

**Division 39: Commissioner of Main Roads, \$2 092 638 000—**

Mr D.A.E. Scaife, Chair.

Ms R. Saffioti, Minister for Transport.

Mr P. Woronzow, Director General, Department of Transport.

Mr J. Erceg, Managing Director.

Mr P. D'Souza, Chief Financial Officer.

Mr L. Coci, Managing Director, Office of Major Infrastructure Delivery.

Mr D. Snook, Chief Operating Officer.

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

Mr P. Laing, Senior Policy Adviser.

[Witnesses introduced.]

**The CHAIR:** The estimates committees will be reported by Hansard and the daily proof 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 those details. Some divisions are the responsibility of more than one minister. Ministers shall be examined only 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 noon on Friday, 2 June 2023. If a minister suggests that a matter be put on notice, members should use the online questions on notice system to submit their questions.

I give the call to the member for Roe.

**Mr P.J. RUNDLE:** I refer to page 599 and the line item “Other Works in Progress: Albany Highway—Kelmescott to Williams Pavement Rehabilitation and Hotham River Bridge Replacement”. Has the minister been for a drive to Williams in the last few months?

**Ms R. SAFFIOTI:** Not recently, no.

[10.50 am]

**Mr P.J. RUNDLE:** Can the minister outline what the \$6 million allocation in that budget year will achieve?

**Ms R. SAFFIOTI:** The \$6 million will rehabilitate 11.4 kilometres of pavement in various sections between Kelmescott and Williams to remove sections of road readily subject to pavement failures, including shoving and rutting, which will improve safety and reduce ongoing maintenance.

**Mr P.J. RUNDLE:** I am pleased to see the new bridge go in at Crossman. A very comprehensive job is being done there over a long period. As the minister knows, I have recently been in touch with her about the new works just north of Crossman and the very deep trenching in the road with those new works. We have seen a couple of accidents with road trains and the like. I have a real concern about smaller vehicles as well. What is the activity level of Main Roads Western Australia when it comes to something like the massive trenches in the road north of Crossman? What is the regime?

**Ms R. SAFFIOTI:** I followed that up after the member’s inquiry. We spoke about the issue. We are looking at trying to allocate some funds through the maintenance budget to address that issue.

**Mr P.J. RUNDLE:** I appreciate that, but what is the procedure for Main Roads when something like that is discovered? Will it be fenced off or how does it work? From my understanding, it seems to take quite a long time for Main Roads to react.

**Ms R. SAFFIOTI:** I will refer that to Mr John Erceg.

**Mr J. Erceg:** Thank you for the question. We undertake inspections of the road network regularly so we have inspectors who are monitoring the conditions and inspecting. As the member pointed out, failures occur from time to time and sometimes they accelerate more quickly than we would like. Normal procedure is to take some action initially to identify the hazard through signage and potentially make some temporary speed reductions, which I understand has occurred in parts of the section the member referred to. We then follow it up with some routine maintenance activity in the short term. The nominal treatment would be something like cutting off the

shoving that has occurred and undertaking some temporary patching to try to keep it in a safe condition. It may remain under a temporary reduced speed. We would then follow up with planned works. That may be planned pavement repairs, which we typically undertake on a larger scale across the network through a pavement repair contract. It would normally occur in the drier months of the year so there may be a delay until that occurs in the upcoming summer.

**Mr P.J. RUNDLE:** I brought this up last year on a different section of road between Bannister and Armadale. When new pavement works are done, we all understand there is inconvenience, but there seems to be another level of inconvenience for another few months when we have to repair new work. Is there a tightening up of procedure or inspection for new works that are done?

**Ms R. SAFFIOTI:** Sorry, what does the member mean in tightening up?

**Mr P.J. RUNDLE:** Work on various areas on that road has been done by contractors, whoever they might be, and it seems to fail. Then we have another three, four or five months of inconvenience to repair failed works.

**Ms R. SAFFIOTI:** More generally, particularly down south, there was a lot of extreme weather over the past year with rains. With no disrespect to any of the contractors involved, our movement to bring in-house maintenance and contracting will assist us in managing those types of works. Bringing it in-house will mean we have a lot more expertise and we will not be so reliant on contractors for the work that is undertaken. Reskilling Main Roads or bringing back skills in-house will help to manage that in the future. The great southern is not yet in-house. The wheatbelt was first, then the midwest. Again, with no disrespect to any of the contractors, it is all about trying to make sure we have as much expertise within Main Roads as possible to help manage these contracts.

