a bit of publicity of late where taxi drivers are manually overriding the rates

system and obviously not notifying passengers that they've switched them on to a weekend night rate when it's in the middle of the day, or anything like that. What is your team doing to crack down on that practice?

ANTHONY WING: We're approaching this from a couple of different directions. We are working with the taxi companies as well and with people such as the Taxi Council. Firstly, I have my own people out doing both in uniform at major events and at the airport and so on, but also doing covert operations—that is, plain-clothes operations. We have handed out, since November 2022, 800 fines to drivers. That fine is now $1,000—that fine was put up last year by the Government—so there's quite a hefty fine. In addition, we've also worked with the companies because the companies have to take some responsibility for the activities of their drivers and they need to properly investigate. We've set up a Taxi Fare Hotline so that people who experience this can report it and get the company to investigate it and take appropriate action. In that time, about 2,000 refunds have been issued to passengers. So passengers have a way, therefore, to get some redress. That Taxi Fare Hotline is advertised by stickers, which were made mandatory by the Government last year to go on every taxi.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: Is the Government investigating, or is your team investigating, whether fines need to be introduced for companies whose drivers seem to be repeat offenders? You have gone the softly route with them. You've given them a hotline; there's been refunds issued. There might be a company that keeps having this issue with their drivers and it doesn't seem to be getting better. Are you looking at investigating fines that could be issued on the companies?

ANTHONY WING: We are looking at different mechanisms for dealing with that. If there are companies that simply don't do enough about drivers then, yes, we are looking at different options. That may require changes to the law so we have to look at that.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: I imagine that sort of stuff would.

JOSH MURRAY: Mr Banasiak, if you've got a remaining moment, I could respond on the Eden attenuator breakdown, if you wanted those figures. That was a collaborative effort from across government that fed into the $38 million that was required for that project—$10 million from Planning and $15.8 million from the Waterways Fund, $4½ million from the con fund, $8 million from Transport for NSW, which we reprioritised. The project was delivered $2 million under budget. Use of that remaining $2 million is yet to be reprioritised.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: No worries. I suggest it go back to the Waterways Fund.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Picking up to the taxi point raised by my colleagues, and recognising that most taxi drivers are very good people working really hard and working long shifts to provide for their families, there are a number of rogue drivers out there overcharging. There's aggressive behaviour, particularly for tourists in our beautiful city driving across the gateway and getting into taxis being overcharged. Also I personally have experienced at night aggressive drivers. We've heard publicly stories of women not wanting to disagree with drivers, given personal safety issues—and also, of course, the elderly. One of the proposals that I put up was the QR code. It's a quick and easy solution, not very impactful on the budget and something that people could easily understand—get in and scan the QR code. Has there been any progress or thought about that as an option?

ANTHONY WING: Firstly, thank you, Ms Ward, for making the point that the majority of drivers do the right thing—and I know you've said that in public as well. It is important that most of our drivers are working hard; it's not an easy job. Yes, there are a number of possible options for addressing some of these things. We obviously have a QR code on every Taxi Fare Hotline sticker already and, in fact, if people feel uncomfortable about confronting the driver, I'd suggest they just report it rather than confront the driver.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: I'll get to that.

ANTHONY WING: There are a lot of possible technical solutions and companies have been trialling some of them. There have been companies trialling using QR codes and then turning that into a booking, using payments systems through that. They haven't had much success to date because of customer resistance but I certainly think any technology solution that works is something that we would look at.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Something you'd be open to looking at or considering?

ANTHONY WING: Absolutely.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: I think people are pretty used to using QR codes around the world. Particularly during COVID, we saw the success of Service NSW. The international language is the QR code.

ANTHONY WING: Yes, my inspectors were out there every day making sure that every taxi had one.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Fantastic. Can I get to that, though? Not to talk about all the problems but the stickers don't appear to be—it won't surprise you to find that I do check taxis for the stickers but they don't always appear in taxis. What steps are you taking to ensure that those stickers are there, in the absence of QR codes and other things so that people can avail themselves of those stickers?

ANTHONY WING: We have printed about 50,000 stickers. We made them available for free to all companies to ensure they put them inside their vehicles. They obviously then have to give them to the operator to get the operator to put them inside their vehicle. My inspectors and my authorised officers will look at, every time they pull over a vehicle—and they do 8,000 or so compliance checks every year on ride share and taxi vehicles. Every time they pull one over, they will look at it and, if they see that the sticker is not there, they'll give a direction to the company to fix it.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Can the public report those if they can't find the stickers?

