

Mr Murray Cowper; Ms Margaret Quirk; Mr Bill Johnston; Mr Chris Tallentire; Mr Frank Alban; Ms Adele Carles; Chairman; Ms Rita Saffioti; Ms Alannah MacTiernan; Mr Tony Simpson

Division 35: Commissioner of Main Roads, \$820 918 000 —

Mr P.B. Watson, Chairman.

Mr M.J. Cowper, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Transport.

Mr R.A. Waldox, Director General, Department of Transport.

Mr P. Ladner, Executive Director, Infrastructure Delivery.

Mr J. Marmion, Executive Director, Regional Services.

Mr R. Phillips, Director, Budget and Financial Planning.

Mr D. Snook, Executive Director, Road Network Services.

Mr P. Woronzow, Executive Director, Finance and Commercial Services.

[Witnesses introduced.]

The CHAIRMAN: The member for Girrawheen.

Ms M.M. QUIRK: I refer to the third dot point on page 425, which refers to the Towards Zero road safety strategy adopted by the government in 2009. In view of that strategy, what measures, if any, have been taken by Main Roads WA to review and upgrade acceptable road standards? Has a business case been developed to focus on better safety outcomes for Western Australian roads based on the safe system criteria? If so, what is intended to be done with that business case; and, if not, why not?

[4.00 pm]

Mr M.J. COWPER: The program will improve road safety on main roads and highways across the state. It is aimed at reducing the incidence of the consequence of single-vehicle run-offs at crashes at major intersections and other significant road safety risks on the network. The program includes a bridges component and is aimed at approving freight efficiency by upgrading structures and removing restrictions to freight on key heavy haulage routes on the WA road network. The bridges component will focus on removing —

Ms M.M. QUIRK: I did not refer to the Safer Roads and Bridges program; I referred to Towards Zero.

Mr M.J. COWPER: This is the Safer Roads and Bridges program.

Ms M.M. QUIRK: I am not talking about that. I am talking about the Towards Zero road safety strategy and acceptable road standards.

Mr M.J. COWPER: I wanted to provide further advice. If the member had allowed me to proceed, she would have the answer by now.

The bridges component will focus on removing restrictions on complete routes that are important to state development projects and restrictions on part of the routes supporting major state development.

An amount of \$35 million each year over four years, totalling \$140 million, is to be provided for the Safer Roads and Bridges program. The 2010–11 program is currently with the minister for approval and the details of the program will be released shortly.

Ms M.M. QUIRK: I compliment the parliamentary secretary on being prescient because I was going to ask about the Safer Roads and Bridges program. I did not ask that question, but as we are on it, I note that the bridges component has just been included. If this is directed at road safety as opposed to road maintenance, can the parliamentary secretary identify particular instances in which accidents have occurred on bridges? Is this not just a way of getting funding into maintenance rather than road safety by stealth?

Mr M.J. COWPER: In relation to specific details, I ask Des Snook to respond.

[Mrs L.M. Harvey took the chair.]

Mr D. Snook: If the member would like, I will talk about the safe system first. As far as the Towards Zero road safety strategy is concerned, safer roads is a very important part of that strategy. The work that Main Roads is doing in safe systems is, I believe, very good. We are learning from work that has been done in other parts of Australia, principally through Monash University's centre of research excellence and VicRoads in Victoria. We have incorporated what we have learnt about safe systems into some of our projects. We have a demonstration project on the new Perth–Bunbury highway. It has a number of safe system components in it, including wider shoulders, audible edge lines and, in some place, wire rope barriers. We have also incorporated safe systems in the design for the Lancelin to Cervantes road, again with wider bitumen-sealed shoulders. We have also done what we call a retrofit project on three particular sites of the old Perth–Bunbury highway, towards Kemerton.

Mr Murray Cowper; Ms Margaret Quirk; Mr Bill Johnston; Mr Chris Tallentire; Mr Frank Alban; Ms Adele Carles; Chairman; Ms Rita Saffioti; Ms Alannah MacTiernan; Mr Tony Simpson

Again, we have incorporated wider bitumen-sealed shoulders, audible edge lines and wire rope barrier around some of the curves on that road.

The member asked about a business case. A business case was prepared for it and the outcome of that business case was the safer roads and bridges program. The first part of that business case was adopted and we are very pleased that the safer roads program was continued.

We have put to the minister a draft copy of the Safer Roads and Bridges program for approval. The majority of that program was safe road-type projects. There was a small component of bridges, but the majority was roads. That is awaiting the minister's approval.

Ms M.M. QUIRK: Further to that, have there been any fatalities on bridges in Western Australia or do they pose a threat in terms of road safety outcomes?

Mr D. Snook: I am not aware of any fatalities on bridges over the past 12 months. However, an important part of the safety of bridges is the guardrail that approaches the bridges. It is a safe system-type issue that we have. We are looking at a number of locations in the rural area for which we can increase the number of guardrail approaches to the bridges.

Mr M.J. COWPER: On that point, I know of an instance in which a bridge has been of concern. I refer to the Collie bridge, which links my electorate with the member for Collie–Preston's electorate.

Ms M.M. QUIRK: I think the member for Collie–Preston would rather the Coalfields highway; however, I will not pursue that.

Mr M.J. COWPER: We have money for that. The member was seeking some examples and I was informing her about the problem with the Collie bridge. It was dangerous because young people were jumping off it and there was a potential for serious accidents. The new design of the Collie bridge will, hopefully, significantly reduce that practice.

The other safety aspect mentioned by Mr Snook was the widening of shoulders. I know that the section of road that was widened near Binningup —

Ms M.M. QUIRK: The opposition understands why that is important.

I have a further question. From what Mr Snook said, it seems to me that the upgrading to accepted road standards is not being applied generally to the maintenance and building of roads. That has been done in relation to only two demonstration programs and the retrofit. Those generally safe systems—optimal standards—are not being applied across all Western Australian roads.

