

Chair; Ms Libby Mettam; Ms Rita Saffioti; Mr Shane Love; Mrs Alyssa Hayden; Mr Vincent Catania; Mr Matthew Hughes; Mr Zak Kirkup; Mrs Jessica Stojkovski

Division 40: Commissioner of Main Roads, \$1 391 503 000 —

Mr T.J. Healy, Chair.

Ms R. Saffioti, Minister for Transport.

Mr P. Woronzow, Acting Director General.

Mr D. Snook, Acting Managing Director.

Mr M. Cammack, Director, Budget and Investment Planning.

Mr P. D'Souza, Acting Executive Director, Finance and Commercial Services.

Mr P. Abromeit, Policy Adviser.

[Witnesses introduced.]

The CHAIR: This estimates committee will be reported by Hansard. The daily proof *Hansard* will be available the following day. It is the intention of the Chair to ensure that as many questions as possible are asked and answered and that both questions and answers are short and to the point. The estimates committee's consideration of the estimates will be restricted to discussion of those items for which a vote of money is proposed in the consolidated account. Questions must be clearly related to a page number, item, program or amount in the current division. Members should give these details in preface to their question. If a division or service is the responsibility of more than one minister, a minister shall be examined only in relation to their portfolio responsibilities.

The minister may agree to provide supplementary information to the committee rather than asking that the question be put on notice for the next sitting week. I ask the minister to clearly indicate what supplementary information she agrees to provide and I will then allocate a reference number. If supplementary information is to be provided, I seek the minister's cooperation in ensuring that it is delivered to the principal clerk by Friday, 30 October 2020. I caution members that if a minister asks that a matter be put on notice, it is up to the member to lodge the question on notice through the online questions system.

I give the call to the member for Vasse.

Ms L. METTAM: I refer to page 613 of budget paper No 2, volume 2, and "Asset Investment Program", "Metropolitan Amenity Walls", to which \$10 million has been committed. Will the minister provide a list of those roads or areas that have already been identified to receive amenity walls from this funding? Will both the residents in the Bayswater area who are affected by the noise associated with the Tonkin Highway gap and residents who have been impacted by the latest NorthLink WA extension project potentially benefit from these amenity walls?

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: Is the member talking about the Tonkin gap project or NorthLink?

Ms L. METTAM: I am referring to both.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: The amenity walls fall within a list of existing noise issues across the network, which we are working through. We will not be able to provide that full list by way of supplementary information. In relation to the specific questions, the Tonkin gap noise walls will be constructed as part of the Tonkin gap project. Significant funds have been allocated to that project. We are working with the community on the type of noise walls that will be built, where they should be located and other noise mitigation issues. It is a tricky area. Some residents have been subjected to noise in the past because they live adjacent to the Tonkin Highway. In a sense, the Tonkin Highway gap creates an opportunity to address some of the historic issues and to prevent the noise from getting worse. We are looking at different types of noise mitigation methods, not just noise walls, which may be a bit of a challenge with some existing infrastructure. We are looking at building noise walls around the new structure. The cost will come out of the Tonkin Highway gap project budget.

In relation to stage 3 of NorthLink, noise monitoring has been undertaken by Main Roads. That was done quicker than normal. Main Roads is contacting the people who have contacted it and the people who are closer to the project who have registered their concerns about or interest in that issue and is arranging to meet with them individually to go through the noise monitoring reports. The outcome of those discussions will determine what noise mitigation is required for those individuals. Also, in that instance, they have a new road that did not exist before. I am not sure what conversations or consultation was had when that road was planned. That is a big issue. It is an issue that occurred with Forrest Highway, for example, when residents did not have a major highway near them but then they did and there were noise implications. As I said, Main Roads will sit down with the affected residents individually and go through the assessments to determine what noise mitigation activity can be undertaken.

[11.00 am]

Ms L. METTAM: Why will the minister not make the outcome of the noise monitoring survey public?

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Ms R. SAFFIOTI: We will, but I think that it is courteous to sit down with the individual landowners and go through the report to get their feedback on it and see what we can do to assist them with noise mitigation when we can. I think the right thing to do is to show the outcome of the report to those who are directly impacted by it first and for them to provide their feedback so that we can work together to help address any of their concerns.

Ms L. METTAM: Is the minister able to provide by way of supplementary information a list of the roads or areas that have already been identified that will receive amenity walls as a result of this funding?

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: That will not have been finalised, so I will not be able to have that information in a week's time, I am sorry, because we are still working through all the issues.

