

**STANDING COMMITTEE ON ESTIMATES AND  
FINANCIAL OPERATIONS**

**2015–16 BUDGET ESTIMATES HEARINGS**

**TRANSCRIPT OF EVIDENCE  
TAKEN AT PERTH  
THURSDAY, 25 JUNE 2015**

**SESSION THREE  
MAIN ROADS WESTERN AUSTRALIA**

**Members**

**Hon Ken Travers (Chair)  
Hon Peter Katsambanis (Deputy Chair)  
Hon Martin Aldridge  
Hon Alanna Clohesy  
Hon Rick Mazza**

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**Hearing commenced at 1.30 pm**

**Hon JIM CHOWN**

**Parliamentary Secretary representing the Minister for Transport, examined:**

**Mr REECE WALDOCK**

**Commissioner of Main Roads, examined:**

**Mr STEPHEN TROUGHTON**

**Managing Director, examined:**

**Mr DES SNOOK**

**Executive Director, Road Network Services, examined:**

**Mr PETER WORONZOW**

**Executive Director, Finance and Commercial Services, examined:**

[Hon Rick Mazza took the chair.]

**The ACTING CHAIR:** On behalf of the Standing Committee on Estimates and Financial Operations, I would like to welcome you to today's hearing. Can the witnesses confirm that they have read, understood and signed a document headed "Information for Witnesses"?

**The Witnesses:** Yes.

**The ACTING CHAIR:** Witnesses need to be aware of the severe penalties that apply to persons providing false or misleading testimony to a parliamentary committee. It is essential that all your testimony before the committee is complete and truthful to the best of your knowledge. This hearing is being recorded by Hansard and a transcript of your evidence will be provided to you. The hearing is being held in public, although there is discretion available to the committee to hear evidence in private either of its own motion or at the witness's request. If for some reason you wish to make a confidential statement during today's proceedings, you should request that the evidence be taken in closed session before answering the question. Government agencies and departments have an important role and duty in assisting Parliament to scrutinise the budget papers on behalf of the people of Western Australia, and the committee values your assistance with this.

[Witnesses introduced.]

**The ACTING CHAIR:** Do the witnesses wish to provide an opening statement?

**Hon JIM CHOWN:** Yes, I do. Thank you, Mr Acting Chairman. I will commence with this opening statement in this session of estimates. As everyone will be aware, the same financial constraints that faced us in the formulation of the 2014–15 state budget confronted us again in the striking of the 2015–16 state budget. The government is balancing the pressing demands on all fronts with the need to ensure the infrastructure requirements are delivered to provide for Western Australia's growing population and economy. Western Australia is still growing faster than any other state in the nation, and the government is continuing to ensure that our road system is developed and maintained to provide safe and efficient road access that keeps Western Australia moving while enhancing community safety and supporting economic growth and further development throughout the state.

The 2015–16 budget will see a record \$2.23 billion provided to Main Roads to expand and maintain the Western Australian road network, including a \$1.09 billion asset investment program.

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This compares to the \$1.17 billion total budget provided to Main Roads in 2007–08 by the previous government. In fact, the allocation of funds in this particular financial year is almost double the last allocation of funds in 2007–08. The 2015–16 budget will see the delivery and commencement of a range of important projects, including the completion of the \$1 billion Gateway WA project by mid-next year, some six months ahead of schedule, and the commencement of the \$1.12 billion NorthLink WA, which will incorporate the 37-kilometre Swan Valley section of the Perth–Darwin highway and the \$1.6 billion Perth Freight Link projects. These three Projects—Gateway, NorthLink and the Perth Freight Link—represent the most significant investment on transport infrastructure ever seen in Western Australia. Combined, they will provide a seamless transport freight link from Muchea to Fremantle, as well as servicing the industrial and commercial hubs along the route. This investment of \$3.7 billion will provide safer routes and less intrusion to other traffic, and will improve the efficiencies of our commercial and industrial operations throughout the metropolitan area. There will be continued upgrades to Great Eastern Highway. We have recently completed the widening of the Walgoolan and Coolgardie section and are currently delivering on our \$48 million commitment to construct 15 new passing lanes between Southern Cross and Kalgoorlie.

On Great Northern Highway we have completed the Bindi Bindi curves upgrade, and may I say that this is part of my electorate and that that upgrade has been wanting for probably at least the last 30 or 40 years. It is a very busy section of road, with heavy transport moving in one direction every three minutes, and was a very dangerous part of the road. Most of the operations that take place on that particular section are very thankful for the upgrade. On Great Northern Highway we are also well advanced with the realignments and upgrades from Batty Bog to Walebing, and with future works such as the New Norcia bypass in the development stage. Works are also underway on North West Coastal Highway to better service regional centres and the mining and agricultural industries. A contract will be awarded later this year.

Could I have some quiet, Mr Chairman, thank you.

**The ACTING CHAIR:** Members, can you afford the parliamentary secretary another couple of minutes.

**Hon JIM CHOWN:** I will start that section again, Mr Chairman, because I do not want anyone to miss this.

Works are also underway on North West Coastal Highway to better service regional centres and the mining and agricultural industries. A contract will be awarded later this year for replacement of the old Mandurah traffic bridge; commencement of the final section of the upgrade of coalfields highway in our south west; a start to the extension of Mitchell Freeway in Perth's northern suburbs; and completion of the Ravensthorpe heavy vehicle bypass. Importantly, \$40 million has been specially allocated to progress a range of traffic congestion management initiatives in the Perth metropolitan area.

**The ACTING CHAIR:** Parliamentary secretary, we have limited time today for the Main Roads hearing. Do you have very much to go?

**Hon JIM CHOWN:** I understand that; I have nearly completed. It will be less than three minutes.

**Hon KEN TRAVERS:** Is there anything not already in the budget papers or the media announcements that have come out?

**Hon JIM CHOWN:** At the same time we are ensuring Main Roads WA has the full professional resources to deliver future road infrastructure projects while maintaining the current state road asset worth more than \$35 billion, and also at the same time strengthening its expertise as a road asset manager with a greater focus on managing traffic control. Thank you.

**The ACTING CHAIR:** I seek an indication from members who would like to ask some questions. We will start with Hon Alanna Clohesy.

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**Hon ALANNA CLOHESY:** I am looking at new works on page 819 in budget paper No 2 and the proposed upgrade to Great Eastern Highway between Bilgoman Road and Mann Street in particular.

**Hon JIM CHOWN:** Sorry, honourable member, can you speak up a little bit? We are not quite getting the road names.

**Hon ALANNA CLOHESY:** It is unusual that I am not heard. There we are! I said Great Eastern Highway upgrade, Bilgoman Road to Mundaring. An amount of \$12 million has been allocated to that road. Where is the remaining \$24 million that was promised for that road? When is that going to be allocated?

**Hon JIM CHOWN:** I will get Peter Woronzow to respond to the question.

**Mr Woronzow:** The total value for that project is \$24 million and the other \$12 million is recurrent expenditure, which is found within our general allocation. Some of the works are categorised as capital, and some are categorised as recurrent. The other \$12 million is just within the total cost of services of Main Roads.

[1.40 pm]

**Hon ALANNA CLOHESY:** This is the new works that have been promised? Why would the \$12 million not be in with the rest of it?

**Mr Woronzow:** The other \$12 million is not capital expenditure; it is part of the asset investment program. What is shown in the asset investment program is only capital expenditure. Similar to the parliamentary secretary in his introductory speech when he talked about the traffic congestion management program, which is the last line under “New Works”, that is a \$40 million program of works, but only 28 are capital; the other 12 are recurrent.

**Hon ALANNA CLOHESY:** That is 24; where is the other \$12 million that was promised?

**Mr Woronzow:** I am sorry, the other?

**Hon ALANNA CLOHESY:** A total of \$36 million for upgrades to Great Eastern Highway was promised. Where is the other \$12 million? Is it in the out years?

**Mr Woronzow:** It is generally within Main Roads’ recurrent allocation. It is recurrent expenditure; it is within the total cost of services.

**Hon ALANNA CLOHESY:** The two figures you have given me add up to \$24 million. Where is the remaining \$12 million?

**Mr Woronzow:** The remaining 12 is the recurrent expenditure. It is just recorded as all recurrent expenditure is recorded. If you go to page 809, it is within —

**Hon ALANNA CLOHESY:** The first answer you gave me was that \$12 million has been allocated in “New Works”; the \$12 million is in recurrent expenditure; that is \$24 million. Where is the third \$12 million?

**Mr Woronzow:** I am sorry, I think there is a misunderstanding. The project is only a \$24 million project. It is not a \$36 million project.

