

**Division 26: Western Australia Police Force, including Road Safety Commission, \$1 644 070 000 —**

Mr D.A.E. Scaife, Chair.

Mr P. Papalia, Minister for Police; Road Safety.

Mr C. Dawson, Commissioner of Police.

Mr C. Blanch, Deputy Commissioner.

Ms K. Whiteley, Acting Deputy Commissioner.

Mr F. Pasquale, Executive Director.

Ms S. Cardenia, Director of Finance.

Mr A. Warner, Commissioner, Road Safety Commission.

Mr P. Zappelli, Principal Policy Adviser.

[Witnesses introduced.]

**The CHAIR:** The estimates committees will be reported by Hansard. The daily proof *Hansard* will be available online as soon as possible within two business days. The chair will allow as many questions as possible. Questions and answers should be short and to the point. Consideration is restricted to items for which a vote of money is proposed in the consolidated account. Questions must relate to a page number, item or amount related to the current division, and members should preface their questions with these details. Some divisions are the responsibility of more than one minister. Ministers shall only be examined in relation to their portfolio responsibilities.

A minister may agree to provide supplementary information to the committee. I will ask the minister to clearly indicate what information they agree to provide and will then allocate a reference number. Supplementary information should be provided to the principal clerk by close of business Friday, 3 June 2022. If a minister suggests that a matter be put on notice, members should use the online questions on notice system.

We are dealing with division 26, Western Australia Police Force, including the Road Safety Commission, and I give the call to the member for Vasse.

**Ms L. METTAM:** I refer to page 413 of budget paper No 2, volume 2, under expenses, and the total cost of services. I note the \$13 million decrease in spend for 2023–24. Why does this decrease occur after this year’s budget had an increase of \$44 million from last year?

**Mr P. PAPALIA:** Is the member asking about the \$13.5 million decrease in 2023–24 from this year’s budget?

**Ms L. METTAM:** Yes.

**Mr P. PAPALIA:** Okay. This is the out years so the forecast of a reduction of funding is the result of \$22.2 million in COVID-response-related cost reduction based on the assumption that this year’s related expenses will return to pre-pandemic levels post-December 2022. There is \$12.7 million for the digital capability fund, which is the ICT transformation program; \$3 million for organised crime operations, which is from proceeds of crime; \$2 million for maintenance costs for helicopter replacement; and \$1.7 million one-off funding for Operation Regional Shield. They are elevated in this budget, and then taper down in the 2023–24 budget. All those things have increased at the moment, so they will taper. There is also an offset in additional funding for an increase in the 2023–24 budget for additional police officers through the 950 program. In that year, there will be another 200 officers. When we take into account the reductions over time as a consequence of things that we have elevated in this year’s budget, they will taper, then the additional funding for that year for 200 extra officers will result in an overall decrease of \$13.5 million. It is pretty elevated at the moment.

**Ms L. METTAM:** I refer to page 413 of budget paper No 2, volume 2, the table “Spending Changes” and the heading “New Initiatives”, and specifically line item “Climate Action—Capability to Estimate and Report Emissions”. There is an allocation of about \$600 000 over the two years. I am wondering what this entails. Is it a role that is contracted out or is it work undertaken within WA police?

**Mr P. PAPALIA:** On 30 November last year, the WA climate policy introduced new requirements for government agencies to prepare emissions reduction plans consistent with the government’s goal of net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050. The government has provided additional funding of \$570 000 from the climate action fund to the WA Police Force with the allocation of two climate risk FTE resources over the next two years to provide relevant data and the input required for determining the impact on the agency statewide. It is working towards a plan and providing information specific to the WA Police Force.

**Mr V.A. CATANIA:** I refer to page 413, under new initiatives, Operation Regional Shield. There is an allocation of \$833 000 for 2021–22 and \$1.667 million for 2022–23. I notice there is no further funding after the 2022–23

financial year. Could the minister indicate how much money has been spent to date, how many police officers that has covered, and where those police officers from Operation Regional Shield have been assigned?

**Mr P. PAPALIA:** With respect to the first question about how much has been expended, that might be something we take on notice.

**Mr V.A. CATANIA:** That is understandable.

**Mr P. PAPALIA:** Yes, because right now there are a lot of demands on police, as the member would imagine, and because of the COVID furlough, it is pretty intense. I do not want to divert them from their task. But I will answer the member's other observations on the numbers.

Operation Regional Shield is not about specific numbers of police; it is about ensuring that there is funding and resources available to enable police to respond to an acute situation anywhere in the state in the regions—in this case regarding juvenile crime. It may be officers but it may not be. It might also be capability. It might be analysts or technology. It might be assets like aviation or air wing assets or even specialist police who might not normally be resident within an area. It might be additional officers for a period.

**Mr V.A. CATANIA:** Where have these resources been?

**Mr P. PAPALIA:** I might get Deputy Commissioner Col Blanch to give the member the running operations. I know that they are active in the Kimberley and the Pilbara, and they were active in the midwest region, but I am not sure whether they still are.

**Mr C. Blanch:** We have surged officers into Broome, Derby, Fitzroy Crossing, Halls Creek, Kununurra, Newman and South Hedland, and we have sent some inspectors for senior oversight into Karratha and the broader Kimberley district.

[5.10 pm]

**Mr V.A. CATANIA:** Operation Regional Shield has not been deployed into places in the Gascoyne like Carnarvon. Is that correct?

**Mr P. PAPALIA:** No, that is not correct. They have been there. I might defer to the deputy commissioner in a moment. They may not be there right now, but I am aware that they have been. I was recently in the Pilbara to announce a launch and there had been assets and officers deployed in the Gascoyne.

**Mr C. Blanch:** At the commencement of Operation Regional Shield, we did send officers into the Gascoyne. We also sent part of the 950 program allocation into the Gascoyne, including Carnarvon. I think we sent five up there. The ones I read out earlier are the latest surges throughout May and probably into next month, but certainly we had Gascoyne ones early.

**Mr P. PAPALIA:** They go when it is acute. They are responding to it.

**Mr V.A. CATANIA:** I understand that; I just wanted a good understanding of where the assets are being deployed. Under Operation Regional Shield, has there been a drop in crime in the Kimberley region? When I say "Kimberley", I am referring specifically to Kununurra, Halls Creek, Fitzroy Crossing, Derby and Broome. By what percentage has the crime rate fallen in those towns, and also in all the other towns in the Pilbara, being Newman, Port Hedland, Karratha and Roebourne, and also Carnarvon? Has there been a drop in crime; and, if so, would the minister be able to provide information on that drop?

**Mr P. PAPALIA:** There has been significant success in the Kimberley. I think it has been 11 weeks since it started. That is the latest I have—for 11 weeks after the commencement of the operation. Crime statistics have confirmed a more than 30 per cent reduction in burglaries and a more than 17 per cent reduction in the theft of motor vehicles. There have been massive additional patrol hours by police, with 1 500 additional computer-aided dispatch tasks attended. The interesting thing, particularly around Broome but also in other towns, is that often it is not just about arresting people; it is about taking children who are at risk to a safe place. That has been a key element of the response.

Regional Shield has identified large numbers of juveniles at risk. They have engaged with 989 children and conveyed 687 to either a safe place or a police station. The vast majority have gone to a safe place other than a police station. Safe places are considered to be a family home, an extended family home or another suitable home or facility, such as a police and community youth centre or other not-for-profits.

**Mr V.A. CATANIA:** Is the minister able to provide crime statistics from when Regional Shield occurred?

**Mr P. PAPALIA:** No, because Regional Shield is still ongoing in that region.

**Mr V.A. CATANIA:** But even for that 11-week period?

**Mr P. PAPALIA:** There was an immediate reduction. I remember seeing reports, on a weekly basis initially, that there had been an immediate impact. There was a significant reduction in some of the volume crime that had been taking place.

**Mr V.A. CATANIA:** The minister would be aware that the crime rate was so high that a reduction of 30 per cent could mean anything. That is why I want to be able to capture it.

**Mr P. PAPALIA:** I can tell the member for North West Central that I receive daily summaries of activity, for instance. There was a time that it was particularly acute in Broome, for example, with multiple vehicle thefts almost daily. They are not happening now. Occasionally, there will be a vehicle theft. They are not necessarily juveniles. Vehicle theft occurs across the state.

**Mr V.A. CATANIA:** What about Derby, Fitzroy Crossing and Halls Creek?

**Mr P. PAPALIA:** It has been the same. The numbers are far lower since Operation Regional Shield commenced.

**Mr V.A. CATANIA:** I did start asking a question. The funding ends in 2022–23. Why is there no further funding after 2022–23?