Mr M.J. COWPER: I understand where the member is coming from. I know she has a genuine interest in road safety and that is commendable. This government has approved additional expenditure of \$93 million over four years from 2010–11 to implement road safety initiatives consistent with the Towards Zero road safety strategy. This government is committed to the Towards Zero strategy, and I understand that the member has some concerns about how that money is presented. The member can rest assured that this government is committed to the safe design of our roads. It has been demonstrated—I can vouch for it because I have seen it—that Indian Ocean Drive has substantially improved engineering features that I believe will save lives.

Ms M.M. QUIRK: I need to clarify that I understood what Mr Snook said. I appreciate the party political plug, parliamentary secretary. The higher acceptable road standards compliant with safe systems are not being generally applied. They are really being applied only on those areas that Mr Snook mentioned.

Mr M.J. COWPER: It is safe to say that members need go only to regional Western Australia to see the improvement in the standard of roads. Main Roads, when it builds new roads or maintains roads, looks at improving them to such a standard that they fit comfortably with the Towards Zero road safety strategy.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: I refer to page 431 of budget paper No 2, particularly the Roe Highway extension. I note that the allocation this year is approximately \$145 million less than the allocation made for the same project last year. When was it decided to reverse the funding in the out years for that project? Is the government still committed to construction of the Roe Highway extension? When is construction of the Roe Highway extension expected to commence?

[4.10 pm]

Mr M.J. COWPER: The answer to the last part of the member's question is that, hopefully, it will commence in 2012 and be completed in 2014. At the last election our government committed to building the Roe Highway stage 8 extension—everybody knows that has been our platform—from Kwinana Freeway to Stock Road. There will be \$20 million over the next four years to begin construction of that project. The budget provides for preliminary work to be undertaken and project development activities are well underway with a focus on

Mr Murray Cowper; Ms Margaret Quirk; Mr Bill Johnston; Mr Chris Tallentire; Mr Frank Alban; Ms Adele Carles; Chairman; Ms Rita Saffioti; Ms Alannah MacTiernan; Mr Tony Simpson

community and stakeholder engagement, as well as progressing environmental investigations. It is currently envisaged, as I said, to be completed by 2014.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: The parliamentary secretary did not answer the question about when it was decided to reverse \$145 million out of the budget.

Mr M.J. COWPER: In the 2009 budget process \$145 million was redirected to the project from three projects in the Perth urban transport and freight corridor initiative. Under the commonwealth government's nation building program—does the member want to know what the three projects were?

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: No, I simply want to know when the decision to reverse the funding was made.

Mr M.J. COWPER: It was in the 2009–10 budget process.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: That was when the money was added. I want to know when the money was taken out.

Mr M.J. COWPER: I refer that question to Bob.

Mr R. Phillips: The member is right in that \$145 million towards the Roe Highway extension project was included in the 2009–10 budget. That came about by a decision of the Economic and Expenditure Reform Committee that last year identified three projects in the Perth urban transport and freight corridor. The committee wanted to try to use those funds towards the Roe Highway extension. There was a note in the 2009–10 budget papers that it was commonwealth funding and that commonwealth approval had to be obtained through the federal minister. Subsequent to that, the federal minister, Minister Albanese, informed the state that those funds could not be redirected from those projects and subsequently through this budget process they have been taken out and put back against the three projects they were originally allocated to.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: I wonder how much of the \$15-odd million in the budget for this project is for the contract with AECOM for the South Metro Connect project. Is there other expenditure on this project?

Mr M.J. COWPER: I do not have that information but Mr Ladner might be able to help us out with that inquiry.

Mr P. Ladner: About half of the \$20 million committed by the current government is going to the AECOM consultancy that is working with Main Roads. The rest of the money will be for other Main Roads project development costs. Therefore, it is all basically project development—AECOM for part of it and investigations by Main Roads engineers and others for the rest of it.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: Given that the government is committed to commence construction in 2012, I wonder how it will commence construction with no allocation of money. At the moment not one dollar is allocated in the budget papers towards construction costs. I am very interested to know how the government can build a road without any money allocated to the task.

Mr M.J. COWPER: At this particular point in time, member, design issues still need to be finalised. There are also issues in relation to consultation with the community and other partners in the project, and that will be addressed as the project develops.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: Is the government not allocating any money towards construction?

Mr M.J. COWPER: Let me put it this way: it is a case of going back to Treasury in due course.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: Will there be more borrowings or higher taxes?

Mr M.J. COWPER: That is a matter that the minister will take to Treasury.

Mr J.E. McGRATH: I refer to the addition of a third lane on Kwinana Freeway between Leach and Roe Highways, which is mentioned on page 431 of the *Budget Statements*. My electorate borders Kwinana Freeway and I regularly see the freeway become a bit of car park just past Mill Point Road—most times in peak-hour traffic and sometimes during non-peak periods. It is a problem and I think this is a good initiative that obviously will help alleviate that bottleneck further down the freeway. What is the future vision for the Kwinana and Mitchell Freeways, given that we now have two very good rail services along those routes? I guess the plan is for fewer cars on the road in years to come. Do any figures suggest one way or the other whether there are more or fewer cars using those two freeways? What planning is being put in place as Perth's population grows so that these two very important freeways can manage our traffic?

Mr M.J. COWPER: The member is very fortunate that he has to get on the freeway only at South Perth; those of us who have to travel the length of the freeway are confronted with those traffic snarls that he talked about! I joined the freeway this morning from South Perth. I had an early morning start and it was a breeze to get into the city. It is only when people come from one end or the other that it becomes a real concern. The member referred

Mr Murray Cowper; Ms Margaret Quirk; Mr Bill Johnston; Mr Chris Tallentire; Mr Frank Alban; Ms Adele Carles; Chairman; Ms Rita Saffioti; Ms Alannah MacTiernan; Mr Tony Simpson

to a number of factors. Obviously, getting more people on rail is the best and optimal way to get people to and from the city. I think we are regarded as having one of the best rail networks in the country. I think there will still be continued challenges in the usage of vehicles. When I sit in those freeway snarls I notice that a lot of cars—probably eight or nine out of 10—have a single occupant. I think a shift in culture in vehicle use into the city needs to be addressed. That has been canvassed in previous questions about parking in the city. I think that, as the state grows, vehicle usage will evolve and there will be more reliance on rail. For the specific details the member seeks on planning issues, I ask Mr Des Snook to make some comment.