Ms L. METTAM: Will some funds be dedicated to assist those NorthLink WA residents?

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: If required, funds will be allocated, whether from the Main Roads minor works budget or from this budget, but funds will be made available should decisions be taken to provide further noise mitigation.

Mr R.S. LOVE: The minister said that there is a list of roads that potentially may have some noise mitigation. I wrote to the minister quite recently about noise problems on Indian Ocean Drive around Woodridge, Redfield Park and Sovereign Hill Drive. I asked for noise monitoring to occur in that area, but the minister declined on that occasion. I again wrote to the minister to reconsider that decision. Is Indian Ocean Drive one of those roads that is being considered?

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: I do not think so, but I cannot remember whether we looked at conducting further noise monitoring. The view was to not undertake further monitoring, but we can look at it again in the future.

Mr R.S. LOVE: The minister's response mentioned a small piece of asphalt that had been put down near the entry to one of the rural subdivisions, but it is not that section of asphalt that is the culprit; it is the Indian Ocean Drive road safety improvement program, which is basically re-laying the whole of Indian Ocean Drive with new pavement along that section. That is the concern that people have.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: We will follow up and see whether we need to do any further noise monitoring.

Mrs A.K. HAYDEN: I refer to page 603 and the total appropriations under the heading "Appropriations, Expenses and Cash Assets". Can the minister identify where in the budget the funding has been allocated for the design and development works of the intersection of Kargotich and Thomas Roads in Oakford?

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: It is on page 615 under the line item "Minor Works (Includes Black Spot and Urgent Minor Works)".

Mrs A.K. HAYDEN: Can the minister give me a breakdown of the funding by dollar figure and the amount allocated for this project, including whether any federal as well as state funding has been provided for it?

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: We will provide that by way of supplementary information. As I recall, funds have been allocated as part of the black spot program. We will get further information about the funds allocated and the source of funds for the Kargotich and Thomas Road roundabout.

Mrs A.K. HAYDEN: I thank the minister for that. In the table of minor works that the minister pointed to is a breakdown over the years from 2020 through to 2024. Can the minister provide me with the commencement date of construction and whether a contract has been awarded or gone out to tender?

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: We will provide by way of supplementary information details on the construction of the Kargotich and Thomas Road roundabout.

[Supplementary Information No A18.]

Mrs A.K. HAYDEN: For some clarification, is that a second supplementary information number or will that be part of the first one, because I did not get a number for the first one?

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: It is after the first one. We will provide the source of funding, the amount of funding and the predicted construction timetable.

The CHAIR: It is all under the one supplementary information number.

Mrs A.K. HAYDEN: I thank the minister. Can the minister advise me whether land acquisition is required and whether any consultation has been undertaken to date?

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: I am not aware of those details, but I suspect that some land might be required. We do not have those details yet. We are still doing the investigations.

Mrs A.K. HAYDEN: The minister does not have that information yet. I refer to the minister's joint media release with the Premier on 11 June in which the minister said that this was underway to improve the intersection and that the project was set to commence in 2021. Is it still on the same time frame?

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: What is the member referring to?

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Mrs A.K. HAYDEN: I am referring to the minister's media release of 11 June.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: What does it say?

Mrs A.K. HAYDEN: It says that the design and development works are underway —

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: For?

Mrs A.K. HAYDEN: For Kargotich Road. Would the minister like me to read it out in full?

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: Yes.

Mrs A.K. HAYDEN: It reads —

Design and development work is also underway to improve safety at the intersection of Kargotich Road, which was listed as a State Black Spot in 2018.

The project, set to commence construction next year, —

The media release is dated June 2020, so we can assume that is 2021 —

will see installation of a new roundabout.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: That sounds correct.

Mr V.A. CATANIA: I refer page 604 of budget paper No 2, volume 2 and the seventh significant issue impacting the agency. Indulge me if this is not the correct division to ask this question. I presented to Parliament a petition on road signage that was signed by over 5 000 Western Australians to inquire into how road signage can deliver better road safety. The petition referred to the number of people who have lost their lives in incidents and accidents that have occurred, particularly in regional WA, because of the impact of road signage being blown down or not being adequate for the conditions that lay ahead. The minister agreed to hold a formal inquiry outside the Parliament process. I want to know how that is progressing, because it has been a while since the petition was presented to Parliament. Who will be on that inquiry and will industry be represented on a panel to provide information to make sure that we get the best practices and outcomes possible for a safer road network?