**Mr P. PAPALIA:** The member will recall that the Premier indicated in his statement at the start of the year that there would be a four-pronged response to juvenile crime in the regions. Policing is only one element of it.

**Mr V.A. CATANIA:** I understand that.

**Mr P. PAPALIA:** It was the first, because our Western Australian police are excellent and they responded rapidly. They implemented their response almost immediately. The other three elements of that response are funded in this budget and will be commencing. The aim is to prevent the recurrence of behaviour and divert children who are potentially on the pathway towards being car thieves and offenders in the manner that we have been concerned about. There is the development of an on-country sentencing option; that is what they are calling it. In essence, it will be more like some sort of bail obligation. It will not be a sentence so much as an opportunity to accept a bail condition and comply with it. Rather than ending up being sentenced in the way that they might otherwise have been and sent to Banksia Hill Detention Centre, it will be an on-country activity that is funded and delivered by an Aboriginal community organisation. It is not in my portfolio. Another one is the rollout of Target 120 across the Kimberley, the Pilbara and further afield. That program has been demonstrated to be successful in the metropolitan area.

**Mr V.A. CATANIA:** Is that under the minister's portfolio?

**Mr P. PAPALIA:** No; it is Communities. It is funded. It is additional funding to enable the rollout of Target 120 across major towns in the Kimberley and the Pilbara, and I believe Carnarvon as well. That is aimed at children who are a little bit short of being the ones we are most concerned about. They will engage with and wrap services and interventions around the family home, with a view to diverting those children and getting them back on the straight and narrow, and supporting the families so that the environment is more secure and those children do not stray.

Then there is a fourth element of the plan, with funding to be used for community-led initiatives. The hope is that they will become successful at what they do and impact on the pathway of the ones the police are dealing with, so that in a couple of years' time, we will see the benefit of those initiatives. It is not to say that Regional Shield will not be required then. We will revisit it as necessary.

**Mr V.A. CATANIA:** I want to make it quite clear that the police in Western Australia are at the pointy end of everything. Often they are the ones who can attract criticism because people have had enough. The minister was talking about all these other programs. What is the collaboration with the Department of Communities? That is the other issue that is impacting, as they are not there in support of the police by doing their job and working with those families and youth who are getting caught up in bad situations. Has there been stronger collaboration between the agencies with the rollout of Operation Regional Shield to make that work? That is where it falls down in my experience and from talking to police officers. They say to me, "We need other departments to lift their game to be able to do our job." Is that collaboration there?

**Mr P. PAPALIA:** I do not know whether I can address what the other agencies are doing under this portfolio.

**Mr V.A. CATANIA:** Is everyone working in the right direction?

[5.20 pm]

**Mr P. PAPALIA:** It is a cross-government response. Police raise reports with the appropriate agencies of children whom they deem at risk so that they are now visible to those other agencies, and in some cases they will deliver them to them. During the daytime, if children are on the street in Broome, for instance, when they should be in school, there is collaboration with the education department. I think it has a regional director allocated to ensure that truancy is dealt with, and the police bring that to the attention of the education department. Similarly, with children at risk, reports are raised with the appropriate agencies as part of the process.

**Mr V.A. CATANIA:** We hear a lot about major centres like Broome, which have regional managers. Where it falls down is in places like Derby, Fitzroy Crossing, Halls Creek, Kununurra and Carnarvon, because the regional managers, whether it be in housing or DCP, are based in Geraldton or Broome, because it is only a day trip away. That means that we get only outreach services, which is causing the problem, because no-one is living and breathing what is happening and understanding it.

**Mr P. PAPALIA:** If the member is talking about other agencies, I really cannot make an observation about them. What I would say is that all those towns have schools, and there are relationships between the police and education representatives in those locations. With regard to the police response, at the outset the member said that police are often the subject of criticism for not responding. I do not think that is true. My experience in recent times has been that everyone who has spoken to me has been at pains to say the police are doing a wonderful job. They are very specific about saying that the delivery of the service by police cannot be criticised. I have not heard anyone say otherwise. I would be concerned if I heard that, because that is my responsibility.

**Mr V.A. CATANIA:** Is the minister able to provide a breakdown of where the 950 police officers who are in the budget under “Ongoing Initiatives: 950 Police Officer Program” have gone to date?

**Mr P. PAPALIA:** Acting Deputy Commissioner Whiteley might be able to provide where they have been deployed to date.

**Ms K. Whiteley:** As of today’s date, we have deployed 570 of the 950 program. Out of the 570 program, 111 have been deployed to regional WA into locations in which it has been deemed they were required. They cover the midwest, Gascoyne, the south west and, of course, the Kimberley. The remainder have been deployed to appropriate positions allocated in the metropolitan area or to state crime as required.

**Mr V.A. CATANIA:** There are 500 or so new police officers out of that 950. How many police officers have left the force through retirement, having had enough, or getting another job? How many police officers have left in the same amount of time as those 500 new police officers have been recruited?

**Mr P. PAPALIA:** I will hand to the commissioner to respond, but I make the observation that the commitment of 950 is above attrition. Regardless of the number who depart, the commitment to grow the police force is above that number, so there is no net impact in the end.

**Mr C. Dawson:** In respect of retirements and resignations, and some dismissals, we are averaging about 30 FTE a month. It is slightly higher than it has been over the last several years, but that is not abnormal. The recruitment program, as has just been outlined, has seen the graduation of 570 officers in addition to our existing sworn strength, so it is over and above our normal attrition. Further, we have redeployed 450 officers out of Operation Tide since we have been drawing down our COVID response. That is over and above our previously authorised strength. In terms of attrition, we are at record low unemployment, as members will know. Although there has been a marginal increase this calendar year, which is not necessarily abnormal—I have seen this in my period in the executive through two previous boom cycles when we had slightly elevated numbers—our recruitment at this point is meeting that attrition. We are in fact 20 FTE over and above the 950 program at this point in time, and although there is pressure on our recruitment area, we have incoming recruit schools basically starting almost every month. We have one starting next month, and several starting in August. I cannot give the member the projected numbers, but I was briefed only today that although those numbers are under pressure, we expect that they will be filled. It has been forecast that because of the labour market, there will be increasing pressure on our recruitment area. That fact is not hidden.

**Mr V.A. CATANIA:** Given that the labour market is a market of great opportunity, which we also had back in 2007 when we had a boom and police officers were leaving to drive trucks and earning a lot more money without the pressure, is the housing situation in regional areas impacting on the ability to attract police officers into regional towns? There are still a lot of gaps in regional areas when it comes to police. Are reports about morale in the police force affecting recruitment and those police officers who want to stay in the job? Is that having an impact?

**Mr P. PAPALIA:** Can I say with respect to that last claim —

**Mr V.A. CATANIA:** As reported in the media.

**Mr P. PAPALIA:** It is a claim. Our police have done an extraordinary job over the last two years. They have confronted a challenge, a global pandemic the likes of which no-one on the planet has ever had to deal with before, at the same time as delivering world-class policing to our community. That is evidenced by some of the really high-profile cases, but also many other cases, that have been solved in an extraordinarily short time, such as the Mick Martin murder and the Cleo recovery. Those are just a few examples of the exceptional police service delivery that has occurred over the last couple of years. Undoubtedly, police are under pressure, and they have been working incredibly hard. With regard to claims about morale, personally, as police minister, I think they are doing an exceptional job. I regularly meet hundreds of police who do not appear to have low morale. Doubtless there are people who are suffering and doing it tough. I do not think that is at all having an impact on recruitment, and the

member cannot claim it as having an impact on recruitment, because every month we graduate officers from the academy. It is extraordinary how frequently I go there for a graduation. The commissioner is addressing a new cohort every month. Despite the similarity to the challenges around the labour market that we had in 2007 and 2008, we are also in the midst of trying to grow the police force by the biggest number in a four-year period in history. We have had an additional challenge. It is not like that. It is not just replacing attrition; it is growing in excess of that at the same time. It is a challenging environment. I do not perceive that they are having any problem attracting people. It is just that this state has a 2.9 per cent unemployment rate, with the greatest participation rate in the country, and the constraint is how many people of the right calibre are out there.

**Mr V.A. CATANIA:** What about the housing situation, because that is really impacting?

**Mr P. PAPALIA:** I might get the commissioner to respond, but the member would be aware, with regard to the last question he asked about Operation Regional Shield, that the nature of the response is funded and supported as necessary. In terms of accommodation, when the member hears that we are down on numbers, they have this thing of authorised versus actual. That really frustrates me, because it is an accounting measure. We have to use some measure, but it is confusing. “Authorised” includes all manner of people who may not be there. They may be in transit to go there. They may have already departed, having been there, and are on their way to another job. They may be on leave. All these other categories are accommodated in “authorised” and the actual strength does not equal that. That is really frustrating. I have told the member many times that every region in the state has more FTE than when we came to office; and, in the case of some of the regions the member has referred to, it is a lot more. The numbers overall have increased.