Of course, there has been a high volume of activity over the past couple of years, which we have never seen before. It has stretched the capacity and, in many instances, has probably stretched the working window into times when the weather has been a bit more inclement than we would have liked.

**Dr D.J. HONEY:** What is the inspection regime? I have commented on this before. I have travelled on that road regularly, in fact for my entire life. The quality of construction is appalling. I would say that every bypass lane that has been put in has failed on that road. Within a short period, there is major rutting. What is the inspection regime by Main Roads during construction of those roads? Is there one, or is it left entirely to the contractor?

**Ms R. SAFFIOTI:** I will refer that to Mr John Erceg.

**Mr J. Erceg:** With contract works, the normal practice is for us to have a contract management team from the Main Roads side that is responsible. It would be normal contract management practices with a superintendent and appropriate representatives who would monitor the works and interact with the contractor in the course of the works. That is from the contracts side. Beyond that, in a broader sense, I go back to my earlier comments about regular inspections being undertaken across the road network for the purpose of monitoring the road's condition, picking up defects, and prioritising and scheduling maintenance activities and responses. The frequency of those inspections will vary depending on the type of road. Certainly, for more prominent highways such as Albany Highway, I would expect there would be weekly inspections undertaken on a road of that calibre. For other roads with a lesser volume of traffic, they might be undertaken over a longer period but that is the nature of the inspection regime.

[Mr S.J. Price took the chair.]

**Dr D.J. HONEY:** Minister, I understand the inspection regime but that is after the horse has bolted, so to speak. For example, with the failure just mentioned that occurred only a very short period after the roadworks was completed, does Main Roads recover moneys from the contractors or does it retain money for those contractors and not pay? Is the contractor made to pay for it or does the government and hence the taxpayer pick up the cost for this shoddy work?

**Ms R. SAFFIOTI:** I will refer that to Mr John Erceg.

[11.00 am]

**Mr J. Erceg:** It is common practice to have in our contracts what is called “the defects liability period” and provisions for the contractor to remedy or rectify defects that occur after the completion of works. That is the common practice.

**Dr D.J. HONEY:** Have any moneys been recovered from contractors for the poor quality of work that has been carried out on Albany Highway?

**Ms R. SAFFIOTI:** We do not have that information on hand, sorry.

**Dr D.J. HONEY:** Can I have that as supplementary information, please, minister?

**Ms R. SAFFIOTI:** Okay. I will provide supplementary information on any default payments from the contractors for works on Albany Highway.

**Dr D.J. HONEY:** Could I also perhaps have it in a time period, such as over the last two years or some reasonable time?

**Ms R. SAFFIOTI:** Okay, over the last two years.

[*Supplementary Information No B2.*]

**Mr R.S. LOVE:** I have been listening to all this with interest because this issue has been raised about many roads. I remember a section of Great Northern Highway had to virtually be redone from scratch because of a fairly major failure of compaction. I refer to the supply of bitumen. It has been reported to me by people in the road building industry that there are different qualities of bitumen and some of the supplies that have come into the state recently have not been of the same quality as in the past. Has that been reported to the upper echelons of Main Roads? Is there any awareness of that difference of supply?

**Ms R. SAFFIOTI:** No, it has not been reported to the upper echelons of Main Roads. It is pretty easy to criticise some of our roads but the feedback I get from everybody is that our roads, our performance and our quality compared with every other state are far above the quality in other states. We have a vast network. We have had significant expenditure, and we have had extreme weather both in the north and the south. The feedback I get is generally positive. I note that sometimes there are issues with some of the works undertaken but to go back to the initial point I made: in assessing how we deliver our road maintenance and contracts in regional WA, first of all, Main Roads is one of the only organisations with a strong and permanent regional presence. We are also enhancing that. We are bringing maintenance contracts in-house. My view is that having the same people and teams working in an area for a long time helps to deliver better quality because there is in-house experience and ownership. I think the quality of everything will improve, noting that we already have far and above the best roads in the nation. The feedback I hear from some of the trucking organisations that go through Queensland and other people who drive through Victoria and New South Wales is that the quality of our roads, given their length and our geography, is much better than those of other states.