[11.10 am]

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: We are trying to finalise who will chair the group that will undertake the review. I have indicated to the member previously that industry will be represented, which I support, on the relevant task force, working group or whatever it is when a decision is finally made. We are trying to get someone who is independent of government. We are working on that. Some names were put forward but they were not suitable. Hopefully, we will finalise that in the next two or three weeks.

Mr V.A. CATANIA: Will the task force or group be formed and the chair announced prior to Parliament rising?

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: I suspect so; absolutely.

Mr M. HUGHES: I refer to page 615 of budget paper No 2, Main Roads' asset investment program, and specifically the total cost figure. I note that expenditure in the last year, 2019–20, was \$1.256 billion. Now that the minister has overseen the funding and delivery of Main Roads projects for a full three financial years, can she advise how the value of road construction delivered by Main Roads last year, and in the last three years, compares with that of the Barnett–Grylls government, which had budgeted to deliver for those years in its last set of forward estimates, which were published in the 2016 budget year?

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: I thank the member for Kalamunda. It is safe to say that this is unprecedented spending on roads throughout regional and metropolitan WA. We have never before seen such a vast array of road projects and number of contracts, particularly in regional WA. We wanted to, and I think we are doing it, focus on a number of regional road projects that had stalled and regional road safety. We want to focus on the many major regional road projects that have never been delivered, such as the Albany ring-road; the Bunbury Outer Ring Road; the Tom Price–Karratha road, which is Manuwarra Red Dog Highway; and the Great Northern Highway and Kimberley road projects. We will have more news on regional road safety soon. We have already committed \$100 million this financial year to regional road safety improvements, the widening of regional roads and the installation of audible edge and centre lines to improve safety. That project is underway. Of course, we received further funds in the federal budget and we are hoping to make further announcements about that soon. It is important because there has been commentary about what is happening in the city but there has not been much reflection of what is happening in regional WA. I looked at what the last Liberal–National government budget predicted for regional road spending in the forward estimates and compared it with our actual delivery. The numbers are incredible. The expectation was that in the 2017–18 financial year the former government would spend \$439 million in regional WA; we spent \$484 million. The former government's expectation, or forecast, was that in 2018–19 it would spend \$192 million on road spending in regional WA. We spent \$628 million. Again, the forecast was \$192 million, but we spent \$628 million. The former government's estimates for 2019–20—the year just passed—show an allocation

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of \$139 million on regional road projects, but we spent \$653 million on regional road projects. We are very proud of our regional road spending—very proud. We are working with local governments and the federal government to spend record amounts. Compared with the forecast of the former government, in the last budget year alone, we spent \$500 million more than it expected to spend in regional WA.

Mr M. HUGHES: Given the commitment to regional roads, can the minister specifically comment on the Exmouth roads package —

Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP: That is very specific to Kalamunda!

The CHAIR: Thank you.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: It is, because he is supportive of regional tourism and regional road safety.

Mr M. HUGHES: — and how it will improve access and amenities for tourists while also increasing road safety in Exmouth?

Several members interjected.

The CHAIR: Thank you, members.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: They are so nasty. Listen to them.

The CHAIR: Minister, please reply to the question.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: There is an allocation of \$20 million for Exmouth roads, including Yardie Creek Road and Minilya–Exmouth Road. I hope to visit Exmouth very soon to look at how we will roll out that road safety package. As the member for Kalamunda knows, promoting regional tourism and regional road safety should be a priority for every government. I am really glad that the member has an interest in regional road safety. Of course, road safety in the peri-urban areas of Kalamunda is also a massive priority for the member for Kalamunda. We are working to include projects such as the Roe Highway—Kalamunda Road interchange, for example, to help ease congestion and promote road safety throughout the member for Kalamunda’s electorate.

Mr V.A. CATANIA: For clarification, of the regional roads money that is being spent, how much of it is federal government funding? The minister talked about the Tom Price–Karratha road, but the federal government put \$235 million into that road. She also talked about the Minilya–Exmouth Road—I am glad that she mentioned it—but \$16 million came from the federal government after the federal Minister for Infrastructure, Transport and Regional Development, Hon Michael McCormack, visited Exmouth and saw the road for himself and got it on the agenda. That \$20 million, of which the state government put in \$4 million, is still not enough to fix those roads. The minister failed to mention that that \$4 million has been allocated to reroute the road across the lighthouse for a tourism development, which I fully support because it is desperately needed in Exmouth. It is my understanding that that money will fall short of what is needed to complete the road. Will there be any further money in the budget for the rerouting of the road around the lighthouse? It is my understanding that there is no money for Yardie Creek Road—in fact, it is Yardie road because “yardie” means creek—even though one million-plus visitors go down that road each year.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: I thank the member for that question. I will address it in two parts. The first part acknowledged that the state has been very successful in negotiating funds from the commonwealth. It is important to note that in the Liberal–National government’s last budget of 2016–17, there was a federal Liberal government. I do not know why the former Liberal government could not secure funds. The only thing that changed from 2016 to 2020 was the change in state government. The former state Liberal government could not get any funds for regional roads from a federal Liberal government. I do not know why that is the case.