ANTHONY WING: Absolutely, please do. The public could certainly report. But if they're in a taxi that doesn't actually have the sticker and, therefore, they don't know how to report, the—

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: What's the thinking, Mr Wing, behind the smaller ID? There used to be the large ID papers or the sticker up the top. They're now much smaller and difficult to read, if you're old like me and too vain to wear glasses. Some of those things were very useful to try to identify the driver, even if you could take a screenshot and deal with that once you'd exited the taxi. What's the thinking behind the smaller ones, which are quite difficult to read?

ANTHONY WING: Actually, the issue that's coming up really, now, is that people tend to sit in the back seat, so they find it quite hard to read what is in the front seat.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: It's safer.

ANTHONY WING: Yes. In fact, during the pandemic, we advised everyone to sit in the back seat, so that's become far more common now. But what we do say is, if you capture the licence plate number, we can work out which taxi company it was and they can work out which driver it was.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Just on that, I'm sure you deal with many reports and do so for the majority of people, but a number have come to me to say that no action has been taken when they have sent through a complaint. Particularly, one was sent in relation to a company that was responsible for overcharging, but the response from you was that they were no longer authorised with the NSW Point to Point Commission and providing passenger services. You were therefore unable to facilitate an outcome for the complaint. That's Ahuja and Daughters Pty Ltd, trading as Premier Alpha Cabs. That company has shut down and set up a new one, and left this person with no alternative.

ANTHONY WING: They may have set up a new one. We actually closed them down for another reason.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: The person who has experienced that overcharging has been told by the Point to Point Commission, "There's nothing you can do".

ANTHONY WING: Yes, so all of this is part of an arrangement that we have with the taxi industry. We are giving them our expectation that they will address the issue. They have issued about 2,000 refunds so far, to date, but that doesn't mean that in every case there will have been a refund.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Is this one that you might take on notice, if I can send the details through, so that they could perhaps have a response about whether there are any opportunities for the taxi industry to deal with this particular one?

ANTHONY WING: I'm happy to take that on notice, yes.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: In relation to express train services from Riverwood, how is the Government addressing the increased demand for faster train services and express services along the T4 airport line?

JOSH MURRAY: Mr Longland, would you be able to take that one?

MATT LONGLAND: There are a series of timetable changes planned over a number of years ahead of us. We're looking at, rather than doing one big change across every line, managing that in a way that potentially manages local issues and impacts and improvements one at a time. Riverwood is a station on the T8 line, so that's a station that attracts services out of the Revesby, but also from Campbelltown and Macarthur. I think it was a Government commitment to look at opportunities for changes to the stopping pattern on that part of the line, and also I think there was another commitment in the inner west and the western suburbs to look at Granville, from

memory, and Auburn and the like. Those are part of the work that we're doing. We're working not only in Sydney Trains but also into Transport, in Ms Mares' team, looking at the work that's happening across multi-modal public transport planning.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Do the plans to address this demand include introducing express services to stations that don't currently benefit from them?

MATT LONGLAND: I think that's one of the options that we're looking at. As you'd appreciate, changes to stopping patterns and particular stations having express services do impact other lines. It's quite a complex network that we manage. I think the commitment on the T8 but also on the T1 line in the west are two of the areas that we're looking at in collaboration with Transport.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Is the Government still considering increasing the availability of express services from Riverwood during peak hours?

MATT LONGLAND: I think that's one of the options that we're looking at at the moment.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: So it is one of the options—because it was promoted as a commitment from the Labor candidate for Oatley under a future Minns government. That was an election commitment by that candidate.

MATT LONGLAND: Yes, so when I say we're looking at it as one of the options, there were a number of other election commitments relating to a review of timetables. That's included in the scope of the work we're doing.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: When will you have information about that scope of work? How long do you anticipate that will take?

MATT LONGLAND: That work is underway, so I guess we'd need to look at the detailed implementation planning. It's not something that we would be looking to deliver this year.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Next year?

MATT LONGLAND: I couldn't speculate, and I'm not sure whether Ms Mares has got anything further to add about the multi-modal planning.

TRUDI MARES: Yes, we're still working through the following year's rail timetable specifications, which we'll then hand over to Sydney Trains, so Mr Longland's answer is correct.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Are you able to provide a time frame for when the community might see additional express train services implemented at Riverwood station? You've said it's when you can, next year.

TRUDI MARES: Yes, same response.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: What funding and staff resources have been allocated to undertake investigations into a revised timetable with greater express services to stations like Riverwood?

TRUDI MARES: We have dedicated public transport planning teams that are undertaking that work, so dedicated resources.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Who's heading that up, Ms Mares? Is that you?

