

**STANDING COMMITTEE ON  
ESTIMATES AND FINANCIAL OPERATIONS**

**2021–22 BUDGET ESTIMATES**



**TRANSCRIPT OF EVIDENCE  
TAKEN AT PERTH  
TUESDAY, 19 OCTOBER 2021**

**SESSION THREE  
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORT  
PUBLIC TRANSPORT AUTHORITY  
COMMISSIONER OF MAIN ROADS**

**Members  
Hon Peter Collier (Chair)  
Hon Samantha Rowe (Deputy Chair)  
Hon Jackie Jarvis  
Hon Nick Goiran  
Hon Dr Brad Pettitt**

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**Hearing commenced at 3.15 pm**

**Hon SUE ELLERY**

**Leader of the House representing the Minister for Transport, examined:**

**Mr PETER WORONZOW**

**Acting Director General, Department of Transport; Acting Commissioner of Main Roads; Acting Chief Executive Officer, Public Transport Authority, examined:**

**Mr PETER PAROLO**

**Executive Director, Finance and Procurement Services, Department of Transport, examined:**

**Mr JEFFREY STEEDMAN**

**Executive Director, Finance and Contracts, Public Transport Authority, examined:**

**Mr ROSS HAMILTON**

**Executive Director, Project Delivery, Public Transport Authority, examined:**

**Mr MAURICE CAMMACK**

**Director, Budget and Investment Planning, Main Roads Western Australia, examined:**

**Mr ANTHONY KANNIS**

**Managing Director, Metronet, examined:**

**Mr MARK BURGESS**

**Managing Director, Public Transport Authority, examined:**

**Mr DOUGLAS MORGAN**

**Acting Managing Director of Main Roads, Main Roads Western Australia, examined:**

**Mr LEO COCI**

**Managing Director, Office of Major Transport Infrastructure Delivery, examined:**

**Mr PATRICK SEARES**

**Managing Director, Westport, examined:**

**Mr DES SNOOK**

**Executive Director, Metro and Southern Regions, Main Roads Western Australia, examined:**

**Mr IAIN CAMERON**

**Managing Director, Department of Transport, examined:**

**Mr PATRICK ABROMEIT**

**Senior Policy Adviser, Minister for Transport, examined:**

**The CHAIR:** Welcome everyone, particularly to the witnesses. Thanks for coming along today. Welcome to today's estimates hearing.

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The committee acknowledges and honours the traditional owners of the ancestral lands upon which we meet today, the Whadjuk Noongar people, and pays its respects to their elders, both past and present.

Can the witnesses indicate whether or not they have read, understood and signed a document titled “Information for Witnesses”? Collective nodding will be fine. Thank you.

Your testimony before the committee must be complete and truthful to the best of your knowledge. This hearing is being recorded by Hansard and broadcast live on the Parliament’s website. The committee will place the uncorrected transcript of your evidence on the internet a few days after the hearing. When the transcript is finalised, the uncorrected version will be replaced by the finalised version. This is a public hearing but the committee can elect to hear evidence in private. If for some reason you wish to make a confidential statement, you should request that the evidence be taken in closed session before answering the question.

Members, as we have the three agencies here today, what I would like to do, just to make it as seamless as we possibly can, is deal with as many questions on the first agency, the Department of Transport, first and then the Public Transport Authority of Western Australia and then Main Roads. We will deal with them as three separate entities. Is everyone comfortable with that? That does not exclude you from asking questions at a later time, but we will just try to get everyone around the table on that first. The first one we will be dealing with is the Department of Transport. Is everyone comfortable with that? Good.

Having said that, members, before asking a question, I ask that you provide the relevant page and paragraph numbers. Can I just get an indication at this stage who has questions on the Department of Transport? I am just looking at time allocation. As I said, we try to allocate time accordingly. The shadow minister gets additional time. Having said that, minister, did you have an opening statement?

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** Only just to say thank you for that, chair. Just so members understand, I have three files, so it will slow things down considerably if I have to jump between files. This hopefully will mean more time for questions. But thank you, chair.

**The CHAIR:** First of all, we will go to the committee. This is the Department of Transport.

**Hon SAMANTHA ROWE:** In budget paper No 2, volume 2, on page 627 is point 3. I am just wanting to go to the Forrestfield–Airport Link. Minister, are you able to provide us —

**The CHAIR:** Is this the PTA?

**Hon SAMANTHA ROWE:** Sorry. I will come back.

**Hon JACKIE JARVIS:** I am just rearranging my questions, if that is all right, chair. When we look at the index, part 9, we are looking at the three sections as per the index, which is Transport, then the Commissioner of Main Roads and then any questions for the PTA. Is that the order you want them in?

**The CHAIR:** Yes. We will just do the Department of Transport first.

**Hon JACKIE JARVIS:** On page 585 of budget paper No 2, volume 2, it is the item to do with the agricultural supply chain improvements. I am just interested if you could outline the road and rail upgrades. It is dot point 5 on page 585.

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** Have you asked your question?

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**Hon JACKIE JARVIS:** The question was: can you just outline if there is any further information on the agricultural supply chain improvements? There is a paragraph there. I am just chasing any further information of what those improvements will be.

[3.20 pm]

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** Following the publication of the *Revitalising Agricultural Region freight strategy* last year, in 2020, the government established the WA Agriculture Supply Chain Improvements, or ASCI, program, which seeks to secure funding for regional freight infrastructure identified in that strategy. That program is well supported by the commonwealth government and was included on Infrastructure Australia's 2021 infrastructure priority list. The state government is preparing a stage 2IA business case for the ASCI program. The business case will provide an assessment of project options for investment in road, rail and intermodal infrastructure across the midwest, wheatbelt, great southern and goldfields–Esperance regions. The business case is anticipated to be complete by the fourth quarter of this year. In May this year, \$200 million in combined commonwealth and state funding was announced for package 1, which will cover a suite of rail and road projects for the stage 2 Infrastructure Australia business case from community consultation. The Department of Transport will manage the delivery of that package over a four-year period, through to 2024–25. Of the \$200 million funding allocation, \$22 million has been committed to rail siding upgrades at Moora, Cranbrook, Brookton and Broomehill. These upgrades will allow longer trains to operate on the network, encouraging more grain to travel by rail and removing trucks. The remaining \$178 million will cover a mix of rail and road projects with a view to complementing the existing \$187.5 million Wheatbelt Secondary Freight Network program and to enable further investment in supply chain improvements in the WA ag region.

**Hon JACKIE JARVIS:** To clarify, is the federal money committed or are we still waiting for further advice from the federal government with regard to the full suite of funding?

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** The \$22 million is committed and there are ongoing negotiations between Minister Saffioti and her federal counterpart on how the rest is to be allocated.

**Hon Dr BRAD PETTITT:** My questions are also on volume 2, page 586. My questions start around some of the outcomes and key effectiveness indicators. Is anyone tracking mode share around how the state is performing, especially in the metro area, in terms of the split between people travelling by car, public transport, cycling and pedestrians? Is that captured?

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** I will ask Mr Cameron to provide you with an answer to that.

**Mr CAMERON:** Thank you, minister. The short answer is, yes. I do not have that information with me, but the Department of Transport works with Main Roads. Main Roads has a number of indicators around traffic volume and types. We also have, across the cycling infrastructure, people would be aware of some of those counters that are on the network throughout the CBD and the Perth metropolitan area. We do have statistics and data on those various modes. There is probably less on walking and pedestrians, but certainly on cycling and some of those other modes.

**Hon Dr BRAD PETTITT:** Could I perhaps ask that that data be provided, if possible?

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** Yes, we can take that as supplementary information.

[*Supplementary Information No C1.*]

**Hon Dr BRAD PETTITT:** My follow-up question is that it feels like a key bit of data that we should be not just collecting but also publishing and actually setting targets for. I wonder why that is not reported. Why are we not setting targets for that kind of mode share so that we know where we want to go?

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**Hon SUE ELLERY:** As to the question about why it is not a KPI, I do not know that I am in a position to give you an answer to that today. The information is available and various elements of it are recorded, but as to it being a KPI, I am not able to advise. I can certainly draw to your attention that, since 2017, this government has delivered over \$165 million in active transport infrastructure, which is assisting more people to walk and ride. A record investment of over \$265 million is allocated over the next four years to further expand our active transport networks to make riding and walking safe, convenient and more widely used methods of transport than they are now. That supports the delivery of the principal shared path expansion program, the WA bike network projects in Perth and the regions, and the delivery on a range of election commitments to improve active transport infrastructure. More than \$64 million is being invested through the PSP expansion program to fund critical state-owned and operated assets, which form part of the primary cycling network.

**Hon Dr BRAD PETTITT:** The point I want to make is, obviously, they are all things I support strongly, but we obviously want to measure how effective they are being and whether they are getting us to where we want to go. I would assume that everyone in this room would agree that we should offer more transport choices and get a better spread of transport modes.

That leads me to my second question on page 585, around the cycling package, which is paragraph 7. Again, I welcome that package.

One of the budget conundrums I have always wondered is: why is it that local government cycling packages are largely fifty-fifty matched with local governments and local governments are required to put in at least 50 per cent, but for local roads projects that requirement is quite different—normally, it is two-thirds state and one-third local government, sometimes less in my experience at the City of Fremantle. I am wondering why is there inequity between funding programs for different transport modes.

[3.30 pm]

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** Good question; it goes to a policy issue rather than something you might find embedded in the budget papers, but I will see what I can do. Honourable member, you did get part of the answer to this in one of the questions that you lodged prior to the hearing, which is essentially recognising the, I guess, difference in scale of cost, if I can describe it that way. The two-thirds contribution to roads, for example, recognises the significant cost of road projects on a local government's budget, so it is around scale of cost, is what I am advised.

**Hon Dr BRAD PETTITT:** I would suggest that answer is probably not truthful for many local governments who are trying to be more ambitious and get a more—going back to mode share; what you fund is what you get, would be my response, so that is why we get lots of roads and not many cycle paths. I would suggest that if we want to achieve mode share, you are actually going to need to fund these things in a more equitable way because local governments will follow the money, is my experience.

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** I am taking that as an editorial, not a question.

**Hon NICK GOIRAN:** Budget paper No 3 is the budget paper we are looking at, page 144, which discusses "Improve Access and Equity for Learner Drivers Pilot". The government is introducing a pilot which is said to provide young people with access to a supervising driver or a vehicle so that they can complete their required driving hours in order to obtain their licence. This, of course, minister, assumes that assessments are available. What is the current waitlist to get a booking for a driver's licence assessment?

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** We will see what we can find for you, honourable member.

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**The CHAIR:** It depends on the station, does it not? Some you can get in pretty quickly, others not so. We have really got a lot to get through so can we take that one on notice?

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** We can. I am not sure of the extent that I will be able to provide the information, but, anyway, we can take it on notice.

[*Supplementary Information No C2.*]

**Hon NICK GOIRAN:** Minister, this pilot, it says, it is to assist eligible young people. Is there an age limit to access the trial?

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** Honourable member, this is one of the things that we announced coming out of the discussions at the skills summit and in particular what we had noted is that particularly young Indigenous people were really struggling to get supervision hours up and that having a valid driver's licence was absolutely essential for many employment opportunities in regional WA. Many employers had spoken to government and said, "We want to increase the number of young local Indigenous people that we can employ on our projects but we can't if they don't have a driver's licence", so it was a critical way of trying to address that issue. Full scoping of the pilot program is being undertaken now but it is expected the following initiatives will be progressed: grants to organisations that deliver driving instruction to purchase vehicles —

**Hon NICK GOIRAN:** Minister, sorry. I am just asking for the age limit to access the trial; I am not asking about the trial.

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** The eligibility—is that what you are asking?

**Hon NICK GOIRAN:** Yes; to assist eligible young people, so how are we defining that? Is there an age limit?

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** It is essentially anyone that is unemployed and does not have a licence, so it is anticipating 16 to 24s but essentially the unemployed.

**Hon NICK GOIRAN:** Okay, but this is important. I think this is a good initiative and the fact that somebody is unemployed is precisely what I want to try to facilitate. I want to get to the bottom of age eligibility. It looks like 16 to 24. My question is: if you are over the age of 24, can you still access this pilot?

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** That might be something that is picked up in the design, which is still going on, honourable member, but you might anticipate my agency of training and workforce development is engaged with this as well. Perhaps, to save time, I will take it as supplementary. I expect there may be some flexibility around the edges if we are talking about a specific region where we do not have 16 to 24s but we have got three 25 year olds. I suspect there is some flexibility but maybe Mr Cameron can add to that.