Mr D. Snook: The freeway system will develop with the basic system that is there, and public transport through the rail network will always be a very important component of that entire system because we simply cannot keep building more and more lanes. As the member identified, there are certain pinch points along the Kwinana Freeway such as that between Leach and Roe Highways, where we believe a third lane is required. In the future we will get more capacity from the existing road system through intelligent transport systems. There is funding in the budget for further ITS work on the freeway. There is money for a Kwinana Freeway ITS management system and a Kwinana Freeway freight management system. We think that the freight management system is very important, and it will assist with the use of heavy vehicles on the freeway. It will be the only option for those types of vehicles. We see that as the way to get more capacity out of the existing system in the future.

Mr J.E. McGRATH: What will happen if we do not get more cars off the road? I am told that one day Perth will be the second biggest city in Australia. What will happen if people use the trains, but there are still as many or more cars on the road in years to come? I am looking at the future and the government has said that it cannot build more lanes because of the river. In my electorate we cannot go into the Swan River.

[4.20 pm]

Mr M.J. COWPER: I think I can smell a ferry system coming on! I refer the question to the director general.

Mr R.A. Waldock: Yes, we are doing a lot of planning for 3.5 million people for Perth. Whether that happens in 2050 or whenever, that is the size of the city that a lot of planning is being done for. Specifically in terms of the road system, there is no doubt we will have to change behaviours. We cannot build more roads, as Mr Snook and the parliamentary secretary have indicated. Certainly, in the longer term—I do not see it in the next 10 years—hard levers such as congestion pricing and the like will be part of the way we do business. We will build roads to meet the needs of public transport and freight of course and, to a lesser extent, cars. Cars at peak can never be catered for by standard roads with the way we behave now. There will be many issues to confront and that is part of our planning work now.

Mr C.J. TALLENTIRE: My question refers to Great Eastern Highway on page 431. Can the parliamentary secretary confirm that the \$225 million indicated in the budget for widening Great Eastern Highway will be sufficient to complete only stage 1 as far as Hardey Road?

Mr M.J. COWPER: Is the amount \$224.978 million?

Mr C.J. TALLENTIRE: Yes.

Mr M.J. COWPER: Is the section of road the member is referring to from Kooyong Road to Tonkin Highway?

Mr C.J. TALLENTIRE: Indeed.

Mr M.J. COWPER: It is 4.1 kilometres in length and a six-lane dual carriageway with a central median and cycle facilities for a continuous pedestrian path. As members know, it is the main arterial road that brings many people from the international airport to the city. It has been somewhat of an embarrassment for some time. It is likely the \$225 million allocated will allow the highway to be upgraded only from Kooyong Road to Hardey Road, which is about 2.7 kilometres in length.

Mr C.J. TALLENTIRE: Thank you. Is it not the case that the \$180 million on offer from the commonwealth requires that the road be widened through to Tonkin Highway?

Mr M.J. COWPER: I ask Mr Phillips to answer that.

Mr R. Phillips: We have been in discussion now for some time in the realisation that \$225 million will not build the total network, as originally planned. We have submitted what is called a project proposal report to the commonwealth seeking its approval to build the project only to Hardey Road with the \$225 million. If we can get any further, we will. We understand a recommendation is currently sitting with the federal minister supporting that project proposal report that we put in. At this time, we do not envisage having any difficulties obtaining the commonwealth's \$180 million to support the project through to Hardey Road.

Mr Murray Cowper; Ms Margaret Quirk; Mr Bill Johnston; Mr Chris Tallentire; Mr Frank Alban; Ms Adele Carles; Chairman; Ms Rita Saffioti; Ms Alannah MacTiernan; Mr Tony Simpson

Mr C.J. TALLENTIRE: Does the parliamentary secretary have an estimate for how much it will cost to widen the whole road right through to Tonkin Highway?

Mr R. Phillips: I think the current estimate will probably be impacted on considerably by land acquisition costs, but it is envisaged that the total cost of the project will probably be in excess of \$350 million.

Mr C.J. TALLENTIRE: Is there a timetable of works?

Mr P. Ladner: Yes; we have commenced the tender process. We have released the request for proposals based on the \$225 million, but the contract will allow some flexibility if we get the extra money to extend the work.

Mr C.J. TALLENTIRE: Can I have a bit of a timeline for the works?

Mr M.J. COWPER: Mr Ladner will respond.

Mr P. Ladner: Construction is to start in 2011, which is next year and the estimated finish is in the 2013–14 year.

Mr C.J. TALLENTIRE: Is that for works all the way through to Tonkin Highway, assuming the additional funds are provided?

Mr P. Ladner: That date will cover that extension if we get the extra money.

Mr F.A. ALBAN: I refer to three-quarters of the way down page 431 where a line item refers to Reid Highway and Alexander Drive, which is close to my electorate. Can an update be given on the funding profile for this important project?

Mr M.J. COWPER: Thank you member, that is a very timely question. This project will resolve safety issues at the worst intersection in the metropolitan area. It will include two bridges to carry Reid Highway traffic over Alexander Drive and construction of bus lanes on Alexander Drive. The current estimated project cost is \$47.6 million, with \$10 million being provided by the commonwealth. It should be noted that in the 2009–10 budget, forward estimates provided \$72 million for the project. However, because of changing market conditions in the road construction industry in Western Australia, the successful tender came in much lower than originally expected. Construction commenced in May this year and work is expected to be completed by June next year.