TRUDI MARES: That's in my team, yes.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: What other steps, if any, is the Government taking to ensure that Riverwood station is adequately serviced as that local population continues to grow? I understand that other stations do also, but that's one that seems to be having some difficulties and anticipated population growth. Is there something that's being done there?

TRUDI MARES: We're looking at all of the population growth data and the passenger data that's available to us, working closely with the operating entity as well, and looking at all future years options to build on that simple and reliable timetable.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Sorry, what did you say the thinking is on timing?

TRUDI MARES: We plan them a year ahead, so we are working on the next three years now.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: When is an announcement or some information about that likely to come through?

TRUDI MARES: I'd have to look at the exact timing for you.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Are you able to take that on notice?

TRUDI MARES: Certainly.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Just an indication would be helpful for that community to understand if it's a year away or three years—what the timing is for that announcement.

TRUDI MARES: Yes, no problem.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Could I ask about the Opal card, Mr Murray. On the eTender website, a tender was placed for advertising space on Opal card readers. Is that the intention of the Government?

JOSH MURRAY: That was something that was looked at within the current Opal team, just drawing the distinction at the moment between Opal and Opal Next Gen. That is not something we anticipate proceeding with in regard to that. It was a view around could there be a commercial market for advertising through Opal machines, which are a declining asset across the network anyway.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: All right, but the tender is there. So is that not intended to continue, or is it an option being looked at?

JOSH MURRAY: No, the CFO and I discussed that at the time, and we didn't believe that it was strategically important to the plans. While we were certainly interested in any market feedback through that process, it wasn't a priority plan for the organisation.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Okay, so it's off the cards, so to speak?

JOSH MURRAY: That's right.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: When will the new Opal card system be rolled out? Previously, we were told that it would be a viable product by 2026. Is that still the case?

JOSH MURRAY: We went to market on 1 July for the Opal Next Gen tender. There are multiple elements of that tender, and responses are due in mid-October, is my understanding. Obviously, with that currently in the market with international vendors, I wouldn't want to discuss too much detail around either timing or specifics of what they will be responding with because that's caught up in the request for tenders.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: But it's still on track for that viable product by 2026?

JOSH MURRAY: Yes, that's correct.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: When does the current contract with the provider end?

JOSH MURRAY: The current contract was extended. The first two-year tranche was enacted, which takes it to 2026. We have an availability of a second two-year tranche to continue existing services, and then that will be factored into some of the responses that we get from this tender as to what timing we might need for any future transition et cetera.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: You anticipated my next question about the extension—so there's just that one extension?

JOSH MURRAY: That's correct.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Is it correct that the current provider owns the intellectual property to the readers that are currently used?

JOSH MURRAY: Again, I wouldn't want to speculate too much on the technical approaches because that is quite central to what we have asked tenderers to come back and discuss—is the way that the hardware as well as the software will roll out in future years.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Should the Government choose a new provider then? Is it the case that all readers will need to be replaced across buses, trains and ferry stations?

JOSH MURRAY: Again, difficult to say. However, what we have asked for as part of Opal Next Generation is the augmentation of readers to accept different forms of technology such as near-field transmissions and the like.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Sorry, near-field transmissions?

JOSH MURRAY: Yes, like being able to tap with other devices, such as you can with your mobile phones on all Opal services now.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: I think there are a few tenders currently open to the market on Opal. Are you able to give a breakdown or an understanding of those current tenders?

JOSH MURRAY: Yes. I'll give a basic overview, again, to not get into the detail of what people will be addressing. One is the Opal back-end technology, one is the bus implementation technology, and one is an assurance process that fits the technology and the systems together.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: The assurance process tender is separate to the back-end technology.

JOSH MURRAY: Yes, that is my understanding. At the same time we have also gone out with the next layer of our ghost buses funding of $91 million, which was included in the processes so that we have that tied into future ticketing approaches, making sure that they have interoperable technology.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Sorry, could you say that again? Interoperative?

JOSH MURRAY: Interoperable technology between what we do on our buses to attract patronage and the location of buses so that it will also form part of that overall review by the Opal Next Generation team.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: I'm just interested in what an account solution means for the Opal system. I'm genuinely asking. It's not my technical expertise. What does that mean?

JOSH MURRAY: The current technology operates where the card carries the data, so every time you tap on a bus or a train, it is transmitting the details back into that card. The future technologies and certainly elements that have been used in other jurisdictions is to move to account-based technology where, regardless of the hardware used to tap on, the account sits with the user, in the cloud, and can be modified online et cetera, which is something that we've never been able to do. Despite the current Opal being a leading product and being recognised around the world and certainly around Australia as being a very successful product, you cannot make any kinds of interchange or interference with that account once it's on the card. You can cancel the card but, in terms of ensuring that concessions are loaded onto those cards, for example, you can't do that.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: I have lost a number of Opal cards, as many of us, I'm sure, have done. It's interesting. What is the sort of timing you are thinking about in consideration of that as a proposition?