[5.30 pm]

**Mr V.A. CATANIA:** But solves crime.

**Mr P. PAPALIA:** That is what we are talking about. We have just confronted something the likes of which no-one has seen. It is a thing. All around the world there has been a huge uplift in family and domestic violence and some of the other types of crimes have grown. Other crimes have diminished because of great policing more than the environment, I think—the volume crime that everyone hates like having their house burgled and the like. I might get the commissioner to respond to the member’s question about housing.

**Mr C. Dawson:** In respect of regional deployment, to add to what the minister outlined, the housing stock is impacted by a couple of things. We all know it is an overheated construction period at the moment. When I was deployed many years ago, the housing stock was entirely state-owned government employee housing, now it is split between the private market and the Government Regional Officers’ Housing arrangements. We have been able to fully house all of our regional deployed officers, except that we are waiting for a number of housing units. In the member’s own constituency, he will be aware that I have spoken to a very active mayor in Eddie Smith. Eddie has been very vigilant and strident in his advocacy there, for all the right reasons. We have houses, but we are waiting for a number of houses there, so we have engaged with the director general of the Department of Communities, who has undertaken to construct more housing, but we are also, to some degree, at the mercy of the private housing market. We have experienced that a number of private landlords have taken it upon themselves to no longer participate in the government stock housing because of escalating rent opportunities. That is another factor that impacts us.

The upshot is that we are waiting on further housing and working constructively with the Department of Housing on that. If they become available, we will deploy. We are presently deploying at least 50 additional officers through Operation Regional Shield and accommodating them in hotel and motel-type temporary accommodation, but for those permanently deployed officers, we are working actively with the Department of Housing to try to secure more housing stock.

**Ms L. METTAM:** In relation to the size of this problem, how many officers are we talking about and how many vacancies across the state, purely based on issues associated with housing or accommodation?

**Mr P. PAPALIA:** I do not believe I can quantify that. As I indicated earlier, when we talk about a vacancy, it is not a category, but there is authorised versus actual and that is what people view as being a vacancy. The difference is not just that an officer cannot be deployed because a house is not available; there is all manner of reasons. It is a very difficult thing to quantify at any one time; it changes daily. The authorised numbers generally stay the same until the commissioner authorises additional people, which he has done, to different regions. The actual number will vary all the time. It might be very high and then change overnight. That is not really a number that would be of value. I do not want to give a number for one day, because it will change the next day.

**Mr V.A. CATANIA:** With those 950 new police officers, will the minister consider additional police officers for Exmouth and Coral Bay, given that they can have somewhere in the order of 25 000 to 50 000 people?

**Mr P. PAPALIA:** Which line is the member referring to?

**Mr V.A. CATANIA:** As I said, it is page 414, the top line.

**Mr P. PAPALIA:** The member knows what I am going to say.

**Mr V.A. CATANIA:** The minister talks about stresses and strains on police morale. He is right in that there may be one person on sick leave or another on annual leave and suddenly there are four police officers and one car. When there are 25 000 people in the town at any one time, that imposes pressure on those police officers not only in that town, but also down the road in Coral Bay, where they are responsible for another 8 000 people. How does the minister expect a couple of police officers to be able to manage that situation? We hear a lot about all these new police officers and how WA police are better resourced with the number of police officers. Here is a situation that is pretty dire, especially during peak tourism season. The minister has often said that police officers come down, say, from Karratha. That is not the case. That has not happened over the last 12 months. Will the minister consider another couple of police officers, at least through an eight-month period, to cover the massive gaps that exist?

**Mr P. PAPALIA:** I do not think I have said they come down from Karratha, but, that aside, the member knows what I am going to say. The commissioner determines where police officers go. It is an operational matter.

**Mr V.A. CATANIA:** Keep going, you might tell the truth now!

**Mr P. PAPALIA:** Are you suggesting the commissioner was not telling the truth at some stage? That is a pretty courageous call, member, which I absolutely refute and disagree with.

Where police officers go is entirely the province of the commissioner, because it is an operational matter. I will hand over to the commissioner.

**Mr C. Dawson:** In respect of deployment, yes, I have always reserved the right operationally to deploy officers where supply and demand is required. The situation outlined is, obviously, not unknown to us and to the member in respect of matters such as Coral Bay, which surges, as we both know, and the same applies in other locations such as Augusta, Busselton, Dunsborough et cetera. We have always adopted the approach to deploy additional officers with temporary accommodation. As a broad approach, I have resisted the FIFO–DIDO type of approach to policing. In fact, police were the only government agency living in Roebourne from a state perspective. I have actively kept police in locations such as Roebourne because we have to build trust with the community and it is much more difficult—not impossible, but much more difficult—to engender trust, understanding and rapport with local people without resident police officers. As a principle, that is my broad approach.

The example we have just been speaking about in the north of the state means an additional 50 or 60 officers and we have had to surge additional officers with temporary accommodation and rotate them where the surges in demand are. The approach we continue to take, particularly with known holiday hotspots, is to deploy officers during those peak times. We are constrained, of course, as it is based widely on the patronage of where people have gone and travelled. Again, without this being an excuse, I am sure members are aware that the last two years have been quite extraordinary in terms of intrastate tourism and accommodation. I am sure the member knows I am not exaggerating when I say that everything is booked out. That has been an additional pressure for our officers. I reserve the responsibility to deploy officers where we can secure the appropriate accommodation for both housing and a police station and we will deploy additional officers in surge areas with support vehicles and assets where that is required.

[5.40 pm]

**Ms L. METTAM:** I have a new but related question. I refer to the 950 police officer infrastructure program on page 422 of the *Budget statements* under the line item “Land and Buildings Infrastructure”. With the majority of spending occurring in 2023–24, where is the infrastructure currently needed? Can the minister outline what works will be undertaken as part of this program?

**Mr P. PAPALIA:** Sorry, the commissioner has pointed out that there are a few land and building infrastructure lines down the page. I will get the executive director, Mr Pasquale, to respond, because he can speak about it in detail.

**Mr F. Pasquale:** There are two main priorities in that investment. In total, \$32.3 million is spread over the period, as printed. Of that, \$1.9 million is for the expansion of the leased facilities in Kununurra. Our police presence in Kununurra both at the police station and across leased premises is full. There is obviously a need to increase the police presence there. Increasing that capacity in Kununurra will be done by creating a greater capacity in the Kununurra leased area so that we can put extra people in the Kununurra Police Station. Our biggest expense is for a district support facility in Broome to also cater for the increased capacity requirements in Broome. The funding for that is \$30.4 million, the majority of which is funded in 2023–24.

**Ms L. METTAM:** Excuse my ignorance, but is that to expand the police facilities? How does that work along with making Government Regional Officers’ Housing available?

**Mr P. PAPALIA:** We do not do Government Regional Officers' Housing; that is a different agency. This is for police facilities, but other significant projects are underway, although they are not necessarily under this line item. There are some really big builds. The completion of the Armadale Courthouse and Police Complex costs tens of millions—\$85.8 million—and is almost complete. A huge build is about to commence, or has commenced, in Fremantle. Those facilities are being built to accommodate this growth in advance. Those facilities will be built with more than the necessary capacity to accommodate those 950 additional police officers. Similarly, the Fremantle police complex will be built to accommodate future growth in police beyond those 950 police officers. In recent years, there has been a lot of expenditure around the state. Under the WA recovery plan, we provided money to upgrade a lot of our smaller, older police stations to accommodate more people and equipment, but predominantly equipment, because recently we have given every officer body armour. That requires storage at the location that was not designed into the buildings originally. There have been things like that and a lot of upgrades to some of the older sites around the state, including Dunsborough, which the member would be familiar with. That had a complete rebuild, almost. There are a lot of projects like that, including, for example, at Bridgetown. I am trying to remember the other ones that I have visited recently.

**Ms L. METTAM:** Is that an expansion or upgrade of the existing facilities?

**Mr P. PAPALIA:** These big complexes are being built to accommodate the growth that will be realised as a result of the additional 950 police officers. I think the member was asking about Kununurra and Broome. That is on a smaller scale, but I might ask Mr Pasquale to give more of an indication of what is being done at those stations.

**Mr F. Pasquale:** The office accommodation area at Kununurra is being expanded. That will allow us to create greater capacity in Kununurra Police Station. The strategy is to create that capacity at Kununurra Police Station. The Broome facility is a new facility in addition to Broome Police Station.