Ms M.M. QUIRK: Under “Explanation of Significant Movements”, the first note on page 427 refers to the project being substantially complete. However, on page 431, in the note the member for Swan Hills referred to, the forward estimate goes out to 2012. Is there a need to marry up those?

Mr R. Phillips: There is an error within those notes. The reference in the budget about the Reid Highway – Alexander Drive interchange program being substantially completed should refer to the Reid Highway – West Swan – Great Northern Highway project being substantially completed. I ask members to note that within the budget papers.

Ms M.M. QUIRK: I drove along it the other day; it is fantastic.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: When the minister became aware of the error in the budget papers, what attempt was made to let us know about the error?

Mr M.J. COWPER: Personally, about 30 seconds ago.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: I said “the minister” not the parliamentary secretary.

Mr M.J. COWPER: It is on record now, member.

Ms A.S. CARLES: I refer to the line item on page 431 that shows the Queen Victoria Street, Fremantle traffic bridge replacement at an estimated total cost of \$38.412 million. Will the parliamentary secretary please explain where the money from the 2008–09 budget papers totalling \$81.268 million for the replacement of the new bridge has gone?

Mr M.J. COWPER: My understanding is that they are trying to agree on the final scope of the actual project. I understand there is also a proposal to include a rail bridge in the overall works, which will obviously mean there will be some fluctuations in the cost of that bridge. There has been some allocation on the scoping works to be done. That appears in the line item the member referred to. I will ask Mr Ladner to give some further detail on what stage the development of that project is at.

[4.30 pm]

Mr P. Ladner: The progress on the work has become a bit complicated by considerations of the possibility of combining a road bridge and a rail bridge and other aspects of the general area to do with port initiatives. For that reason, the money that was previously programmed could not be spent. It is true to say that the project has

Mr Murray Cowper; Ms Margaret Quirk; Mr Bill Johnston; Mr Chris Tallentire; Mr Frank Alban; Ms Adele Carles; Chairman; Ms Rita Saffioti; Ms Alannah MacTiernan; Mr Tony Simpson

slipped a little. We are just about to put before cabinet a submission to endorse going out to the community to recommence the community engagement process. There was a substantial community engagement process some time ago and we will soon be in a position to recommence that process to get community and stakeholder input and to progress the project.

Ms A.S. CARLES: Can the parliamentary secretary please confirm that a report was commissioned after 2000 into the adequacy and safety of that traffic bridge? If possible, could the parliamentary secretary please provide that by way of supplementary information?

Mr M.J. COWPER: I think the member is referring to the Dawes report.

Ms A.S. CARLES: I do not know the name of the report but I understand that there is a report that suggests that that bridge is unsafe and it needs to be replaced.

Mr M.J. COWPER: I understand that the report has identified issues in relation to the bridge but it is still considered to be serviceable and safe at this point.

Ms A.S. CARLES: Could the parliamentary secretary please provide a copy of that report by way of supplementary information?

Mr P. Ladner: Could the member be more specific about the report?

Ms A.S. CARLES: I am asking for the report that the parliamentary secretary just referred to.

Mr P. Ladner: We will take it on notice and try to identify that.

Mr M.J. COWPER: The problem we have is that there has probably been more than one report. We are trying to identify which one the member is referring to. I will probably require her to identify which report she is seeking.

Ms A.S. CARLES: I asked the parliamentary secretary for a copy of the report in a question on notice on 18 May but none was forthcoming. I am advised that there is a report held by the department that suggests that that bridge is unsafe and that is what I am trying to seek a copy of.

Mr M.J. COWPER: I will take it on notice and ask Main Roads to provide that to the member in good faith.

The CHAIRMAN: I need to confirm that this is not being provided by way of supplementary information. This is being taken as a question on notice.

Mr M.J. COWPER: The member asked a question on notice previously.

Ms A.S. CARLES: I have been seeking a copy of that report.

Mr M.J. COWPER: She has not received it and she is simply asking for that report. It is a bit unclear what report she is referring to. We have it on good faith that Main Roads will try to find it and provide it to her.

The CHAIRMAN: I just want the member to be very clear that this will not be provided by way of supplementary information, which has a deadline date. It will be provided on notice.

Ms A.S. CARLES: Yes, thank you.

Mr C.J. TALLENTIRE: I understand that there is a date by which that bridge needs to be fixed for safety reasons. Is that information not available to us now given the expertise in the room?

Mr M.J. COWPER: I will refer to one of the engineers here or people representing Main Roads for that sort of information. I do not know how any report could determine that a bridge has a use-by date. It is either serviceable or it is not. It is either safe or it is not. I do not think we can predict those things.

Mr P. Ladner: Maintenance work has been done over time. Further maintenance work is proposed to be done given the slippage and the ability to replace it. That addresses the safety concerns. Further money will be spent on maintenance that addresses the structural concerns.

Mr C.J. TALLENTIRE: Given that this report has been prepared, can it be submitted to us as supplementary information?

Mr M.J. COWPER: If the member can identify which report he is referring to.

Mr C.J. TALLENTIRE: The one that the member for Fremantle referred to.

Mr M.J. COWPER: We are still trying to determine what that is. If he can give us a name, we will get it to the member.

The CHAIRMAN: Member for Gosnells, the parliamentary secretary has already indicated that he will follow up the question on notice.

Mr Murray Cowper; Ms Margaret Quirk; Mr Bill Johnston; Mr Chris Tallentire; Mr Frank Alban; Ms Adele Carles; Chairman; Ms Rita Saffioti; Ms Alannah MacTiernan; Mr Tony Simpson

Ms M.M. QUIRK: We are asking for it as supplementary information.

Mr M.J. COWPER: When the member is unable to name the actual report, it makes it problematic. The member for Fremantle has put on notice a request for a report. We are yet to determine the name of that report. Members present have led me to believe that there is a report. We are not sure of the name of that report. We will follow it up and provide a copy to the member for Fremantle. Should anyone else wish to have a copy of that, we are happy to provide it.