JOSH MURRAY: The tenders will be returned in mid-October.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: How long will you take after that for assessment?

JOSH MURRAY: I wouldn't want to speculate on that. It would depend on the detail. There is a program—I don't have it in front of me. But it will also depend on the number of bids and the complexity of the proposals that come in.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Can I go back to Sydney Trains, Mr Longland? These aren't tricky questions; I'm genuinely interested. When incidents occur on the Sydney Trains network, is there a rating system used to define them, or how do you classify them?

MATT LONGLAND: Yes, thank you for the question. We have an incident management framework with three levels: level one, level two and level three. Level one is a routine incident, level two is a critical incident, and level three is the top level—that's what we call a crisis event. That's something that would impact the whole of the network.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: I don't mean to be catastrophic, but what sort of examples are level one? Can you give an example what that might mean, like a branch fallen on a track or something?

MATT LONGLAND: Level one might be a train that's broken down and that might be blocking a part of the corridor. It might be affecting one line, and it might need intervention in terms of a fleet team member to reset the train and get the train moving again. It's creating local impacts on part of the network but not across multiple lines.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Then level two is how much more dramatic than that?

MATT LONGLAND: Unfortunately, an example of a level two incident might be a self-harm event or something that involves Emergency Services that is a prolonged incident that might take a number of hours. Often, in those sorts of incidents, we're under the direction of Emergency Services. Those sorts of events are more unpredictable. We tend to have more staff involved, and the planning and the communications around level two are much more significant.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: How many level one incidents occur each year?

MATT LONGLAND: I would have to get the details. I am happy to provide them because, obviously, the team at our operations centre do a fantastic job.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Yes, they do.

MATT LONGLAND: Clearly, we deal with infrastructure incidents and fleet incidents. We deal with a lot of security incidents, unfortunately. We deal with medical incidents and the like. Level ones tend to occur quite regularly. On any given weekday we would have a number of level one events where the team at the ROC are working with local teams to manage incidents locally and minimise the impact for passengers. Those sort of events would be fairly frequent.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: In terms of train reliability, it is still below target. I think my colleague asked about that, significantly. Despite the rail improvement plan, it is still down there. Is that why the reliability is down?

MATT LONGLAND: Thank you for the question. Rail reliability—certainly for the suburban network, we measure two measures for reliability. One is 24/7—that's every train on every day across the network; and we manage peak reliability. They're the numbers that we track. They both have a target of 92 per cent of services arriving within five minutes of their timetable time. The 24/7 punctuality for the last financial year was 91.1 per cent, so it didn't quite achieve the 92 per cent target. Peak reliability finished the year at 88.8 per cent, which was a 3.7 per cent improvement from the year prior. So it is an improvement but, certainly, that is the target for us. Unfortunately, a number of particularly security and medical incidents tends to occur in peak periods. That's our focus at the moment—to get the peak running more reliably.

Specifically on the Rail Repair Plan, the good news is that the incidents involving infrastructure have seen a significant improvement. On the numbers that we have recorded, the customer delays from infrastructure incidents across the suburban network have reduced by 18 per cent. That is a really positive sign and early trend off the back of the investment that we put into the Rail Repair Plan. But there are a number of other things we are working on. Fleet is one, but also navigating those sorts of incidents that occur, like security and medical incidents.

The CHAIR: Ms Taylor, I think this is one for you. How is it going at Transport for NSW in terms of reducing the senior executive level positions?

TRACEY TAYLOR: Thanks for the question. Over the course of the past two financial years, being FY 2022-23 and then year-to-date for this financial year, we have seen 112 TSSEs leave the department. We have a program over the course of the next couple of years, until June 2026, to deliver on the cap that we have been asked to deliver on. We are progressing well against that target at this point.

The CHAIR: I think last time I asked this there was a figure of 1,357 senior executives. Is that the correct number that you're working at reducing by 15 per cent?

TRACEY TAYLOR: The baseline for our reduction target was actually changed, and it was changed to the June 2023 *State of the Public Sector Report* baseline, which was actually 1,315.

The CHAIR: Why was it changed?

TRACEY TAYLOR: It was a submission by government to rebaseline the reduction of the 15 per cent overall across the sector. So all of the sector baseline changed.