**Mr CAMERON:** Thanks, minister and chair. The program, we are still in the consultation phase; we are in the Kimberley and the Pilbara at the moment. The priority, initially, has been to identify, as the minister stated in her release, is around young people who for whatever reason cannot access a vehicle or a supervising driver or an instructor and so we are focused on that. Over 25, you are not required to do the graduated hours, but we will be looking at young people over the age of 25 in those areas and if the driver's licence is a barrier to employment, as you said, we will be looking at those. But the early focus will be on those young people that are under 25 that cannot get a supervising driver or a vehicle, but it does not exclude over 25s at this stage, but that is not finalised in terms of scope.

**Hon NICK GOIRAN:** So if you are over the age of 25, you do not need to do the 50 hours of supervised driving?

**Mr CAMERON:** Correct.

**The CHAIR:** Can I just get some clarification with that—do we need any further information for that? It sounds to me like you have actually answered the questions.

**Hon NICK GOIRAN:** The only question, I think, which had already been taken on notice—I hope—was about the current waitlist.

**The CHAIR:** Yes, we have got that. Okay, that is fine.

**Hon NICK GOIRAN:** Minister, what is the eligibility criteria to drive in Western Australia with an international licence?

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** I do not know where you would find that in the budget papers. Perhaps to save time we will take it on notice.

*[Supplementary Information No C3.]*

**Hon NICK GOIRAN:** With respect to obtaining a driver's licence assessment, are there circumstances in which a person in hardship can obtain a priority assessment?

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** I am not able to answer that question here and now; I will take that on notice.

*[Supplementary Information No C4.]*

**Hon NICK GOIRAN:** It is a matter for the Department of Transport—driver assessments?

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** Yes, it is, but we do not have that information here. It is not in the budget papers so the file does not include that information.

**Hon NICK GOIRAN:** It is amazing what can be answered and what cannot be answered. It is a pretty significant issue, minister. There are a lot of Western Australians who cannot get an assessment in a timely fashion at the moment.

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** Chair, this has got nothing to do with the budget.

**Hon NICK GOIRAN:** I dare say it does because you have got a Department of Transport that pays —

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** You find me the line item, honourable member—find me the line item.

**Hon NICK GOIRAN:** I will ask you this question, minister, through you, chairman: how many driver assessors are employed by the Department of Transport?

[3.40 pm]

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** We do not have that in this file, so I will take that on notice.

*[Supplementary Information No C5.]*

**Hon NICK GOIRAN:** I suppose it has nothing to do with the budget, either.

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** Honourable member, I am doing my best to assist the committee.

**Hon NICK GOIRAN:** You are not doing a very good job.

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** I have always done it. Your questions do not directly relate to the budget papers. You know how to ask other questions; you are not shy.

**The CHAIR:** Let us move on to Hon Neil Thomson. You have a bit of extra time as shadow minister.

**Hon NEIL THOMSON:** Thank you, chair. I will continue on in the vein of my honourable colleague in relation to this excellent initiative for driver training. Congratulations on doing something there; that is good to see. Can we have, maybe on notice, a list of the towns and communities that it will apply to, if you cannot answer that now? My other question is: is the Department of Education, the school system—I have had conversations with people in the regions concerned about the lack of

involvement of the Department of Education in this program—going to work with the Department of Transport to see if we can get driver training into schools?

**The CHAIR:** There are two questions there; let us deal with the first one first.

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** In answer to the first question, as Mr Cameron indicated in an earlier answer, the design work is still being done on the pilot, so even if I took the question on notice, I would not be in a position to give you a list of the towns because that is still being worked out now; the consultation is happening now. The second part of your question is a much broader question than the question about the pilot: is the Department of Education engaged in conversations with the Department of Transport about greater driver training in education? I have an answer in my head, but I am not answering in my capacity. I will get Mr Cameron to give you some information about that.

**Mr CAMERON:** On the specific question, we are not discussing the particular issue about driver education in schools, but we do work with the Department of Education regularly and that is ongoing, as we are with the Department of Communities, Aboriginal community organisations, employing bodies and other groups. As the minister said, we are in the design phase, but, generally, the Department of Transport has an ongoing dialogue with any of the agencies that have contact with young people in communities. We need to work with those agencies to be able to identify which young people may be at risk and which young people may need assistance with driver education and training. There is a program in schools, funded through the road trauma trust account, called SDERA. With respect, the honourable chair had foundation involvement in that program many years ago. It has been operating statewide in combination with drug education, and that provides young people throughout Western Australian secondary schools the opportunity to do not only road safety education in the earlier years, but then it becomes part of their learner's process with the Department of Transport. It has been very successfully operating for a long time.

**The CHAIR:** I remember it well; the good ol' days.

**Hon NEIL THOMSON:** Will the scope of this pilot or program that you are doing include a presence in remote Aboriginal communities?

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** In respect of the pilot project, I anticipate that it might well. As Mr Cameron said a little earlier, the consultation that is happening right now is in the Kimberley and the Pilbara, so I would anticipate that. One of the issues that employers in those areas have raised—this is why the pilot was suggested by the Minister for Transport—is that when they go to local and remote Indigenous communities looking to engage young people in particular to work on their projects, the biggest single obstacle is the lack of a driver's licence.

**Hon NEIL THOMSON:** I refer to "Significant Issues Impacting the Agency" on page 585. The department is working with industry to improve competitive rail for carrying containers to the Fremantle Port's inner harbour. The current rail subsidy is \$50. Can you advise on the number and percentage of containers in the last financial year; and, as part of that answer, is the percentage of rail containers, as opposed to road, increasing or decreasing?

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** I can advise that the container rail mode share was 18.4 per cent in 2020–21, slightly down from 20 per cent in 2019–20. Given that the world was a state of pandemic, I think that is understandable.

**Hon NEIL THOMSON:** Yes, and it would appear that whilst the overall number of containers is increasing, there seems to be a decline in the percentage, despite the \$50. Obviously it is a challenge to achieve those objectives. What is the department doing to plan ahead? We have had the decision of the Beeliam wetlands bill, for example, and Roe 8. We know there are some big challenges for the



transport task in and around the outer harbour and the future of the outer harbour. What is the department doing to ensure that planning is underway so that the delivery of those transport corridors can be achieved?

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** One of the elements is the Fremantle Traffic Bridge, honourable member. I will ask the acting director general to make some comments on that.

**Mr WORONZOW:** A key part of the Westport project is to get an understanding of the existing supply chains in the Perth metropolitan area and the greater metropolitan area. A key part of that initiative is also a study on looking at how we can get more container traffic onto rail rather than road. Currently, the Western Australian jurisdiction has the most container traffic on rail than any other jurisdiction in Australia, to my knowledge. The key aim of Westport is to increase the level of container traffic on rail. As I said, a number of studies have been commissioned within the Westport office to understand the existing container freight movements, existing freight movements to the port, and to plan to get a better outcome into the future.

**Hon NEIL THOMSON:** Are you able to provide those studies or a list of ones that are completed or underway?

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** That is the work that is being undertaken now. I have nothing to give you, because it is being done now.

**Hon NEIL THOMSON:** Each project will have a title. Can I have the project title so that we know what studies are being undertaken? “Work” is a very general term.

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** That is a piece of work that is being driven and oversighted by government now, so we are certainly not in a position to release that information now.

**Hon NEIL THOMSON:** I cannot go past a question on my hometown, Broome. I have to declare that I own a small fishing boat; a little 4.2 —

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** A conflict of interest! Is that what you are declaring?

**Hon NEIL THOMSON:** Conflict of interest! I am going to ask a question about the boat ramp, but I am just disclosing and putting it on the record that I do have a boat.

**Hon MARTIN ALDRIDGE:** Any helicopters?

**Hon NEIL THOMSON:** No, no helicopters!

On page 592, under “Asset Investment Program”, there is reference to \$36.3 million for the Broome boat harbour, pending confirmation of a third party contribution. That is very unusual wording—“third party”—for a budget paper, I would have thought. Are there a few third parties out there that are going to throw in the extra \$30-odd million that is required to build that project? I do not mean to be flippant here, but I suppose the question is: have you contacted a third party for the additional \$30-odd million required to complete the project, and who is the third party?

[3.50 pm]

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** The Broome boating facility project has an estimated capital cost of \$76.1 million, to which the state has committed \$36.3 million subject to a third party contribution, as the honourable member has pointed out. They are the conversations that are occurring between the Minister for Transport here and the Minister for Transport in the commonwealth government. The minister, I understand—the Western Australian minister—has made some public comments about that already.

**Hon NEIL THOMSON:** So you are confirming the third party is the commonwealth and there is an agreement and you are underway in your negotiations?

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**Hon SUE ELLERY:** I am advised that the third party referred to is the commonwealth and that discussions are ongoing. I think it is probably too soon to say that an agreement has been reached. But if you were able to be assist in any way, honourable member, that would be great.

**Hon NEIL THOMSON:** I was willing to assist, especially on a project like that.

**The CHAIR:** Are you okay, Hon Neil Thomson?

**Hon NEIL THOMSON:** I am okay here; we can pass to other members.

**The CHAIR:** Hon Donna Faragher, did you have a question on public transport?

**Hon DONNA FARAGHER:** Perhaps I could I clarify; it may be that it has to be asked at another point, but I do not want to miss the opportunity. I will go to page 588 under “Strategic Transport Policy and Integrated Planning”. I have a query with regard to the closure of Robinson Road as part of the Bellevue facility. The Bellevue facility comes in at PTA, but is not actually related to the facility itself; it relates to the closure of the road. I am happy to hold off until Main Roads or ask it here. It is not really a PTA question; it relates to traffic modelling but I will ask it where best you want me to ask it.

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** He has got his file out, so let me see. What I am trying to avoid is having to juggle three different files.

**Hon DONNA FARAGHER:** And that is what I am happy to assist with.

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** If I can do it now, I will.

The depot that is planned for that area is an essential part of the Metronet railcar program, which is delivering 246 new C-series railcars and six new *Australind* railcars, and will provide necessary maintenance and stabling to support the operations on the Midland, Airport and Ellenbrook lines. There are some measures proposed to mitigate any impact from changes at Robinson Road, and they are around Great Eastern Highway and Lloyd Street: on the Great Eastern Highway western side, lengthening of the existing right-turn pocket to a total length of 110 metres; installation of a new left turn, approximately 80 metres; Great Eastern Highway on the eastern side, lengthening the right-turn pocket to a total of 100 metres and a new left-turn pocket of approximately—I cannot tell you because a hole has been punched in that number—Lloyd Street north, lengthening the existing left-turn pocket to a total of 150 metres and lengthening the existing right-turn pocket to a total length of 90 metres; Lloyd Street south, no additional changes other than lengthening the existing right-turn pocket to a total length of 110 metres. That will remove right-turn movements from Railway Parade to Lloyd Street. The intersection layout has been identified as a safety concern due to these right turning movements. With regard to the existing Lloyd Street and Clayton Street intersection, no physical changes are proposed, just line markings.

**The CHAIR:** How did that go? Did it answer the question?

**Hon DONNA FARAGHER:** Almost; that is great. That is excellent; thank you. Can I just ask on that point: is there a time frame for those improvements to be made?

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** I am advised that in the next 12 to 18 months, and they are funded.

**Hon DONNA FARAGHER:** I understand that traffic modelling was undertaken with regard to the closure of Robinson Road. Are you able to take on notice and provide me with that traffic modelling?

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** I can give an undertaking that we will provide what we are able to. I am not sure how much we can provide. I will take that as I supplementary.

[*Supplementary Information No C6.*]

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**Hon DONNA FARAGHER:** To clarify, I understand from a press statement that the Minister for Transport released on 14 September is that she referred to additional traffic modelling undertaken. I would like, if we can, as part of that—there is clearly traffic modelling and then there is additional traffic modelling that has been undertaken, two sets, from the way I read this press statement—whether we can incorporate both in that answer? That would be helpful.

**The CHAIR:** The response I got was that the minister would give what she could.

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** Yes, on the advice that I have been given I think we can provide both, but that will be down to the minister.

**The CHAIR:** We have had a couple of interlopers and they have really messed up my timing! I need to know from the back, whether you can indicate if you want a question on the Department of Transport first. That is great.

**Hon JAMES HAYWARD:** I refer to page 581 of budget paper No 2, volume 2, “Transport” total cost of services. My question is around the PDAs and whether there has been an increase.

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** Chair, through you, can I double-check that we are talking about the transport division.

**Hon JAMES HAYWARD:** I understand that driver’s licence issuing is under the Department of Transport.

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** Yes, but the page number, honourable member, that you just referred to —

**Hon JAMES HAYWARD:** Is page 581, budget paper No 2, volume 2, “Transport”.

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** Okay; that is fine. You could ask anything; that does not help me find the answer any quicker, but go ahead.

**The CHAIR:** If you refer to page 589, you will find it.

**Hon JAMES HAYWARD:** The question is about PDAs, which is practical driving assessments. Is there an increase in the budget to address the backlog of PDAs both in metropolitan and regional areas?