Several members interjected.

The CHAIR: I will allow a follow-up question. Thank you very much, members. Minister, please finish.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: The member wanted to make a point about the funding split for regional roads. I am making the point that when the former government did its last budget of 2016–17, there was a federal Liberal–National government and a state Liberal–National government. Now, there is a state Labor government and we have more funds for regional roads. It has been hugely successful of the state Labor government to negotiate that.

In answer to the second part of the question, we are always looking at allocating further funds to that area. We are working on proposals and projects to further improve road safety and road conditions throughout the Exmouth region.

Ms L. METTAM: I refer to page 614 and the asset investment program, specifically the line item “Tonkin Highway Corridor Upgrades—Tonkin Highway Gap; Grade Separations at Hale, Welshpool and Kelvin Roads; and Stage 3 Extension”. Will the minister provide a breakdown of the cost of each of the separate components of the project, together with the amount of commonwealth funding for each project? How much of the project costs relate to works

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necessary for Metronet and can the minister also confirm that the project costs have increased by \$230 million since the midyear review?

[11.20 am]

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: I think information about the Tonkin Highway gap project was contained in a media release. From my recollection, the contract price was \$400 million and the project price was \$500 million. Information on how much of that project relates to the Morley–Ellenbrook line was contained in a media release on Sunday. I think it is \$178 million. The government is going through procurement processes and we will release the individual costs. As I said, there is information in two media statements—we can get copies for the member—that identify the contract, the total budget cost and the cost attributable to the Morley–Ellenbrook line.

Ms L. METTAM: Can the minister confirm that this project has blown out by \$230 million since the midyear review? Will the minister also explain why the cost has blown out?

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: As I said, the project changed in scope to include works associated with the Morley–Ellenbrook line, so it is self-evident why the price has increased to include those works.

Ms L. METTAM: Was the minister not aware that those works were required as part of the Morley–Ellenbrook line at the time of the midyear review?

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: We are always looking at how we can maximise efficiency in delivering our projects and at how we can manage contracts to get better value for money for taxpayers and minimise disruption for residents. That is why decisions were made to include some of the facilitating works as part of the Tonkin gap project.

Ms L. METTAM: Is the minister saying that a cost blowout is creating value for money for the taxpayer and providing a greater deal of efficiency?

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: No, I am not saying that. The member does not understand the budget numbers. I have outlined what those budget numbers are. I am not saying that at all.

Mrs A.K. HAYDEN: Further to the question about the Tonkin Highway corridor upgrades, of the \$1.39 billion allocated across the forward estimates to 2024, can the minister indicate what dollar figure has been allocated to the Tonkin Highway stage 3 extension within this budget paper and identify the amount and the year?

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: It was approximately \$500 million.

Mrs A.K. HAYDEN: And the year?

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: It is across forward estimates.

Mrs A.K. HAYDEN: I just want to clarify that. We know that it is a \$505 million project with \$404 from the federal government thanks to Andrew Hastie, a fantastic federal local member, and \$101 million from the state government. Can the minister advise where under that \$1.391 billion the \$505 million is allocated and under which budget year between 2020–21 through to 2023–24?

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: It is over the forward estimates. It is fully contained in those forward estimates.

Mrs A.K. HAYDEN: Is the minister agreeing to not advise which year?

The CHAIR: Sorry, member, the minister is still replying. I gave you the call too early.

Mrs A.K. HAYDEN: I did not hear her over you giving me the call, Chair.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: To explain those years, it is 2020–21, 2021–22, 2022–23 and 2023–24. They are the years it is allocated against.

Mrs A.K. HAYDEN: Can the minister tell me where the \$505 million sits in each year and when the first dollar has been allocated within these forward estimates? I do not want to be told “over the forward estimates”. I want to know when the governmental allocated the funds for the Tonkin Highway extension.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: It is funding allocated now because we are doing the preliminary works and site investigations now. Funding is being spent now. We are negotiating with the commonwealth on the approval and we want to get it as soon as possible. This is a good chance to correct the record on this, because I think there was a tweet that said there was no funding in the forward estimates for this project, but it is all in the forward estimates.