**Hon ALANNA CLOHESY:** When was it reworked?

**Mr Woronzow:** It was never a \$36 million project.

**Hon ALANNA CLOHESY:** The total amount of \$36 million to upgrade Great Eastern Highway was promised in 2013, so the project has been split into two, has it? From Greenmount to Mundaring a total of \$36 million has been promised and only \$24 million has been allocated.

**Hon JIM CHOWN:** Can you refer to where you got the figure of \$36 million?

**Hon ALANNA CLOHESY:** The “Safer Roads and Roadsides”, “The Liberals’ Road Safety Policy”, page 4.

**Hon JIM CHOWN:** Is it in the budget?

**Hon ALANNA CLOHESY:** That is the promise, and I am asking: where is it in the budget?

**Mr Woronzow:** I am sorry, could you please clarify where in the budget papers it says it is a \$36 million project?

**Hon ALANNA CLOHESY:** The promise.

**Hon KEN TRAVERS:** An election promise.

**Hon ALANNA CLOHESY:** It is an election promise.

**Hon KEN TRAVERS:** I do not think they got passed on to the departments!

**Hon ALANNA CLOHESY:** That is why I am asking where is it in the budget papers, but it is not there.

**Hon JIM CHOWN:** It is a \$24 million project. That has been explained.

**Hon ALANNA CLOHESY:** Okay, so there is another \$12 million that is not in the budget. I will add that to the list.

**Hon JIM CHOWN:** Yes, but that is all that is resourced. If I had to actually rectify the problem, I would redo the road, I would assume.

**Hon PAUL BROWN:** Given that the recently announced wheatbelt highway review will very shortly take place, can you identify where it is in the budget? Once that review has been completed, I imagine that you are looking at the Great Eastern Highway and also Great Southern Highway. I think they are the two that have been identified. Has any money been allocated once that review has been done and any issues identified? Can you show me where in the budget that there has been any money set aside for remediation and roadworks?

**Hon JIM CHOWN:** The normal process is once a review is done and considered by the ministry and the government, budget allocations will take place where it is deemed appropriate. But as I said in my opening statement, a great deal of work is currently being done on those particular roads.

**Hon PAUL BROWN:** When is that review going to take place, when is it expected to be completed, and when will we find some detail about that?

**Hon JIM CHOWN:** I do not have that information at hand but I am happy to take the question on notice.

*[Supplementary Information No C1.]*

**Hon DARREN WEST:** I refer to the roads that were funded to replace tier 3 lines. The information we have here is on those particular roads and the issues around them. The issues of roads being closed were fairly publicised that they were proven unfit for the task of carrying the grain in the replacement of the rail. The problems or the issues identified with these roads were previously funded to replace tier 3 lines. I just want to know are you aware of what those issues are with those roads?

**Hon JIM CHOWN:** Yes, I am. Let me commence by saying that the government invested well over \$100 million in upgrading a number of grain —

**Hon DARREN WEST:** But the roads have failed, parliamentary secretary.

**Hon JIM CHOWN:** Let me finish, please. The government invested well over \$100 million in upgrading roads within the tier 3 area. There have been a number of inspections; in fact inspections take place on either a weekly or fortnightly basis by Main Roads department over that particular section of the tier 3 area. I myself did a personal inspection of the main roads 18 months ago just after the work had been finalised. Some issues were required to be addressed, and they were addressed as such. And of course the most advertised failure was on the road from Cunderdin to

Quairading. That was a road undertaken by the shire. A study was conducted to see why that particular pavement failure occurred. A long story short is that Main Roads, I think, put in some \$180 000 to rectify the problem. If you have any more specific areas that you would like to discuss, please go ahead.

**Hon DARREN WEST:** Are there other roads? I am asking about all the roads.

**Hon JIM CHOWN:** Other road failures; is that what you are asking?

**Hon DARREN WEST:** Yes.

**Hon JIM CHOWN:** I will refer that to Mr Des Snook, who is an authority on this.

**Mr Snook:** With the grain freight program, that is a \$118 million program and it is over state roads and local roads. There were a few construction-type issues with the widenings on the state roads to start with, but they were all dealt with very quickly, so they are all fine now. There were some issues on some of the local roads but the local governments had done that work so they have been in there. Apart from the Cunderdin–Quairading road, the local governments have repaired the issues with their roads. There still remain two roads where there are issues. There is the Lomos Road and the Bencubbin–Kellerberrin road, and the local governments have to deal with those.

**Hon JIM CHOWN:** Before your next question, member, I would just like to clarify something I said earlier. Weekly inspections are being undertaken by Main Roads on these particular roads; not fortnightly as I said before.

**Hon DARREN WEST:** That is very heartening. Is there additional funding required to address these issues on these roads that you have mentioned?

**Mr Snook:** If the local governments are required to get extra funds to do that, then they have the opportunity to apply through the regional road groups as part of the normal funding that is available to local government through Main Roads.

**Hon DARREN WEST:** So there will not be extra money in those regional road groups to allow for the failure of these grain freight network roads; there will be the existing amount and that is all?

**Mr Snook:** That is correct. But, as I said, additional funding is always available through the regional road groups, and that is part of the money that Main Roads provides that is passed on as usual grants.

**Hon DARREN WEST:** How much is available through that mechanism and who is responsible for that funding?

**Mr Snook:** Overall, the total value of the local government funding that Main Roads provides is 27 per cent of the motor vehicle licence fees that come into Main Roads.

**Hon DARREN WEST:** Is all of that hitting the ground, all of that 27 per cent?

**Hon JIM CHOWN:** Could I just interrupt? I think Peter Woronzow would be probably more qualified to respond to that and talk to that. I actually do not think it is 20 per cent; it is about 22 per cent but Mr Woronzow may have the actual figures.

[1.50 pm]

**Mr Woronzow:** The current state funds the local government agreement; allocates the equivalent of 21 per cent of state funds to local government.

**Hon DARREN WEST:** Sorry, 21 per cent?

**Mr Woronzow:** Yes. Importantly, that 21 per cent is in the order of \$150 million, which is the highest the allocation has ever been to local government.

**Hon DARREN WEST:** Why is it not 27 per cent; is that not the original agreement?

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**Mr Woronzow:** The original agreement was 27 per cent, but as part of corrective measures, the government introduced in the midyear review, EERC made a decision to reduce the funding going forward to 21 per cent in recognition that the overall level of funding was at a historic high.

**Hon DARREN WEST:** Is that an efficiency dividend or a general decision of the department?

**Mr Woronzow:** It was a general decision of the EERC.

**Hon DARREN WEST:** Who is responsible for administering that funding?

**Mr Woronzow:** Main Roads.

**Hon KEN TRAVERS:** Mr Snook said \$118 million had been spent on roads in replacement of tier 3 rail—is that correct?

**Mr Snook:** The program is \$118 million, but the final \$7 million is to be spent in 2015–16.

**Hon KEN TRAVERS:** Seeing as you have just been able to outline that to us now, why were you not able as a department to provide an answer to question 9 of questions on notice to this committee? You said it did not relate to the budget papers and, therefore, you were unclear as to the relevance of the question to the estimates hearing. If the department is aware that roads that it funded need to be upgraded because they are failing, which is what the question went to, why were you not able to answer question 9?

**Hon JIM CHOWN:** What has not been answered with regard to the question on notice? It addresses the Cunderdin–Quairading Road, the Lomos Road in the Shire of Wickiepin, Bencubbin and Kellerberrin.

**Hon KEN TRAVERS:** Question 9, parliamentary secretary.

**Hon JIM CHOWN:** Yes, question 9: Have any problems or issues been identified with the roads previously funded to replace the tier 3 rail lines?

**Hon KEN TRAVERS:** Mr Snook just outlined two roads and I am aware of three roads at least where problems have been outlined.

**Hon JIM CHOWN:** I see the answer and I agree with the member in that the answer is not quite adequate in regard to its response to a specific line item. I am sure that there is some confusion about the estimates that took place in the Legislative Assembly as opposed to the Legislative Council where more broader questions are allowed.

**The ACTING CHAIR:** Are you going to provide an alternative answer? Will you take that on notice?

**Hon JIM CHOWN:** I am more than happy to respond if the question is put on notice.

[*Supplementary Information No C2.*]

**Hon KEN TRAVERS:** So you will take question 9 on notice?

**Hon JIM CHOWN:** Yes, but we have addressed some of the issues already, honourable member. If you have a more specific question in regard to question on notice 9, feel free to go ahead.

**Hon KEN TRAVERS:** Yes, I do. Who wrote the answer as it is provided to the committee? Was that done at the agency level or at the ministerial office level?