**Mr V.A. CATANIA:** I refer to page 415 of the *Budget statements*. The sixth significant issue impacting the agency states —

The Western Australia Police Force remains dedicated to contributing to the wellbeing of Aboriginal people through increased engagement to improve relationships ...

It also states —

The Western Australia Police Force continues to proactively recruit Aboriginal police officers and staff ...

How is that progressing? Can the minister indicate how many Aboriginal police officers have been recruited over the last—I do not know how long?

**Mr P. PAPALIA:** I do not think I have that information here, but I can get that for the member. In the last 18 months, probably, the number has grown significantly. At every graduation, it will be between one and three. At the last two graduations I went to there were three Aboriginal officers, and there was one Aboriginal officer at the graduation before that. There have been a number. The commissioner initiated a number of entirely Aboriginal police cadet intakes over the last three years. The cadets program is not a school program; they are police cadets in a uniform at a police station. They get some training at the academy and are mentored. It is like “try before you buy” to become a police officer. They are also supported in a local police station. The hope is that if some of them determine that they want to go on with it, they can become a recruit and go into the police academy. That has been very successful. I cannot tell the member the number right now, but I will be able to get it for him. It is probably in my office. Can I take that as a supplementary?

**Mr V.A. CATANIA:** Yes.

**Mr P. PAPALIA:** The member should celebrate because I do not do this often!

**Mr V.A. CATANIA:** I agree! I think the minister is the first one to do it today in the sessions that I have been at. It is unusual, coming from the minister.

**Mr P. PAPALIA:** I undertake to provide the member with supplementary information that will provide the number of Aboriginal recruits who have graduated from the academy in the last two years —

**Mr C. Dawson:** Four years, probably.

**Mr P. PAPALIA:** I think the commissioner's campaign has probably been realised in the last two years because the cadet program had to run for a bit before we got a return, I think.

**The CHAIR:** Is the supplementary information the number of Aboriginal cadets who have graduated from the police academy in the previous two years?

**Mr P. PAPALIA:** Yes.

[*Supplementary Information No A5.*]

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**Mr V.A. CATANIA:** Does the minister have a target out of the 950 additional police officers?

**Mr P. PAPALIA:** No. But obviously we would like the rate to be per capita. That would be an appropriate minimum. I think the police should look like the people they police, so that the more people in the community who are able to look at a police officer and say, “Yes, I’m represented amongst the people in uniform”, the better. That is true of not only Aboriginal people, but also culturally and linguistically diverse communities.

**Mr V.A. CATANIA:** There are plenty of them.

**Mr P. PAPALIA:** I can tell the member that there has been a lot more recruiting by police of people from CALD communities in recent years under this commissioner.

**Mr V.A. CATANIA:** Absolutely. I agree with that.

**Mr P. PAPALIA:** The commissioner has been extraordinary. In a lot of ways, that has enabled us to respond to the real challenge around recruiting, because there are demographics that we probably have not tapped into in the past. Possibly, they had not seen policing as a career of interest to them, but that has all changed. That is true in Aboriginal policing, too, I think. The return from the commissioner’s focus on that has been quite extraordinary, and it is visible; we see it at the graduations. We will get the numbers for the member.

[5.50 pm]

**Ms L. METTAM:** I have a couple of questions. I refer to the table on page 414 and ongoing initiatives. The minister has already touched on the Armadale courthouse and police complex and its operating costs. Can the minister clarify why the courthouse operating costs are included in the police budget?

**Mr P. PAPALIA:** I might get Mr Pasquale to respond to that as well.

**Mr F. Pasquale:** The Armadale courthouse and police complex is obviously a joint initiative. The Western Australia Police Force, in agreement with the Department of Justice, agreed to lead the project, but it has been done in a collaborative manner because it is a joint complex that consists of the police station, the district office and the court facilities. Rather than complicate it and try to deliver a joint project by segregating the budget into two different agencies, it is being delivered under the guise of police. We have a memorandum of understanding about the operating parameters and who will take responsibility for the general maintenance and upkeep of the building. This recognises that it is a new facility and the operating cost to support that new facility is what this budget allocation is about. The Department of Justice has also received specific funding for its particular requirements, but the upkeep, maintenance and running of the building will be with police. Police have been funded for that to ensure that, as the landlord, if you like, they provide the capability for the building to be maintained. But Justice has an allocation for any unique fit-out requirements specific to particular costs for the courthouse.

**Mr P. PAPALIA:** I do not know whether the member has seen it, but it is a pretty impressive facility. It has a shared custody centre that services not just the police district and station, but also the courts when holding people as necessary. There are five separate courtrooms. It has accommodation for 340 FTEs from police. I think that the number in that district at the moment is half of that, so there is a lot of opportunity for growth. The courthouse will also accommodate 20 FTEs from the Department of Justice. It is a pretty incredible project. Police own most of the building itself and they are very good at this sort of thing, so they will take on this responsibility.

**Mr V.A. CATANIA:** I refer to page 415 of budget paper No 2 and paragraph 7, which reads, in part, “The Western Australia Police Force continues to build relationships with young people”. This is about community youth centres such as the police and community youth centres and youth engagement police officers. How has the police force attracted youth engagement officers, who are absolutely critical when we talk about what is happening in the Kimberley, the Pilbara and Carnarvon? I know for a fact that Carnarvon has not had its youth engagement officers, which has played a major role in some of its problems. Is there a special recruitment process and how many —

**Mr P. PAPALIA:** Yes. They have to be the right people.

**Mr V.A. CATANIA:** I understand that—do not get me wrong. I do not know how to frame this question. Are we pushing for more youth engagement police officers? Are they coming out of the pool that we have now or are they part of the police officers from the 950 program that the police force is trying to attract?

**Mr P. PAPALIA:** I might get the commissioner to respond to that.

**Mr C. Dawson:** Our youth engagement program was kickstarted about four years ago. We have dedicated youth policing and community engagement, which supplements those activities with not-for-profits such as the PCYC. We obviously work collaboratively with other government and non-government agencies. We have actively recruited within our ranks operationally credible officers to be youth policing officers. We do not want them to be officers who have purely a youth skill set, but they must have credible policing experience. I am not suggesting that previously they were not credible, but it is most important that they are not seen by their colleagues or the community to focus



just on recidivist crime offenders. We want to get the kids who are at risk off a carousel of entering the justice system. They were once called “youth crime officers” and I felt that that was a wrong label because not all youth are criminals, and nor do we want them to become criminals. We have intentionally repositioned that as a youth and community engagement portfolio. We have been overwhelmed by the number of officers from police stations—detectives and others—who have come into that portfolio. They have really added an incredible diversity within that portfolio. Coupled with that, and tailored to the 950 program—the minister is providing supplementary information on this—I know that in the order of 11 per cent of our total recruitment program are culturally and linguistically diverse officers. One in 10 officers comes into the force with an ability to speak other languages. That gives us much better flexibility to work with particularly new Australian families. Officers with African or Asian heritage, or whatever it might be, will supplement those numbers, as indeed will our efforts to recruit Aboriginal police officers. That program is in fact recruiting above the roughly three per cent number, as the minister’s supplementary information will show.

In essence, this is not about blowing up balloons and playing games with kids. These officers are actively engaging in a way that is not purely designed for police. We work closely with education authorities and other government and non-government agencies and we have tailored it so that they do not just respond when a kid is unfortunately in and out of the Children’s Court. Often, sadly, it is too late for some of those very high-end offenders because they have already unfortunately got into a pattern of recidivist offending. We very much target that younger cohort before they get to the stage of high recidivism.

**Mr P. PAPALIA:** I might see whether Deputy Commissioner Blanch wants to add anything.

**Mr C. Blanch:** As part of the 950 program, we are going to allocate functional positions for more youth policing officers. Similar to what the commissioner said, it is mutually beneficial for both police officers and the youth to be exposed to different types of police officers. We actually want to rotate the officers and give them lots of time with the kids, because one day they might be dealing with critical incidents that involve those families or they might even be arresting those kids. But it is very healthy for those same officers to spend six to 12 months working as dedicated youth policing officers with those kids. That brings the entire policing workforce up to a sufficient level of skill and training in dealing with kids on a daily basis so that when they are back to their normal frontline role, they have a greater appreciation of the complex issues that many of these kids face in regional WA areas.

That approach is a bit of a change in our policy. We do not want to pigeonhole a police officer into being a youth police officer forever. That can cause other police to say that working with youth is a specialist area. We want to give all police officers that exposure and time with those kids so that they can better deal with their complex problems as frontline police.