**Mr R.S. LOVE:** On page 594 of budget paper No 2, the first outcome and key effectiveness indicator is “Outcome: Facilitate economic and regional development: Return on construction expenditure”. I note that the return on construction expenditure has dropped from 2.91 in 2021–22 to 1.6, so I assume that is \$1.60 back for every \$1 expended. Is that correct? Is that what that means? If so, what does that mean for some of the projects that have been developed by Main Roads? Has there been any revision of those and whether they are still justifiable, given the reduction in the cost–benefit score?

**Ms R. SAFFIOTI:** As part of securing funds from the commonwealth, we are required to undertake either a full business case analysis or what is otherwise known as a “project development proposal”, depending on the cost and the degree of work that needs to be undertaken. We put forward projects all the time, and we mostly get a benefit–cost ratio score of more than one—the aim is to get more than one. I note that most regional projects have a score of less than one. Albany ring-road was an example for which the BCR was about 0.7. Our view is that BCRs are important, but I raise a couple of conditions. Infrastructure Australia is changing its assessment and analysis of BCRs. The BCRs we have had to submit in the past have solely asked for the transport benefit of a particular project. For example, they look at things like congestion and safety. The definition of the term “economic benefit” in these cases is restricted to transport economics, but there is more to a lot of the infrastructure that we do, and the Albany ring-road is an example. The Albany ring-road will not only make for a safer and more efficient route for trucks, but also benefit the Albany town centre by allowing for a better tourism experience, greater land-use development and, probably, more development in Albany, but those things are not taken into account.

A concern of ours has always been that the definition of “economic benefit” under some of the existing processes does not take into account wider economic benefits, which are primarily land-use benefits that may include more opportunities for affordable housing or reduced congestion through a town that in turn will improve the tourism experience and potentially bring more tourists. BCRs are very, very important, but they are, of course, driven by inputs and outputs. If we were to strictly fund projects with a transport BCR of more than one, a lot of regional projects would not get more than that score. A lot of projects in WA have what I would call “low volume”. People in Albany would not call those projects low volume, but people on the eastern seaboard may say they are. It is all comparative. The volume for some of our projects in regional WA may not be great compared with what is happening on Hume Highway, but that does not diminish the need for the projects, with their improvements in safety and the ability of the town to then grow.

**Mr R.S. LOVE:** Is the minister suggesting that the return has fallen from 2.91 to 1.6 because of regional roads having been included in the program?

**Ms R. SAFFIOTI:** No, I think it has to do with some of the cost increases and projects, so of course the BCR changes because the cost increases. That will be across the state. There have been cost increases across the state for regional and metro projects. There is a process of developing a business case that we are very much committed to, but, as I said, every business case depends on how wide the definition of “benefit” is. My view is that that definition

in the past has been very narrow. People around the state will say that these projects are needed even though the BCR may be less than one.

[11.10 am]

**Mr R.S. LOVE:** How are the mechanics of this measure derived? Is it the aggregate of all projects over a certain amount? Surely the department does not do a cost analysis of some of the very minor projects in the same way as it would the very large projects, or does it? If it is an aggregation of all those projects, would it be possible for the minister to supply a list of those projects and their returns, at least by way of supplementary information?

**Ms R. SAFFIOTI:** It is not the total investment program; it is selected projects. I think it would probably include all projects over \$100 million, because we are required to do building confidence reports or project development proposals for those. We can provide further details. I do not know exactly what detail we have on this, but we can provide detail of the BCRs for projects.

**Mr R.S. LOVE:** The minister will provide the original and revised BCRs for projects over \$100 million by way of supplementary information; is that right?

**Ms R. SAFFIOTI:** Yes. We will provide the updated building confidence reports. The original BCRs are all available through the published information, but we will provide original and updated BCRs for major road projects over \$100 million.

[*Supplementary Information No B3.*]

**Mr G. BAKER:** I refer to page 598 of budget paper No 2, asset investment program, and paragraph 5, which relates to the regional road safety program. Having driven extensively in the United States, I would agree with the minister that the quality of the roads in Western Australia is superb. Can the minister provide an update on the rollout and advise on the success of the program?