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** Honourable member, I guess I do not accept the premise of your question that there is currently a backlog. I am advised that there was last year and that was COVID-related, but that the department moves people according to demand so there is not currently a backlog. I have no kind of backlog list to give you because there is not one.

**Hon JAMES HAYWARD:** I wonder what the department thinks is an acceptable wait time for a PDA?

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** Is that your question?

**Hon JAMES HAYWARD:** Yes.

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** It is a fairly subjective question.

**Hon JAMES HAYWARD:** You are saying that there is no backlog. If you are saying that waiting six, seven, eight, 10 or 12 weeks is acceptable, then I accept the position is that that is not a backlog. I would have thought that those sorts of numbers would indicate a backlog. The question I am asking is: what does the department think is an acceptable wait time to get a PDA?

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** With the greatest of respect to your question, you can ask me, and I am the representative so I probably could not even answer that, but I am not going to ask officers of the department to give you a point of view about their personal thinking, so I cannot answer that question. I will see if I can find you some more information to assist you, but you are asking for an opinion, and that is not how we operate in budget estimates.

**Hon JAMES HAYWARD:** Are there KPIs?

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**Hon SUE ELLERY:** I am going to see what else I can provide to assist you.

**The CHAIR:** Perhaps, I can assist also. I do not think we can ask advisers' opinions on government policy, which is an important thing that we need to ascertain.

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** Chair, but I can ask Mr Cameron to make some comments about how they manage that waitlist if that is of assistance to the member.

**Mr CAMERON:** Thank you, minister and chair. We have a system where you can go online at any stage and there are releases when we have slots. This is about the available people we have and the number of people looking for a slot. It is true that some people can wait several weeks or longer. I have been around to almost half of our metropolitan centres in the last three weeks and they are advising me that generally they have got a wait time of two to three weeks. That is not a statistic, but that is what they are telling me. But on any given day you might have to go in several times and look, but you can make a booking. Often young people will make a booking when they do their learner's permit and they book for some months ahead.

[4.00 pm]

We do have situations where people are not passing, and then they go to rebook. In the last three weeks, in the several centres that I have been to, I am advised that there is a wait of two to three weeks, generally. That means that people could wait longer, but they are advised, and we keep advising people, to go onto the website and plug in their details, and they can often score a booking. If they are prepared to be flexible with their timing and can go to another centre, they can get a slot earlier. There are some people who, when they first book, it does take six or eight weeks, but they can then normally secure a booking at a shorter time.

We have a number of driver assessors. We also have customer service officers. If there are particular problems, whether that is due to leave or illness, or just demand, we will move assessors around. I will say we are still getting no-shows, which does not help, because it takes a booking out and it takes an assessor out. It is still about 10 per cent of our bookings that are a no-show. Lack of preparation is still the biggest issue that we are seeing. That means that if a young person fails and they need to rebook, that is distressing for the young person, but it is also adding volume and demand to the system. We keep adjusting the number of assessors and the customer service officers that we have. A couple of the centre managers said to me that they thought that perhaps with as much supply as we kept providing, that would enable more people just to come back every two weeks.<sup>1</sup>

It is a concern to us that some young people are not well prepared, so we are going to provide more education and more information. The 50 hours for a young person under the age of 25 is a minimum. It is not necessarily what everyone needs to be well prepared. I might take longer than you to learn a skill as complex as driving. We are going to do more to encourage young people to be better prepared, because we want them to pass, and we want them to pass safely.

**The CHAIR:** Do you charge for a no-show?

**Mr CAMERON:** Depending on the situation, yes. They will have booked. When you initially do your learners, you have a test included in that. If you do not show up, you waive that fee. There is some public debate that we make a profit out of that. We do not. We actually do not fully cost recover. We work with Treasury. We are a cost-recovered agency in this space, but we do not fully cost the recovery of a fee. It has been put to me that some young people are choosing to go for a test and

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<sup>1</sup>A letter of clarification about this part of the transcript can be accessed on the committee webpage.

get explicit feedback so that they know what to work on. I guess we would encourage them to do that with a driving instructor rather than come and use an assessor to do that.

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** If I can add for the purposes of full disclosure, it took me three times to get my driver's licence. I am probably one of the underprepared people that Mr Cameron was referring to.

**Hon JAMES HAYWARD:** In the south west, there was a significant issue around Bunbury, and I understand you put an extra assessor in there for a short period of time. Will that extra assessor stay on? Will there will be a commitment to have those people there?

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** It will be dependent on demand, honourable member.

**Hon NICK GOIRAN:** Chair, further to this line of questioning —

**The CHAIR:** No, sorry; perhaps at the end. We have a lot to get through in this instance. I call Hon Dr Brian Walker.

**Hon Dr BRIAN WALKER:** Minister, I refer you to budget paper No 2, volume 2, page 603. The reference is primarily in paragraphs 7 and 8, to new and emerging technologies.

**The CHAIR:** Sorry. I think you are looking at Main Roads. We are dealing with the Department of Transport at the moment.

**Hon Dr BRIAN WALKER:** Yes, but public transport is about electric vehicles.

**The CHAIR:** We want to try to be as accommodating as we possibly can. The member can ask his question and we will see how we go, or else we can do it under Main Roads. Do you mind?

**Hon Dr BRIAN WALKER:** I am happy to wait for Main Roads.

**The CHAIR:** In that way, we can finish with the Department of Transport. We will get through this, guys, I promise you; just have some patience.

**Hon STEPHEN PRATT:** My question relates to Westport, which is a heading in budget paper No 2, volume 2, on page 585. Can the minister please outline what the \$400 million commitment in the 2021–22 state budget will mean for the future container port in Kwinana, and can the minister outline how this project will reduce congestion in the South Metropolitan Region and unlock trade opportunities for Western Australia?

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** Westport is a key part of our plans for the economic future. An amount of \$400 million has been allocated. That will see a land-backed port built within the Kwinana industrial area, connected by an uninterrupted freight corridor, Anketell Road and Tonkin Highway. The recommended container point at Kwinana would include upgrading Anketell Road into a freight route that will connect the port directly with Tonkin Highway and the logistics precincts in the outer metropolitan area of Perth.

The Westport office has been established and is working on defining the design of the future container port and its integration into the road and rail freight network. The Westport office will also progress the analysis of investment drivers, commence development of a potential commercial framework, and provide preliminary advice on the timing of the move from Fremantle to Kwinana, and transition planning. The following is also being worked on: advice on future locations for non-container trades, which will support the Future of Fremantle Planning Committee's examination of land use and economic development opportunities at Fremantle; a program of enabling works with initial funding to strategically secure land; and greater investment in managing stakeholder engagement. A key focus as well is the extensive environmental and social impact assessment program. An agreement has been reached between Westport and the University of Western

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Australia to enable the independent Western Australian Marine Science Institution to conduct environmental studies of Cockburn Sound.

**Hon DARREN WEST:** Regional airfares are a very big issue for us. I refer to budget paper No 2 on page 597, and the line item “Aviation (Public Air Route) Subsidies”. Can the minister outline to us how the state government is delivering more affordable and more reliable regional air services, please?

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** From the middle of next year, we will be rolling out a new two-zone airfare cap that will provide a capped airfare for residents of regional WA travelling to Perth. This is an \$18.7 million investment to ensure that the community is connected, and to support the economy more widely and reduce the cost of living.

Residents will pay a maximum of \$199 or \$299 to fly to Perth, depending on where they are coming from. Since we were re-elected in March, the government has worked with Northern Star Resources and Alliance Airlines to launch a trial of the \$199 community airfare between Perth and Kalgoorlie. That is adding an additional 2 000 seats per annum to the market. We have also worked with BHP and Alliance Airlines to launch the reduced \$299 community airfare into Hedland and Newman, which will represent over 15 000 affordable seats per annum; doubled the number of flights into Onslow from three to six per week; and launched new flights between Derby and Perth. We have also committed \$9.7 million to the regional airports development scheme and \$5 million towards aviation subsidies.

[4.10 pm]

**Hon NICK GOIRAN:** Minister, this is in respect of these assessments. I was very interested in the response provided to Hon James Hayward and the suggestion that assessments could be booked within two to three weeks. I have a constituent who is watching today’s broadcast and has just sent me through screenshots, having gone live onto the site to try to obtain a booking. With regard to Kelmscott, the response comes up with respect to the booking system, “Sorry, there are no bookings available for the date requested.” Keep in mind, minister, that when you go for a booking, you click on for the earliest date and when it is so booked, that is the response you get. You might say that for Kelmscott, go somewhere else. For Joondalup it is the same response. Of course, we could go to Mandurah, at which the point we would get a date on 29 March next year. In Mirrabooka: “Sorry there are no bookings available.” Rockingham, we love Rockingham, and we can go there on 8 February. That would be an expedited assessment. Success, “Sorry, there are no bookings available.” West Perth, “Sorry, there are no bookings available.” We could, of course, otherwise go to 1 March at another metropolitan site. This suggestion that it is available within two to three weeks is demonstrably incorrect according to the information provided by my constituent live now.

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** If you had listened to what Mr Cameron said, he also said that he encouraged people to go back again, again and again. He made the point that one point in time, once, and then forget about it because it says there are no appointments available. He encouraged people to go back often because spots do become available. I might get him to add to that, but he clearly made the point that it is not about going on once and assuming therefore you will not get any appointments and spots will not be made available. I am happy to get him to add to that.

**The CHAIR:** From the sound of things, certainly going online, it might be easier to get to the grand final. I have some constituents saying the same thing in terms of the fact they have tried relentlessly to get their licence and have had exactly the same response as we have just heard, so I am interested to hear your response.

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**Mr CAMERON:** As I said earlier, it is a live system. I do not doubt that is exactly what is happening at that time. “Live” means we are getting cancellations all the time. We have bookings made in advance. We send an SMS reminder, I think, 24 or perhaps 48 hours before the test. That is still with a 10 per cent no-show rate, but we are constantly making more, we call them spots, available and there is a release every day, depending on the time of the day of those releases. As we get more availability in the system we keep publishing and republishing those. It is true that at any given time you may have a very long lead time. As I said earlier, go back again; pick a different day; pick a different date; pick a different centre and there will be availability because it is live. It is not limited by just the number of people we have. It is by what our stakeholders are doing and they are changing. For very good reasons they do cancel appointments and rebook, so when they cancel that slot becomes available, so it is very dynamic process.<sup>2</sup>

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** Can I also add that the department conducts approximately 120 000 car-class PDAs annually and about 98 000 of those are in the metropolitan area and 22 000 in regional WA. Clearly, those are being conducted.

**Hon NICK GOIRAN:** Perhaps, minister, you can take this on notice because it is really a policy question and I appreciate that you will have to ask the minister responsible. I would like to know whether the minister is satisfied with the existing system in light of the evidence that has just been provided. It may well be a so-called dynamic system but to be able to go online now and the first available date is February and be told, “You’ll just have to keep going online two or three times a day” creates exasperation for Western Australians. My question to the minister to be taken on notice is: is the minister satisfied with the existing system; and, if not, what improvements are proposed?

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** I will take that on notice. You need to appreciate that the minister is well across the dynamics of this system and has had discussions with the department about making sure they move people where they need to move people to keep up with demand, for example, but I will take the question on notice.

*[Supplementary Information No C7.]*

**Hon JAMES HAYWARD:** On the same line, if I can add something. With the greatest respect, I think that the department perhaps does not understand the level of frustration that is out there and that is the reason these questions are being raised. People are raising them with us. I do not know whether that is a question about policy, but that is the reason I asked whether there was a budget line item that would see increased investment into this service, because the feedback I am getting is that it is not meeting demand. I was quite surprised by the response from the department today because I do not know where the disconnect is between what the community is saying and what the department thinks. I guess my question is, again: is there going to be any further investment or any further investigation at the very least in regards to that matter?

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** Honourable member, you are assuming that we accept the premise of your question. We have taken on notice a question about whether the minister herself is satisfied. The department has responded to questions about how assessments are managed, about the fact that it is a system that requires you to go on a number of times to find a spot. I am not in a position to give an answer to your question. I respectfully suggest that you wait until you get the response from the minister. If you think you need to pursue it further, please do.

**The CHAIR:** Members, we were about to move to the Public Transport Authority, so are there any final questions on the Department of Transport?

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<sup>2</sup>A letter of clarification about this part of the transcript can be accessed on the committee webpage.

**Hon DONNA FARAGHER:** Can I clarify when the Commissioner for Main Roads will come?

**The CHAIR:** After. Yes; we have the PTA now. We got through it, that is great. Everyone is comfortable then with the Department of Transport. If something comes up, by all means, if we have time at the end.