Mrs A.K. HAYDEN: That is why I am asking the minister to identify it, but she cannot identify in which year the government will start. That is why there is a lot of uncertainty in the community. Could the minister simply point to which year the government will spend money on the Tonkin Highway extension and when she expects that money to be finalised? When will the construction be finished? Will it be within the forward estimates up to 2024?

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Ms R. SAFFIOTI: Yes, that is what I said. It would be within the forward estimates. We are spending money now. As I recall, under the previous Liberal Party plan, it was not required until 2050.

Mrs A.K. HAYDEN: But the minister cannot tell me where the government has it?

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: I have said that the funding is wholly within the forward estimates, as opposed to what the member said.

Mrs A.K. HAYDEN: My understanding is that the minister is now committing that the Tonkin Highway will be completed by 2024. If the government is going to be using all of the money by then, it has to be completed. Has the land that needs to be acquired been acquired? If not, why not? Has the consultation process started and can I please get detail on that?

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: I think we answered before the question about the land that has been acquired. I will see whether I can get further information. Some land has been acquired and will continue through the approvals process. We are waiting for federal government approval and then we can finalise the relevant land acquisition.

Mrs A.K. HAYDEN: Can the minister advise how many landowners still need to be consulted with and the land that needs to be acquired?

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: I think there are three remaining landowners.

Mrs A.K. HAYDEN: How many landowners in total had land acquired for this project?

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: I am just getting more information. There are three remaining. By way of supplementary information, we can tell the member whose land has been purchased.

The CHAIR: Will the minister reword exactly what she will provide?

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: I will provide by supplementary information the land that has been purchased and the land remaining to be purchased.

[Supplementary Information No A19.]

Mrs A.K. HAYDEN: Approximately how much will the land acquisition cost as part of this project? Does the minister have a dollar value on the land acquisition?

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: We will include that in the supplementary information provided for the previous answer.

The CHAIR: That information will be included in supplementary information A19.

Mrs A.K. HAYDEN: I understand the project is now under a controlled action and that the state government had a deadline to provide the required documents to the federal government by August 2020. Have all those documents been sent to the federal government and are now completed?

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: We are providing those documents to the federal government. By way of supplementary information, we can advise when they were sent.

[Supplementary Information No A20.]

Mrs A.K. HAYDEN: The minister said that she is still providing the documents, so has the government not met the August 2020 deadline?

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: I said that by way of supplementary information I would give the member the date on which information was provided.

Mrs A.K. HAYDEN: Great; thank you.

Thomas Road between Tonkin Highway and South Western Highway is under local government management. Obviously a lot of works will be required on Thomas Road with the Tonkin Highway upgrade and further upgrades at the South Western Highway end. Is there any plan for the state government to take Thomas Road over for change of management?

[11.30 am]

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: It is something that will be considered. Each year, the state considers all different roads that are put forward, and transactions are undertaken wherein the state takes over high-volume roads and I suspect that in future that would become something that we would consider.

Mrs A.K. HAYDEN: Can the minister confirm whether she has met with the local shire, the Shire of Serpentine–Jarrahdale, to start these discussions and does she have a date in mind?

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: I have recently met with the shire to discuss the Byford rail station and the road improvements across the suburb, so we meet regularly with the Shire of Serpentine–Jarrahdale to discuss its road and rail needs.

The CHAIR: Further question, member for Darling Range.

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Mrs A.K. HAYDEN: It is not a further question; I am just trying to get an answer to my first one. Has the minister actually met with the shire about the change of management for Thomas Road and has a date been set?

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: Each year we consider the role and nature of roads. As I said, the Shire of Serpentine–Jarrahdale has a significant demand and request because nothing was done for eight and a half years. Under the previous government, projects such as the Byford rail extension was not planned to start until 2050. The Tonkin Highway extension was not being considered until 2050. There are a lot of issues to work through because there is a lot of work and a lot of funds allocated —

Mrs A.K. Hayden interjected.

The CHAIR: Member! The minister will reply and then you can ask further questions.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: There is a lot of work and a lot of challenges because nothing was done for eight and a half years.

Mrs A.K. Hayden interjected.

The CHAIR: Members! Thank you.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: There are challenges and there are a lot of issues to address, but we are confident. We have over \$1 billion of infrastructure spend through that whole area. There is a lot of work to do and we love the fact that we are spending money in what was a much neglected region.