Ms M.M. QUIRK: We ask that by way of supplementary.

Mr M.J. COWPER: If members can name the report, we will provide it by way of supplementary information. If not, we will provide it in good faith.

Ms M.M. QUIRK: The parliamentary secretary's advisers seem to know of the report.

Mr M.J. COWPER: They know of a report. They do not know the name of it.

Ms M.M. QUIRK: They should be able to find it.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: Madam Chair, I wish to make a suggestion. I suggest that the parliamentary secretary undertake to provide by way of supplementary information any report related to the safety of that bridge. That will give the parliamentary secretary the opportunity to be completely frank with the people of Western Australia and not withhold any information that is relevant to this matter.

The CHAIRMAN: With respect to supplementary information, my guidelines state that the minister has to state exactly what information will be provided. I think it might be problematic to provide any and all reports. As the member for Cannington is aware, a number of reports are available. Unless the parliamentary secretary can be quite precise as to what he is providing, I think the member is making a difficult request.

Mr M.J. COWPER: I reiterate my commitment to the member for Fremantle that we will provide a report that best represents the report that she referred to in this committee hearing. We will provide it to her in good faith. We are more than happy to provide a copy of that to anyone else wishing to receive it.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: My question relates to the Reid Highway – Alexander Drive interchange but, moreover, the intersections in that area, including the Reid Highway – Mirrabooka Avenue intersection, the Reid Highway – Malaga Drive intersection and Reid Highway between Beechboro Road and West Swan Road. Are these three projects on Main Roads' 10-year capital works program? Has any funding been allocated to the planning of these three projects over the next four years?

Mr M.J. COWPER: I do not have that detailed information in front of me. I ask Mr Phillips to comment.

Mr R. Phillips: No funds are provided for those projects within the forward estimates. I understand that the Reid Highway – Mirrabooka Avenue intersection is in Main Roads' 10-year capital works program. I am not sure about the other two. We could advise the member.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: Could we seek by way of supplementary information whether the Reid Highway – Mirrabooka Avenue intersection, the Reid Highway – Malaga Drive intersection and the duplication of Reid Highway – Beechboro Road and West Swan Road are on the 10-year capital works program?

Ms A.J.G. MacTIERNAN: And where on that 10-year plan.

Mr M.J. COWPER: I do not have a problem with providing that information. That is a planning issue and is the dominion of Main Roads. I undertake to provide by way of supplementary information the information sought by the member for West Swan pertaining to the Reid Highway future planning for the intersections at Mirrabooka Avenue and Malaga Drive and the duplication between West Swan Road and Beechboro Road.

[Supplementary Information No B36.]

[4.40 pm]

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: I wish to ask two other questions relating to roads in the area. One is about the Alexander Drive overpass, which Main Roads is constructing. Can I confirm the comments earlier that provision is being made for a dedicated bus lane along Alexander Drive and whether there are two dedicated bus lanes or one?

Mr M.J. COWPER: Certainly, in respect of the bridge overpass, there is a bus lane for the Alexander Drive bridge over Reid Highway.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: I am sorry; is it on Alexander Drive, though?

Mr M.J. COWPER: In respect of Alexander Drive, it is still on the drawing board as part of the 20-year public transport plan. The design of that is still being undertaken. It is not currently available.

Mr Murray Cowper; Ms Margaret Quirk; Mr Bill Johnston; Mr Chris Tallentire; Mr Frank Alban; Ms Adele Carles; Chairman; Ms Rita Saffioti; Ms Alannah MacTiernan; Mr Tony Simpson

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: I am sorry; I just got a bit confused. Is the bus lane on Reid Highway or is it on Alexander Drive?

Mr M.J. COWPER: No, it is on Alexander Drive.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: So there are two bus lanes on Alexander Drive.

Mr M.J. COWPER: For the bridge, there is, yes.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: So Reid Highway will be the bridge and Alexander Drive will go under it.

Mr M.J. COWPER: Provision is made for Alexander Drive to have bus lanes on each side.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: I have a final follow-up question about the Swan Valley bypass, or the commencement of the Perth–Darwin highway. As I understand it, Main Roads gave a presentation a number of weeks ago in the valley —

The CHAIRMAN: That is a new question, member for West Swan.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: I am sorry; it is a related question, because it crosses Reid Highway, and it is a part of the Reid Highway intersection.

The CHAIRMAN: I have a list of five other members who are waiting to ask questions.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: Seriously, Reid Highway crosses it.

The CHAIRMAN: I will allow a further question.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: Thank you, Madam Chair. Is there any money in the forward estimates for planning of the Swan Valley bypass, and what is the expected timing for the construction of the Swan Valley bypass?

Mr M.J. COWPER: Main Roads has been focused on upgrading Great Northern Highway in recent years. The existing Great Northern Highway, from Roe Highway to Muchea in the north and beyond, is gradually being upgraded by widening the formation width to include wider sealed medians and sealed shoulders, but still keeping the two-lane road concept. Main Roads is proceeding with further planning for the new Perth–Darwin highway between Muchea and north to Bindoon to investigate the preferred alignment in more detail and define the road reservation requirements for the highway, in consultation with the community and stakeholders. Up to now, the construction of the future Swan Valley bypass has been considered a medium to long-term proposal. However, the need to further develop the future Swan Valley bypass is recognised, and Main Roads will be progressing investigations to develop the business plan later this year. However, cost estimates to develop the route are in the order of several hundreds of millions of dollars, and further planning work is required to refine those costs. As this road forms part of the national network, the state will be seeking funding from the federal government, as part of the future Perth–Darwin national highway is not a funded project, and it is unlikely that the work to construct the highway will be undertaken for a number of years yet. Main Roads would need to do some substantial pre-construction works to identify the scope of the project and costings.