**Ms L. METTAM:** How many of those youth officers are in the south west and how many are in Bunbury?

**Mr P. PAPALIA:** If we do not have that information, we can get it. I know that there are some in the member’s electorate because I have been to Busselton Police Station and, recently, some youth police officers were allocated to the member’s district.

**Mr C. Dawson:** I will add to the response provided by Deputy Commissioner Blanch. From memory, Busselton Police Station has about three dedicated youth policing positions, but, again, we are intentionally rotating officers through that. Again, we do not want to typecast them and say, “You’re the ones who are going to be dealing with youth; these others won’t be.” It then becomes normal practice. For the same reason, in other areas of the state, I do not want officers to be dedicated to Aboriginal policing issues so that the population, whether they be for liaison reasons, victims or offender-type activities, gravitate towards a particular number of officers at the station because they will think, “They’re the ones who dedicate themselves to this type of activity.” It is most important that we do not compartmentalise them and they all get an understanding and rotate their way through that. It gives them a much broader perspective. I know from my experience, and listening to other officers, that when they do get exposed to other activities, they say, “Well, actually, not all the kids are bad”, because they are often only tasked in dealing with either victims or offenders, but they see the kids through a different lens. Also, the children themselves see the officers differently as opposed to, “Oh, they’re the ones who charged me last time.” That rapport can get built. It is an intentional strategy, and I think it is one that will be a success.

[6.00 pm]

**Ms L. METTAM:** Thank you for the response, commissioner and minister. Is the minister able to provide that information by way of supplementary in relation to the youth officers at Busselton Police Station?

**Mr P. PAPALIA:** I can, but based on listening to the commissioner’s response, I would suggest that there are probably positions but not individuals specifically dedicated to those positions. I am aware that there are youth policing officer positions there, and we can get the number. Deputy Commissioner Blanch might be able to tell the member right now.

**Mr C. Blanch:** We will have those figures for today, but I think in the vein that we are trying to express our position on the policy to look after youth, mental health, family and domestic violence and Aboriginal affairs, we are holding the district superintendents to account on the issues that they may face in their district. We will surge the functional positions. If they have a greater youth crime problem, in the south west as an example, we will increase the functional number of positions for youth policing to rotate more officers in there. The stat of today, or the number of people performing the function of youth policing, may in fact increase in a month or two depending on the youth crime issues. It is very similar to the Regional Shield structure. We are going to surge in places with the functions and put more of those police into those areas, subject to the district issues themselves. Every Monday morning, we hold a senior executive meeting. We talk about the exact issues in each of these districts. If we see a change, that will be the issue for the district superintendent to increase the number of those functions. We can give the member that data as at today, but it may not be the same next week.

**Mr P. PAPALIA:** It is a change in operational focus.

**The CHAIR:** Can I clarify: are we providing supplementary information?

**Mr P. PAPALIA:** No. On reflection, listening to the answers, I do not think there is much point because it is a shift in the nature of the operational approach, which means that what in the past might have been a relevant number is not so much, because it is more fluid and the police are just adapting to the threat or the task as necessary. I do not know whether that would be worth anything to the member.

**Ms L. METTAM:** In relation to, for example, Busselton Police Station, would the allocation of those officers be coming from the south west district office? Is that why the minister is unable to provide the decision-making information?

**Mr P. PAPALIA:** As I understand what the deputy commissioner said, it is more in the nature of how they are tasked at the moment. It is dependent upon the perceived challenge that is confronting a particular district or subdistrict; that will determine the mix of what is allocated. It will change. It may be that youth crime is down, juvenile crime is down, so police allocate other resources or other tasking to people.

**Ms L. METTAM:** I refer to page 413 under “New Initiatives”, the line item “RTTA—2023 Total Solar Eclipse”. How is it different from the existing intersection program under road safety as identified by Main Roads?

**Mr P. PAPALIA:** I am not sure this is linked to the nature of the member’s question, but for the total solar eclipse approaching next year on 20 April, in anticipation of a significant number of out-of-state visitors, potentially from overseas, there is an allocation from the Road Safety Commission of \$850 000 from the road trauma trust account to promote road safety for visitors travelling to the event. That is what it is specifically for.

**Mr R.S. LOVE:** On the Road Safety Commission itself, I refer to page 420, service 4, “Road Safety Commission”, which has the number of employees for the Road Safety Commission. I see that the number of employees is moving from 42 FTE to 52 FTE this year. Is there an explanation about why that is occurring?

**Mr P. PAPALIA:** I will ask Commissioner Warner to respond.

**Mr A. Warner:** A number of factors are involved in that. One of them relates to an ongoing project for the infringement management reform program, which is a temporary increase in deployment. Referencing the total solar eclipse, we have budgeted for a temporary increase in employment to manage the program of promoting road safety to the visitors to that region. There is another temporary project around a safety camera trial that has a staffing element as well as an operational element. As well as that, we have made a decision to insource some of our education and campaign functions that we have traditionally outsourced. We have rebalanced some of the staffing around that. That adds up to the increase.

**Mr R.S. LOVE:** On that same table, on page 420, the cost of services seems to have spiked in 2021–22 for the actual amount compared with the budget. That is \$28 935 000 as opposed to \$35 718 000, and then a fall to \$23 341 000 this year. What is the explanation for those variances and shifts over the period?

**Mr P. PAPALIA:** I will ask the commissioner to respond.

[6.10 pm]

**Mr A. Warner:** Yes. One of the complexities in the *Budget statements* is that the Road Safety Commission and road trauma trust account, which is a hypothecated account and functionally separate from the Western Australia Police Force, sit administratively within the accountability framework of the Western Australia Police Force. In the accounting of the budget, funding that comes out of the road trauma trust account and flows to Police for functions such as operating safety cameras, mobile cameras, issuing infringements, booze buses, drug breath testing and the like is not in that figure. The overall figure of the road trauma trust account needs to factor back in for this year the \$39 million that has gone to Police.

I can take the member through the overall picture for the road trauma trust account as a whole, because that might be helpful. In terms of expenditure in 2022–23, the planned expenditure is \$118 million. That is an increase of

\$20 million over the estimated actual for the current financial year. Although there are ins and outs across the funding profile, the major drivers of that increase include an increase in funding to Main Roads WA to ramp up its metropolitan intersections program. In the early days of COVID, when there was the COVID stimulus, there was a lot of juggling of the Main Roads program. We agreed to go slow on that particular program to give the agency more capacity to be flexible in other elements of its program, so that is the payback on that program. There is also an increase in funding for Police to fund a new police helicopter. We funded the Department of Fire and Emergency Services emergency helicopter in the previous budget. This is a capital item there. And there is an increase in funding associated with the Road Safety Commission for the implementation phase of an infringement reform program, which has been going for a couple of years. That is the increase on the expenditure side. In terms of average expenditure over the last few years, it is above the average of about \$105 million.

The revenue over the past few years has been fairly stable. We anticipated and took precautions in terms of our budget figures for revenue in the early days of COVID, but it has not had the impact that we thought it would so we have increased the revenue estimates in the current budget back to what we think is a long-term trend, and that is reflected in the overall figures.

That is the global position. In terms of unallocated cash, we manage that through the Road Safety Council by keeping a prudential reserve, a float, of about \$10 million that covers some of the revenue and expenditure side risks. That has been negotiated with Treasury. It is our sort of “do not touch” amount to cover risks. Over the forward estimates on the current budget, there is an ability to allocate an additional \$21.4 million over the next four years. We do that on an annual basis. The Road Safety Council considers and tries to adjust to the way the world is turning. For example, we looked at the cost pressures in Main Roads and found those cost pressures still exist and we are funding out of the road trauma trust account an ongoing commitment for the state’s contribution to regional road safety, which has been a huge benefit to road safety outcomes in the regions. On the roads that we have treated, crash reduction has been significant. Indian Ocean Drive, which was problematic some years ago, has had a significant crash reduction of close to 50 per cent and that is the same for the roads into Toodyay and into Collie, which have had the longest lead time.

There are some risks associated with technology. The infringement reform program, which I have spoken about, is basically a big shift in technology. We think that it is being managed well but we need to keep some room to adjust if things go south there. As I said, we need to have some capability and flexibility to fund new projects in upcoming budgets for which we have not yet received formal requests.

I will outline the overarching numbers and reflect them back to the figures on page 420 of the budget. The starting figure is \$118 million. That is the planned expenditure. If we deduct \$39 million, which is the Police component paid out of the road trauma trust account, we get the \$79 million, which is the highlighted budget figure for total cost of service. The rest of that goes out to various government and non-government agencies, and I can provide those details if required.