Mrs A.K. HAYDEN: Obviously, the minister has not discussed this with the shire because she would not answer that question. If the minister has not discussed it with the shire and major works are happening on Thomas Road, surely as a responsible government, considering that it has not spent one cent in the seat of Darling Range since the government's disgraceful member took office —

The CHAIR: Member!

Mrs A.K. HAYDEN: — and then left, when will the minister have a conversation with the shire about taking over the management of Thomas Road? It is a major route with a high volume of vehicles and a lot of work has been proposed, under this government, to be done sometime over the next 20 years.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: As I said, we have had constant discussions. Honestly, over eight and a half years, nothing was spent in that shire by the previous government. We have over \$1 billion of infrastructure, so there are a lot of issues to talk about such as the Byford rail extension, the Thomas Road improvements —

Mrs A.K. HAYDEN: You have not even delivered the first one—the Tonkin Highway extension. You promised that in 2017 and you have not done that.

The CHAIR: Member, the minister is replying to your question.

Mrs A.K. HAYDEN: No, she is not.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: As I recall, the previous government committed to it in 2013 and then the next Minister for Transport said that it was not something that the government was going to pursue.

Mrs A.K. HAYDEN: You are in government, minister. What are you doing for the people of Darling Range? You have not delivered one cent.

The CHAIR: Member, the minister is replying to your question.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: The previous government —

Mrs A.K. HAYDEN: You are in government; you have done nothing.

The CHAIR: Member!

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: The previous government delivered nothing for eight and a half years. Here we are, planning works and building stuff. Honestly, it is an embarrassment for the previous government, and that is why Hugh Jones is getting good support out there because he has obviously agitated somebody.

Mrs A.K. HAYDEN: The people of Darling Range are frustrated —

Mrs J.M.C. STOJKOVSKI: With you!

Mrs A.K. HAYDEN: With you!

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: No. That is not what I hear!

The CHAIR: Members! Thank you very much! Members, the member for Darling Range has the call and is asking a follow-up question and then we will go to a new question.

Mrs A.K. HAYDEN: Thank you. The minister referred me to the freight rail realignment for South Western Highway being —

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Several members interjected.

The CHAIR: Minister! Members!

Mrs A.K. HAYDEN: Are you listening, minister?

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: Yes.

Mrs A.K. HAYDEN: I do not think you are.

The CHAIR: Please ask your question, member for Darling Range.

Mrs A.K. HAYDEN: During questions in the Public Transport Authority division, the minister referred me to Main Roads for the freight rail realignment under the Tonkin Highway corridor upgrade, so I will ask those questions here because the minister has her advisers with her now. Can the minister advise how much money has been allocated for the freight rail realignment for south west rail and over what years?

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: We are going through the planning study and as we have no decision yet on the route, those funds will be part of the overall budget for the Tonkin Highway extension. We will go through all that work but because we have not decided on the freight alignment route, those issues are still being considered as part of the consultation.

Mrs A.K. HAYDEN: For confirmation, has no funding been allocated in this budget for the freight line?

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: That is incorrect. What the member is saying —

Mrs A.K. HAYDEN: No, I am asking.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: No, the member is incorrect. I have told her the answer.

Mrs A.K. HAYDEN: Well, can you provide the —

The CHAIR: Members! Members, just pause for a second. The minister is replying. There are further questions. I think the member for Kingsley has a new question and then you have a new question, member for Darling Range.

Mrs A.K. HAYDEN: Thank you.

Ms L. METTAM: I have a question.

The CHAIR: Is it a follow-up question to this one?

Ms L. METTAM: No. I have a new question.

The CHAIR: Okay. One follow-up question to this one, which is the original question from the member for Vasse that we are still on.

Mrs A.K. HAYDEN: It is just a simple, simple question. How much money has been allocated for the freight line—what is the dollar value—and in what year?

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: It is part of the \$505 million.

Several members interjected.

The CHAIR: Members!

Mrs J.M.C. STOJKOVSKI: Minister, I refer to page 612 of budget paper No 2, under the heading “Transforming Freeways—Mitchell Freeway Corridor”. I know the minister is aware that the other Labor members in the northern suburbs and I have been advocating strongly and loudly to her for this over the last number of years. Can the minister outline how the government’s investment in the Mitchell Freeway corridor will ease congestion for residents across our northern suburbs?