Ms A.J.G. MacTIERNAN: I refer to page 432 of the *Budget Statements* and to the reference there to the completed works of the Perth–Bunbury highway. Of course, it is always important, when we complete a project, to work out what its impact has been on the network. I understand that an 80-count site collection program on the surrounding roads, including South Western Highway, was to take place in March 2010.

Mr M.J. COWPER: Sorry; what was that, member? What was to take place?

Ms A.J.G. MacTIERNAN: According to the Minister for Transport, an 80-count site collection program was going to take place in March 2010, and that was going to provide figures on the impact of the opening of the Perth–Bunbury highway on South Western Highway. I want to check now, three months on, that this count has been concluded, and I wonder whether we could get that information.

Mr M.J. COWPER: I want to clarify the position. The member wants to know what impact the new highway has had on South Western Highway; is that correct?

Ms A.J.G. MacTIERNAN: Yes. I want to know what the impact of the opening of the new Perth–Bunbury highway was on South Western Highway. In particular, I am referring to information provided by the Minister for Transport that an 80-count site collection program was to take place in March 2010. I want to know where it is and whether we can see it.

Mr M.J. COWPER: Yes. I will refer that to Mr Des Snook, who has information about this matter. But, as the member would be aware, it is still early days, and the actual impact is still to be determined. However, I share the member's interest in the impact that may occur, and I commend to the member the details from Mr Snook.

Mr Murray Cowper; Ms Margaret Quirk; Mr Bill Johnston; Mr Chris Tallentire; Mr Frank Alban; Ms Adele Carles; Chairman; Ms Rita Saffioti; Ms Alannah MacTiernan; Mr Tony Simpson

Mr D. Snook: I do not have the details of that traffic survey here. We will certainly prepare that information and provide it to the parliamentary secretary. The anecdotal evidence that we have so far is that, yes, there has been a significant drop in traffic on South Western Highway, and certainly after the opening of the new Perth–Bunbury highway, the traffic figures that we were recording over the first few weeks on that road were in line with the predictions for the overall project.

Ms A.J.G. MacTIERNAN: I am well aware of those figures, and I am well aware that, unfortunately, the count that was done afterwards was not very extensive for some reason. However, I want confirmation that this 80-count site collection program did take place in March.

Mr D. Snook: I am not aware of it.

Ms A.J.G. MacTIERNAN: Mr Snook is not aware of it.

Mr M.J. COWPER: I am advised that Mr Snook is not aware of an 80-count site collection program. That is something that I would need to take up with the minister's office to ascertain the current position about where that allegedly is.

Ms A.J.G. MacTIERNAN: Okay. I ask that the parliamentary secretary provide, by way of supplementary information, details of all traffic counts that have been done in relation to South Western Highway since December 2009.

Mr M.J. COWPER: Since it opened, yes.

Ms A.J.G. MacTIERNAN: No. We have the ones immediately after it opened that were not very comprehensive, so I am asking for any traffic counts that have been undertaken in 2010.

Mr M.J. COWPER: Ones done by Main Roads, I take it.

Ms A.J.G. MacTIERNAN: That is right.

Mr M.J. COWPER: By way of supplementary information, I ask that details of any traffic count that has been conducted in respect of the impact that the new Forrest Highway has had on provincial roads be provided to the member.

[*Supplementary Information No B37.*]

Ms A.J.G. MacTIERNAN: On subsidiary roads, I think, rather than provincial roads.

I will ask one further question on South Western Highway. As I well remember from my days as a minister, there has been a desire by the community of Byford to calm traffic on South Western Highway through Byford. One of the complaints is that the Byford community cannot get Main Roads across the line on reducing traffic speeds adequately through that town centre. I well recall the battles we had in trying to achieve that in Harvey, which I think ultimately we did. I would like to know what principles are going to apply to the town centre in Byford.

Mr M.J. COWPER: Although this does not relate to the previous question, I ask Mr Des Snook to detail the current situation in respect of speed limits or speed calming devices within the precincts of Byford.

Mr D. Snook: That is correct. We have had a number of discussions with the Byford community regarding the speed limit through the town and that they wish to reduce the existing 60 kilometres an hour speed limit. The discussion that we have always had is that there needed to be an extension of the dual carriageway through the town before we would consider that.

[4.50 pm]

Ms A.J.G. MacTIERNAN: An extension of the dual carriageway?

Mr D. Snook: Yes, that is right. There needed to be a link so that there was more room available for overtaking within the town.

Ms A.J.G. MacTIERNAN: Can I just seek clarification of this through the parliamentary secretary?

Mr M.J. COWPER: Yes.

Ms A.J.G. MacTIERNAN: The bizarre thing, and what sounds odd about what Mr Snook is saying, is that the whole plan is about bringing it down to one lane each way.

Mr D. Snook: Yes.

Mr Murray Cowper; Ms Margaret Quirk; Mr Bill Johnston; Mr Chris Tallentire; Mr Frank Alban; Ms Adele Carles; Chairman; Ms Rita Saffioti; Ms Alannah MacTiernan; Mr Tony Simpson

Ms A.J.G. MacTIERNAN: Mr Snook is saying that Main Roads is not going to do anything because there is not enough road that comprises two lanes. Is Mr Snook saying that Main Roads will not support the proposal, as it goes through the guts of the town, for it to be reduced to one lane each side?

Mr D. Snook: I am broadly aware of that design. The point I was making was that we have some concerns that there need to be more overtaking opportunities outside town sites. I apologise for not making that clear. I understand the issues about the 50-kilometre-an-hour zone. I have not personally revisited that issue for a while. I was not aware that it had arisen again. I am very happy to look at that again with the people from Main Roads traffic branch and see where things are with that.

Ms A.J.G. MacTIERNAN: I am sure the member for Darling Range would agree with me that it is very important that this be revisited. A revised plan has been developed by the progress association, and I think it would be very timely for a person of Mr Snook's abilities to meet with the community and resolve the problem that he is so skilled in resolving.

Mr M.J. COWPER: I thank the minister. I am also aware of the —

The CHAIRMAN: Minister!