We now move to the Public Transport Authority. I know for a fact that a member of the committee has a question.

**Hon JACKIE JARVIS:** I have a question for page 611, but I believe it is Main Roads, so have I missed something?

**Hon SAMANTHA ROWE:** We have not done Main Roads yet.

**Hon JACKIE JARVIS:** We are doing that afterwards, sorry. I will save my question for later.

**The CHAIR:** Do try to keep up.

**Hon SAMANTHA ROWE:** Budget paper No 2, minister volume 2, page 627, point 3. Is the minister able to provide an update on the Forrestfield–Airport Link for us and outline what works are currently underway, please?

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** Thank you, I can. That construction is well underway and nearing completion. It recently reached a major milestone with the last piece of track on the project being laid. That is more than 27 000 sleepers, 2 400 tonnes of Australian made steel used to install more than 16 kilometres of track from Bayswater junction to High Wycombe station. Construction of the 1 200 bay, three-level car park at High Wycombe is also complete. The multi-deck design will improve station access for passengers and free up eight hectares of land for future development. Progress is also being made at the three new stations—High Wycombe, Airport Central Station and Redcliffe—which are all on the home stretch of construction. Planning is also well underway for the integration of the Metronet Forrestfield–Airport Link to the public transport network by adding new bus routes and increased train capacity. The new train line will add five trains, three car sets to the network, meaning an additional 20 000 passenger trips can be made each day. The airport line will be supported by an enhanced bus network connecting surrounding suburbs to the new train stations, adding 26 new buses to the network as well as 1.7 million annual bus service kilometres to the Transperth network. Community consultation has been launched about the new bus routes on the My Say Transport website. Consultation with local government authorities will also continue. We currently have 15 Metronet projects under construction, completed, planned or in procurement supporting thousands of local WA jobs.

[4.20 pm]

**Hon SAMANTHA ROWE:** Can I just follow up on that? Do you have the date for the consultation? I know you said it is on the website, but do you have the information on you?

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** It is underway now; it has commenced.

**Hon Dr BRAD PETTITT:** My question refers to page 628 of budget paper No 2, volume 2 around rail line planning. I was aware that there had been a previous government commitment around planning for mid-tier inner-city transit, but I cannot find anything in this budget or the forward estimates. By mid-tier, I mean light rail or trackless trams planning. Is there an amount set aside for that purpose, please?

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** I have the relevant piece of paper. I am sorry, but can you repeat the actual question?



**Hon Dr BRAD PETTITT:** I am referring to page 628, paragraph 13, “Rail Line Planning”. I guess I was asking for the bit that I was not sure was in there. Is there any planning for mid-tier transit—by that, I mean light rail or trackless trams—that would be in the central subregion that has previously been spoken about, in fact, a government commitment, that that would happen in the last term of government? I appreciate that was pushed out to, I hope, this term of government. I was wondering whether that appears anywhere in the forward estimates.

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** No, honourable member. That funding is for heavy rail, not for light rail.

**Hon Dr BRAD PETTITT:** My final question is: is there any money in the forward estimates, not for the construction of but for the planning of mid-tier transit as previously committed?

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** I am advised that there is funding in the budget for trackless tram and road infrastructure; there is \$2 million to develop a business case. This is for the Scarborough Beach Road area. In terms of Metronet, we are focused on delivering part 1 of that. But if you are looking for something, is there any money in this budget allocated to anything related to mid-tier —

**Hon Dr BRAD PETTITT:** Light rail.

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** Trackless tram and road infrastructure preparation of a business case: there is \$2 million allocated for that.

**Hon Dr BRAD PETTITT:** Is that federal funding or is that state funding?

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** That is part of the national partnership agreement.

**Hon Dr BRAD PETTITT:** My understanding is that, even in the forward estimates—I appreciate it might not be in this budget—there is no planning for this term of government. I was looking for it. So, there is no budget allocation at all for even planning?

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** Other than what I have just described to you, that is correct.

**Hon Dr BRAD PETTITT:** That surprises me and disappoints me, but so be it.

When Metronet stage 1 is completed, how many TODs—transit-oriented developments—do we expect as part of that?

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** I will ask Mr Kannis to provide some comment on that.

**Mr KANNIS:** Up to 22 new stations will be created out of the Metronet program. Obviously, all those will have certain levels of development around them. Key TODs would occur around the Morley activity centre, the Ellenbrook train station and those sorts of areas, but there are up to 22 stations to be constructed.

**The CHAIR:** Sorry, is that “up to” or is that 22?

**Mr KANNIS:** At the moment, it is 22.

**Hon Dr BRAD PETTITT:** I appreciate that “TOD” is an elastic term. I think a clear definition of that is where you would have shops and residences of a higher density within a 400-metre walking catchment of those. I think that would be a standard definition of TOD. How many of those will meet that requirement?

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** Mr Kannis can provide some comment on that.

**Mr KANNIS:** I cannot give you an exact breakdown at this point, but we do have stations right across the realm. As you could imagine, we have a city centre development, which will have a greater level of transit-oriented development around it, whereas other stations, like an Eglinton station on the Yanchep line, will be more a transit-oriented one. I do not have an exact break-up with me at this point in time, but we have the spectrum of developments.

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**Hon Dr BRAD PETTITT:** Could I ask that that be provided, chair?

**The CHAIR:** You can ask, but I am not sure from the response we have just got whether you will receive it.

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** We are not in a position to provide that.

**Hon Dr BRAD PETTITT:** I find it surprising again that we cannot answer the question around how many TODs we are intending on building. I am happy for you to provide a definition of TOD, but given that is a key part of the government's strategy, I would think that you would be able to describe and provide the information, even if it is not available today, of how many of the 22 of those will be TODs. I thought that would be a fair question and one that I think an answer should be able to be provided to.

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** Noted.

**The CHAIR:** I would like to follow up on that one as well, just in terms of when will we know. Is this a finite situation, or when will we know? This is a pretty major infrastructure project.

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** The honourable member made the point himself that the term TOD is a very broad term. We can certainly give a list of the stations and the type of station. We will undertake to provide that and then, honourable member, you can use the normal method of asking questions if you want to pursue this.

**Hon Dr BRAD PETTITT:** Thank you. I appreciate that.

*[Supplementary Information No C8.]*

**Hon Dr BRAD PETTITT:** My last one is a bit of a follow-up on that. It is really around the existing train stations, especially on the heritage lines, as they are often called. I could not find it, but is there any budget allocation for looking at creating TODs around some of those existing train stations? Obviously, Bayswater is one, which I identify is already there, but beyond Bayswater, are there any plans?

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** I am advised that they are only related to new stations, which might be on heritage lines. So that I do not say the wrong thing, maybe I will ask Mr Kannis to make some comment.

**Mr KANNIS:** With regard to the development of stations on the heritage lines, in areas like Victoria Park, we are building new stations at Oats Street and Carlisle as examples. We are putting in precinct planning around those stations, but we are not planning on doing any precinct planning on a station that is not being redeveloped. Bayswater is an example. We are doing precinct planning around Bayswater station, but other stations where we are not doing any work, we are not planning to at this point in time.

**Hon NICK GOIRAN:** Minister, I am referring to the same budget paper at page 628—that is, budget paper No 2. There is discussion there about new stations and existing station upgrades. I am going to be asking some questions particularly around Nicholson Road and Ranford Road stations. Four years ago in estimates, these were additional questions that I had asked following the estimates and financial operations annual process. I noted at the time the Public Transport Authority's investment of \$535.8 million across the forward estimates for the construction of two new stations at Nicholson Road and Ranford Road and the announcement by the Premier during the 2017 election campaign as this being a \$474 million investment, with a completion date of 2021. Are those two stations going to be completed as promised in 2021?

[4.30 pm]

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**Hon SUE ELLERY:** Honourable member, I think that the minister has also already made some comments that construction on the Thornlie–Cockburn Link completion date is expected to be late 2022.

**Hon NICK GOIRAN:** All right, so that is a year later than promised. What has been the impact in terms of the cost for that overrun?

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** Honourable member, just for your information, we announced that change in the date back in 2019.

**Hon NICK GOIRAN:** Yes.

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** Your question is what is the change in costs; was that your question?

**Hon NICK GOIRAN:** Yes.

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** The budget remains as is.

**Hon NICK GOIRAN:** Right, which was \$535.8 million?

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** It was \$716 million, which I am advised we announced in late 2020.

**Hon NICK GOIRAN:** All right, so in 2019 it was announced that it would be a year late, and in 2020 it was announced that it would be about \$200 million more than originally estimated?

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** That is what I have just told you.

**Hon NICK GOIRAN:** I am just checking. That is right, 2019 and 2020?

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** I just told you that.

**Hon NICK GOIRAN:** Yes; thank you.

**Hon NEIL THOMSON:** I refer to page 622 and note that metropolitan and regional passenger services has blown out from \$1.19 billion. That is in the table of service summary.

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** Honourable member, sorry, can I interrupt you. I think I need to correct an answer that I have given.

Going back to the question by Hon Nick Goiran, as part of the announcement that government made about the smoothing out, if I can describe it that way, of the infrastructure projects due to the heated market, the minister announced that the current target date for completion and commissioning is late 2024 for the Thornlie–Cockburn Link. That was announced back —

**Hon NICK GOIRAN:** Well, 2019, I was told a moment ago, and when I asked to correct it, you said, “Yes, that’s what I just told you.”

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** Nineteen was when the announcement was made about a change in the date.

**Hon NICK GOIRAN:** That is right.

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** As soon as it came to my attention that I had said the wrong thing, I am correcting the record, honourable member.

**Hon NICK GOIRAN:** Thank you. I appreciate it.

**The CHAIR:** Thank you. All good there?

**Hon NICK GOIRAN:** Well, enough for the time being, anyway.

**The CHAIR:** We will move on.

**Hon NEIL THOMSON:** I will start again, thank you. I refer to the service summary table on page 622, at the bottom of the page. Metropolitan and regional passenger service has blown out from

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\$1.197 billion in 2019–20. It goes up steadily. It is budgeted this year at \$1.498 billion. I just ask for the main drivers for that increase.

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** I am just going to double-check on a whim, sorry; just bear with me while I drive the file. Your question is about the change in numbers in respect to metropolitan and regional passenger services from 2020–21 estimated actual of 1.3 to 2021–22, 1.4?

**Hon NEIL THOMSON:** Well, I mentioned 2019–20. Just looking at the trend, it seems to be increasing quite considerably, so we have a roughly 20 per cent increase over three years.

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** Okay. Honourable member, the decrease in total cost of service from 2020–21 budget to 2020–21 estimated, which is about 4.8 per cent, is mainly due to Metronet operating costs, the public transport cost in funding forecast revision, the platform and signalling upgrade program, and decreased interest expense. That is offset by an increase in expenditure due to increased depreciation, the one-off loss of the radio systems replacement, increased cleaning and other services associated with COVID, and increased external works undertaken for third parties.

**Hon NEIL THOMSON:** Can you elaborate a little bit on the radio systems replacement?

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** That was a one-off. I cannot give you more detail now, but I can take it as a supplementary.

[*Supplementary Information No C9.*]

**Hon NEIL THOMSON:** Does this increase in any way impact on the subsidy per passenger movement?

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** I will get Mr Burgess to provide you with some comments on that.

**Mr BURGESS:** Thanks, minister. Thanks, chair. It will be in the papers, and I can find it in a moment if you wish to, but it will. Obviously, one of the other significant increases in the budget for the most recent year and a half has been COVID cleaning costs, as well, and the other factor which the minister alluded to, which is we have started to bring on staff now for some of the Metronet projects, specifically for FAL, so we are recruiting now for transit officers and have been recruiting for transit officers and drivers for that project when it kicks in next year, because obviously they have to be trained and prepared. They are some of the other contributing factors, therefore on a per passenger basis—it will actually be in the budget papers, or, if not, in the annual report, but I anticipate that that would mean on a per passenger basis it will marginally have gone up. I look over; the CFO is nodding his head in agreement with me, so that is a helpful sign.

**The CHAIR:** On that, what were the COVID cleaning costs? How much were they?

**Mr BURGESS:** The COVID cleaning costs, my notes would indicate—they were substantial. They will be surprising. In the order of \$8 million for the part-year impact, so it will be more than that for the full-year impact. Minister, if you are okay, Mr Steedman may have to hand what the annual COVID cost impact is for train and bus. No, he does not.

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** I will see if I can find something.

**Mr BURGESS:** That was a substantive ramp-up we went through, obviously, with COVID. We were cleaning vehicles multiple times a day at various points.