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: Again, it is an area that was neglected under the previous government. I cannot remember much happening along the Mitchell Freeway then, so we have a lot of work happening now. One example is an allocation of \$100 million for the smart freeway project on the Mitchell Freeway, which includes lights at 16 ramps. Members know how well this smart freeway works, which was criticised by Liberal Party members, who, as I recall, also attacked the contractor, BMD. The government has allocated \$100 million for the smart freeway project along the Mitchell Freeway for the 16 ramps from Hester Avenue to Vincent Street. It is incredible. We will make sure that the congestion that we reduced on the Kwinana Freeway can be replicated on the Mitchell Freeway.

I thank the team at Main Roads for their work on the Kwinana Freeway and the smart freeways projects. It is one of those projects that people stop me at the kids’ sports and everywhere to say thank you for the smart freeway because it has saved them so much time on a day-to-day basis, and we want to make sure that people in the northern suburbs benefit, too.

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The widening of the Mitchell Freeway as part of the Hodges Drive–Hepburn Avenue project is another project that I know is dear to the member’s heart. We will be constructing that around the same time as the smart freeways to make sure we minimise disruption.

Another project is the extension of Mitchell Freeway to Romeo Road, which will really help benefit everyone in that northern corridor. I note that my good friend the member for Butler and the member for Wanneroo, who has just walked in, are quite interested in that one. We also have transformational projects along the Yanchep rail line that will completely change the lives of people living in that corridor.

Ms L. METTAM: Can the minister advise when the tenders will be announced for the smart freeways project? When will work commence? What is the anticipated completion date?

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: I think we can start the procurement process at the end of this year. I suspect that the works will take between two and three years, which is what I would expect them to take. But we will also do it alongside the Hodges Drive to Hepburn Avenue widening project so that we can maximise the benefit.

Ms L. METTAM: I refer to the line item that refers to the Hodges Drive–Hepburn Avenue project. Given that this project has been badged as part of the smart freeways initiative, is this likely to cause further delays to the commencement of the Hodges Drive–Hepburn Avenue widening project?

[11.40 am]

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: We think that it would be sensible to do them together. We do not want to go in, do major works, leave, and then come back to do more major works. Therefore, we want to deliver these projects together. We will award the Hodges Drive–Hepburn Avenue project tender late this year. We will not hold up the Hodges Drive to Hepburn Avenue project; we will bring forward the Mitchell Freeway smart freeways initiative.

It would have been better to have timed those two programs together, but different parts may be delivered at different times. The idea is to schedule the program of works and do the works together to minimise disruption, and not leave and come back again. That is what we did, for example, as part of the Kwinana Freeway widening project. We incorporated parts of the Metronet Thornlie–Cockburn Link works so that we would not have to come back later. Where we can, we minimise disruption by timing the work of projects together.

Ms L. METTAM: Can the minister confirm when she anticipates the Hodges Drive–Hepburn Avenue project will be completed?

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: We are awarding it in January, so we will have it completed within two years.

Mrs A.K. HAYDEN: I refer to page 615 and the item near the bottom of the table, “METRONET–Byford Rail Extension–Thomas Road Bridge”. An amount of \$51.961 million has been allocated over the budgets from 2020–21 through to 2023–24. Can the minister provide a breakdown of that cost—how much is state and how much is federal funding, and how much is allocated to the bridge over Thomas Road?

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: The estimated total cost of the Thomas Road bridge is \$51 million. That is the amount. What was the second part of the question?

Mrs A.K. HAYDEN: Can the minister please provide the breakdown of state and federal funding, and how much will be allocated to the bridge?

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: It says —

Mrs A.K. HAYDEN: Is that the full amount for the bridge?

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: Yes, it is \$9 million for the bridge. It is in the allocation. The federal government has given us a pool of money for the Byford rail extension, so I suspect we will just use that pool of money. It is about 50–50 for the Byford rail extension, so it is about half of that.

Mrs A.K. HAYDEN: I note that \$51.961 million has been allocated to the Thomas Road bridge, but that there is no further funding in this budget for the Byford rail extension.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: That is incorrect.

Mrs A.K. HAYDEN: Can the minister point to where in the budget there is funding for the Byford rail extension?

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: As I said before, under part 9, for projects that are under development—I think the member was sitting there so I am sure she would have heard it—funding is allocated as part of a pool of funds. The Morley–Ellenbrook line, the Midland rail station, the level crossing renewals and all those projects are put under a pool of funding and that pool of funding is then distributed.

Mrs A.K. HAYDEN: In a media release in August the minister said that the works would start in November this year. Considering there are only eight days left in October, can the minister explain in detail what works will commence on site for the Thomas Road bridge?

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Ms R. SAFFIOTI: I will announce that when we come out to turn that sod.