**Ms R. SAFFIOTI:** I thank the member. The regional road safety program funds low-cost safety treatments such as the sealing of road shoulders and the installation of audible edge lines or centre lines to warn drivers who may be veering outside their lane. So far, \$652 million has been spent on the program, allowing 7 500 kilometres of our state road network to be upgraded. Some early indications already show improved results in those areas where the treatments have been undertaken. We are continuing to roll out that program with an allocation in this state budget of \$175 million, meaning by June next year we will have rolled out upgrades to more than 9 000 kilometres of WA's road network. Furthermore, we continue to work with the commonwealth to secure funding in the future. We have made a massive effort on this program. I congratulate Main Roads on the work it has done. Originally, there was funding of \$20 million a year for the regional road safety program. We are now funding it between \$150 million and \$200 million a year. It is a massive effort and we are already seeing improvements. It improves the quality of the road. The audible edge lines, the audible centre lines, the wider shoulders and in some instances the metre gap between the two lanes of traffic allow for people to make a mistake on the road and not have disastrous consequences. Again, I think we are leading the nation with this program. We will continue to very much support the program and do further analysis on some of the benefits it is delivering.

**Mr R.S. LOVE:** I refer to page 592, paragraph 5, and the significant issues impacting the department. Paragraph 5 refers to the congestion situation around Perth and initiatives such as the Smart Freeway program, the deployment of new technology et cetera. At this point, have the new cameras and technology that have been deployed along those major routes led to any traffic fines being issued?

**Ms R. SAFFIOTI:** No.

**Mr R.S. LOVE:** Are there any plans for that to happen in the future?

**Ms R. SAFFIOTI:** As I said when those cameras were installed, it is a matter for the Road Safety Council and the police. It is not a decision for us. I am not sure whether they are considering that.

**Mr R.S. LOVE:** We can follow that up in the road safety section; that is fine. I thank the minister for that.

Since the implementation of this technology, has there been a visual reduction in collisions, dingles and congestion? Can the department measure that, does it measure that, and how does it measure that?

**The CHAIR:** A technical term. Minister?

**Mr R.S. LOVE:** I am sure they will give a bit of a chat back! We do not usually get concise answers.

**Ms R. SAFFIOTI:** I think that our business case was predicated on 10-minute savings in travel time. The results on travel times came in pretty much as estimated. Of course, one problem has been that we have been rolling this out and measuring the impact through the COVID pandemic, during which we have seen some weird changes in travel behaviours. I think we have settled back down to a bit more normality. For example, I think, for a while, public transport usage was much lower and car usage was much higher than they were pre-COVID, but that seems

to have settled. I do not think we have any information on road safety but our numbers on efficiency came in very much as originally estimated. The feedback that I get is that it is less stop and start, so it is a smoother ride in because of the variable message signs and the fact that the speed limit will change depending on the level of congestion. It allows for a smoother travel in. Of course, on top of that, we have had all the improvements to the freeway itself. The new Canning Highway entrance lane and all the works around Cockburn, too, have helped to improve that experience.

**Mr R.S. LOVE:** Expansions are being made to develop the smart freeways and these traffic solutions, but the minister is telling me that the department is really not measuring the success of each of those interventions? Is there no measure?

**Ms R. SAFFIOTI:** No, I said that we have measures.

**Mr R.S. LOVE:** The minister just said that she feels it is better to drive around than it was before.

**Ms R. SAFFIOTI:** I said that we have measures. I said that the estimates were based on a 20 per cent saving in travel time, and that is what we have reached.

**Mr R.S. LOVE:** So, the department has measured the success of these interventions.

**Ms R. SAFFIOTI:** That is what I said, yes.

**Mr R.S. LOVE:** I thought the minister said that the department had taken rough estimates at the beginning.

**Ms R. SAFFIOTI:** Yes, I said that we estimated a 10 per cent saving in travel time, and our data shows that we have reached a 10 per cent saving in travel time. Then I said it has been a bit tricky because of the change in travel patterns because of COVID. Initially, post-COVID, I think we were running at about 75 per cent or 80 per cent public transport usage, and about 105 per cent vehicle movements, because more people were driving than catching public transport because of COVID. That seems to have stabilised, particularly with public transport numbers going back to pretty much pre-COVID levels.

[11.20 am]

**Mr P.J. RUNDLE:** I refer to page 600 of budget paper No 2 and, about 10 lines down from the top, “Goldfields Highway—Wiluna to Meekatharra Construct and Seal Priority Sections”. When will this initial section be completed?