**Hon JIM CHOWN:** I have no idea.

**Hon KEN TRAVERS:** The departmental people will know if that is the answer they wrote. Is that the answer they provided to the minister's office?

**Hon JIM CHOWN:** Just hang on a minute. The department deals with a lot of questions and answers come from various areas of the department. I do not think it is a fair question to public servants on this occasion. If the member wants to pursue it further, please put it on notice and we will deal with it.

**Hon KEN TRAVERS:** With all due respect, Mr Chown, there is a range of answers of a similar nature given in terms of questions on notice that I believe go to holding this committee in contempt and I want to know whether it is the departmental staff that are holding the committee in contempt or the minister's office. I want to know who wrote the answer that was clearly trying to avoid answering the question prior to the hearing.

**Hon JIM CHOWN:** I do not think anybody is trying to hold this committee in —

**Hon KEN TRAVERS:** Tell me who answered it.

**Hon JIM CHOWN:** Hang on; let me finish. There is no intention to hold this committee in contempt. As I have given an explanation, there is a slightly different process between the Assembly and the Council with regard to estimates. It is my understanding that in the Assembly, questions are quite specific to the *Budget Statements* and in the Council, these particular proceedings, questions can be broader ranging. The answer that you have received here as I read it asks for a specific line item with regard to the question. I have given an explanation. I am more than happy to take a further question on notice on this matter, but in no way can I say or agree with the member that there is any intention to hold this committee in contempt in any way whatsoever. I believe the question is inappropriate.

**Hon KEN TRAVERS:** I am wondering whether any of the advisers can advise who wrote that answer.

**Hon JIM CHOWN:** I am answering as the parliamentary secretary. These are my advisers, here at my request.

**Hon KEN TRAVERS:** I am asking the other witnesses whether or not they provided that answer.

**Hon JIM CHOWN:** No, questions will come through me as the parliamentary secretary representing the ministry and the Minister for Transport.

**Hon KEN TRAVERS:** There are five witnesses before this committee.

**Hon JIM CHOWN:** Yes, and it is up to me whether —

**Hon KEN TRAVERS:** Are you instructing them to not answer the question?

**Hon JIM CHOWN:** No, I am not. I am saying that you can put that question to me. I have responded to the question. I am asking you to put the question on notice.

**Hon KEN TRAVERS:** I am putting the question to Mr Troughton.

**The ACTING CHAIR:** Order, members! We are moving away from the question asked by Hon Darren West.

**Hon KEN TRAVERS:** My question is to Mr Troughton and Mr Waldock, and the parliamentary secretary can advise them to not answer if he wishes.

**The ACTING CHAIR:** Hon Ken Travers, you will have a turn later today. Just hold it there.

**Hon KEN TRAVERS:** They are all witnesses before this committee and I am asking the witnesses and you can instruct them not to answer if you choose.

**The ACTING CHAIR:** We will leave that for a moment. Hon Paul Brown, do you have a question on Hon Darren West's line of questioning?

**Hon KEN TRAVERS:** My question has not been answered.

**Hon JIM CHOWN:** Mr Chairman, are you looking for clarification with regard to the question?

**The ACTING CHAIR:** Can you clarify the question again, Hon Ken Travers?

**Hon KEN TRAVERS:** My question is to Mr Waldock or Mr Troughton: did the Main Roads department provide the answer that was given to this committee or was that answer provided by the minister's office—changed by the minister's office?

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**Hon JIM CHOWN:** Mr Acting Chairman, I am asking for clarification as a member of the government in this particular hearing to give a response representing the government, and as far as I am concerned, the gentlemen around me are professional public servants and any questions must be directed through me. I have given a response—it is on the record—and I have asked for the question to be put on notice.

**Hon KEN TRAVERS:** I think you are getting confused with the Assembly again.

**Hon JIM CHOWN:** No, I am not.

**The ACTING CHAIR:** Members, standing order 182(b), evidence of public servants, states that the officer of a government agency should be given reasonable opportunity to refer questions asked of the officer to a superior officer or to the minister.

**Hon KEN TRAVERS:** If that is what they want to do, they are entitled to do it. But it is not Mr Chown's job to do that. I am still putting the question to Mr Waldock in the first instance as to whether that was the answer provided by his department to the minister's office or whether it has subsequently been changed.

**Hon JIM CHOWN:** My response is that we will take it on notice.

**Hon KEN TRAVERS:** I am not asking you.

**The ACTING CHAIR:** Mr Waldock, did you want to refer it to the parliamentary secretary or do you want to answer the question?

**Mr Waldock:** I think for the purpose of discussion, I would much prefer to take it on notice.

*[Supplementary Information No C3.]*

**Hon KEN TRAVERS:** To finish off on those roads, is the failure of those roads—I think three were mentioned by Mr Snook—because they were not properly funded to upgrade them to the task that they are now required to do; that the licorice strips that were put on were not the actual solution and you need to completely rebuild the roads to carry the task that is required of them now that the rail is closed?

**Hon JIM CHOWN:** The report I read in regard to the failure of those roads, the failures came about by not properly formed-up foundations.

**Hon KEN TRAVERS:** Is that because you cannot form a foundation when you are doing a licorice strip; you need to do the whole road so that it can carry that sort of weight and load?

[2.00 pm]

**Hon JIM CHOWN:** By a licorice strip, I assume you mean the edge that has been widened.

**Hon KEN TRAVERS:** Most people call them the licorice strips out there in the —

**Mr Troughton:** They are fully widened so it is not just a bitumen strip. The edges are formed, proper material is brought in to form that up, and they are properly widened. From what I understand that work was not carried out to the required specifications and it failed.

**Hon KEN TRAVERS:** Have we gone back to check whether all of the other roads that have been upgraded have been done to sufficient specifications?

**Hon JIM CHOWN:** As I said previously, they are checked weekly by the Main Roads department. Where there were failures shortly after the work was done, the contractors under their contractual arrangements had to rectify the problems that occurred. Might I say that with over hundreds of kilometres of road works done, there were very small areas that needed rectification, which is normal when a road is done, whether it is a new road or an upgraded road.

**Hon KEN TRAVERS:** So with the three roads mentioned earlier by Mr Snook, have the additional works been undertaken by the contractors and funded by the contractors or are they having to be paid for by the local government with some contribution by Main Roads?

**Mr Snook:** We expect that those works will be fixed up by the shires because the shires have been responsible for getting that work done.

**Hon KEN TRAVERS:** But that suggests that the contractor did not upgrade them to specification.

**Mr Snook:** The shires have specified what improvements or what specification they wanted, and there have been failures. There has been no investigation that I am aware of that has determined the specific reasons for the failures; it is just that it has failed so it needs to be repaired.

**Hon KEN TRAVERS:** Surely if you have a failure on a new road it is because the contractor did not build it to the specifications required or that the specifications set were not sufficient to meet the task. In the case of each of those three roads, which was it?

**The ACTING CHAIR:** Can we leave that as the last question Hon Ken Travers.

**Hon JIM CHOWN:** I will have Mr Troughton respond to that because a lot of roads have been built in Western Australia in the last couple of years.

**Mr Troughton:** Those three roads were designed and constructed by the shires. So work was undertaken by the shire. The shires follow Main Roads guidance. We have specifications and guidance for them to develop their designs by. We provide technical support to them as they require it, and they go ahead and build those roads. The issue has been in that a number of places they have not met the specification or the subgrade has not been formed properly, and that is the sort of supervision on site by the shires on those roads.

**Hon KEN TRAVERS:** If that is the case, surely then it is the contractor that built—if they have not met the specification that was set, surely it is the contractor then that should be paying to fix those roads, but yourselves and the council are having to pay, why is that?

**Mr Troughton:** Because I think the contractor was the shire.

**Hon KEN TRAVERS:** But why are you then paying?

**The ACTING CHAIR:** Can we leave it there, Hon Ken Travers, because we have a bit to get through.

**Hon KEN TRAVERS:** I understand but this is a really important issue.

**The ACTING CHAIR:** I know it is but you will get your turn a little later and you can continue this line of questioning if you like. I will now go to Hon Paul Brown who has been patiently waiting.

**Hon PAUL BROWN:** Just following on from that line of questioning, the failure of the Cunderdin–Quairading Road was due to a removal or reallocation of \$800 000 through the initial grain rail road funding, which was not supplied. There was an initial allocation of \$3.94 million to the Shire of Cunderdin to complete that section of road, of which eventually only \$3.1 million was delivered. The \$800 000 was reallocated to another local government somewhere in the south west region apparently—that is the information that I have been given. That has caused that road to not have the treatment and the upgrade that was required. Why was that money reallocated considering it was allocated under the grain rail road funding, and which local government and priority project was it allocated to?