**The CHAIR:** I take that on board. Over what period of time was that \$8 million?

**Mr BURGESS:** That would have been for the year—probably for the full-year impact, I suspect. Sorry, we were referring to the first part of the notes there, so that would have been the part-year impact—my apologies. March, April, May, June last year, and full-year impact over \$20 million. Mr Steedman is going off his memory there. He said \$22 million, but it is of that order; it is a very

substantial amount. We basically divided the cleaning options up in combination with the advice of the Chief Health Officer and his staff into regimes of gold, silver, bronze and then normal, what we did pre-COVID, and, based on the best health advice, we have been going between different cleaning regimes. Each one has a different number of cleans at stations, touch points on vehicles and so on, for bus, train and ferry, as well as at stations and depots, and depending on which one of those applied at a time substantially ramped up and down the number of cleaners and products we have had to use.

**The CHAIR:** Would it be difficult for you to get that information classified down to those categories, to the ferries, buses and trains? Is that going to be difficult?

**Mr BURGESS:** No.

**The CHAIR:** Can we get that for that period of time, minister?

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** Yes.

*[Supplementary Information No C10.]*

**The CHAIR:** That would be before March 2020 to present time.

[4.40 pm]

**Mr BURGESS:** Do you want the part-year impact of the first part of COVID and then the full financial year impact?

**The CHAIR:** Yes, thanks very much.

**Hon NEIL THOMSON:** Thank you; that is useful.

I want to refer to the table on pages 629 and 630. It is a big table; it goes over two pages. We have the “Total Cost of Asset Investment Program” mostly to do with Metronet, so there are a lot of good projects in there, \$1.58 billion for 2021–22. We have some good information in relation to the source of the commonwealth funding. I see that escalates up quite considerably in the following year. But I was curious in relation to the “Funded By” section to do with the “Capital Appropriation—Other (Land Sales Proceeds)”. There is a not insignificant amount of \$2.1 million, then \$9.3 million, through to \$4 million, then \$12 million. Can the minister please outline what those land sales look like?

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** I can try. Chair, I am advised that I do not have an officer here who can give us the detail of the actual plots of land, but we are happy to take that on notice.

**Hon NEIL THOMSON:** Please.

*[Supplementary Information No C11.]*

**Hon NEIL THOMSON:** Following on from that, I note the officer mentioned possibly 22 new stations for the TODs. I would be very interested to know: Does the state actually own the land on the majority of those TODs? Is it state land or is it a combination of private and state?

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** It is all of them. The state owns all of them.

**Hon NEIL THOMSON:** All of them—and the surrounding land that we use for part of the TOD development?

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** No, just the bit that the station is on.

**Hon NEIL THOMSON:** Yes, I understand that, but I am talking about the uplift. In terms of the proportion of privately owned, are there any areas, for example, which the state holds or DevelopmentWA holds a significant proportion of the land in and around those TODs that can be uplifted for higher urban development?

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**Hon SUE ELLERY:** We think the vast majority of it would be privately owned. Some of it may be held by the state, but the vast majority of that is privately owned.

**Hon NEIL THOMSON:** On that basis, has there been any consideration in relation to some form of uplift charge in relation to the zoning—the state’s investment on this? Has there been any work done by the state around how we might be able to get a return on some of our investment?

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** If the honourable member is talking about value capture —

**Hon NEIL THOMSON:** Yes.

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** No. A decision has been made that we will not be doing that.

**Hon NEIL THOMSON:** Is the minister able to provide, out of session, a private list of those landholdings within the precincts?

**The CHAIR:** Did you say “out of session”?

**Hon NEIL THOMSON:** After.

**The CHAIR:** You mean on notice.

**Hon NEIL THOMSON:** On notice, sorry.

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** It would be huge, chair, so I do not know that I can give that commitment. I do not want this to be supplementary information. I can give an undertaking that I will ask the minister what she might be able to provide, but I cannot give you a guarantee that it will be a comprehensive list.

**The CHAIR:** That is not supplementary information; it is the commitment of the minister —

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** It is not supplementary; it is my personal undertaking.

**The CHAIR:** — to use her considerable influence.

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** Sometimes.

**Hon NEIL THOMSON:** I refer to the PTA, division 41, and paragraph 3 on page 621. I note the increase in railcar expenditure. I also refer to a recent question without notice on this issue in relation to the Alstom contract and the organisation the KTK Group. We had a very generic response to that question without notice. But we have people here now and I am wondering when the managing director exactly became aware of the concerns in relation to the KTK Group.

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** Honourable member, we had a similar line of questioning another session. I am happy to provide answers about line items in the budget. As to who knew what, when and where, there are other mechanisms for you to ask questions about that during sittings of the Parliament. I encourage you to do that.

**Hon NEIL THOMSON:** Okay, I will follow-up on that. In relation to this budget matter—obviously, a significant amount of money is being spent on this project—what percentage is going to KTK Group?

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** What percentage is?

**Hon NEIL THOMSON:** Of the total spend for the railcar development.

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** I am sorry; I do not understand the question.

**Hon NEIL THOMSON:** The per cent or the amount—you can give me the amount, I do not mind, or a percentage would be fine—of the total spend on that line in relation to the railcar expenditure, what dollar amount or percentage of that figure is going to the KTK Group?

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** I do not think I can provide that information, honourable member. The best that I can offer you is: if you wanted to ask another question during the course of the normal

parliamentary questions, you could try that, but I am not in a position to give you that information today.

**Hon NEIL THOMSON:** Okay, I will follow up. Thank you.

**Hon DONNA FARAGHER:** I turn to page 620, under spending changes, “Small Commitments—Bus Shelter Upgrades” under election commitments. I asked a question prior to the hearing for a breakdown of the bus shelters that would be upgraded and the funding allocated to each. I was provided a one-liner from the minister saying, “Consultation on bus stop locations is currently underway.” I have a couple of questions in and around this. Who is undertaking the consultation? Is it the PTA or members of Parliament?

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** I am advised that, initially, local members will be doing the consultation. They will provide advice to the minister’s office. The minister’s office will liaise with the PTA about whether what is being identified meets the PTA’s criteria for suitability.

**Hon DONNA FARAGHER:** Can I just ask on that, because you have referenced local members. Obviously, this was an election commitment, so I appreciate that you might not be able to advise me of the street locations for the bus shelters, but can you advise me of the suburbs where they will be located?

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** I think I could accurately say south-east suburbs and north-east suburbs.

**Hon DONNA FARAGHER:** I know, for example, minister, that Aveley has been identified; that is in the minister’s electorate and mine as well.

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** Is that not north-east?

**Hon DONNA FARAGHER:** That is in the East Metropolitan Region. So, there have been some identified suburbs. I am wanting to just get an understanding of which suburbs the shelters will be in.

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** I think the best I can offer you, honourable member, is what I said before, which is south-east and north-east suburbs, but I am not in a position to name the precise suburbs here and now.

**Hon DONNA FARAGHER:** So which local members of Parliament will be consulting, then, on the shelters? I mean, can we?

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** What did you say?

**Hon DONNA FARAGHER:** Can we, as members of Parliament? Do all members of Parliament get the opportunity to consult?

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** We do not normally make election commitments on behalf of the Liberal Party, but it is getting so tough for you, maybe we will have to!

[4.50 pm]

**Hon DONNA FARAGHER:** I am just trying to seek some clarification, minister.

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** It is the member for Southern River and the member for West Swan.

**Hon DONNA FARAGHER:** Thank you; I appreciate that advice. My other question then just relates to the shelters themselves. My understanding from actually a previous letter that the minister kindly provided to me on a matter that I had raised with her about a shelter was that shelters are generally the responsibility of local government but that in certain circumstances the PTA will provide a 50 per cent contribution. With regard to the shelters that are part of this commitment, will local government be asked to contribute at all?

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** I am advised no.

**Hon DONNA FARAGHER:** Okay, thank you.

**Hon JACKIE JARVIS:** My question relates to page 628, budget paper No 2, volume 2, the *Australind* train service, which is item 18. Minister, there is a total of \$54.7 million—\$6.8 million up to June 2022 and then around \$19 million, almost \$20 million, in the subsequent two years. I am just interested to understand if this is a like-for-like replacement of ageing rail cars; and, also, does this extend the life span of the *Australind* service from Bunbury to Perth?

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** I am advised that we currently have one *Australind* set; we are going to get two and they will be built locally.

**The CHAIR:** Hon James Hayward.

**Hon JAMES HAYWARD:** I apologise, chair; I will just be a moment.

**The CHAIR:** Why do I not move to Hon Nick Goiran and then you —

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** Do you have to?

**The CHAIR:** You be nice.

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** You tell him!

**Hon NICK GOIRAN:** That would be a first.

**The CHAIR:** You two—stop it! Hon Nick Goiran.

**Hon NICK GOIRAN:** Thank you, chair. Minister, I would like to ask about revenue that is raised by way of advertising on Public Transport Authority assets. Three years ago in the estimates, we were told that \$10.5 million would be derived from advertising on PTA assets. What is the budgeted amount this year?

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** I will get Mr Burgess to make some comments.

**Mr BURGESS:** Thanks, minister and chair. Member, it has dropped; my recollection is that it is \$6.8 million in the year just closed. The outdoor marketing sector is a relatively vulnerable sector in terms of where people spend money—TV, radio and other—and now the digital world is obviously a key place where people advertise on various social media forms and so on. The outdoor sector advertising on street furniture, trains, buses and billboards tends to be somewhat more vulnerable. One of the challenges with COVID is that the advertising spend has dropped in most sectors, as I understand it, but certainly in the outdoor sector so we have gone from, as you mentioned, over \$10 million to \$6.8 million, is my recollection, in the year just closed.

**Hon NICK GOIRAN:** The year just closed being 2020–21; what is the budgeted amount for the current financial year?

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** Perhaps I can ask Mr Steedman to respond.

**Mr STEEDMAN:** For the financial year 2021–22, there are two contracts—one for the bus and one for the rail. Revenue is expected to be \$6.8 million, as Mr Burgess indicated, which is about \$1.6 million above the actual for the 2020–21 year. The 2020–21 year was about \$5.2 million.

**Hon NICK GOIRAN:** What is the amount budgeted for that revenue in the forward estimates for each of the years? Is it also going to be \$6.8 million?

**Mr STEEDMAN:** We are expecting that the revenue will increase slightly, but I have not got the exact figures over the forward estimates.

**Hon NICK GOIRAN:** Could that be taken on notice, minister?

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**Hon SUE ELLERY:** I will take that on notice.

[*Supplementary Information No C12.*]

**Hon NICK GOIRAN:** Further to that, chair, with regard to the \$5.2 million of revenue that was derived from advertising in the last financial year, what were the number of complaints that were received by the Public Transport Authority regarding advertising content?

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** Honourable member, we do not have that information here. I would have to take that on notice.

[*Supplementary Information No C13.*]

**Hon JAMES HAYWARD:** The question I ask is in relation to the state budget in budget paper No 3, and it appears on page 143. It talks about spending on purple CAT bus services, with some spending over the out years. I am wondering whether there was any investigation into or if any of those buses will be electric.

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** Interesting question. I am advised they will be diesel to start while we are conducting a trial in Joondalup and, then, depending on the outcome and evaluation of that trial, over the longer term it might be possible for them to be electric.

**Hon JAMES HAYWARD:** In terms of the wider bus fleet, you are saying the government is already making some investigations?

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** I am advised there is a trial. I will see if I can find you some more information about the trial. I am advised that a total of four e-buses are being purchased for the Joondalup CAT service trial, expecting to be operating from the Joondalup depo in early 2022. Two of these buses will be used exclusively for the Joondalup CAT service and the other two will be utilised on other Transperth routes operated from the Joondalup bus depo. The e-buses will be supplied by the Volvo bus group via the PTA's existing bus supplier agreement and the PTA expects to evaluate data gathered during the trial period to determine the suitability of e-buses on other Transperth routes should the trial prove successful.

**Hon JAMES HAYWARD:** I have one other question about another topic if that is okay? It is in relation to the *Australind* train and it is a follow-up from Hon Jackie Jarvis's question about the improvement of service in terms of delivering two trains to replace the single train that we have. The question I have got is: will that run on the existing rail line; and, if so, what are the impacts of freight rail on that track, particularly from the Collie turnoff into Bunbury—the last, I think, 28 or 30 kilometres?

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** It will run on the existing track, I am advised, but we are not anticipating that that would have any impact on freight.

**Hon JAMES HAYWARD:** So just a question about improved service, which I think was the question Hon Jackie Jarvis was asking, I am just wondering if there are any constraints on that part of the track that will prevent you from improving the service in terms of time and those sort of things.

[5.00 pm]

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** I am advised, as the honourable member would be aware, that it is a privatised track. You need to talk to people on your side of the world about that. We are somewhat constrained in what elements of that we control, but I am advised that there are ongoing discussions between ARTC and PTA.

**The CHAIR:** I just have one more for the PTA, and I will stop it then and go to Main Roads. Is everyone comfortable with that?