The CHAIR: You said 112. How many more senior executives do you need to reduce it by then to reach that 15 per cent? I'm not a maths freak.

JOSH MURRAY: We've announced that we're aiming to take 300 executive roles out of that cohort.

The CHAIR: How many did you say?

JOSH MURRAY: Three hundred, essentially over a three-year time frame.

The CHAIR: So that's until June 2026. Just to be clear, what was the date of the announcement of the first baseline? Do you have that to hand, when the Government made that announcement about reducing senior executive levels?

JOSH MURRAY: There was an election commitment.

The CHAIR: It was an election commitment. Then who made the decision to change that baseline?

JOSH MURRAY: My understanding was that the initial numbers were prepared on mid-2022. Because they were commitments made during the election campaigns, the numbers were using mid-2022 public service

figures. As the Government then, as Ms Taylor said, centralised that expectation across all departments, the decision was made to use last year's state of the public sector official report by the Public Service Commission.

The CHAIR: When the agreement was made to increase salaries within the public sector by 2.5 per cent, did that apply across the board? For example, that band 1 level that we had a conversation about, Mr Murray, of just over $200,000, did that increase by a certain percentage?

JOSH MURRAY: No. None of those senior executives, bands 1, 2, 3 or 4, have received any pay uplift based on, again, an election commitment.

The CHAIR: Thank you. I want to turn to particular ferry services. Mr Collins, I understand that, before being elected, the Government committed to extending the F10 Glebe ferry service to include stops at Pyrmont and Annandale, and to including that service on the Opal fare network. Has any of this been looked into by the department?

HOWARD COLLINS: Yes, we've been working through, obviously, the F10 Black Wattle Bay service. It is not currently on Opal, as people know. The patronage levels vary from day to day—150 to 200—and we've been asked by the Government, as an election commitment, to consider those new stops at Rozelle Bay, Chapman Road in north Annandale, and at Pirrama wharf, which is the Elizabeth Macarthur public pontoon in Pyrmont. We're obviously working through that now, in terms of commitments, and also looking at reopening the existing Elliott Street wharf which was closed at west Balmain. We are doing some work on the need for vessels, because one of the difficulties is we only have one of those small ferries available to us. Therefore we are looking at whether we can reappropriate other ferries and make sure the wharves are suitable. That work is ongoing and we're working with the Government on that proposal.

The CHAIR: You just mentioned the possibility of an additional ferry for the service.

HOWARD COLLINS: Or reutilising the current fleet as we remove vessels which are life expired and bring in new vessels. We're examining whether there could be an alternative of using the Inner Harbour services, for example, some of RiverCat or the First Fleet operation, which are relatively small vessels. It is quite a logistical challenge, but we have been working with the Government and also with our specialists in understanding what those options can be. That is being discussed and shared with the Government now.

The CHAIR: That is good to know. Have you been asked to provide time frames? Or is it early days in terms of the options at this point?

HOWARD COLLINS: It is. As was mentioned earlier, there are significant demands for the F3 service as we are seeing the growth of ferry utilisation continue. It's not only the metro that sees a rapid growth of utilisation. We only have 40 vessels available at the moment; more are coming onboard. We will be giving the Government a view of what those time scales are in due course, but it is too early for me to give you those in detail. I would be speculating.

The CHAIR: With the opening of the metro, as well as, of course, the planning for the Western Sydney airport metro, and the Western Sydney airport being 24 hours, has there been consideration of what a 24-hour transport system would look like, particularly, I suppose, with the metros but recognising that the metro has to connect with other modes of transport to really have a 24-hour transport system in place? Has there been any work undertaken with the new metro about extending that to 24 hours to begin with?

JOSH MURRAY: I might take this first, and it relates to Ms Mares' work as well. As we look at integrated transport planning across the city, we do have the ability to look at metro frequency. However, certainly the advice at this early stage is that the patronage in the nights is still at a very manageable basis around the current service levels. But we're only three weeks in, and we would have a look at that in regard to both the existing services and future services like Western Sydney airport, with their operating model, and which services would in fact be coming in during the night, if they were passenger related.

PETER REGAN: I would add, Chair, that we have certainly tested with the metro the ability to run a 24-hour service for special events. So, certainly, New Year's Eve, the Mardi Gras and the like, it can run throughout the night. As it's currently set up, the maintenance is done at night. There is a trade-off. If you extended the operating hours on, say, weekends further into the evenings, into the early mornings, there is then less time to do the maintenance, which may mean you have to run less services at another time. But it is something that we are looking at and, certainly, as the Secretary says, with the future metros—

The CHAIR: It would make sense, wouldn't it? You mentioned the Mardi Gras. If we are going to trial a 24-hour public transport system in Sydney, it would make sense to trial that over the Mardi Gras weekend, wouldn't it?