**Hon JIM CHOWN:** We do not have that information at hand so we will take the question on notice.

*[Supplementary Information No C4.]*

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**Hon NIGEL HALLETT:** Mine is a fairly brief question. I cannot find any notification through the budget regarding cyclists but I think we all realise Perth has a significant problem. What thought has been given to the licensing of cyclists? The next part of the question is: do you think cyclists should make a contribution to getting the capital required for the cycleways? Do you believe that cyclists should come off designated truck routes?

**Hon JIM CHOWN:** What was the first question again?

**The ACTING CHAIR:** Whether cyclists should be licensed, is that correct?

**Hon NIGEL HALLETT:** Yes.

**The ACTING CHAIR:** Is that question for the Department of Transport rather than Main Roads?

**Hon JIM CHOWN:** It is really a political question, which is a policy issue that needs to be taken up by the government. If he is asking for a personal opinion, I am not prepared to give one.

**The ACTING CHAIR:** We will not ask for a personal opinion.

**Hon NIGEL HALLETT:** It is something that Main Roads is grappling with. There is nothing in the budget, it is a problem that is ongoing and I would like a reply.

**Hon JIM CHOWN:** It is not an issue that Main Roads is grappling with at this stage. No.

**Hon KEN TRAVERS:** Can anyone over there tell me if the NorthLink project is funded in this budget?

**Hon JIM CHOWN:** Peter, the NorthLink project, is it funded in this budget?

**Mr Woronzow:** It is funded in this budget.

**Hon KEN TRAVERS:** Thank you. Again, why could the department not answer question 15 regarding the NorthLink project in the questions that were placed on notice?

**Hon JIM CHOWN:** We are just trying to find the question on notice so we can refer to it ourselves.

**Hon KEN TRAVERS:** I am sure you could almost rote-learn the words as they appear so many times in the answers.

**Hon JIM CHOWN:** It is the same answer to the prior question that the member brought up. Obviously, there is no confusion as to how this Legislation Council estimates committee operates and the Assembly —

**Hon ALANNA CLOHESY:** Who is confused about that?

**Hon JIM CHOWN:** I am not, but the response to the questions is obvious when they are referring to a specific line item. As I said in regard to the question from the member—whatever it was—these were obviously prepared in the Assembly estimates hearing, which took place well over a fortnight ago, and we operate differently. I will be instructing Main Roads, DoT and PTA to be a little more resilient and understand the process in this house when we come to estimates. I am disappointed —

**The ACTING CHAIR:** Hon Ken Travers, any further questions?

**Hon JIM CHOWN:** We are happy to answer the question now.

**Hon KEN TRAVERS:** If you were not confused, did you get to see the answers before they were provided?

**Hon JIM CHOWN:** No, I have not.

**Hon KEN TRAVERS:** That is a shame. Can you answer the question now?

**Hon JIM CHOWN:** The director of Main Roads will answer the question. I will give the question: The NorthLink WA Tonkin grade separations project to upgrade Tonkin Highway from just north

of Guildford Road through to Reid Highway will include a median between the two carriageways of sufficient —

**Hon KEN TRAVERS:** Sorry, can you do that a bit slower. Can you start again?

**Hon JIM CHOWN:** Sorry. Perhaps, for everybody else I will put the question. It is question 15 from Hon Ken Travers —

**Hon KEN TRAVERS:** No, it is just the answer I want.

**Hon JIM CHOWN:** But the other members may not be aware of the question.

**Hon ALANNA CLOHESY:** They have the question in front of them.

**Hon JIM CHOWN:** Okay. The NorthLink WA Tonkin grade separations project to upgrade Tonkin Highway from just of north of Guildford Road through to Reid Highway will include a median between the two carriageways of sufficient width to accommodate a future rail line within Tonkin Highway if required.

**Hon KEN TRAVERS:** If that is the case, why does the NorthLink stage 1 Tonkin grade separation and reconstruction project contract 6814, invitation for expressions of interest to become a proponent, not provide for that to occur? In fact, it only provides for the ultimate earthworks along Tonkin Highway for a future eight-lane carriageway with allowance for PTA heavy rail in the median north of Morley Drive.

[2.10 pm]

**Mr Troughton:** That is the current planning that we have with the Public Transport Authority. What we have made sure is that there is—so that is the current transport plan. What we have made sure of is that south of Morley Drive, if there is a future requirement through a new public transport plan, that it would be able to fit into that reserve. We are allowing for it, but it is not part of the ultimate design of this project at this stage.

**Hon KEN TRAVERS:** But why would you not be building the railway line both north and south of Morley Drive—sorry, building the roadworks, because we are not talking about building a railway line at this stage, we are just making the roadworks to provide for it. Why are we not making provision for the earthworks on Tonkin Highway, to make provision for a PTA heavy rail in the median south of Morley Drive? Why would you not have that as part of your contract specifications?

**Mr Troughton:** The answer is because it is not part of any planning that we are aware of at the moment.

**Hon KEN TRAVERS:** Why do you have it north of Morley Drive, then?

**Mr Troughton:** Because it is part of the rail plan.

**Hon KEN TRAVERS:** So, currently the rail plans as advised to you, only have a rail line running north of Morley Drive?

**Mr Troughton:** Yes.

**Hon KEN TRAVERS:** Right. So the big tunnel from the city out to Morley is currently what you are working your plans around, and you are making no provision in terms of the earthworks or construction south of Morley Drive to allow for a future railway line?

**Mr Troughton:** Not as part of this project, but we made sure that there is the ability, if required by future planning, for a rail corridor to pass through that area.

**Hon KEN TRAVERS:** Will that require any of the upgraded works that you are currently undertaking on Tonkin Highway to be replaced or removed or changed? If you built a railway line, would some of the roadworks that you are currently doing have to be modified to allow for a railway line south of Morley Drive?

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**Mr Waldock:** It is not unlike how we did the Mandurah railway line, where indeed there certainly will be pavement required to be taken out for the median railway line, but I think sensibly we have in fact made sure those three grade separations are in fact able to accommodate rail if indeed it is required in the future.

**Hon KEN TRAVERS:** Yes, but people have not just asked about grade separations, they have about the corridor. So you are saying that the pavements you are laying as part of the construction of the Tonkin Highway upgrade will be in what would become the future railway reserve, if a decision was ever taken to put a railway line along Tonkin Highway south of Morley Drive to the Midland line?

**Mr Waldock:** If a decision was ever taken, the government would have to make a decision of course, between additional road lanes, as Mr Troughton has suggested, up to four lanes—eight lanes in all—or whether we would actually keep six lanes and maintain a railway. It will be a future decision for governments.

**Hon KEN TRAVERS:** But, are we building roadworks in what would be the future rail reserve, as part of the current Tonkin Highway upgrade?

**Mr Waldock:** We are putting pavement down, we are indeed.

**Hon KEN TRAVERS:** In what would be the future rail reserve?

**Mr Waldock:** That is it.

**Hon KEN TRAVERS:** Why are we not, as we are north of Morley Drive, building the roadworks outside of the rail reservation?

**Mr Waldock:** Why would we do that until that rail works is ever been determined by government? It is not a decision by government, there is no plans for it, it is not on the future plans, it will be something we will consider in due—so what we are doing is we are allowing sufficient corridor to do both if ever required.

**Hon KEN TRAVERS:** North of Morley Drive—has the government given a decision there?

**Mr Waldock:** To do what?

**Hon KEN TRAVERS:** To build a railway line there.

**Mr Waldock:** Not at all.

**Hon KEN TRAVERS:** So, why are you making provision north of Morley Drive for a railway line, but not south? You have got inconsistency there. North, you are not building in the railway reserve, and south, you are.

**Mr Waldock:** We have got the ability, on Tonkin Highway, to run a railway in the future if we are required.

**Hon KEN TRAVERS:** Yes, but north of Morley Drive, you are building a roadworks outside of the rail reserve, but south of Morley Drive you are building a roadworks inside the rail reserve. Why is that the case, when no decision has been made about any railway line in that corridor?

**Mr Waldock:** I will defer to Mr Troughton, but my understanding is that all the grade separation we are doing, we are giving ourselves options for the future. Mr Troughton might want to confirm that.

**Mr Troughton:** All the rail separations have that ability. We have been liaising with the Public Transport Authority and the advice we have been given is their current planning shows the reserve is required as we have worked on it.