**Hon Dr BRAD PETTITT:** Just following on from Hon James Hayward around the electric bus trial, more in this case in relation to the depot, how many electric buses will the depot upgrades

accommodate in total? Is there funding in the forward estimates around upgrades to depots to accommodate the expansion of the electric vehicle fleet; and, if so, in terms of what timing and magnitude?

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** I am told that four buses are part of the trial. No further increase is anticipated. The electric vehicle infrastructure at the station can accommodate those four buses.

**Hon Dr BRAD PETTITT:** Only four buses? I guess the question is: are we futureproofing this? As I have said publicly before, we do not really need to trial electric buses. I am not quite sure why we are doing that; we know the technology works. Are we putting in place the kind of infrastructure that can, going forward, expand beyond four buses to a fleet, and is there a budget allocation for that?

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** Not before the trial, honourable member.

**Hon Dr BRAD PETTITT:** So the new infrastructure accommodates only four buses maximum?

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** Correct.

**Hon Dr BRAD PETTITT:** Thank you.

**The CHAIR:** We will now move to Main Roads.

**Hon JACKIE JARVIS:** I refer to page 611 of budget paper No 2, volume 2. On behalf of my electorate, I refer to the line “Bussell Highway Duplication Stage 1 and Stage 2”, under other works in progress. There are budget line items out to 2023–24. I am wondering if I can get an update on the progress of that project, and how long we are going to have to do 80 kilometres an hour in that stretch between Capel and Bunbury!

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** The project will address the following problems: excessive traffic congestion and delay during public holiday weekends; longer and more frequent periods of congestion, as traffic increases over time; unacceptable network resilience; and the poor safety record of Bussell Highway in the project area. The Bussell Highway duplication has been subject to many false starts over the years. We commenced pre-construction works in 2019. In mid-2020, the state government was successful in securing commonwealth funding for stages 1 and 2 of the Bussell duplication project. Construction commenced on stage 1 in October 2020, supporting 570 direct and indirect jobs. The \$850 million project involves duplication of the 17-kilometre section of the Bussell Highway between Capel and Busselton. The construction of the dual carriageway will remove a bottleneck that has long caused traffic issues, especially during holidays. It has previously been voted WA’s riskiest road in an RAC survey. Stage 1 works are currently underway between Spurr Street and Hutton Road, which includes building a five-kilometre second carriageway and reconstruction of part of the existing carriageway. Early construction work for stage 2, which includes construction of the remaining 12 kilometres of carriageway from Hutton Road to Busselton, along with three bridges, commenced last month.

**Hon JACKIE JARVIS:** So that work will take it right through until 2024, presumably, because that is where the budget line items are?

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** We anticipate that stage 2 will be finished in early 2023.

**Hon Dr BRAD PETTITT:** My question starts at page 602 in budget paper No 2, volume 2, around the significant issues impacting the agency. Paragraph 5 highlights congestion, which is obviously a significant issue. The question I have is: has any work been done on how successful the state has been, in terms of spending in the budget, around resolving congestion through some of the mechanisms talked about—smart freeways and those kinds of things—and how is that measured?

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** I will ask the acting director general to make some comment on that.

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**Mr WORONZOW:** I think the member is aware that approximately three years ago we put in place a world-class Road Network Operations Centre. As part of that, we have put in extensive systems that manage and measure travel times over 48 segments of the road network, so at any point in real time we can see travel times and we can compare those travel times, historically, with any times in the past. As a result of that, we can map trends. We know which parts of the network are improving and which parts are not improving. Tied up with that, I think the member is well aware of the smart freeways initiative, which you mentioned. The Kwinana Freeway smart freeway initiative has been very successful. We are currently rolling out that initiative on Mitchell Freeway.

**Hon Dr BRAD PETTITT:** Thank you, that is a useful answer, and it flows to my second question, which is around the outcomes and key effectiveness indicators. They seem to be largely around community satisfaction kind of surveys. It was not clear to me how those results were resolved. I guess the tension that was there is that I think you have just outlined some quite tangible data that measures success, but what we seem to be measuring here is community satisfaction surveys. Why is that chosen as a metric for effectiveness?

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** I will ask the acting director general to make some comment.

**Mr WORONZOW:** We are very conscious about measuring the performance of the road network via the satisfaction of users, but also in terms of hard statistics. The travel time survey has been running, I think, for 15 or 16 years. We measure the satisfaction of users of the network by getting an independent third party to go out and survey people's overall view of how they think the network is running. As I said, we measure, via those 46 or 48 segments, exactly how travel times are going.

**Hon Dr BRAD PETTITT:** Apologies for my ignorance, but is the information from that hard data published and made public as well?

**Mr WORONZOW:** I am only working from memory, but I think if you go to the Main Roads website, there will be information on how we have split up the network and how we measure it.

**Hon Dr BRAD PETTITT:** Is there longitudinal data over time for travel times and congestion?

**Mr WORONZOW:** Again, from memory, it will show real time. I am unsure if we publish actual performance today as opposed to six or 12 months ago.

[5.10 pm]

**Hon Dr BRAD PETTITT:** One of the things I would be interested in finding out, and I think it is a key performance indicator—I appreciate the information that is provided here—but I think there is that harder data around travel times and how it is tracking over time. If that could be provided, that would certainly be useful.

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** We can take on notice what information we are able to provide about what data collection and tracking is done to look at long-term trends.

[*Supplementary Information No C14.*]

**Hon Dr BRAD PETTITT:** Thank you. Can I add to that as well, because this flows on from on an earlier question around cycling, noting as well that satisfaction with cycling facilities is the key measure? I would be interested in that as well. Forgive me if I am doubling up here, I think that was conveying the key data around usage, rather than just satisfaction, of course. You might be very satisfied having one path, but what we are trying to do here is to get more people cycling more often, so actually having some of that data as well, because I think what you measure ends up with what you get.

**Mr WORONZOW:** Member, the only other thing I can add is that as a result of putting in place that road network operation centre, which is considered world class—before COVID, people came from

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all over the world and other jurisdictions to see what is here. A whole division, so to speak, at Main Roads is just devoted to managing the road network and measuring the performance of the road network. In terms of metrics, and to give you some satisfaction that we are monitoring and measuring, a whole unit of Main Roads is devoted to that. Subject to the minister's agreement, I would be quite happy for you to go and see that operation; it is quite impressive.

**The CHAIR:** Member, I think that is an offer you should take up.

**Hon Dr BRAD PETTITT:** I will.

**Hon NICK GOIRAN:** I refer to budget paper No 3, page 193, where it talks about the Leach Highway and Fifth Avenue intersection upgrade. An amount of \$5 million has been allocated. When is that intersection upgrade intended to be completed?

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** Main Roads sent a letter of advice to the City of Canning on 28 June 2021. Development work on this project will commence in the first quarter of 2021–22 and will involve detailed service relocation development work with Western Power.

**Hon NICK GOIRAN:** That is when it will start; when will it finish?

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** Honourable member, we anticipate in around 12 months.

**Hon NICK GOIRAN:** Minister, on that same page, page 193, there is an itemisation under “2021–22 Commonwealth Budget Roads Investment”. A large amount of money was available, at least at one point in time, with respect to the extension of Roe Highway to Fremantle. Is that money still available?

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** I am advised the commonwealth has got it in their budget—in their books if you like—as a contingent liability. That is not the position that the Western Australian government supports. They say they are holding onto it for that purpose. We made our position on Roe 8 perfectly clear. I am also advised that the contingent liability is not actual funding; it is not actual money sitting there waiting to be used. They are describing it as a contingent liability.

**Hon NICK GOIRAN:** Consequently, that amount of money is not found anywhere in the state budget?

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** Correct; there is an awful lot of other money from the commonwealth government. This minister, I have to say, has been very successful in her negotiations with the commonwealth government to assist us with our projects.

**Hon NICK GOIRAN:** What amount of money is this contingent liability?

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** It is \$1.2 billion, I am advised.

**Hon NICK GOIRAN:** It is \$1.2 billion.

**Hon NEIL THOMSON:** To make things easy, I am going to refer to pages 611 to 613—the massive table titled “Works in Progress”. It is a very comprehensive table of significant capital works.

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** A lot of work is going on, honourable member.

**Hon NEIL THOMSON:** Yes, I acknowledge that, and particularly the massive increase in contribution by the commonwealth in relation —

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** It is great. We love it!

**Hon NEIL THOMSON:** Fantastic—good on Scott Morrison and the team. We can see that commonwealth grants has been a significant component. I guess we are really keen to see value for money on that spending here by the state because it is important that we deliver for the regions. I am going to just refer to the table. There are a couple of projects that seem to have slowed. They

include the Tonkin Highway. I do not know how you want me to do this. I can do each one individually, but the Tonkin Highway corridor upgrades —

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** If I can slow you down for a minute, honourable member, I am going to mark them and we can try to deal with them in a job lot. So Tonkin, are you talking about on page 612?

**Hon NEIL THOMSON:** Yes, “Tonkin Highway Corridor Upgrades”. What I am doing is comparing and contrasting the previous budget with this budget, so I am looking at how much was spent. It is \$67.3 million, but then the estimate from the previous budget was \$163 million. What seems to have happened is that there has been a delay in that project, if that is what I am reading correctly. That is the first one. Do you want me to do them as a job lot?

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** If you want to give me a few.

**Hon NEIL THOMSON:** Okay. Under “Manuwarra Red Dog Highway”, there was \$22.5 million in 2021–22 instead of \$34 million as in the previous budget. Again, it seems to be slowing down in terms of the delivery of that budget. The “Bindoon Bypass” had \$15 million in 2022–23—this was in the previous budget. Sorry, the other way around. It is in the current budget. It was \$74 million in the previous budget. So, again, things like that bypass have slowed, so it may be deferred for a year or two. If you could answer those three, it would be fantastic.

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** I will get the director general to make some comments in a minute, but you will be aware that when we announced the budget, honourable member, we announced that we had done some consultation with industry across the board about the heated construction market and, in particular, the proposition that government should slow down or smooth out public investment in infrastructure when private investment in infrastructure was so high. We made an announcement about smoothing out a range of projects to make sure that the construction market was able to service what was needed, but also acknowledging—the private sector completely concurred with this—that it was important that we stretch out, or balance, public and private investment in infrastructure so that public investment would ramp up when private investment started to slow down. The projects that you have identified are part of that. I will get the director general to make further comment.

[5.20 pm]

**Mr WORONZOW:** Thanks, minister and thanks, member. As the minister said, as a result of what was going on in the civil construction market in Western Australia, we made the decision in consultation with industry, and that consultation was wideranging. It included working with the Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Consult Australia, the civil contractors association, Consult Australia, the people that provide the raw materials, the flexible placements association—in total, six or seven peak bodies of the civil construction industry.

The transport sector in WA employs about 22 000 people. Those 22 000 people, plus the people who are engaged in the transport portfolio, have got only a certain capacity. That capacity, in consulting with industry, is around \$3 billion a year. In terms of delivering new roads, new rail, things like Metronet, and maritime facilities, there is only capacity within WA to deliver in the order of \$3 billion. In consulting with industry, we agreed that some projects needed to be pushed out a year or two. Those three that the member has named are some of those that, in consultation, we agreed with industry.

The Tonkin Highway grade separations project now has a target completion date of 2025–26. Manuwarra Red Dog Highway has a target completion date of 2024–25. Manuwarra Red Dog Highway is an important project for the traditional owners. They have always had the view that they would like training and employment opportunities on that particular work. Besides industry and the

Department of Transport saying we will smooth that project out, the traditional owners, including the Yindjibarndi people, were very happy that we have smoothed the project in that respect so that they can get training opportunities for their people and develop business opportunities. I think the third one was Bindoon bypass. That has been pushed out to complete in 2026–27, but in recognition that we had a number of Aboriginal businesses working on that project, we have put in place a process where \$7 million worth of that work on Great Northern Highway can continue so that those Aboriginal contractors can get ongoing work for their employees.

**The CHAIR:** Thank you. Do not take that as an indication that time is up. I can assure you that there is time.

**Hon NEIL THOMSON:** In that list, and great that you have been consulting, you did not mention the capacity of local governments. Did you involve local governments in any of those discussions around their capacity to deliver civil projects?

**Mr WORONZOW:** In terms of the projects that were the subject of the discussion around smoothing, there were no projects that were on local government roads; they were all on state roads and highways.

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** If I can add to that, honourable member, local government would find itself in the same position that public infrastructure spenders are finding themselves and private infrastructure spenders are finding themselves in, which is competing for the same workforce, so in fact spreading out and smoothing out the pipeline of work assists everybody.