PETER REGAN: Certainly. That was one of the tests that was done prior to opening, actually running it all night, to be able to do that. Certainly New Year's Eve is the other one that obviously makes sense, and I think there are other special events where you would look at that. It's certainly an option, but the way the contract has been set up, to date, it's not something that is prescribed for on an every-weekend basis. But certainly it's something that can be looked at as we go forward. It's that trade-off of when they do the maintenance versus keeping the performance level very high. But certainly, for special event mode, it can do.

The CHAIR: Other international global cities manage to maintain their fleet while also having a 24-hour public transport service, though.

PETER REGAN: Absolutely, and I think it's something that can be looked at. It's just the reality is that the contract that has been put in place does not prescribe for that at this stage. That's not to say that couldn't be looked at. But certainly, at the moment, it does allow for special events.

The CHAIR: So the contract, you said, does not allow or provide for 24-hour public—

PETER REGAN: Not on a regular basis, because that's the maintenance window that's been provided. If you're not doing maintenance then, you'd have to do the maintenance at another point, so you'd have to look at a rebalancing.

The CHAIR: Just to be a bit clearer on that, what would need to change with the contract to get to a 24-hour public transport system? Is it just maintenance?

PETER REGAN: It's work on the system. There is obviously the staffing, the utilisation of the assets, but there is a lot of work that happens in the middle of the night when the trains aren't running that is what allows the trains to then continue to run at the high performance level they run. That's what would have to be looked at for future metros: what other options would need to be considered in that balancing. That's not to say it can't be done. You are right. There are cities around the world where it is done at certain points of the week or for certain events. My point about the contract is that's not the way the contract has been set up. But that's not to say that future metros couldn't look at that as part of the suite of options as to what is purchased.

The CHAIR: Other cities manage to do it and manage to maintain the fleet, clearly, with 24-hour transport services. The issue, just to be clear, is a contract issue?

PETER REGAN: To be fair, it's probably more than a contract issue. It's a trade-off issue around cost and patronage as well as being a contract issue. My comment is not that it can't be done. It's just not the way it was set up.

The CHAIR: It's also difficult to work out, isn't it, what the demand is when we've never tested that demand?

PETER REGAN: Absolutely.

The CHAIR: People who are living in Wollongong, for example, come to Sydney on a Friday night. We're talking beyond the metro now, obviously. It really stops people travelling into the city for a night out because of that transport situation.

PETER REGAN: For the first, I think, four weeks of operation of the metro, it's not running its full operating hours into the early evening. At the moment, it is still closing early while some of those additional works are being done behind the scenes. That will change over the next couple of weeks and it will then run a lot later, particularly on Thursday, Friday and Saturday nights. But, at the moment, it's not set up to run 24 hours. There are trade-offs in that, but you are right. It is something that is done in some places around the world, but we'd have to look more broadly across the network because the metro alone won't provide the full outcome. With the airport, as well, I think that does raise an interesting question. But, to the Secretary's point, "What does it connect to?" becomes the next question.

The CHAIR: Are you saying, Mr Murray, that the Western Sydney Airport won't receive passenger planes between the hours of—what are the hours? What will they be? I thought they were something like 2.00 a.m. to 5.00 a.m.?

JOSH MURRAY: It's a 24/7 airport.

The CHAIR: But the metro?

JOSH MURRAY: The metro for Western Sydney Airport? Do you have hours?

PETER REGAN: No, I'd have to take that on notice for you. It's in the contract that's been purchased for that, so I can give you that answer.

The CHAIR: Therefore, is it also in the contract or also being arranged that planes coming into Western Sydney Airport aren't passenger planes in the early hours of the morning when the metro isn't open? Or do they expect to disembark and there is no transport?

JOSH MURRAY: We don't yet have the advice. The Western Sydney Airport has only just secured—as was announced last week, Singapore Airlines will be taking up the first slots out of that airport. We don't yet have the operational timings or deployments or when they would seek to use some of those travel windows. We make the point here that we would have to take that into account with the future capacity of the metro line to the airport and whether there were any down times for passenger movements that we would want to take into that operation, rather than running empty metros, when that could be used. The other two elements to take into account is, even on the last two weekends, Sydney Metro and MTS have worked hard to change the regularity of the services because we had a family fun event on the first weekend where trains were running at four-minute headways. That was reduced last weekend, and we are continuing to monitor—when we think about future City2Surfs, the Sydney Marathon and the rugby league grand finals, where we have significant patronage impacts—what we could do with the operator and metro to cater to that multimodal shift.