**Hon KEN TRAVERS:** One last question on this point. South of Morley Drive, will there be a median, or will it actually be a—what do they call them—New Jersey barriers? Or a wire barrier and a narrower median between the north and southbound carriageways? Obviously north of

Morley Drive, I assume if you are leaving allowances for a rail reserve, quite a wide median. But, south of Morley Drive, how wide will the median strip between the north and southbound carriageways be?

**Mr Waldock:** Again, my understanding is it will be wide enough in the future. Because there are limitations, so it would probably have to be a hard barrier system, like we have in the narrows.

**Hon KEN TRAVERS:** But you just said that you are building the pavement in the rail reserve.

**Mr Waldock:** At the present moment, I am saying, just given the widths though generally—if we come back and put a railway line in, we are constrained by width, as I understand it, so it would be a hard barrier system.

**Mr Troughton:** As I understand it, it is not a rail reserve; it is road reserve. I do not know the exact detail, we are working through the designs at the moment—or the contractor is. I will have to take that on notice to provide the exact median width and barrier type for you.

**Hon KEN TRAVERS:** Just to be clear of what I am asking for. The median width north of Morley Drive, and the median width south of Morley Drive, both the average and its narrowest point.

[*Supplementary Information No C5.*]

**The ACTING CHAIR:** Hon Ken Travers, if you can leave it there for now, because we have other members and time restraints. I will go now to Hon Martin Pritchard, to ask his first questions of estimates.

**Hon MARTIN PRITCHARD:** As you can tell, this is my first question, so hopefully I am referring to the right point. I just draw your attention to page 819, under “New Works”, and I could not see anything there with regards to putting additional lanes with regards to Shelley Bridge. I was wondering if it does appear in the budget as a line item somewhere, or whether you can tell me when that is likely to occur, and how much that is likely to cost?

**Hon JIM CHOWN:** Thank you for your first question, honourable member. Rather than read out the response I think I will defer the question to either the director general or Mr Troughton.

**Mr Troughton:** With Shelley Bridge we are currently doing some development works, so we are in early stages of design and looking at the most suitable route for the duplication of that bridge, and that is the phase that we are up to at the moment. We are looking at options both north and south, and we are working through that. I think the next stage is for us to get some geotech information, and continue with the design program.

**Hon MARTIN PRITCHARD:** Has there been money put aside to actually accomplish the extra lanes?

**Hon JIM CHOWN:** There is no funding allocated at this stage, other than the development work that is under —

**Hon MARTIN PRITCHARD:** And nowhere in forward estimates at all?

**Mr Waldock:** Not at this stage.

**Hon MARTIN PRITCHARD:** For someone that is not familiar with it, does that mean it is not likely to happen within the period of the forward estimates?

**Hon JIM CHOWN:** Possibly, but there is no definitive—you know, if it is not in this budget it is not going to happen, but who knows what will happen in future years.

**Hon MARTIN PRITCHARD:** Is there an ability for it to happen? Just say the government decided to do it within the next two years, where would they get the funding for it?

**Hon JIM CHOWN:** Funding is allocated by Treasury through the government process, and obviously Main Roads put up a list of priorities in regard to traffic management requirements et cetera, and it is discussed and I think it is probably an EERC decision in the end.

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**Hon MARTIN PRITCHARD:** So, it could happen within the next four years, but no decision has been made?

**Hon JIM CHOWN:** Every year these sorts of developments are reviewed and it is impossible to say no or yes at this stage.

**Hon MARTIN PRITCHARD:** Is it impossible to say it will happen and it is impossible to say it will not happen—it may happen?

**Hon JIM CHOWN:** Correct.

**Hon MARTIN PRITCHARD:** Okay. Thank you.

[2.20 pm]

**The ACTING CHAIR:** Thanks, Hon Martin Pritchard. I might go to Hon Phil Edman, then Hon Adele Farina then Hon Peter Katsambanis, then we can come back.

**Hon PHIL EDMAN:** My question is regarding the Kwinana Freeway first off southbound from Roe Highway to Armadale Road. Firstly, I want to know if that is on budget and on time, and when it is actually going to be completed. That is to widen it to three lanes, which I believe you are currently working on.

**Hon JIM CHOWN:** Thanks for the question, member. Mr Troughton is probably better qualified to respond to that than myself.

**Mr Troughton:** It is definitely on time. I was actually visiting it recently. I am just trying to see in here the date it is due to complete. It is due to complete in August 2016 this year.

**Hon PHIL EDMAN:** Is that 2016 or 2015?

**Mr Troughton:** It says 2016—2015. That is a typo. It is due to complete in August this year.

**Hon PHIL EDMAN:** In August, it will be opened up to three lanes all the way to Armadale Road?

**Mr Troughton:** It is four lanes from Roe—as you come off Roe, I think. Then it goes to three.

**Hon PHIL EDMAN:** Is it on budget?

**Mr Troughton:** Yes. It is actually below budget.

**Hon PHIL EDMAN:** Excellent; good news. The second question I have is the other way now, so if we go from Armadale Road back to Roe Highway, it is actually two lanes, and I want to know if Main Roads are looking at widening that to three lanes. It is very congested. As well, you have got an electronic signboard—this is a debate that I have brought to this house before about this road. There is a digital signage board that you have got just before Berrigan Drive that everyone seems to stop and look at. That is why everybody stops and then as soon as they get to the hill they shoot off again but there is definitely a lot of congestion. Is that something that Main Roads is looking at, going northbound to repeat exactly what they have done southbound to make that three lanes; and, if so, when is the expected start date?

**Hon JIM CHOWN:** Thanks, member. The director general is more than happy to respond to the question.

**Mr Waldock:** If I could answer the first question, in terms of widening the northbound lane between Russell Road and Roe Highway, we do acknowledge that that is a significant congestion point. The important issue for us, of course, is not to widen and just have more cars speeding into the existing constraints further north. But certainly, we are aware that many vehicles do actually move out of the freeway at Roe Highway and move into the Roe Highway area. So there certainly is a strong argument for widening that. Main Roads have done some initial work. We hope to be in a position to put a proposal brief to government in due course because we think that could be a very substantial improvement on the road system, as I say, between Russell Road to the south moving north towards the Roe Highway. We think it is a good idea. We have been doing some planning on

it, and certainly, from our point of view we think that is certainly worth pursuing. So we will continue to work on that and in due course put a proposal to government.

**Hon PHIL EDMAN:** Why would you not do it at the same time? Under our government, we widened the three lanes right through to Farrington Street on both sides. Why would we not do it at the same time and repeat what we did some years ago, which I thought was very well done. There was some chaos, but we got there eventually.

**Mr Waldock:** It is very much a matter of funding, as you might expect. But it is not just funding. Our general view is trying to improve the road system moving out of Perth because it does not actually feed more cars into a more constrained space. So that has always been our priority, but certainly now we see some advantages, particularly because, as I say, Roe Highway—both now and into the future—will take a greater east–west load. To that extent, we think that is certainly an opportunity. So that is the reason: firstly, funding; secondly, in terms of priorities. But we are quite serious about pursuing that.

**Hon PHIL EDMAN:** If it is there being looked at in planning at this stage, it is something you are keen to look at, which is good news. Perhaps Main Roads might want to look—I am not talking about the billboard; that has been switched off—at that little digital sign that you have got to let people know about double demerit points on the weekend, or whatever it is for. Perhaps that might be something you might want to look at because people stop and look at that and then everybody stops and then all of a sudden there is no reason for anybody to stop at all and then it just causes chaos because you are going up a hill on the freeway to Berrigan Drive. I do not know, perhaps you could look at that or whether I am just talking baloney and I do not know anything.

**Mr Waldock:** We can look at that. Certainly, we are looking at in a number of issues in the signage space as you might expect at the present moment. Around Australia, of course, particularly digital signs are well-established. We certainly are considering them but we are going to make sure that there are no safety aspects, or indeed, not just safety aspects but also congestion-creating aspects. So that will be part of our considerations.

**Hon ADELE FARINA:** My question is in relation to the Bunbury Outer Ring Road. We have had stage 1 completed, which was the stage in the middle, and there are two other stages yet to be completed. Where is that at?

**Hon JIM CHOWN:** Mr Waldock will be responding to that, in due course.

**The ACTING CHAIR:** Mr Waldock.

**Mr Waldock:** In due course. Certainly, as the member would be well aware, we have expended significant sums on both the Port Access Road and Bunbury Ring Road stage 1. Stage 2, in terms of assessment and planning, certainly the environmental assessments have been completed, although they have not been fully assessed by EPA. So that is an issue, and they certainly have not been assessed by the federal environment agencies yet.