**Ms R. SAFFIOTI:** The project is expected to commence in late 2023 and to be completed by mid-2024. Project development is also continuing to finalise the design to meet the required heritage, environmental and other approvals for construction of the 9.8-kilometre West Creek flood crossing section near Wiluna. We have engaged with key stakeholders in the Wiluna area to plan the delivery of the project and maximise employment of local Aboriginal businesses and people. A key component of the pilot project was the training of Aboriginal students at Wiluna Central Regional TAFE, with input from Martu elders, the Shire of Wiluna and community leaders. As I said, we are working on the project whilst continuing to develop and employ the local Aboriginal workforce. We are currently finalising a heritage agreement with traditional owners to conduct a survey of the area.

As I have said in this place before, this is a road on which we really tried to work with local Aboriginal people to deliver the first section. I remember going up to Wiluna and meeting 12 to 18 local Aboriginal people who were being trained in road delivery. Some of those people have gone to employment in the mining industry, but we are continuing to focus on working with local Aboriginal people to deliver the road. We very much see this project as being one that is about improving both safety and connections and also local Aboriginal employment.

**Mr P.J. RUNDLE:** I recognise that, minister, but will the local shire or others need to be brought in to actually get this section completed? The minister talked about late 2023, early 2024.

**Ms R. SAFFIOTI:** I do not think the shire has greater capacity up there.

**Mr P.J. RUNDLE:** So who else will be brought into the mix to actually build it?

**Ms R. SAFFIOTI:** It will be Main Roads teams, together with the local Aboriginal people. Trying to get the heritage approvals and all the other relevant approvals has been a bit of a tough process, but we will continue to work at it.

**Mr P.J. RUNDLE:** Minister, this is 17 kilometres of the last 124 kilometres that need to be sealed. Has the minister put in a submission to the federal government to assist with funding for the balance of the Goldfields Highway?

**Ms R. SAFFIOTI:** I think we would have; we submit everything to the federal government for help with funding, so I think we have, and we would have in the past, but we will continue. The federal government is in a different stage at the moment. It is not really accepting or keen to look at new proposals; it is really concentrating on existing commitments and supporting those where it can, so it is not really open to new projects at this stage.

**Mr P.J. RUNDLE:** Even though it is not open to new projects, will the minister be putting her best foot forward and putting her hand up for WA to complete this really important road?

**Ms R. SAFFIOTI:** Absolutely I will put my best foot forward. I will!

**Mr P.J. RUNDLE:** So will the minister be contacting the federal minister in the very near future?

**Ms R. SAFFIOTI:** As part of future negotiations for the midyear review and other funding rounds, I will definitely be putting it forward.

**Mr R.S. LOVE:** I refer to page 600 of budget paper No 2 and the line under “Great Northern Highway”, “Bindoon Bypass—Construct New Alignment”, for which the estimated total cost is \$275 million. I note that that was the original project cost when the project was announced a number of years ago. I am wondering whether there is any belief that the minister will be able to deliver the project with that amount of money, given the cost escalations that have hit many of her other major projects?

**Ms R. SAFFIOTI:** So far we have not encountered budget issues. We have, again, been working to support Aboriginal construction through this area. This is another of the sites I visited and I was very pleased to see the amount of Aboriginal employment on the project. Under stages 1 and 2, seven kilometres of the Bindoon bypass have been completed. Construction of stage 3, 11 kilometres of the Bindoon bypass, commenced in March 2023. We have directly engaged an Aboriginal construction contractor, Garli Pty Ltd, through a supply arrangement to continue the development of this contract. Early works were undertaken ahead of the main contract to provide continuity of work and take advantage of the summer construction period. For the next 46-kilometre stage, procurement is scheduled for mid-2023, with construction starting in 2024. As I said, so far we have not encountered any major budget issues, and we are working with the Aboriginal contractor, Garli. I have been out there a couple of times and I was absolutely impressed on my most recent visit by the amount of Aboriginal employment, including people who may not have been employed in these types of jobs before, or who may have otherwise fallen through the cracks. This company very much engages with them, providing mentorship and support, and it really gives them a huge opportunity.

**Mr R.S. LOVE:** Can the minister explain to me how the contract is being managed? Is it being actively managed by Main Roads, or is it being left to the contractor the minister just mentioned? Given the context of our discussion at the beginning of this division, how is the management and supervision of this contract being conducted?

**Ms R. SAFFIOTI:** Main Roads manages the contract and has a project manager on site. The contractor also has some very skilful people helping to deliver that project.