**Hon NEIL THOMSON:** Thank you, because that is a great segue to what I think we would agree is a success story in relation to Halls Creek and the Tanami, because they are working in partnership with Main Roads in the delivery of a local road, or not even a gazetted road, I understand; it is just a track—the Tanami Road. I could not find it in here, and I know it is very dear to the hearts of the people of the north—the \$75 million from the Roads of Strategic Importance program. I wonder where that is in the budget. I know the \$75 million was allocated.

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** Honourable member, are you talking about a specific project?

**Hon NEIL THOMSON:** Yes, the Tanami Road upgrade. I know it is not the minister's portfolio, but in the snapshot in, I think, the 2020–21 budget, there was a statement about it, and previously in the 2019–20 budget there was \$42 million, from recollection, which was allocated to Duncan Road. There is a very convoluted sort of exchange of funds. What bothers a lot of people in our region—the region that I represent—is that the money for that project has disappeared. We are just wondering if you could give us some authoritative advice in terms of where that ROSI funding, plus the 20 per cent of state funding, is currently at, and when that is likely to be progressed.

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** I will ask the director general to make some comments.

**Mr WORONZOW:** Thank you. There is in the order of \$42 million that has been allocated to Tanami. The money that the member talks about, the ROSI component, the commonwealth and the state have agreed to the funding as 80 per cent commonwealth and 20 per cent state. The total commonwealth contribution is \$34.2 million, but that ROSI money—I think the member is right; from memory, it is in the order of \$20 million—that is tied up within the commonwealth's \$34.2 million that is allocated to the Tanami.

**Hon NEIL THOMSON:** So it was \$75 million for the ROSI funding. That might have been over some out years, but the total was \$75 million.

**Mr WORONZOW:** Did you say \$35 million?

**Hon NEIL THOMSON:** It is \$75 million.

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**Hon SUE ELLERY:** It is not within the forward estimates.

**The CHAIR:** Honourable member, where are you getting the \$75 million from?

**Hon NEIL THOMSON:** That was announced. That is what I am asking. It is not here, but it is definitely \$75 million announced by the commonwealth.

**Mr WORONZOW:** Sorry, if you not mind my adding to what I have said, that money was allocated to both Duncan Road–Gordon Downs Road and Tanami Road. The comments that I made related to Tanami Road. The balance is on Duncan–Gordon Downs. That is the project that the member was kind enough to comment about the good work we have done with the Shire of Halls Creek and those 12 Aboriginal young men that we are training up in collaboration.

**Hon NEIL THOMSON:** This might be a rhetorical question, so I will just throw it in here. Actually, no; I will do one more specific one. We will save the rhetorical ones for later. The sealing of Wiluna–Meekatharra road is obviously a very important link, with \$5 million, \$5 million, \$5 million and \$4.9 million in the table over the out years. I cannot remember; I have driven it quite recently and it is a long way. I do not think that with about \$1 million a kilometre, we are going to finish that road with that funding. It is a pretty vital link, would you say, and something that we should seal all the way through between Wiluna and Meekatharra?

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** Honourable member, as a good, faithful and loyal public servant, of course the director general does not have a point of view, and I do not have a point of view either because I am a representative minister, so I will take it on notice if that is what the member wants.

*[Supplementary Information No C15.]*

**Hon DONNA FARAGHER:** I refer to budget paper No 2, volume 2, page 613. It is under the line item “METRONET—Caledonian Avenue Level Crossing Closure”. I just have a couple of questions in and around this. My understanding is that the crossing is expected to close next year. Have we got a time frame as to when that is likely to be?

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** I am going to have a look, honourable member. I might ask Mr Kannis to make some comments about the timing of that.

**Mr KANNIS:** The requirement for the level crossing to be closed is to be in time for the opening of the Forrestfield–Airport Link. The Forrestfield–Airport Link is planned to be operating by the end of the first half of 2022. The level crossing needs to be closed before that commences operation.

**Hon DONNA FARAGHER:** Further to that, my understanding—this is, in part, I think, some of the funding that is attached to it in the budget papers—is that there will need to be a number of road improvements and upgrades to allow for what will inevitably create some traffic congestion on either side by the closure of that crossing. I am happy to have this taken on notice, but am I able to receive a breakdown of all the road upgrades and/or bridge improvements that are associated with this project, when those works are due to commence, and their expected time frame?

[5.30 pm]

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** Honourable member, I can give you some information now. A new green median at Railway Parade and Caledonian Avenue, traffic signals at Guildford Road–Seventh Avenue intersection, pedestrian upgrades to Guildford Road–Eighth Avenue intersection, traffic signals at Whatley Crescent–Railway Parade intersection. In terms of time lines and dollars, are you able to add anything?

**Mr KANNIS:** I can only add that not all those upgrades are required at the time the Caledonian Avenue crossing closes, so it will be spread over a period of a couple of years is my understanding.

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**Hon SUE ELLERY:** Honourable member, I can tell you that construction is due to start late 2021, early 2022—estimated completion date 2024, 2025.

**Hon DONNA FARAGHER:** I appreciate the information you have provided but if we can, I would appreciate a breakdown of those improvements that you have raised, as well as any others that may also be part of the project and when they are due to commence. I appreciate that some may occur prior to the closure and others will happen after. It would be helpful to know which ones are coming first and then throughout and then the expected time frame for the completion of each of those.

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** We can take that on notice, chair.

*[Supplementary Information No C16.]*

**Hon DONNA FARAGHER:** Thank you.

**Hon MARTIN ALDRIDGE:** I have two discrete areas to ask questions on this afternoon. One is in relation to the question prior to the hearing. I asked question 1, and it relates to the Great Northern Highway–Bindoon bypass following on from the earlier line of questioning. I understand this project has been delayed by two years as a result of infrastructure smoothing. I am just wondering—the response makes reference to a review. Was that an across-government review or is this a review specific to Main Roads and its infrastructure projects?

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** Do you mean of the asset investment program review?

**Hon MARTIN ALDRIDGE:** In the answer to 1) a) it says “The review considered ...”.

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** Yes; it was not across government. It was announced as part of the budget and then within each agency, they did their own work. But at the time we announced the budget, we announced a range of projects across government that were part of that.

**Hon MARTIN ALDRIDGE:** Is the Main Roads review of its infrastructure program that informed the smoothing available to the committee?

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** It is not a document, honourable member. There was a range of consultations—I participated in them as well—with industry. Out of that the government factored that into the budget.

**Hon MARTIN ALDRIDGE:** This project has quite a strong BCR of 3.4. I am wondering, given there is no formal review, whether you could enlighten me as to why this project, perhaps in comparison to others, was prioritised for delay. I know there was some reference before about the engagement of Aboriginal contractors, but I am sure there is probably a more fulsome answer than that.

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** I am advised a couple of things. Environmental approvals had not been achieved for the southern part of the project. It was a question of: Have you already gone to tender; have you not gone to tender? If you have not gone to tender, how quickly can you go to tender? Given those environmental approvals were still wanting, this was one of the projects that could be smoothed because we were not already in the tender process. Secondly, we also knew that in terms of workforce capacity, labour market capacity, outside the metropolitan area as well were stretched with all the other work that was going on, so those were the factors that led to this project being included as one of the projects to be smoothed.

**Hon MARTIN ALDRIDGE:** Can I go to another area now with respect to streetlighting? It might fall under perhaps “Road Network Maintenance” on budget paper No 2 page 609. I assume that Main Roads pays a power bill to power providers such as Synergy across the state or whenever they procure their power from for streetlighting on its network. Would you be in a position to tell me how much the department spends on streetlighting?



**Hon SUE ELLERY:** When I asked how much we pay, I am told it is a lot of money. I might get the director general to make some comments. I do not know if we have that information here, but perhaps he can make some comments.

**Mr WORONZOW:** Streetlighting on highways and main roads—we pay for that through a common-use arrangement that is put in place by the Department of Finance, Western Power and Synergy. The quantum is significant; I do not have the figure here but I think, from memory, it is between \$5 million and \$10 million a year.

**Hon MARTIN ALDRIDGE:** Perhaps you can take that on notice.

**The CHAIR:** Do you just want it for one year?

**Hon MARTIN ALDRIDGE:** Yes, just last year is fine—in the budget year.

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** We will take it on notice.

*[Supplementary Information No C17.]*

**Hon MARTIN ALDRIDGE:** I understand the department has quite an active program of inspecting roads for faults and their condition. Does that include streetlighting?

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** I ask Mr Snook to make some comment about that.

**Mr SNOOK:** We do regular checks of streetlighting. The maintenance of the streetlighting is part of our statewide electrical contracts, so inspectors do regular checks.

**Hon MARTIN ALDRIDGE:** I ask this because I understand, for example, Western Power only inspects the streetlights, which you pay for, once every four years. Whether they do that or not, I guess, is another question for perhaps another day. My observation is that the maintenance program is not what it should be and there are significant outages of street lights on your network. I have written to the minister about this, particularly with respect to the NorthLink project, which I think would be a potential contractual issue because of the recency of the completion of that project. Again, I drove to Perth last night and there are significant outages of streetlights on Tonkin Highway relating to the new NorthLink project. That would be something that perhaps I can just highlight to the agency and the public servants present where there needs to be some further consideration, given that you are paying a significant bill.

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** Duly noted, honourable member.

**Hon MARTIN ALDRIDGE:** I think one of the witnesses was wanting to respond.

**Mr SNOOK:** To comment on the specific point about the NorthLink project—that project is still under defects liability, so there are still things that the contractor needs to repair. The other part about up there is we have had some recent cases of theft of the copper wire up there, so the police have been involved in that. There is a number of issues that are involved in that NorthLink project, but we will definitely have another look at it.

**Hon Dr BRIAN WALKER:** A quick question first of all; one question, but there is a second question. I am wondering—was Hon Sophia Moermond present, when I was away on urgent parliamentary business, to ask a question on congestion?

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** No.

**Hon Dr BRIAN WALKER:** The first question in that case: I refer the minister to budget paper No 2, volume 2, page 603 and the references there in numbered paragraphs 7 and 8 to new and emerging technologies. The background to this question, of course, is having sat for a briefing with Infrastructure WA and asking, in particular, about the preparedness we have for electric vehicles in

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WA; you will know that I am very interested in green technology, particularly the growth of the electric vehicle usage and, indeed, hydrogen vehicles.

What, if anything, has been done to prepare us for this? I note, in particular, that, for example, compared to other states, the purchase of an electric car receives no rebate. People are paying fees for luxury car value when, in fact, we ought to be looking at—I am sure you would agree—making electric vehicles the norm. Leading on to the next question of preparing as Main Roads that if Australia is now being seen as the dumping ground for less clean vehicles, as has been reported in the press, what steps are being taken to prepare us for a clean future?

[5.40 pm]

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** I am not sure if anyone here can answer the second part of that question but I will start with the first. The member might be aware that on 17 August, the government launched the *Electric vehicle action plan* as part of the \$21 million electric vehicle fund and the state *Electric vehicle strategy* for WA. The WA Electric Vehicles Working Group assists to coordinate the implementation of that strategy. Main Roads is one of the members of that working group. WA is going to be home to the longest electric highway in Australia, with up to 90 new electric vehicle fast-charging stations and backup chargers, at 45 locations along key travel routes, with the average distance between stations around 160 kilometres. Most electric cars can run for at least 400 kilometres in one charge. It is expected that technology will continue to improve over the next few years. The electric highway will connect Perth and regional WA, stretching north to Kununurra, south to Esperance and east to Kalgoorlie. It will allow vehicles to be charged in as little as 15 minutes. The locations have been chosen to encourage tourists to spend this time looking around the local area. A tender for the charging stations design is due to go out to market by the end of this year, with the network expected to be fully operational by early 2024. Synergy and Horizon Power, in consultation with the Department of Water and Environmental Regulation, have determined the location of those charging stations. The electric vehicle market presents a significant opportunity for industry in WA. Some of the largest reserves for all of the critical battery materials are here in WA, so there are benefits for us to gain from that.

As to the second part of your question, I am not sure how we can provide an answer to that. I am not sure that I am in a position to provide you with any more information other than I already have, which was really about an industry that the government does not control, effectively.

**Hon Dr BRIAN WALKER:** Thank you, minister. I would be very happy to continue this line of discussion in question time in the future and see if we can get some political change. In particular, I am looking here at the costs to the general public in buying electric vehicles which, in comparison with other states, of course, is not giving the rebates that we need.

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** Honourable member, it might be helpful if I speak with the Minister for Environment, for example, to provide you with a briefing about the strategy more broadly.