**Hon ADELE FARINA:** Why has that assessment not happened?

**Mr Waldock:** It is being pursued. It just does take a substantial time. There is a process.

**Hon ADELE FARINA:** What is the time frame for that?

**Mr Waldock:** The time frame, as I understand it, it is going to be certainly within the next few months. In fact, I think it is third-quarter, is what we expect. Sorry, the submission went in in April–May and I think it is due whenever the federal government responds. So the submission is in to them. I guess the issue here, as we all know, it is a very large amount of money, both stage 2 and stage 3. I know that we did put some early correspondence in to Infrastructure Australia and it is to one of our longer-term priorities, or medium-term priorities. Again, it is just a matter of funding priorities. So we are still doing the work; we are doing the development work, we are doing the

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planning work, and it certainly will be part of future considerations and it is a reasonably high priority for us. And the minister is aware of that.

**Hon ADELE FARINA:** When will it be shovel-ready? Because Infrastructure Australia requires a project to be shovel-ready before it considers funding for the project.

**Mr Waldock:** Again, we need the environmental approvals that we need to have acquired all of the land. I am not sure if we have acquired land, if we need to acquire it at all? Maybe Steve or Mr Woronzow might have a better sense there?

**Mr Woronzow:** As the director general has said, we have submitted the project for review by Infrastructure Australia. They assessed that there is real potential. They have a four-stage scale: real potential is high on the scale. But Infrastructure Australia do not provide funding. They make assessments and then the Department of Infrastructure, Energy and Resources provide the funding. They have made their assessment but then it is up to the commonwealth infrastructure department to provide the funding.

**Hon ADELE FARINA:** Where does the project sit on the state's priority listing of projects seeking federal funding?

**Hon JIM CHOWN:** I would imagine it is under a number of priorities that are under consideration and in regard to your question of having this particular infrastructure shovel-ready, the minimum time frame would be two years away.

**Mr Waldock:** Yes, and if I could say it would certainly be one of our top 10 priorities—stage 2. What we need to do though is further work. Infrastructure Australia, as suggested, has given it a real potential status but we will need to do a more developed—what we call a “project definition plan” and that will move through.

**Hon ADELE FARINA:** Why is it taking so long? It certainly did not take that long to complete the prep work for stage 1.

**Mr Waldock:** I guess part of the issue has been in terms of just the funding priorities and other funding priorities. But look, we do see it as important. We have done a significant amount of work on it in terms of, as I suggested, environmental approvals and planning but it does need to go to the next stage. Maybe, if you wish, we could put that on notice and we will come back with a more definitive response.

**Hon ADELE FARINA:** That would be great. Thank you.

*[Supplementary Information No C6.]*

**Hon ADELE FARINA:** My next question is in relation to the department's budget allocation. What percentage of the road construction improvement funding in the Main Roads budget is actually allocated to regional roads, excluding royalties for regions funding?

**Hon JIM CHOWN:** What percentage?

**Hon ADELE FARINA:** Yes.

**Hon JIM CHOWN:** Sixty per cent.

[2.30 pm]

**Hon ADELE FARINA:** Can you provide that to me on a regional breakdown?

**Hon JIM CHOWN:** Not at the moment, no.

**Hon ADELE FARINA:** Can you take that on notice?

**Hon JIM CHOWN:** We will take it on notice,

*[Supplementary Information No C7.]*

**Hon ADELE FARINA:** Thank you.

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**The ACTING CHAIR:** We go now to Hon Peter Katsambanis.

**Hon PETER KATSAMBANIS:** Thank you, Acting Chair. There are a couple of issues that I want to raise. I have a whole series of questions and I will see how many I can get through. I refer to page 810, “Significant Issues Impacting the Agency”, and the traffic signal optimisation review program. Without getting into laborious technical detail, can you provide an overview of what has actually been achieved in that program, or what you are aiming to achieve? Do we have any concrete examples of alleviating congestion and improving travel times?

**The ACTING CHAIR:** I concur with Hon Peter Katsambanis about not getting into a laborious answer.

**Hon JIM CHOWN:** It is pretty hard to ascertain how much detail is relevant and how much is not —

**Hon KEN TRAVERS:** Just read the headings of the press releases and comment later!

**Hon JIM CHOWN:** — but I will ask the director of Main Roads, Mr Waldock, to respond to that, with as little detail as possible and a general overview of the situation.

**Mr Waldock:** Mr Snook has been living this project for the last few years. But I think it is on the public record that the Canning Highway trial between Riseley Street and Canning Bridge, and Orrong Road, I guess, are two of the key ones. But we are rolling out a whole program now. So we have moved past the sort of “let’s try it” now to have a detailed program, which Mr Snook will speak to. It is interesting that I was with the RAC on Friday, and they jointly worked on the Orrong Road traffic light SCATS coordination project, and the results are positive—in fact, so positive, indeed, that we are actually seeing that we are getting some induced traffic, because a number of my colleagues are now taking Orrong Road as a route that they did not take before because of the issues and the constraints and the congestion and the travel time. So there are certainly some improvements. But maybe Mr Snook can add to that.

**Hon JIM CHOWN:** I am sure Mr Snook will have more to add to that as the hands-on operative on this initiative.

**Mr Snook:** The traffic signal optimisation involves coordinating, or re-coordinating, the SCATS program that links the consecutive traffic signals. We have done approximately 10 of these optimisation reviews so far. Some of the recent ones we have done are Canning Highway from North Lake Road through to the causeway, and on that one we have achieved some significant benefits—an improvement of around four minutes eastbound in the peak hour.

**Hon PETER KATSAMBANIS:** Four minutes from where to where?

**Mr Snook:** From North Lake Road through to the causeway. That is a significant improvement. We have also had a look at Charles Street between London Street and Newcastle Street, and in the southbound direction in the morning peak we have had improvements of about three minutes there as well. That is a couple of examples of what we have been doing.

**Hon PETER KATSAMBANIS:** Do you measure the intersecting roads to see whether we are just shifting the congestion from north south to east west or whether we are actually achieving wins across the board?

**Mr Snook:** We have a saying, when we look at traffic signals to get the best performance, that you cannot create time. It is all about what you can do with the amount of time that you have. What we are doing is we are deliberately trying to reallocate a little amount of extra time from the side roads to the main road through, so that while it might take a little longer to get onto the main line, once you get on there you have a quicker run.

**Hon PETER KATSAMBANIS:** I do not want you to indulge in this, so this is going to be a very, very quick comment. I think it is a very old-fashioned view to continue to think of Perth as north—

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south traffic only. Most of the concerns I get in my office about localised congestion usually deal with east–west roads. I am going to go onto one of those programs that you have. You recently announced a program to ease congestion at particular intersections. Two of the intersections that you highlighted were the intersections of Marmion Avenue with Hepburn Avenue and Whitfords Avenue, where there is clearly significant congestion, particularly on the east–west roads there, Whitfords and Hepburn. When you released that, there was scant detail. I do not even know that you released it with an actual completion date in mind. Are you able, either right now or on notice, to provide me with a timetable for when those works are going to commence, a sort of rough scope of the works—again, I do not need every shovel stroke—and when they are likely to be completed?

**Hon JIM CHOWN:** We will take that on notice. You require a fair bit of detail in response to that, I assume, and considering the fact that your original question did not request that sort of detail, we will take it on notice.

*[Supplementary Information No C8.]*

**The ACTING CHAIR:** If we can keep questions relatively concise, that would be beneficial.

**Hon PETER KATSAMBANIS:** I am trying to make the best use of the time. The Mitchell Freeway extension is funded to extend Mitchell freeway from Burns Beach Road to Hester Avenue. That is a great initiative and very well supported. You would have all picked up that locally in particular, locals are saying, “Since we’re going to Hester Avenue and since this is a good time to build and quotes are coming in lower than we previously thought, why don’t we take it all the way through to Romeo Road rather than stop at Hester Avenue?” First of all, why do we not do that; and, secondly, is it as simple as continuing the scope further out to Romeo Road, or are there considerations that would need to be taken that would slow the project and the current program build down if we did change the scope now and moved to Romeo Road; and how much would it cost?

**Hon JIM CHOWN:** Mr Waldock has got the response to that, member.

**Mr Waldock:** That has been raised by certainly the Wanneroo council, and others.

**Hon PETER KATSAMBANIS:** And local residents, too. Do not discount that.

**Mr Waldock:** Yes, I am sure it is. I guess the key issue, like most things in life, is funding. It is a very substantial extension. In fact, it is almost the same distance as the current extension, so we are not talking very small amounts of money. If I can just remind us of what we are talking about, we are talking about a 5.6-kilometre extension, two lanes in each direction, so a divided two-lane extension, northbound on-ramps and southbound on-ramps at the Hester Avenue interchange, Lukin Drive to Dunington Drive, and it goes on. The P50 estimate—this is perhaps the more realistic estimate, rather than a P90, but it is a lower estimate—is \$190 million. That is the sort of quantum we are talking about. I guess that answers the question.