**Mr P. PAPALIA:** I would add to the Road Safety Commissioner’s observations by saying that the regional road upgrade program, the road safety program, is far in excess of our road trauma trust account money and will have a dramatic impact on road safety. I think we are talking about \$870 million —

**Mr A. Warner:** There is \$837 million that has been committed so far.

**Mr P. PAPALIA:** We are talking about 40 years’ worth of road improvements in less than a decade, really. That should result in a step change in outcomes with serious and fatal crashes in the regions. The impact will be potentially as dramatic as the introduction of seatbelts and things of that nature. The agency hopes to achieve that sort of scale of change. That will be really impressive. Most of that program is with Main Roads; it is not ours but there is a contribution from the road trauma trust account. The road trauma trust account is not a bucket of money that sits unspent anymore; it all gets spent. As we heard, there is \$10 million in contingency funding, but the rest of it goes out annually.

**Mr R.S. LOVE:** I have a question that is almost further to the balance of the road trauma trust account we heard about from the commissioner and that the minister has just spoken about. By my reckoning, that is referred to on page 426 of budget paper No 2, volume 2, as the third line item “Restricted cash (RTTA)” under the heading “Current Assets”. It shows a balance at the budget year. I am not sure whether that is for commencement or the end of the year.

**Mr P. PAPALIA:** It is at the time of printing probably.

**Mr R.S. LOVE:** Is it at the time of printing?

**Mr P. PAPALIA:** Is that what it is? It is at the time of printing so it changes and it will continue.

**Mr R.S. LOVE:** We heard that the agency likes to keep a float of about \$10 million in there; is that right?

**Mr P. PAPALIA:** That is a Treasury-approved practice.

**Mr R.S. LOVE:** The \$20 million is planned to be expended throughout the year.

**Mr P. PAPALIA:** No. It is \$10 million.

**Mr R.S. LOVE:** But there was also mention of a \$20 million expenditure over three or four years; is that right?

**Mr P. PAPALIA:** No. In four years' time on current projection there might be \$20 million unallocated.

**Mr R.S. LOVE:** That is quite likely to remain the case?

**Mr P. PAPALIA:** It is unlikely, actually. What will happen is that I imagine that would diminish as it gets closer because the agency will find reasons to average.

**Mr R.S. LOVE:** Not according to the forward estimates—but anyway.

**Mr P. PAPALIA:** That is right. The forward estimates in four budgets' time is a long way away and there is a lot of activity between now and then.

**Mr R.S. LOVE:** That is good. I have another question on what I assume is the road trauma trust account funding. I refer to page 425, the “Details of Controlled Grants and Subsidies” table and the line item “Government Organisations” under the heading “Road Safety Initiatives”. Can we get a breakdown, maybe as supplementary information, of what that \$48.781 million represents and where it is going?

**Mr P. PAPALIA:** Is the member looking at the line item “Government Organisations”?

**Mr R.S. LOVE:** Yes.

**Mr P. PAPALIA:** Does the member want to know why there is a difference and it is larger than the estimated actual for the previous year?

**Mr R.S. LOVE:** No. I would like a breakdown of the road safety initiatives for government organisations and non-government organisations, which are roughly \$48 million and \$3 million.

[6.20 pm]

**Mr P. PAPALIA:** I am just trying to add up whether this is it. I will get the commissioner to go through the list of grants and perhaps explain where that money has gone.

**Mr A. Warner:** The \$48 million that the member is referring to is grants to state government agencies that are not the Western Australia Police Force and not the Road Safety Commission. That includes Main Roads, which has in the current financial year \$39 million allocated to its programs. The Department of Transport has a bit over \$5 million allocated to it, and that is principally for the costs of administering traffic infringements, the payment of traffic infringements and the processing of demerit points. There is a little extra in there for a cycling reporting tool that it is still developing, which will be very valuable once we get it. It will be an online reporting tool for people to report cycling incidents. The Department of Education gets \$1.7 million, and that is for a school drug education and road safety awareness program that has been running for some time. Various entities within the Health portfolio, including the Department of Health, the East Metropolitan Health Service and the Mental Health Commission, get about \$2.6 million. That funding is for services such as the alcohol interlock treatment and assessment services provided by the Mental Health Commission as part of the alcohol interlock scheme. The East Metropolitan Health Service runs the State Trauma Registry, which is a very important data collection point for us, but it also runs a program around visiting the trauma wards as part of an education campaign to prevent people carrying out risky behaviours.

Then there are the non-government agencies that get money from the road trauma trust account. The Western Australian Local Government Association has a longstanding community engagement program called RoadWise, which is very effective; that is about \$1.9 million. There is also a little over \$1 million for Injury Matters, an organisation that has for some time provided road trauma support services to victims of road crashes. That has also been very successful. There is that, together with the \$39 million allocated to the Western Australia Police Force for the cost of providing traffic enforcement operations, and the \$27 million allocated to the Road Safety Commission for its traditional functions in terms of policy, research and governance, the education and campaign space, and the temporary projects that I listed earlier. That adds up to the \$118 million.

**Ms L. METTAM:** There was a reference to, I think, the P.A.R.T.Y. program. I understand that was put on pause during the COVID pandemic. Can the minister clarify what is happening with that program now? The commissioner referred to it just then. Can the minister explain the pause on that program and when it resumed?

**Mr P. PAPALIA:** I will ask the commissioner to answer.

**Mr A. Warner:** I will have to take that on notice to get the specific dates, but there was a pause, as the member said, because of restrictions on access to wards. It is very much a hands-on, visit-the-wards, see-it-first, confronting program, but it is back up and running. The funding for that has been budgeted to increase this financial year, so I expect it to be up and running. I will have to get that data.

**Mr P. PAPALIA:** What was the member's question again?

**Ms L. METTAM:** I just wanted to confirm when the P.A.R.T.Y. program resumed after the pause.

**Mr P. PAPALIA:** I will take that as a supplementary question: on what date did the P.A.R.T.Y. program resume?

**The CHAIR:** The minister will provide the date when the P.A.R.T.Y. program resumed operation under the auspices of the Road Safety Commission.

[*Supplementary Information No A6.*]

**Ms M.J. DAVIES:** I have raised this with the minister on a number of occasions and I just pricked up my ears because one of the programs that is funded under non-government organisations is the support for trauma program, Injury Matters. I have raised with the minister the Heart Hub South West group in Collie, which is doing a regional-specific program. I wonder whether the minister could explain how it might be able to access non-government organisation funding? Is there an opportunity for it to do that?

**Mr P. PAPALIA:** Injury Matters is specifically for counselling people who have encountered trauma on the roads. It is a specialist body that delivers that counselling. For instance, the member will be familiar with the horrible crashes in Williams last year that impacted on families there, but the whole community was impacted on as a consequence of their knowledge of and close proximity to the family involved. Police also received counselling via that program. It is a specialist program, but Injury Matters is funded by the Road Safety Commission through the road trauma trust account. It makes recommendations to me, and things of that nature will be put to the Road Safety Commission, and whether it is funded is subject to its deliberations. There are a lot of programs of that nature, but Injury Matters is a very specific counselling service with experienced counsellors who deliver services to people who have encountered trauma on the road. It is not a preventive program or anything of that nature; it is actually a treatment and a response to an incident.

**Ms M.J. DAVIES:** I thank the minister. Heart Hub is also a counselling service for those who have been impacted by road trauma. It is not preventive and it is not just a road safety awareness group. That is part of what it does, but a big proportion of what it is attempting to do is to meet with those who have been impacted by road trauma, including family members and police. It has good support from the WA police district superintendent for the south west. The difference is that it is regionally based. One of the comments that has been made to me, particularly from someone who has been instrumental in organising Heart Hub who lost one of her own children, is that even travel to and from Perth by car is now traumatic, so having something based locally is useful, and that is what is offered. I guess I am putting it on the record that it is along similar lines to Injury Matters, but it is a regionally based organisation and there must be some opportunity for assistance.

**Mr P. PAPALIA:** I acknowledge that and I do not dispute that it is a worthy program, but Injury Matters actually goes to the site of the trauma; it does not have people come to it. It was deployed to Williams to deliver its program to people who had been impacted by those crashes. It goes to wherever it is required in the state. That aside, the Road Safety Commission receives proposals from all manner of different organisations and individuals, and that would be an appropriate pathway for Heart Hub to take. That does not mean that it will necessarily be endorsed or funded, but as I said earlier, the money in the road trauma trust account does not sit around; it is mostly spent, and a lot of it has been previously allocated. If possible, the commission would like to do more research funding to determine what initiatives might be undertaken for new innovation, technology or capabilities to reduce the road toll. It would like to have money for that. Unfortunately, a lot of what happens is that a number of programs continue to roll on with annual funding. There is an allocation to Main Roads to support regional roads improvements. There are a lot of other similar allocations prior to the annual deliberations about what else might be funded. It is the body. It is the one to approach because it makes recommendations for that fund and to us.