Mr M.J. COWPER: Member; I meant to say "former minister".

Ms A.J.G. MacTIERNAN: Ex-minister!

Mr M.J. COWPER: Ex-minister; ex-member; member for Armadale. I am also familiar with the road construct through Byford and the single lane either side, and I am a little perplexed as I am only now becoming aware of the situation, but I will look at the current situation and see whether a suitable outcome can be achieved.

Ms A.J.G. MacTIERNAN: Excellent! Look at what we can do when we work in a bipartisan way!

Ms M.M. QUIRK: I want to refer to two pages together; firstly, the service summary at the bottom of page 424, and the outcomes and key effectiveness indicators on page 426. My question links those two pages. The first entry in the service summary on page 424 is road safety. I would like an explanation of the decrease in budget under road safety there. The estimated actual for 2009–10 is \$141.047 million and in the following years it is \$89 million, \$83 million, \$84 million and \$88 million.

Mr M.J. COWPER: What was the other page number?

Ms M.M. QUIRK: Page 426. I will explain that and then the parliamentary secretary can see whether they are linked, and he will then understand what I am about to ask. On page 426, under "Community satisfaction with road safety", the actual for 2008–09 was 97 per cent, the estimated actual for 2009–10 was 95 per cent and the budget target for 2010–11 is 90 per cent. Is it possible that the lower target for community satisfaction is a function of the fact that there is less expenditure on road safety?

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: Shame!

Mr M.J. COWPER: There are two questions there. I will deal with them one at a time.

Ms M.M. QUIRK: I am just asking whether they are linked and why the target is so low.

Mr M.J. COWPER: The answer is no. In 2009–10 the allocation was \$141 million. The allocations on page 424 referred to by the member reduce to \$89 million, \$83 million, \$84 million and \$88 million in the out years because expenditure on the interchange at Reid Highway, West Swan, which has subsequently been completed, does not need to be funded in the out years.

In relation to the indicator on community satisfaction with road safety, the figure that the member sees there by way of percentage for 2009–10 is 92 per cent, which is the target that Main Roads sets as a target to achieve.

Ms M.M. QUIRK: But that is lower.

Mr M.J. COWPER: I am sorry?

Ms M.M. QUIRK: Does the parliamentary secretary see that it is lower?

Mr M.J. COWPER: No.

Ms M.M. QUIRK: For 2010–11 it is 90 per cent.

Mr M.J. COWPER: No. Put it this way: as the member can see in the —

Ms M.M. QUIRK: The parliamentary secretary is lowering the bar.

Mr M.J. COWPER: The budget, to my understanding, has always been set at 90 per cent. Last year, the member will be pleased to note, community satisfaction was above the target set; to wit, a 95 per cent

Mr Murray Cowper; Ms Margaret Quirk; Mr Bill Johnston; Mr Chris Tallentire; Mr Frank Alban; Ms Adele Carles; Chairman; Ms Rita Saffioti; Ms Alannah MacTiernan; Mr Tony Simpson

satisfaction rating. We may need to give that a bit of a tune-up and set our expectations higher, given that they have hit the mark.

Ms M.M. QUIRK: I just want to relate it to road safety expenditure on page 424. I have a further question. I do not know whether the parliamentary secretary saw the article in *The West Australian* by the president of the RAC on Monday, which made the proposition that the Barnett government is spending less on road safety than the previous government. Would the parliamentary secretary agree with that proposition?

Mr M.J. COWPER: The individual from the RAC is entitled to his opinion. The fact is, as the member would well know from previous budget estimates hearings in this place, that there will be a significant increase in moneys for road safety through projects from the Minister for Road Safety. I am very comfortable in the knowledge that there will be an increase in the available money for road safety in Western Australia.

Ms M.M. QUIRK: I have a further question for the parliamentary secretary. Is that as a result of revenue from speeding and red light camera fines?

Mr M.J. COWPER: It is money right across the board.

Ms M.M. QUIRK: That is in the future but it is not in this financial year.

Mr M.J. COWPER: There is an increase right across the board.

The CHAIRMAN: Member, we are deviating from the original —

Ms M.M. QUIRK: No, we are not deviating, Madam Chair. We are talking about expenditure for road safety. It is an item on page 424.

The CHAIRMAN: The member is depriving other committee members of time.

Ms M.M. QUIRK: My colleagues are aware of this item. Preventing me from asking the question is wasting time.

Mr M.J. COWPER: I say just in good faith that the member would know that the Minister for Road Safety has that responsibility and that it would appear mostly in his budget. Obviously the improvement and structural engineering of roads is within the dominion of Main Roads. As I mentioned before, the standard of roads in Western Australia is on the improve. The cost of them, obviously, as a result —

Ms M.M. QUIRK: I did not get an answer, parliamentary secretary, but I will leave it there; thank you.

Mr A.J. SIMPSON: My question refers to page 431 and the line item “Indian Ocean Drive — Lancelin to Cervantes Stage 2”. I understand the project is going extremely well and completion is eagerly awaited by many Western Australians, especially those who go to Wedge Island for the fishing. Can the parliamentary secretary please provide an update to the committee on the progress of the project and the benefits it will deliver to the community?

Mr M.J. COWPER: I thank the member. Indian Ocean Drive is a road that will virtually link Perth and Cervantes. There is a 55-kilometre section between Ocean Farms and Cervantes that is under construction currently, referred to as Indian Ocean Drive. The Lancelin–Cervantes road stage 2 is progressing well ahead of the original completion date of July 2011. Works are approximately 70 per cent complete. At this stage Main Roads anticipates that the new road will be open to traffic by December this year—seven months ahead of schedule. The completion of the last section of the coastal road link from Perth to Dongara, known as Indian Ocean Drive, will provide significant social and transport benefits to the local community along the way and foster economic opportunities for the central coast region. It is important to add that this is predominantly aimed at light traffic. No heavy vehicles will be given access to the new road. I know the member for Geraldton will be there when we open the road later on this year, along with a number of very interested people who were formerly in this place and had been pushing for this section of road for many years. The coastal road will improve road safety in the region. As we know, Brand Highway is increasingly coming under pressure. It is showing its age. Notwithstanding substantial ongoing costs to that road, providing an alternative route for tourists will hopefully steer caravanners in particular away from the heavy vehicles that head north as we anticipate the expansion of mining areas in the mid-west around Oakajee and further up the road in the Pilbara. Hopefully we can provide a safe route and great scenic tourist opportunities for the towns of Lancelin, Cervantes, Jurien Bay, Green Head, Dongara and areas north of Geraldton and beyond.