**Mr R.S. LOVE:** Is there an agreed situation in which the contractor provides all materials? Is it a fixed-price contract? Can the minister tell me how confident she is that she is going to deliver this project for \$275 million?

**Ms R. SAFFIOTI:** It is construct only, so it is a fixed price. It is not an alliance or a design and construction; it is construct only. Stages 1, 2 and 3 were construct only.

**Dr D.J. HONEY:** I refer to page 591 of budget paper No 2 and the heading “New Initiatives”. At the middle of that table there is the line “Oakajee Strategic Industrial Area Access Road”. When I last went past that, which was not so long ago, I did not notice any significant changes there. Will that access route be completed? Furthermore, given that it is recognised as a major industrial area for the state, and a hydrogen precinct, are there any further plans to upgrade the North West Coastal Highway? I believe that the road would be completely unsuitable for heavy traffic, given how narrow and winding it is at the moment.

[11.30 am]

**Ms R. SAFFIOTI:** The Department of Jobs, Tourism, Science and Innovation is leading the Oakajee corridor project and, more importantly, the activity around the Oakajee industrial estate. We are helping with the design and some funds are allocated throughout the budget for construction of the road intersection. It depends on what the next steps are for Oakajee. There is a lot of discussion and prospectivity around hydrogen in that area and that will help determine the shape of what we do. Currently, our funding commitment is to the improved intersection. More generally, this is tied up with the Geraldton and Northampton bypass projects. That will impact some of the other connections more directly. It is more a project that is led by JTSI and not something that I have day-to-day management of.

**Mr R.S. LOVE:** On page 591, “Significant Issues Impacting the Agency”, the first dot point talks about supply constraints impacting construction and maintenance costs and its ability to deliver the program on budget. Could the minister give me an idea of how many projects she has had to seek extra funding from the commonwealth for over this period of time, and how much that funding is?

**Ms R. SAFFIOTI:** In relation how things are progressing, it changes all of the time. We are in constant negotiations with the contractors regarding budgets and so forth. The commonwealth is a funding partner for the majority of our major transport projects. It is not something that is a moment in time. We constantly look at our budget to see where there are cost pressures. We do not really have a static list of all of the projects that have cost pressures.

Sometimes they resolve themselves and we can manage them internally. Other times I will need to seek further funding. That continually evolves and changes.

**Mr R.S. LOVE:** Let us look at the Bunbury Outer Ring Road, which we know has blown out by another \$100 million in this budget from the last, even though it had already gone out by from, I think, \$825 million to \$1.2-something billion. How much of that was picked up by the commonwealth and how much was picked up by the state in percentage terms?

**Ms R. SAFFIOTI:** We are in negotiations with the commonwealth. I will put this in relation to the commonwealth budget. The commonwealth, as we know, is under enormous budget pressure to try to manage the finances. We are working with it in the lead-up to the midyear review regarding funding allocations. It is undertaking a review and I would like to outline our situation compared with the eastern states. Yes, we have budget pressures and we seek commonwealth involvement. We are constantly discussing those issues. In some instances, we may have contingencies that help cover any cost increases, and in other instances we do not. States over east have billions of dollars of cost overruns. There are one or two projects in which there are cost overruns between \$5 billion and \$10 billion. We are not in that boat, but because of the demand on the federal government from all the states, particularly the eastern states, it is going through a review. As the Premier outlined yesterday, the commonwealth is going to review the total infrastructure program of the nation and we are very sure our projects will continue to be supported, and that any cost increases will be reflected through the federal budget process.

**Mr R.S. LOVE:** The first dot point on page 592 talks about, “Main Road’s accelerated delivery of the Regional Road Safety Program”. Can the minister outline how many kilometres of regional roads, in total, are expected to be treated by the program, and how many have been treated to date?

**Ms R. SAFFIOTI:** To 30 June 2023 it will be 7 500 kilometres. As part of the Main Roads rural network there are 14 000 kilometres. By the end of this June, we will have treated 7 500 kilometres and we predict that 9 000 kilometres will be treated by the end of June 2024. Just to clarify, the entire rural network is 19 000 kilometres. The area that required treatment is 14 000 kilometres, and 7 500 kilometres of those roads have been treated or are expected to be treated by the end of this year. We are expecting to have 8 500 kilometres treated by June 2024. We continue to seek further funding to roll out the project to do the entire 14 000 kilometres.