[6.30 pm]

**Ms L. METTAM:** I refer to page 416 and paragraph 15 under "Road Safety". Reference is made about the results of the mobile safety camera trial. This is in relation to mobile phones, I assume, and compliance of mobile phones. My questions are: What is next? Are we looking at more permanent implementation?

**Mr P. PAPALIA:** This trial is of road safety cameras. This is new technology. They have similar capabilities to those members have witnessed on the freeway, but they are traffic management cameras. That is why they were fitted and operated. These cameras are mobile and can do point-to-point speed calibration or monitoring. They can also identify whether people are using phones or not wearing seatbelts. They are a road safety camera. They have greater capabilities and they are mobile. The trial will be undertaken in the near future, commencing in July. It will be a short, sharp trial to demonstrate their capability and confirm they can do what we hope they will do. I think they are looking at running the trial within 200 kilometres of Perth. The cameras will provide a whole new opportunity for enforcement or deterrence in regions that have not really been subject to that sort of capability in the past. Nowhere has had that capability but not even that degree of effort because a lot of people on remote country roads have not really worried too much about the likelihood of being caught by a camera of this type.

**Ms L. METTAM:** Will there be infringements?

**Mr P. PAPALIA:** There will not be during the trial.

**Ms L. METTAM:** Not during the trial. The trial starts in July —

**Mr P. PAPALIA:** We will socialise it. People will understand that it is underway. We have already done some media on this, announcing it. I hope and we anticipate that it will be a successful trial and then, in the event that we move towards using them operationally, we will have to adjust legislation because the current legislation talks about speed cameras alone, I think. It does not accommodate these other capabilities.

**Ms L. METTAM:** Does the minister anticipate, with the success of the trial, that the cameras may be implemented more permanently along the smart freeway, for example?

**Mr P. PAPALIA:** The smart freeway cameras are different. In the event that the trial of the mobile ones is successful, they have a similar capability in what they detect with people breaking the law around the use of seatbelts, phones and speed. If we have to amend legislation to enable the use of the mobile cameras, it would make sense to look at the other cameras. I cannot say; they are not my portfolio. There would be a lot of consideration around whether those ones would be used. They are just traffic management cameras at the moment. We used images from them when we announced the trial but that was because they are cameras with similar capabilities.

**Mr R.S. LOVE:** Does the minister have any other thoughts on putting cameras in the Northbridge tunnel to prevent hooning in that area, as has been reported?

**Mr P. PAPALIA:** I might get the Commissioner of Police to answer that one.

**Mr C. Dawson:** The Northbridge tunnel, the member may know, is privately operated but we have negotiated with them for quite a number of years. We are actively enforcing hooning and excessive speed. It is not exclusively done by use with the existing cameras, although we will use them evidentially. As the minister already outlined, they were designed for traffic management purposes. Some of these reckless drivers are stupid enough to incriminate themselves by posting it on social media, so we use that as good evidence as well. We will use basically any tool we can to infringe and charge them.

**Mr R.S. LOVE:** Thank you. I think it is very dangerous that they would be using a mobile phone while driving. I have one final question for the Road Safety Commissioner on the Road Safety Commission's role for policy and research. I know that the government introduced fairly recently some new regulation around the use of electronic scooters and e-bikes et cetera, but there is a rapid escalation of quite powerful scooters, which are inevitably going to come in. I know that is a statement and I will perhaps get to a question. Is there a place for the Road Safety Commission to look a little bit wider than just regulation about how to bring in a safe system whereby pedestrians, ordinary bike riders, e-riders, e-scooter riders and cars can all get around together with a safer system?

**Mr P. PAPALIA:** The observation to make is that that is exactly what the regulations do. Prior to the regulations being enacted, there was no regulation of that category of transport, but people were using them. The issue that the member referred to with high-powered e-scooters or e-rideables was totally unregulated. They were not lawful, but it was happening. It is now set out very clearly. There is a speed limit. There is a power limit. There are size limits. There are regulations on where they can be used. They can be used if a person is travelling under 10 kilometres an hour on a footpath but it is under 25 kilometres an hour on a suburban road that has a speed limit of 50 kilometres an hour. All those things are clear in the regulations and they were not prior to the regulations coming into force.

That did a couple of things. Firstly, it set the ground rules. It was a pretty lawless environment. Now, there is an opportunity to educate people and we are doing it and have been since prior to the regulations being enacted. It is a matter of continuing that process. A lot of people out there were using these things before and they were not doing it in a responsible fashion. Now they are breaking the law if they breach these regulations. It also enables business opportunities, as the member has witnessed in just about all his electorates, that were not available to people prior to that regulation. They could not get insurance when they did not have a regulated environment and now they have one. It is not like the use of high-powered e-scooters or tripping them out so they are faster, or whatever, is a new thing. That was happening before but now people are breaking the law if they are caught doing it. People not wearing helmets are breaking the law. Children under 16 years old should not be on those powerful e-scooters. There is another category of scooter that is okay for children, but the ones the member is referring to should not be used by children under 16 years of age. We have to continue the education effort because that has not necessarily penetrated. I can ask the commissioner to contribute as well. The regulation is based on anticipated national standards. At the road safety ministers meeting that the Minister for Transport attended, not me, they agreed some time ago on potential national standards so we could harmonise in advance. We have set our regulations at what the anticipated national standard will be.

[6.40 pm]

**Mr A. Warner:** I think there is an important distinction to be made between the risks from a road safety perspective in terms of the rideshare operators in the regional areas of Bunbury and Esperance and in the trial in the City of Stirling in Perth and the risk associated with privately owned devices. The rideshare operators are regulated and regulate through their mobile phone app so people cannot ride the devices at an unlawful speed. They may reach speeds of over 25 kilometres an hour if they are being ridden down a steep hill, freewheeling a bit, but it is regulated quite well. The biggest risk for rideshare operators is not wearing a helmet, and the police are on to that, certainly in Stirling.

Compared with the private sector market, most people are doing the right thing. We know that; we can see that. But a small minority of people, as the minister mentioned, actively share ways of how to get past the speed-limiting elements when they are sold so that they can go fast. Similar to the hoons through the Northbridge tunnel, some people are posting on social media extreme examples of passing cars in flowing traffic. We have had some active conversations with the police in state traffic around actively enforcing some of that. The risk that these riders face is that they are effectively unlicensed motor vehicles and under the current rules, those devices can be seized and the owners will not get them back.

**Ms L. METTAM:** How many infringements or seizures have been undertaken since the introduction of e-scooters?

**Mr P. PAPALIA:** I do not know. I know that they have been seized because I have seen some that have been seized. If I tell the member to ask a supplementary question about infringements, the officers will have a very short time frame in which they can search for that sort of detail. I know that the infringement management system is being upgraded, but it is not great at the moment. It is not necessarily an easy thing to get for the member. I would prefer that the member put that question on notice. It is not that I do not want to give the information to the member, but we are spending time and money and using resources to upgrade the infringement management system for a reason. That might be difficult. We will get the information for the member if she puts the question on notice.

**Mr R.S. LOVE:** Is there a place where data such as the number of infringements is published regularly? I would have thought that sort of information would be made available.

**Mr P. PAPALIA:** No. We are in the process of transforming our infringement management system to a modern system—a digitised data management-type system that would potentially enable that sort of activity. The sooner that is done, the better we will be able to provide all sorts of information for the purposes of these guys trying to predict where more activity should occur or where more measures to improve road safety might occur. That system would be beneficial. The member has identified what should be the case, but we have legacy systems. They are being improved right now. We are in the middle of a project to lift our capabilities and deliver a much better system. That sort of thing might be something that could be achieved but not right now, because we are talking about combinations of old systems that are very intensive in terms of extracting data.

**Mr R.S. LOVE:** Typewriters.

**Mr P. PAPALIA:** Maybe not. It was not that long ago when officers were writing out tickets. We now have an electronic infringement system that enables our traffic cops to scan a licence, fill out the data on an infringement form and do voice to text on the side of the road, which halves the time taken to give someone a ticket. It has removed all the problems that used to be associated with interpreting handwriting, which was not an insignificant challenge. That has transformed that part of the task. This other management system is more comprehensive than that, and that will be shifted into Transport.

**The CHAIR:** I draw members' attention to the time. We have about 15 minutes before this division has to be concluded. Are there any further questions on road safety? Are there any new questions?