The CHAIR: So, at this point, we don't know. But we do hope that by the time the passenger planes are coming into Western Sydney Airport there is, you would hope, 24-hour metro from Western Sydney Airport?

TRUDI MARES: I think we're looking at the full integrated plan for the airport. The airport—we are relying on their information on passenger services and freight and worker use. The bus services that we'll have set up initially will have 5.00 a.m. until 10.00 p.m. services running. As we get more information and we understand the demand from the airport, then we will look at adjusting the services in the future.

The CHAIR: Welcome to Sydney. You arrive at 3.00 a.m. You're however far out from the CBD and there's no transport to get to your hotel in the city.

TRUDI MARES: There are other options. There are on-demand buses. There are shuttles. There are different connections we can look at, but we will have the services in place for the first day of operations.

The CHAIR: That is excellent. Let's go back to the Central Coast train issue. Again, I've had quite a bit of communication about this. Why am I getting feedback and giving you feedback now about the fact that the communication is so poor to the commuters on that line? Firstly, there's the reliability, which seems to be one of the worst in terms of punctuality, frequency and what have you. But when issues arise, which is clearly very frequently, for essential workers—it's a big commuting area—why are they not being communicated with in an honest, forthright manner about what's happening and how late the trains will be so that they can make plans and get on with their day?

MATT LONGLAND: Thank you for the follow-up. I did review the information that you tabled. My organisation and my role has taken accountability for intercity service delivery since July this year, so we are still in a phase of mobilising the team and looking at how we can drive performance improvement.

The CHAIR: That was from where, Mr Longland? Remind me. When you're saying you're taking it from—

MATT LONGLAND: Intercity. The Blue Mountains, the South Coast, the Southern Highlands, and the Central Coast and Newcastle. I was in Newcastle last week and I heard that same feedback directly from passengers. The reliability of that line—it's 165 kilometres from Newcastle into central Sydney. It's one of our oldest alignments. It mixes with freight. It has some challenging curves and grades and sections of line that are difficult to maintain. I acknowledge that the reliability, particularly of Central Coast and Newcastle, is an outlier and it's an area that we need to continue on focus on. Specifically on passenger information, we have made a number of changes since July. We have implemented updates to passenger apps to include intercity services. When there is an incident that occurs, whether it's a broken down freight train or a level crossing or an incident that causes a delay, passengers will be able to access that information through their own apps and we'll make that information available.

The CHAIR: Can I urge you with that to look at the information that's being provided? You mentioned an app. Another form of communication is, for example, Twitter, which I will still call "Twitter". The NSW TrainLink North Twitter account, for example—when there is a delay, a constituent has said to me that she regularly contacts them on Twitter and they come back and say, "Operational reasons," every time. The app potentially says that as well. Clearly sometimes it is operational reasons but, again, there's another example. There was a recent power outage between Wondabyne and Woy Woy. Commuters were told to allow an extra half an hour for travel—that seems to be a standard thing—but trains were being sent down the line regardless, stopping at Hawkesbury, where there was no power, and they were sitting there for an hour. On that day, no replacement

buses were provided either. These are reasonably recent. They were happening, I think, over the last few months, or at least this year, when you took over, yes?

MATT LONGLAND: I think you're right. The level of detail we provide is important. We've provided electronic devices to all of our station staff. We're very lucky. We have local people on the ground. We have people on trains—guards and drivers—who can provide information as it happens. We want to make better use of technology.

The CHAIR: I'm not sure they're doing that, Mr Longland. I'm not sure they're doing that as much as they should be. If you look at the various threads—commuter threads, Reddit, what have you—where people jump on and communicate with each other, they're not getting the information they think they should get. Thank you. Ms Ward?

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: In relation to the tabled document, when do you anticipate you might be able to get those numbers back to us on those projects?

JOSH MURRAY: Again, I did check in at the last break. We don't have that as yet. There are dozens of moving projects in terms of that capture, so we'll have to take that on notice, as part of the usual process.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Last time you very helpfully were able to provide a number of those project forecasts on the day.

HOWARD COLLINS: I can very quickly sneak in and say that the member for Holsworthy's response was done by the Minister on 6 July. You asked that question on notice.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Thank you for that. I think there were some further questions there about what will happen, but that's fine. Just a quick one following up on my colleague's questions about the disability inclusion and wheelchair accessible taxis and just noting that, obviously, we have talked about the shortage of those taxis. The Physical Disability Council of NSW reported that only 30 per cent of official bookings are being completed, which is disappointing. We have talked about that. I just had a budget question. In the 2024-25 budget it seems there is no increase in that investment beyond a small increase to the subsidy scheme in response to, I think, inflation. Do you want to elaborate any further on what might be available or what might be the proposition there, other than sort of community consultation? We really want to understand what the view is about committing to increasing investment to getting more wheelchair accessible taxis on the road.