**Mr R.S. LOVE:** When the project funding expires in 2024–25—I think there is \$175 million for that program in 2024–25—is the minister hopeful of continued arrangements?

**Ms R. SAFFIOTI:** Absolutely. We see this as the biggest road initiative, and biggest road safety initiative, in regional WA. We all know statistics of people killed and seriously injured have always been worse in regional WA. We want to reduce that and make the roads safer. Again, in statistics of people killed and seriously injured, the predominant cause of accident or death has been single vehicle run-off—that is, a single vehicle leaving the road and crashing into trees or rolling over on the side of the road. This project targets that and, of course, the audible centre-lining tries to help avoid those head-on crashes as well. Our aim is to do the 14 000 kilometres and we will continue to advocate for this. We have \$175 million allocated in 2023–24, plus another \$175 million allocated in 2024–25, and we expect to get 8 500 kilometres done by the end of June 2024.

[11.40 am]

**Mr R.S. LOVE:** Can the minister outline whether the funding arrangement is 80 per cent commonwealth and 20 per cent state?

**Ms R. SAFFIOTI:** For regional road safety, yes.

**Mr R.S. LOVE:** Is that the same arrangement that the minister is seeking to extend into the future?

**Ms R. SAFFIOTI:** That is what we will be seeking.

**Mr R.S. LOVE:** Can the minister outline the source of the state funds? Is it from the road trauma trust account, royalties for regions or her own sources? Where does it come from?

**Ms R. SAFFIOTI:** It is from the road trauma trust account.

**Mr R.S. LOVE:** Which roads are eligible—is it state roads or local roads?

**Ms R. SAFFIOTI:** It is a state high-speed network, but we have also allocated funds to local governments as part of the project—I think \$37 million this year over the program.

**Mr R.S. LOVE:** Is that from this program?

**Ms R. SAFFIOTI:** Yes.

**Mr R.S. LOVE:** Who carries out that work? Does local government do it itself?

**Ms R. SAFFIOTI:** Yes.

**Mr R.S. LOVE:** Can the minister get me some information on how much has been given for the program?

**Ms R. SAFFIOTI:** It is \$35 million.

**Dr D.J. HONEY:** The middle of page 592 of the *Budget statements*, paragraph 7, talks about the achievement of net zero. There are probably two parts to this question. The agencies say that they have committed to an 80 per cent reduction in carbon emissions by 2030. Are those the agencies' internal emissions, as in its own vehicles and the like, or does that include work carried out on behalf of the agency by contractors as well as its own emissions?

**Ms R. SAFFIOTI:** Main Roads Western Australia together with all other agencies are required to develop plans to reduce scope 1 and 2 emissions aligned with net zero for 2050. We have set an interim target of 80 per cent by 2030. The Main Roads net zero transition plan will focus on scope 1, directly generated emissions, and scope 2, emissions generated by energy providers. Transport emissions from the use of the road are considered to be scope 3 and not part of scope 1 and 2. For major projects seeking environmental approval, Main Roads is obliged to produce estimates of the greenhouse gas emissions from the built infrastructure by the Environmental Protection Authority. Infrastructure Australia recently introduced interim guidance for internal assessment submissions that require greenhouse emissions to be considered, including projects aligned with the net zero emissions targets. Our plan will be developed by September 2023.

I have a couple more general points to make. On the whole emissions and sustainability area, we are supporting recycled material. We have introduced a lot of policies about recycled materials. In excess of 4.6 million tonnes of recycled or re-used material has been used on state roads between 2019–20 to July 2022. We have a process with construction and demolition waste. Again, our aim through the Roads to Reuse project is to explore the re-use of as much construction and demolition waste as possible. We used 25 tonnes of recycled C&D—construction and demolition—products in the Murdoch Drive connection to Kwinana Freeway. As of December 2022, over 161 million tonnes of crushed recycled concrete has been used on Main Roads projects.

The other interesting point concerns crumbed rubber. We set a target to use 1 200 tonnes of crumbed rubber a year by 2021–22. We are very much meeting that target. We used 2 750 tonnes in 2021 and 1 900 tonnes in 2021–22 on the state road network. We are working with industry on crumbed rubber, particularly with the number of old tyres in the state from the mining sector. I understand that the rubber content in those is much higher than with non-mining tyres. Therefore, crumbed rubber is a good alternative in Western Australia.