It is also noted that Main Roads Western Australia is currently examining the impact the completion of this road will have on other parts of roads, upgrades or other treatments that will be undertaken as required. This is a very good news story. I know that the member for Geraldton and I will keenly watch and enjoy the new road. I might add, member, that I have been very fortunate in my role as parliamentary secretary to have a sneak preview of

Mr Murray Cowper; Ms Margaret Quirk; Mr Bill Johnston; Mr Chris Tallentire; Mr Frank Alban; Ms Adele Carles; Chairman; Ms Rita Saffioti; Ms Alannah MacTiernan; Mr Tony Simpson

that road. I add to what I mentioned earlier about the safety of this road that it is a magnificent piece of road and it is a joy to drive on.

[5.00 pm]

Mr A.J. SIMPSON: Is there an exit road off this road to the Wedge community? It has always been an issue north of Lancelin, in my years of going up there, for the Wedge Island community.

Mr M.J. COWPER: Indeed there is a 3.5-kilometre spur road. It comes from there and heads down to Wedge Island. It obviously makes it accessible to not just four-wheel-drivers, as it has been in the past, but to all Western Australians to take advantage of not only that wonderful spot but also further up at Grey, Kangaroo Point and a number of other areas.

[Mr A.P. O’Gorman took the chair.]

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: I refer to page 433 of budget paper No 2 which relates to the allocation of funding for these road projects. I note that a number of road projects received commonwealth funding. Are there other projects like the Great Eastern Highway widening where the funds allocated in this budget and the forward estimates are insufficient to complete the project that was originally agreed with the commonwealth? Are there other jointly funded projects that have an insufficient allocation to complete the project?

Mr M.J. COWPER: I am not intimately aware of any such projects. I will ask Mr Bob Phillips to make comment.

Mr R. Phillips: To my knowledge, no. The only project that is running short of funds is the Great Eastern Highway Kooyong Road – Tonkin Highway. We have clearly identified that to the commonwealth. As I said earlier, it appears that the commonwealth is just about at the stage of approving works to Hardey Road and, in turn, providing \$180 million over a time frame of two to three years. With the other projects funded under the Nation Building Program, I am not aware of any project at this point in time that is short of funds in terms of completing the scope of works that was originally envisaged. Under the Nation Building Program we have a contingency fund within the total funding provided to the state. It originally started at about \$80 million. That is available for the state to draw upon should any of those projects run into cost overruns.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: The commonwealth required the state to fund more than half of the cost of the Perth-Bunbury Highway project. The parliamentary secretary is saying that the commonwealth’s attitude to the Great Eastern Highway is not reflective of the attitude of the commonwealth government at the time that highway —

Mr M.J. COWPER: My understanding is that the Perth-Bunbury Highway was not originally part of the AusLink funding.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: The commonwealth originally announced it would fund half the construction cost. In the end it did not do it.

Mr M.J. COWPER: That was when it was set at \$340 million. That was when the estimated cost of that project was \$340 million.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: That is exactly what is happening here.

Mr M.J. COWPER: The commonwealth said it would provide half the funding based on that principle. As we well know, history will show that the cost of that substantially blew out. It would have blown out more had it not been for the contribution by the federal government. I think it was \$150 million plus \$20 million, and it was to commence before Christmas of whatever year it was. I cannot see that the member can draw an inference from that. To clarify, I will ask Mr Bob Phillips to respond.

Mr R. Phillips: The original allocation for the new Perth–Bunbury Highway from the federal government was \$170 million at a time when the project was \$340 million. That was provided under the AusLink program. In the new program, the Nation Building Program, the federal government has included the additional \$160 million contribution. In total, out of the \$705 million for the total project cost, the commonwealth government has provided \$330 million.

Mr M.J. COWPER: Which is nearly half.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: The state government is reducing its expenditure on the roads program in the out years—this year is less than last year and last year was less than the year before. Is there any particular expectation about commonwealth funding in the future years to make up for that significant reduction in the state’s allocation to roads projects?

Mr Murray Cowper; Ms Margaret Quirk; Mr Bill Johnston; Mr Chris Tallentire; Mr Frank Alban; Ms Adele Carles; Chairman; Ms Rita Saffioti; Ms Alannah MacTiernan; Mr Tony Simpson

Mr M.J. COWPER: Contributions by the commonwealth government are dependent upon applications made by the state.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: Funding for roads programs is being cut this year, next year and the year after. Is the parliamentary secretary expecting those cuts in roads funding to be made up by the commonwealth?

Mr M.J. COWPER: It is interesting that the member makes the comment that it is decreasing. My understanding is that it is going to increase; the details of which I refer to Mr Phillips, the chief financial officer.

Mr R. Phillips: The allocations from the commonwealth are shown on page 433 of the budget papers. They fluctuate from year to year, but by 2013–14 the total funding that the commonwealth is to provide under the Nation Building Program will be provided to the state. I suppose the state's current capital budget is less than last year, but when we move out, hopefully in an improved economic position, the capital program in 2013–14 is well above the prior three years.

Ms A.J.G. MacTIERNAN: That is never–never land. That is well into never–never land—I think it might even be fantasy land!

The CHAIRMAN: Member, I have no indication of further questions. My understanding is that that was the last question for this division.

The appropriation was recommended.

[5.10 pm]