ANTHONY WING: This is the budget for the various subsidies. Transport for NSW runs those. Yes, I think that is correct. The Ministers have been conducting round tables to talk to people about what actually could be done, ideas et cetera, but I don't know if Transport has more information about that particular budget item.

JOSH MURRAY: No. Obviously the existing subsidies remain, which are 50 per cent of the fare up to $60 per trip and a $15 incentive for drivers to pick up wheelchair passengers. Obviously, our issue is fully expending that scheme of incentives by not having the ability to deploy that through enough taxis and drivers. To the Chair's earlier question, I can confirm that as of last week there were 635 wheelchair accessible taxis in New South Wales.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Mr Murray, have you reflected on whether you'll agree to a meeting with the community regarding the Sydney Harbour Bridge cycleway?

JOSH MURRAY: Again, I'll take that on notice. I know that the extensive consultation has been held for a long period of time.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: With respect, it's not a take on notice question. Will you meet with them or not?

JOSH MURRAY: There has been an extensive period of consultation. I am in correspondence with not just that group but a number, and I will consider that as we look to the next stage of the project.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: I'll take that as a no.

The CHAIR: Mr Regan, I want to come back to something that you said at the last budget estimates about one of the recommendations that came out of the Sydney Metro review, which was around the active transport-surface transport connections. That specifically referenced, I think, the Parramatta Road revitalisation strategy. But the review suggested that Sydney Metro work with Transport for NSW, and you said:

> … would look at enhancing in the future the surface transport connections—active transport, bus transport—to maximise the benefit to customers of being able to get to the metro and interchange. That work is ongoing with Transport for NSW.

Is there an update for that in terms of Sydney Metro West and Sydenham to Bankstown in terms of making sure that there is that connectivity with active transport users particularly?

PETER REGAN: Yes, absolutely. I might start with the city section. A number of the stations also have dedicated bike parking at the new stations that have been opened as well, which people can access on a secure basis through their Opal cards. That's part of the product on the new city section. For the south-west metro, as part of the works to be done alongside the conversion of the railway, there are considerable works being done around active and shared transport paths along the corridor. Some of that work has been prioritised to be available during the conversion period and we are working very closely with the Transport team around delivering along that corridor to enhance that opportunity for people to access the stations, with active transport. Metro west is a key part of the discussions I mentioned, and you asked the question before about the stations.

When we look at the stations there is, of course, the broader precinct around the station and how do you get to the station and what facilities are there at the station. That is part of the considerations around how the stations are set up, how they are connected to the precincts and the communities. I think it is an incredibly important opportunity that those stations are accessible to people through multiple modes and easy to access and walk, but also the bike connections, the active transport connections, the bus connections, the heavy rail connections and the light rail connections are all part of the mix that we work very closely with Transport on how they are put together. It's certainly a key part of the metro that while there's a metro line, it's not in isolation from the network. It really has to integrate and at virtually every station that's part of the design process.

The CHAIR: Ms Taylor, has Transport for NSW documented how many staff are returning to work under the work from home mandate? How much has that changed within the department in terms of statistics on that?

TRACEY TAYLOR: Good question. We are currently working through how we bring into line with the workplace circular. We are expecting to consult on our new policy settings by the end of this month. About 50 per cent of our workforce use the workplace. The other 50 per cent is actually front line. What we have looked at is about more than 50 per cent of the people who use workplaces are already regularly using the office. So we will be looking at how we increase our utilisation over our workplaces by introducing the new policy settings by the end of this month.

The CHAIR: Could you take on notice just to get more data on that—if you do have it—in terms of numbers of staff who are frontline staff and extra additional days in the office since the circular was released?

TRACEY TAYLOR: Certainly. I can absolutely come back to you on the numbers. As I said, we are working to bring Transport into line with the workplace circular, which means we do need to change our policy settings. And we do need to consult on that, which is by the end of this month. But I can take on notice the current utilisation and provide that back.

The CHAIR: Thank you, Ms Taylor. There are no Government questions. Thank you all very much, as usual, for the hard work you do and for the time you give up for us to ask you questions. I really appreciate it. The secretariat will be in touch about the answers to any questions you took on notice, as well as supplementary questions. I appreciate it. Thank you.

(The witnesses withdrew.)

The Committee proceeded to deliberate.