**Mr R.S. LOVE:** I refer to page 600 of budget paper No 2 and the line item “East Perth Power Station Footbridge”. It is a \$38 million project. Has a tender been let for that project? Can the minister give me an update on whether that is going ahead? Is it the case that the project was originally costed at \$35 million, in which case it has already blown out before it has even started?

**Ms R. SAFFIOTI:** What was the first part of the member's question on the footbridge?

**Mr R.S. LOVE:** Is the tender being let for the bridge?

**Ms R. SAFFIOTI:** No. We have done some design work and nearly completed that design. I suppose we will then be guided by the Minister for Lands on the timing of that bridge, as it will be part of the overall redevelopment of the former East Perth power station. Once the design is finished, I suspect we will be guided on the construction timetable by the Minister for Lands.

**Mr R.S. LOVE:** Does the minister feel it is likely that the minister will let the tender out soon?

**Ms R. SAFFIOTI:** Do I feel it is likely? To quote Ross Lyon, “I don't deal with hypotheticals.” I will get guidance from the Minister for Lands.

**Mr R.S. LOVE:** The rail crossing program on the same page has a \$35 million estimated total cost, with \$5 million expenditure each year. I think the situation of attempting to improve the rail level crossings in country areas and the possibility of applying for a federal fund established under the former coalition government that had \$180 million attached to it has been raised with the minister on a number of occasions. Is there any plan to approach the federal government to join in that program using the \$5 million at least?

**Ms R. SAFFIOTI:** I think I have said this a number of times, but, anyway, we will go through it. First, we have undertaken a review on rail safety in the state and the outcome of that will be announced very soon. As I have said on a number of occasions in Parliament, of course the state will ask for federal funding. We are one-third of the nation. The idea that we would not do so is just ludicrous. Irrespective, the federal government's level crossing safety program has released \$6.3 million—\$1.7 million for level crossing safety data improvement grants and \$5.4 million for level crossing safety research and innovation. That is money it has put forward as a grant program, and we applied for those funds. But those are the only funds that have been released from the \$180 million. I do not understand how many times I have said this: there was \$180 million in there, but it has not released those funds yet; it is under review, but it has done two grant programs of \$1.7 million and \$5.4 million, which we applied for.



We are very keen to get the federal government's money, of course—why would we not? As soon as the money is available, we will be keen to partner with it. It has not distributed the \$180 million; it has not told us how it is going to spend the \$180 million. We will keep rolling out our program, which is extensive. As I said, we will make an announcement very soon about the rollout of funds and what other initiatives we will take. The federal government has not told us yet how the \$180 million will be broken down.

[11.50 am]

**Ms H.M. BEAZLEY:** I refer to page 602 of budget paper No 2. Paragraph 4 under financial statements refers to additional funding under the disaster recovery funding arrangements for Western Australia. Will the minister update the chamber on the government's efforts to reconnect the Kimberley, including the progress of the new Fitzroy River bridge, and advise what this means for local jobs and Aboriginal businesses?

**Ms R. SAFFIOTI:** Absolutely. I was in the Kimberley last Thursday with the member for Kimberley as we visited Fitzroy Crossing. Demolition of the existing Fitzroy River Bridge commenced last Thursday. It was an amazing afternoon watching the bridge being eaten away by a massive machine. It was incredible. I talked to a lot of local Aboriginal groups in the area. They had set up their chairs to watch the demolition of the old bridge. It was a big afternoon for a lot of people. The demolition means that construction of the new bridge will start very soon. A lot of the equipment and some of the material is already up there.

I also drove across the low-level crossing. I was blown away by how many people were using it. The crossing operates well under the traffic management. Currently the bigger trucks have to break down if they want to move freight across. We believe the new low-level crossing, which has been built for freight movement, will open by the end of this month. That two-way crossing will facilitate the movement of freight.

Local Aboriginal people are involved in all elements of the contract, whether it be helping with the surveys, assisting with the approvals or supporting the contractors as they engage with local Aboriginal people about creating training opportunities. It is a massive project. I again congratulate the Main Roads team. It has received really positive feedback throughout the Kimberley about the work. The team on the ground has moved very quickly. To have those connections already open, and then to have construction about to commence on the bridge, has been an incredible effort and I thank all the teams involved.

**The appropriation was recommended.**