**The ACTING CHAIR:** Can we leave that there.

**Hon PETER KATSAMBANIS:** Can I have one more question?

**The ACTING CHAIR:** Is it brief?

**Hon PETER KATSAMBANIS:** I am not sure!

**The ACTING CHAIR:** Can we come back to you, because I know there are other members who would like ask more questions.

**Hon PETER KATSAMBANIS:** You may not be able to.

**The ACTING CHAIR:** Make it as quick as you can.

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**Hon PETER KATSAMBANIS:** I want to ask about the Target Zero campaign. On page 813, you have effectiveness of road safety awareness campaigns, and you are aiming for 70 per cent effectiveness. Target Zero does not seem to fit in with 70 per cent effectiveness.

**Hon JIM CHOWN:** If I can interrupt, member, I think that question may be relevant to the Office of Road Safety.

**Hon PETER KATSAMBANIS:** Rather than Main Roads?

**Hon JIM CHOWN:** Yes.

**Hon PETER KATSAMBANIS:** Road safety awareness campaigns are in the Main Roads budget, though—Commissioner of Main Roads.

**Hon JIM CHOWN:** But I think the Target Zero campaign is part of the Office of Road Safety.

**Hon PETER KATSAMBANIS:** Okay. Thank you. I will ask it there.

**The ACTING CHAIR:** Are you satisfied with that, Hon Peter Katsambanis?

**Hon PETER KATSAMBANIS:** Yes.

**The ACTING CHAIR:** The next person I have on the list is Hon Paul Brown. I do not know whether you have any further questions.

**Hon PAUL BROWN:** Just one more, thank you, Chair. I refer to page 819, under “New Works”, the national highway upgrade program, \$40 million over the forward estimates. Can you give us any indication of where that money is intended to be spent?

[2.40 pm]

**Hon JIM CHOWN:** Peter Woronzow will be able to respond to that question.

**Mr Woronzow:** The bulk of the funding has been allocated to the New Norcia bypass; I think in the order of \$30 million. The balance of the funding is allocated to a number of floodways on Great Northern Highway.

**Hon PAUL BROWN:** I go back to a question I asked a while ago: with the extra traffic that is now seen between Northam and The Lakes on Great Eastern Highway, and the increased difficulty and the increased traffic and the rather large amount of fatalities we have had along that stretch of road, has any work or scoping been done around duplication of the highway into a dual carriageway?

**Hon JIM CHOWN:** Mr Troughton will be happy to respond to that.

**Mr Troughton:** We are currently looking at that link in particular. We are doing some planning and development work at the moment. I have been talking with our commonwealth government to look at a further allocation towards that. You are aware we have got a number of passing lanes to complete in the next few years. I am more interested in looking at safety improvements to that route. Whether it means a dual carriageway, I do not know, but certainly we are doing some development work on the whole of that length at the moment and hopefully put that up for future funding.

**Hon PAUL BROWN:** Has any work been done or any statistics been done around the increase in traffic, particularly in heavy vehicle traffic, given that the break-up of road trains at the northern road train assembly area are coming into Perth and therefore going out from Perth into the road train assembly area?

**Hon JIM CHOWN:** I am sure that traffic counts are available. We do not have them on hand. We are more than happy to take the question on notice and give you specific responses. I assume by your question you want all traffic counts broken down into heavy traffic and light traffic?

**Hon PAUL BROWN:** That would be fantastic; thank you very much.

**Hon JIM CHOWN:** Okay.

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[*Supplementary Information No C9.*]

**Hon DARREN WEST:** That segues very well into my next question. I have three areas and I have some brief questions on each area, so brief answers would be great. Bakers Hill: what is the government doing to address safety issues along Great Eastern Highway at Bakers Hill?

**Mr Troughton:** We are currently looking at options and doing some design work for that.

**Hon DARREN WEST:** Is consideration being given to the inclusion of off-highway parking for heavy vehicles stopping in Bakers Hill to support local businesses?

**Mr Troughton:** It certainly will be part of the considerations we are looking at.

**Hon DARREN WEST:** Is consideration being given to lowering the speed limit from 70 kilometres an hour to the usual 60 kilometres an hour or 50 kilometres an hour as is the case in Mundaring?

**Hon JIM CHOWN:** Des would like to respond to that.

**Mr Snook:** No. At the moment we do not have that under consideration, but if the local government there has that in mind, we are quite happy to look at any proposal they have.

**Hon DARREN WEST:** I think you would agree it is unusual that a town with so many local businesses right on the highway and a school one block back from the highway would have a 70-kilometre-an-hour speed limit when just about every other town that I drive through in the wheatbelt has a 60-kilometre-an-hour speed limit. As is the case in Mundaring, it is down to 50 kilometres per hour. It would be good to have a look at that speed limit in Bakers Hill because it is an unusual set of circumstances.

Secondly, given that road safety remains a priority for the government, has any funding been allocated to address the issues currently experienced at the intersection of Hosken Street and Great Northern Highway at Bluff Point in Geraldton?

**Mr Troughton:** I think we are actually looking at designs for that at the moment. We are looking at some options around what could be done to improve that junction.

**Hon DARREN WEST:** That is rated the second-most dangerous intersection by RAC members in regional WA.

**Hon JIM CHOWN:** Yes, and in fact for your information, member, I will be up there in two weeks with Main Roads and the local member, Mr Ian Blayney, the member for Geraldton, looking at that exact intersection.

**Hon DARREN WEST:** That would be fantastic, because that is a —

**Hon JIM CHOWN:** It is on the local member's agenda.

**Hon DARREN WEST:** Excellent.

**Hon JIM CHOWN:** He has been pursuing the ministry, and through his efforts I am going up there to look with Main Roads representatives.

**Hon DARREN WEST:** Have you made any allocations to do work on that intersection?

**Hon JIM CHOWN:** Not at this stage, but as I said, it is on our agenda.

**Hon DARREN WEST:** You are off for a look; that is great.

Have any traffic analyses and investigation of options of this intersection been done; and, if so, what treatments are being planned for the intersection?

**Hon JIM CHOWN:** The same response would apply.

**Hon DARREN WEST:** So, nothing so far?

**Hon JIM CHOWN:** No.

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**Mr Troughton:** We have done an analysis —

**Hon DARREN WEST:** When do you think you might have done this analysis and will this work be subject to a cabinet decision?

**Mr Troughton:** The work is ongoing at the moment. We are analysing and looking at different options for solutions for that junction, from traffic lights to roundabouts and other things. That is in early stages of design work—engineering study. Once that is completed and approved, it will go through the normal budgetary process to be allocated.

**Hon DARREN WEST:** Will that be expected to be a cabinet decision or a department decision as to whether to proceed with those works?

**Hon JIM CHOWN:** The process is that Main Roads put up their priorities to the ministry. The ministry, in regard to funding allocations, makes a decision.

**Hon DARREN WEST:** Finally, has a final decision been made regarding the route of the Great Northern Highway through or around Wubin?

**Hon JIM CHOWN:** Yes. I think we are well underway in regard to that bypass. The bypass will probably go east of Wubin itself.

**Hon DARREN WEST:** Which route—the route through Wubin, the route just east of the town, or —

**Hon JIM CHOWN:** Just east of the town, yes.

**Hon DARREN WEST:** So the middle one, route 2?

**Hon JIM CHOWN:** I think it must be. We do not have the maps here, so it is pretty hard to ascertain, member, but rest assured it will be east of the Wubin town site itself. The maps I have seen —

**Hon DARREN WEST:** Has the impact on established local businesses been taken into account during this decision-making?

**Hon JIM CHOWN:** Yes, it has all been taken into account, member. Let me add a bit more to that: the road train breakdown area will remain. There will be access for road trains to go into the breakdown area and access the new bypass road, and certainly the use of facilities in the town site, if they wish to do so. I am talking about the drivers.