Mrs A.K. HAYDEN: It is great that the minister will announce it like she announced the bridge, but does the minister not think that the people who live along that road should be consulted and know exactly what will happen in eight days' time that will affect their homes?

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: They have been consulted and they will continue to be consulted. This gives me a chance to clarify a comment made by the member for Darling Range in that area. She said that homes would be bulldozed—I think that was the quote. Yet again, that is another baseless accusation and another mistruth. We could spend the whole of estimates clarifying those statements, but I do not think people would find that enjoyable. No, we are not bulldozing homes. There is a portion of land, I think about one metre wide—I will have to clarify that.

Mrs A.K. HAYDEN: It is 10 metres by 200 metres.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: Yes. I think the member's colleague the member for East Metropolitan Region, Hon Donna Faragher, brought in a petition against that landowner on a particular issue. But we are consulting on this matter. We are not bulldozing homes. We are consulting with the affected landowner and all landowners in that area. We have done doorknocking and continued consultation so that people are aware of what is happening.

Mrs A.K. HAYDEN: Through supplementary —

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: That property —

Mrs A.K. HAYDEN: I was talking. Who has the call?

The CHAIR: Can you ask the question, member for Darling Range.

Mrs A.K. HAYDEN: Can the minister provide, by supplementary information, the time line of consultation? I note that a document appeared on the website the other day, after the announcement, that the minister had started consultation. Consultation has been very short and quick. As the minister said, she will not be providing details on the project. The community is very upset about the impact of a bridge on Larson Road and Marri Grove Primary School. Can the minister please advise what consultation she had done, and whether the department was made well aware, prior to the minister's announcement in August, of the project and what works would be underway?

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: I will answer that. In relation to consultation, as members know, we promised a Byford rail line.

Mrs A.K. HAYDEN: This is a bridge.

The CHAIR: Member, the minister will reply.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: Because the former government did not build anything for eight and a half years, the member for Darling Range does not understand that when rail lines are built, bridges have to be built and other associated civil works need to be done. We cannot just build a rail line. We committed to the Byford rail line.

I recall the member for Darling Range and the Leader of the Opposition standing near the Denny Avenue level crossing, calling on us to hurry up and build the project. "Get on with the project", is what I heard. I think we made a pretty clear commitment that we would build the Byford rail extension, so we have been working on a plan for that extension. As part of extending an electrified rail line to anywhere, level crossings have to be addressed. That is part of the Office of National Rail Safety Regulator's national safety requirements and the operability. A lot of work is required for the removal of level crossings. As a part of that, work was undertaken to identify the Thomas Road work, and a commitment was made to remove that level crossing and build a bridge over that rail line. We went and individually doorknocked everyone involved in that area. Some people do not support it. I totally understand that, because people do not like change; it is in an area of rural living and it is a change. But Byford is a growing community with enormous infrastructure demands. Some people do not support it and some do. There have been claims that homes will be bulldozed, which is totally incorrect. There is one affected landowner. We are trying to do what we can to make sure that no property is acquired, but that is still up for further discussion and further planning, particularly with Western Power.

Larson Road is another interesting road on which we will be doing further work as part of the planning for the rest of that project. We are also consulting with Marri Grove Primary School. There will also be changes to local road networks. That has happened with every major road project across the metropolitan area. For example, when stage 1 of NorthLink WA was done, there was an impact on local access; with stage 2, there were changes to the road networks in Bennett Springs, Ballajura, Noranda and Morley. Landowners' access to local roads was affected by the work on the Wanneroo Road–Ocean Reef Road intersection and the Wanneroo Road–Joondalup Drive intersection. We try to work through and manage those things, and offer other improvements across the local road network to support connectivity.

We know these changes are difficult for some people, particularly those who enjoy the current rural amenity, but we made this major commitment in 2017. The opposition supported it then and asked the government to do the work more quickly. There is also a view that we need to keep going and create as many jobs as possible. We support that. This project will create jobs, but it is also an essential part of the Byford rail extension.

Extract from *Hansard*

[ASSEMBLY ESTIMATES COMMITTEE A — Thursday, 22 October 2020]

p382b-391a

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Mrs A.K. HAYDEN: A yes or no answer, minister: has an environmental assessment been done over the area for the Thomas Road bridge?

[11.50 am]

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: Yes.

Mrs A.K. HAYDEN: Can I get a copy of that through supplementary information?

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: Can the member put that on notice?

The appropriation was recommended.

Meeting suspended from 11.49 to 11.56 am