**Hon Dr BRIAN WALKER:** I would be very grateful.

I move on to the second one that Hon Sophia Moermond was unable to ask. This refers to budget paper No 2, page 602, volume 2, and the admission by Main Roads in paragraph 5 that congestion has a significant impact on the state's productivity. I refer you also to a media statement made by the minister a month ago that plans are in place to alter the speed limits on portions of the Kwinana Freeway during the Metronet shutdown in January next year. The implication here is that the already congested roads are going to be congested yet more and I believe that the bus lanes, which are transferring those passengers on the now-closed railway line, are going to be subject to delays as well. I foresee that there will be a significant increase in congestion. Can you confirm

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whether my suspicions are correct? What time delays could a driver expect on their daily commute and will we see the reintroduction of bus lanes to allow train replacement services to flow more smoothly?

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** I will ask Mr Burgess to make some comments.

**Mr BURGESS:** Clearly, the disruptions are not ideal but they are a necessary evil, unfortunately, with most of these projects, in particular, the Thornlie project because it does sit in the middle of the Kwinana Freeway. Whilst I cannot claim that it was targeted, it happens to coincide, obviously, with the Christmas shutdown, so we do have a modest decrease in traffic. People would probably think it is greater but my colleagues from Main Roads indicate there is about a 10 per cent drop in traffic volumes, perhaps even slightly more. We will start that blockade that is being talked about on 26 December, on Boxing Day. It will be in the order of 20 days. That time has been picked because—obviously, it is when it is—it is a useful time that has been identified because traffic volumes are down for quite a good portion of that time. Similarly, even our volumes on public transport, our demand on the train service, which will not be operating—we will be operating from Mandurah to Rockingham normally, Rockingham to Aubin Grove on one track and then taking people off a bus from Aubin Grove into the city. I have noticed some public commentary about, “Couldn’t we turn the trains elsewhere?” You cannot turn the trains elsewhere, unfortunately, without impacting the Joondalup line. We do not want to impact the Joondalup line.

To comment on your point, we did look at it with our colleagues in Main Roads about opportunities for bus priority. The overall impact on the network would have been worse, in our belief, so we are putting, in Dunkirk spirit style, all hands on deck and all the buses that are available to service that demand. We are taking that very seriously. We are looking at the businesses or the organisations that have a particular impact, such as Murdoch hospital obviously, and trying to put in special arrangements and special plans, working with them and trying to make sure that the service we provide by way of a bus replacement service for the train that is missing for that relatively short—well, it is 20 days—period of time is the best service that we can possibly provide. It will be a case of trying to live with it and, as I say, the disruptions unfortunately come with the growth and the improvements in the network.

**The CHAIR:** Now we have a window of opportunity for questions for any of the agencies just to finish off if there are any.

**Hon NEIL THOMSON:** I will just go back to the issue of Metronet, if we can get a general comment, if it is possible. I think this is in the table. I do not have it in front of me because we have changed pages, but there was \$1.5 billion in spending this year, from recollection. I would have to go back to my notes; my apologies for that. My understanding is that there has been an increase in the cost of Metronet beyond the scope where it has been expanded. I know there is stage 1 and stage 2. If I could get a comment in relation to the actual cost per kilometre of track or whatever, that would be useful. We are now looking at a \$7.4 billion spend. I think some figures were around \$2.9 billion a couple of years ago. There have been various numbers out there. If possible, could we get an overarching comment on what is driving the increase in the cost of delivery of that project, and then I will go with a supplementary on that later?

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** Honourable member, I can tell you that the total investment in Metronet projects over the forward estimates period is \$5.7 billion. Additional projects have been added and others have been expanded in scope. These include: expansion of the level crossing removal program to include removal of the crossings at Mint Street, Welshpool Road and Hamilton Street in Victoria Park and Cannington, requiring new elevated stations at Carlisle, Queens Park and Cannington; funding of the high-capacity signalling program; expansion of the railcar acquisition program to

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include the replacement of the A-series; the previously funded Mandurah station multistorey car park; and the Greenwood station multistorey car park that was committed to during the 2021 state election.

[5.50 pm]

**Hon NEIL THOMSON:** Am I able to have that information provided, just to have a look at it?

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** You will get it in *Hansard*. I have just read it out.

**Hon NEIL THOMSON:** Thank you. The comment of \$7.4 billion included, I think, last year's cost and a few previous years, as well, so you are right—it is \$5.7 billion in the forward estimates. Has the cost of delivering Metronet, notwithstanding these additional activities or additional works, gone up in terms of delivery per kilometre? Let us say per kilometre. Has that been related to increased costs of contracting due to the shortage of labour?

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** Well, I think it is fair to say that there are general cost pressures across all the projects. The budget is as set out in the budget papers. I am not sure that I can give you much more than that. The budget includes those additional items and changes to scope that I just referred to, so I am not sure that I can give you much more information than that, honourable member.

**Hon NEIL THOMSON:** In the contracting process, what, in general terms, is the government doing to ensure that we are getting value for money?

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** The government is always looking for value for money, but one of the things that we did, and we have talked about this a couple of times already in this session, is that the smoothing of the pipeline of work is in part to address a number of things: workforce labour market pressures, and balancing the public sector investment in infrastructure with the private sector investment in infrastructure. Because if we are all doing work at exactly the same time, everything is going to be at an inflated cost, so if we can spread that work out, part of the thinking behind doing that—and industry is highly supportive of us doing it—is to ensure that we are not all paying a premium now because we are trying to do everything at the same time.

**Hon NEIL THOMSON:** Do you think the hard border has in any way impacted on the availability of technical skills for the project?

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** Honourable member, we have managed labour market shortages before. We have just never done it in a pandemic, when international and domestic borders are closed. These things are always a balance. In this case, the balance is public health and our capacity to protect the citizens of Western Australia, and at the same time bear the inconvenience that comes with not being able to meet all of our labour market demands at the same time. It is a balance.

**Hon NEIL THOMSON:** Like Main Roads, we had this discussion around having a sort of round table in relation to the civil construction market and peak bodies. Was anything similar done in the Metronet project?

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** What like?

**Hon NEIL THOMSON:** Like Main Roads, how we had this round table discussion on civil —

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** Yes. Honourable member, that was an across-government exercise in consultation, so Metronet was part of that. They were part of those considerations, and the relevant stakeholders who were engaged in those projects were part of that consultation.

**Hon NEIL THOMSON:** At any stage, did you test the market at all, other than just a discussion in the round table with peak bodies? Did you test the market with the contractors?

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**Hon SUE ELLERY:** Honourable member, you would appreciate, there is an awful lot of infrastructure—probably more than has ever been done by a government in recent history. There is a massive investment in public infrastructure by the McGowan government. In the lead-up to the conversations that we had with industry representatives about whether it was in everybody's interests for us to smooth out the work, those projects were at various stages. All of that work was at various stages. We could see what was happening in the market—we could see prices starting to creep up, we could see tenders going beyond what we had originally anticipated, we had seen workforce pressures starting to emerge—and so all of those factors were part of the reason why the government chose, as is really standard operating procedure of this government, to consult. We went to industry and we said, "These are our observations: we are all competing for the same workforce; we've got issues around managing skill shortages in a pandemic, which we have never faced before. We are thinking one way to manage this might be to try and smooth out the pipeline." So, all of those factors were taken into account when we came to the decision that we did. But this is not just about projects in Main Roads; this is projects across government.

**Hon NEIL THOMSON:** Yes, and I accept that. Do you concede, though, that the delays in getting these projects started, noting that Metronet was announced in the 2017 election, has actually led us to the situation where there was a shortage of work in 2018, 2019 and 2020, and now we are in a tighter market? Do you concede that that has actually caused some price —

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** No. No.

**Hon NEIL THOMSON:** You do not concede that there has been any impact on the price?

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** Correct; I do not.

**Hon NEIL THOMSON:** Not a dollar?

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** Correct; I do not.

**Hon NEIL THOMSON:** All right. If I may—I will just get stopped at some stage, thank you. We will terminate that discussion, minister, so you will be happy. I do note there is a considerable amount of funding by the commonwealth, as we have discussed earlier.

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** It is fantastic, isn't it?

**Hon NEIL THOMSON:** It is great, and I am glad you support what the coalition government is doing in relation to Western Australia. It is fantastic.

**The CHAIR:** Are you batting for Scott?

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** No.

**Hon NEIL THOMSON:** I would be comforted by some briefing, maybe from one of your officers here, on actually the mechanism of this, because it is very difficult to ascertain a massive investment next year, 2022–23—\$1.12 billion from commonwealth grants, \$479 million for state funding, and there are other components put in there—with all these changes in schedules, as you can imagine. I wonder: is there scope at all for any cost shifting from the state to the commonwealth in that process? It may be that you could give me some advice as to actually how that mechanism works—I do not actually know the mechanism. When the commonwealth commits to a project—80 per cent for a road project, for example—does it require the state to actually spend money? How does that mechanism work? Can you assure me that there is no cost shifting that goes on between the state and the commonwealth? It would be a big amount of money and it would be easy to do, if it was possible.

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** Sure. Honourable member, it has long, long been the practice that both federal governments and state governments fund infrastructure—they both do. From time to time, the

commonwealth government will come up with a particular bucket of funding, whatever that might be, and they will look to state governments and say, “How can we work together? We’ve got this bucket of money to spend; what can you put on the table? What are your priority projects?” Now, we are in a really strong position in Western Australia, because the minister for this portfolio is a pretty good negotiator. She has negotiated the percentage split between the commonwealth and the state on a range of different projects. She has negotiated making sure that the priorities that we want match the priorities that are available to be funded from the commonwealth, so she has done a great job in negotiating that. There are various buckets of money that the commonwealth uses at different times, so the terms of the negotiations will alter each time. Sometimes the percentage is up for negotiation; sometimes the percentage is fixed but it is just about the particular priority of projects. All of these things are linked to timing. The honourable member understands how the electoral cycle works. The commonwealth is looking to spend money in Western Australia right now, and Western Australia is well served by a minister who is a really strong negotiator.

**The CHAIR:** I have a couple of quick ones, if you do not mind. We are all the beneficiaries of improvements to our road system; but, at the same time, we are all recipients of the changes when they occur. As a long-suffering member of the North Metropolitan Region where we had the inconvenience—the magnificence now—of the new four or five lanes on the Mitchell Freeway, which I think took about two years for that, and now we are going down from Joondalup to Reid Highway. You are familiar with that improvement, obviously, with those changes. I assume that is to widen it to three lanes. Can you just give me the duration of that project? How long can we expect for that? How long will that take?

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** Director general.

**Mr WORONZOW:** Typically, those major projects, once you have environmental and heritage approvals, and from memory, in this case, I think they have been obtained, it typically takes 18 months to two years.

**The CHAIR:** Yes, they have done it now. One lane is taken out already, so it has already commenced. I am talking about the Mitchell Freeway.

**Mr WORONZOW:** Oh, the extension of the Mitchell Freeway?

**The CHAIR:** Yes.

**Mr WORONZOW:** Sorry; I beg your pardon. That will be completed in approximately 18 months.

**The CHAIR:** Okay, good. It will be good, thank you.

**Mr WORONZOW:** I could give you the exact date if you —

**The CHAIR:** No, it is all right. And just one quick one: the sound wall around Warwick on the freeway there that has been committed to from the government. There was, I think, \$16 million in the election. I asked a couple of questions on it.

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** People are looking at me blankly.

**The CHAIR:** Can you tell me why the west side of the freeway is not being done; it is only the east side? No-one has that?

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** I am told it is determined by which side of the freeway the other work has been done. Maybe Mr Snook can provide us with some information.

**Mr SNOOK:** There were four different packages of amenity walls that were election commitments from the last election, and that is what they are. They were chosen as election commitments.

**The CHAIR:** Okay, so they were not necessarily based on —

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**Mr SNOOK:** I do not have the technical reasons for them.

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** Would you like us to take that on notice?

**The CHAIR:** I would, actually. Just some identification as to why, because I am copping a lot of constituent concerns with the fact that the west side is not getting the sound wall whereas the east side has been, so if I could get some justification for that, that would be very much appreciated.

*[Supplementary Information No C18.]*

**The CHAIR:** With that, everyone, I think we have had a fair go with you guys, so thank you very much. I think probably the only one that may still have some more questions is Hon Neil Thomson; you might like to put that on notice in a moment.

Just to conclude, thank you very much, particularly to the witnesses, for attending today; it is very much appreciated. To the members, as I have just mentioned, you may submit your remaining questions through the electronic lodgement system, which will close at 5.00 pm on 29 October 2021. Witnesses, the committee will forward the uncorrected transcript of evidence, with questions taken on notice highlighted, as soon as possible after the hearing. Responses to questions on notice are due by 5.00 pm on 17 November 2021. Should you be unable to meet the due date, please advise the committee in writing as soon as possible before the due date. The advice is to include specific reasons why the due date cannot be met.

Having said that, thank you once again for your attendance today; it has been very much appreciated. Thank you.

**Hearing concluded at 6.02 pm**

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