**Ms M.J. DAVIES:** I refer to page 419 of budget paper No 2, volume 2, and "Regional and Remote Policing Services". It is a general question relating to my electorate. I am happy to be corrected, but I feel like there is a very regular turnover of district superintendents.

**Mr P. PAPALIA:** In Northam?

**Ms M.J. DAVIES:** Yes, in Northam. It would be interesting to know how often that role is changed.

**Mr P. PAPALIA:** I refer that question to the deputy commissioner. I am not sure but I am pretty certain that somebody got promoted. That has an impact. I will check. I know my nephew is still out there, so the member has not lost everybody!

**Ms M.J. DAVIES:** That is no criticism of the person in the role. They are all very nice people!

**Mr C. Blanch:** I think the member was referring to the fact that a number of actors were in the role until the latest person, who is a substantive superintendent, was appointed. We have only had the two substantives, including the previous one, a couple of actors in the middle while we went through a promotional round, and now that one has

been in there for probably a year now and he will see out his term. We normally do about three or four years in each period. There has not been a high turnover. It is just the acting in between while we replaced the last one.

**Ms M.J. DAVIES:** What is the term?

**Mr C. Blanch:** It is generally three to four years. They change subject to need and their own family circumstances.

**Mr P. PAPALIA:** It is a sought after location.

**Ms M.J. DAVIES:** It is a great place to live, minister.

**Ms L. METTAM:** I refer to page 417 of budget paper No 2 and “Outcomes and Key Effectiveness Indicators”. The fourth indicator states —

Percentage of priority one and two incidents in the metropolitan area responded to within 12 minutes

Basically, how will the minister anticipate reaching the target of 80 per cent? The minister knows what I am asking for.

**Mr P. PAPALIA:** I am sure the member can probably guess why the target might not have been achieved. I will hand over to the deputy commissioner to give the member some reassurance about how things have changed.

**Mr C. Blanch:** The figure as of today is 79.5 per cent. At the start of this year and certainly with the return of the Operation Tide staff and additional recruits coming out of the school for the 950 program, combined with adjustment of rosters to give a greater 24/7 coverage of police on the front line, we have significantly improved our response times to critical incidents. I am pleased to say that it is tracking upwards. I suspect over the next month or two, we will be well over 80 per cent, which we have been reaching on multiple occasions over the last month.

[6.50 pm]

**Ms M.J. DAVIES:** I have a further question. I am assuming that those key performance indicators are for the metropolitan area. Can I confirm that they are not associated with regional policing? In terms of having to respond within a set time frame, is the best endeavours model used in regional policing, much like we have been talking about with the St John WA contract for ambulances?

**Mr P. PAPALIA:** Not really, because, in the regions, St John has a lot of volunteers. We do not have volunteer police.

**Ms M.J. DAVIES:** I wish I had lots of volunteers in my patch, minister!

**Mr P. PAPALIA:** They do their job; they are professionals. They are not non-professionals. I will ask the deputy commissioner to comment.

**Mr C. Blanch:** In regional WA, we do not measure grades of service like we do in metro, purely because the tyranny of distance can blow out arrival times, but it is best endeavours. Obviously, within the metro district, we have a higher saturation of police stations and travel times, so we measure our grades of service only in metro areas.

**Mr P. PAPALIA:** I will get the deputy commissioner to add, but there is a huge amount of effort right now to employ technology and innovations around the use of technology and couple that with delivery of a lot of the similar sort of support that metro police get in the regions to improve all police outcomes. It may be that the deputy commissioner can give a bit of explanation on that. That will change how policing is delivered in the regions.

**Mr C. Blanch:** Thank you. Yes, we currently have a number of initiatives in place. The first is about communication itself. We are trialling satellite capability on some of our remote police cars. We have full use of our OneForce mobile phones, regardless of whether it is in a 4G or 5G location, so we can backhaul it through satellite. The WA Police Force has partnered with industry experts in the mining, oil and gas industry to give us capabilities that mining uses on a regular basis to support its remote capabilities. We will have live streaming body-worn video, live streaming dash cams and an enhanced drone project. We are working with the Civil Aviation Safety Authority on semi-autonomous drones to go up in the air to give police officers situational awareness, and also those who sit in the State Operations Command Centre live vision of the situation that they may be looking at. Although police officers in their human form will be attending in whatever time it takes to get there, soon we hope to have vision from aircraft or other sensors in the environment to have a look eyes-on so that better decisions can be made by attending police officers, regardless of where they are in the state.

**Mr P. PAPALIA:** The communications thing is going to mean a significant uplift in the capability of, and support for, our regional police officers. Currently, like all of us when we are driving and go out of the phone range, they lose all the benefit that everybody else in the metro area gets from that digital policing, which gives them access to database, situational awareness, all sorts of intelligence support, and direct links to the State Operations Command Centre. If they can achieve that in the regions, it will change a lot of things.

**Ms M.J. DAVIES:** I have a further question. If that dynamic changes, will the minister start talking about introducing those types of KPIs into the regions?



**Mr P. PAPALIA:** I do not know. These are state KPIs. They will always be tempered by the fact that we are so big and have remote localities with a sparse population over a third of the continent, so it is a big challenge, but I think that it will improve the support to the police officers on the ground to enable them to deliver a higher level of support for their communities. Who knows—it may be that if there were greater capability, we may have to apply a different measure. I do not know; I think it is something that these guys will have to recommend to people.

**Mr C. Blanch:** Although it is not a KPI that we measure in regional WA, as the executive, we certainly track attendance times in regional WA. There are so many different factors that may affect arrival time, particularly distance, but also many other factors such as numbers of police, which are far lower in regional WA than they are in metro just because of the very nature of distance. But we do track arrival times for critical incidents. That is a discussion that we have internally, again, every Monday with the executive. If that is a factor, we look at how we can alleviate that. It is managed internally; it is just not a KPI.

**Mr P. PAPALIA:** I know that right now the police are in the midst of assessing the police air wing potential and planning for the future. Increasingly, all the time, there are new capabilities out there that might be acquired to support regional policing and a more rapid response, potentially via air.

**Mr R.S. LOVE:** I refer to page 422 of budget paper No 2, volume 2. A question might have been asked about this before. I refer to two line items in particular. One is the sixth line item under land and buildings infrastructure, “Police Station Upgrade Program 2022–24”, and then further down, under “New works”, there is another police station upgrade program for 2024–28. I just want to ask on behalf of the people of Jurien Bay: is there any program for improvements to that particular brick box?

**Mr P. PAPALIA:** That is very specific! I might ask Mr Pasquale to respond.

**Mr F. Pasquale:** With the current program, we typically try to plan one year in advance, and then the new works obviously picks up from where the first program that the member talked about leaves off. We have not programmed the works that far out. In terms of what we have programmed at the moment, to my knowledge, there is nothing for Jurien Bay that I can share this evening. That is not to say that it is not in the program and not considered.

**Mr R.S. LOVE:** I have a further question. While I have the ear of the Minister for Police and the Commissioner of Police for the next couple of weeks before he makes his departure, would it be appropriate to make a parting gesture and allocate some money towards that particular station? I am sure they would probably invite you up for a fishing expedition or something at some point.

**Mr P. PAPALIA:** That is an attractive proposition!

**Mr R.S. LOVE:** While I am at it, I just put on the record from the electorate of Moore our thanks for your service, commissioner. We wish you all the very best in your future role.

**Mr P. PAPALIA:** Thank you, member. That is noted. In fact, the man sitting behind the commissioner is probably the most important with respect to infrastructure matters, anyway, or capital investment and that sort of thing. That is noted, and I am sure the commissioner would appreciate the opportunity to come and visit; regardless of whether he is able to sort it out in the next couple of weeks, I am sure that the local constabulary would welcome the new Governor to their site.

**The CHAIR:** A little bit on the note that was just struck, I want to make a short statement. A statement was made earlier by a member that may have been interpreted as an imputation that the Commissioner of Police had not been honest previously in his evidence. I have sought advice from the Clerk on that matter. The situation struck me as a little unusual, with the commissioner being both a very senior public servant and the incoming Governor. There is no standing order that applies, but the situation is also unusual because, generally speaking, we do not have advisers in the chamber. I want to take this opportunity to remind members to be careful with their choice of words. I am certain that the commissioner has been through much more rough and tumble than happens in this place and so does not need any protection, but I do expect that members treat all advisers with respect moving forward.

**Mr P. PAPALIA:** Chair, in fairness, I do not think he intended it to be serious. He was in jest.

**The CHAIR:** I think that is right, but I think, Minister for Police, you have made the point many times before that sarcasm and jokes do not show up very well in *Hansard*.

**The appropriation was recommended.**

*Committee adjourned at 6.59 pm*