**Hon DARREN WEST:** Route 2 will mean the closure of many of those established local businesses, will it not?

**Hon JIM CHOWN:** Such as what?

**Hon DARREN WEST:** The local businesses that would be on route 1, the existing route through town, would close —

**Hon JIM CHOWN:** Which businesses are you talking about?

**Hon DARREN WEST:** There are two roadhouses, for example.

**Hon JIM CHOWN:** One is already closed. It has been closed for many, many years.

**Hon DARREN WEST:** There are two roadhouses operating in Wubin.

**Hon JIM CHOWN:** Only one is operating.

**Hon DARREN WEST:** Okay.

**Hon JIM CHOWN:** One closed probably 10 years ago.

**Hon KEN TRAVERS:** Is that when you stopped buying your cheese sausages from it?

**Hon DARREN WEST:** Is the minister aware that there are no alternative stops with suitable truck parking for drivers between Perth and Wubin?

**Hon JIM CHOWN:** There are no alternative?

**Hon DARREN WEST:** Stops with sufficient truck parking for drivers between Perth and Wubin. For instance, if you were driving a truck up and you wanted to take a rest in Wubin and that option was taken away from you with —

**Hon JIM CHOWN:** The bypass in Dalwallinu, which is just down the road from Wubin, has a designated truck stop there —

**Hon DARREN WEST:** Yes, but there are no services for truck drivers.

**Hon JIM CHOWN:** There are truck stops all the way down to the metro area.

**Hon DARREN WEST:** Yes, but there is nowhere to go and buy a roast beef sandwich, for example, and a nice cup of tea, anywhere between Perth and Wubin.

**Hon JIM CHOWN:** Bindoon, Miling, Upper Swan.

**Hon DARREN WEST:** Twenty-four hours?

**Hon JIM CHOWN:** That is up to the commercial entities. Seriously—are you saying that Main Roads should start putting 24-hour roadhouses in place?

**Hon DARREN WEST:** No. There is already one in Wubin and you are going to shift the road away from it. That is the point I am making.

**Hon JIM CHOWN:** But I have just said they still have access to —

**Hon DARREN WEST:** Are we agreed that that is what is going to happen?

**Hon JIM CHOWN:** No. I have just said they still have access to the Wubin town site. There is a large breakdown area there and the requirement for triple road trains will remain the same. They will have to drop off their trailer. They can access the same facilities as they always have done.

**Hon DARREN WEST:** You mentioned Miling. Are there not plans for a bypass around Miling as well?

**Hon JIM CHOWN:** Yes, there are.

**Hon DARREN WEST:** So Miling would not be an option for heavy vehicles?

**Hon JIM CHOWN:** No. Not at this stage, no.

**Hon DARREN WEST:** Thanks. That is all the questions I have on those, Chair.

**Hon KEN TRAVERS:** I want to turn to question 12 from the questions prior to the hearing. Thank you for your comprehensive answer on this occasion, parliamentary secretary, —

**Hon JIM CHOWN:** I am here to serve in the best interests of the community, member, as you would be fully aware.

**Hon KEN TRAVERS:** — including a copy of the proposed road works that are intended to be carried out at the intersection of Graham Farmer Freeway and East Parade as a result of the widening of the Graham Farmer Freeway. As I see it here, you are simply widening the on-lanes. The current two lanes will go to three lanes and then get narrowed back into single lanes as they go into the tunnel. As I understand it, there was an original proposal that would have actually seen both the on and off-ramps being grade separated. The lanes that came out of the tunnel would have a bridge that took them over the top of the lane that would come off Lord Street to go into the tunnel, and on the other side vice versa. Why was that original proposal for, effectively, grade separation of the on and off-ramps, which made a lot of sense to me, not proceeded with, and the

cheaper option that I suspect will eventually reach capacity quite quickly before the tunnel reaches capacity, not proceeded with?

[2.50 pm]

**Hon JIM CHOWN:** Thank you for the question, member; you will probably require a fair bit of detail, so Mr Snook is more than happy to do his best to provide it.

**Hon KEN TRAVERS:** The one thing I know about Mr Snook is that he will be able to answer my questions if you let him, parliamentary secretary!

**Hon JIM CHOWN:** He is more than happy to on this occasion.

**Hon KEN TRAVERS:** I have absolute faith in Mr Snook.

**Mr Snook:** The ultimate treatment for that intersection is indeed the proposal —

**Hon KEN TRAVERS:** The grade separation?

**Mr Snook:** The grade separation. We call them braided ramps. They are very expensive, and they will actually restrict some of the access from East Parade onto the ramps. It really is very much an ultimate treatment for the intersection. What we have here is that having done the original design, we have now seen where the traffic congestion is actually occurring now that the traffic is using it. What we are doing with the design we have proposed now is really to get as much as we can out of the current design.

**Hon KEN TRAVERS:** But when will the current design reach capacity so that we start to see fails? I think we knew at the time that the tunnel was built that once you put that third lane in you would get a backup into the tunnel, and, as predicted, in less than year, I think, we started to see that regularly, particularly with traffic heading east and trying to exit off onto East Parade; we immediately had the orange lights flashing almost permanently all through the tunnel.

**Mr Snook:** Yes.

**Hon KEN TRAVERS:** How long will it be before these roadworks are no longer able to meet the demand and we will need to build the braid?

**Mr Snook:** Braided ramps.

**Hon KEN TRAVERS:** As in plaiting your hair?

**Hon JIM CHOWN:** Yes.

**Mr Snook:** Yes, that is it.

**Hon KEN TRAVERS:** I can see why the commissioner would want that term used. So how long until we need to braid that intersection?

**Mr Snook:** At the moment I actually do not have that information for you because we would have to get the traffic modelling out to get all that detail. I apologise; I do not have that information now. The treatments we are putting in will specifically address that current issue of the queuing that comes down into the ramp. The problem is actually not the tunnel. The tunnel is working really well, it is just that as they get out of tunnel they cannot get out fast enough onto East Parade. The improvements we are doing will actually make it easy for the traffic to get out.

**Hon KEN TRAVERS:** But as someone who until reasonably recently used that exit reasonably regularly, it is that merging of the traffic that is the problem. So, you have the cars coming off Lord Street cutting across the cars that are coming out of the tunnel, as those who want to go south onto East Parade cut across and the ones heading west cut across. So, no matter how many additional lanes you put, you are still going to have that intersection that ultimately is going to lead to a backup. Although it may provide some short-term relief, I cannot imagine it is a particularly long-term solution. Surely before you make the decision as to whether to proceed with the braided option or the cheap option, for want of a better term —



**Hon JIM CHOWN:** There is nothing cheap in road construction.

**Hon KEN TRAVERS:** No, that is true at \$8 million. But for the current solution—the short-term fix; I do not know what you want to call it—surely you would have done that calculation as to are we going to spend \$8 million when within five years we are going to actually have to spend the full braided cost, so are we not better holding off and doing, in another year's time, the braided version?

**Mr Snook:** You are absolutely correct that the movement of the traffic from Lord Street east as they want to change lanes does cause a problem. We are actually putting a treatment in to look after that particular problem. We are going to put a ramp meter in. It is a set of traffic signals similar to the ones we have already installed at Point Lewis Rotary, so we will have a set of those put in for the traffic from Lord Street heading east. Depending on the amount of traffic coming out of the tunnel, we will hold the Lord Street traffic to allow the clearance from the tunnel.

**Hon KEN TRAVERS:** Have you done the modelling on when you believe that what you are putting in place will fail, and we will need to have the braided intersection built?

**Mr Snook:** No, we have not, but, as I said, I am really happy to do that work and provide it.

**Hon KEN TRAVERS:** But why would we not have done that before a decision was taken on proceeding with this work? I have seen the design for the braided option, so you clearly have done work on the braided option; I cannot understand why you would not have done an evaluation of the two models. I should thank Mr Waldock for the copy I got.

**Mr Troughton:** As I understand it, the braided option actually does not solve all the issues at that junction. We are getting a lot more issues down Plain Street and other streets now as well, as the traffic has changed. I think it is a really good point. We certainly need to do some work on Plain Street and East Parade. I think the braided option would need to be reconsidered in the future; I believe the benefit–cost ratio is quite low. The work was done before my time, but certainly I think it is something we should have a look into.

**Hon KEN TRAVERS:** The sign over the freeway south of the river that has been turned off, what role did Main Roads have in approving that sign? I know it is on PTA land, but what role did Main Roads have in approving that sign before it was allowed to be built?

**Mr Waldock:** Main Roads was always seen to be the key player within the transport portfolio, but all the agencies were involved in this and certainly we are improving processes all the time. But all the agencies were involved. The reality is that Main Roads is always the key agency in terms of safety and providing total and complete advice in terms of whether it met safety warrants. On the basis of meeting safety warrants, the DA approval could proceed. The DA approval application came from the Public Transport Authority, as you have indicated, and Main Roads was there to, again, make an informed judgement about safety. To that extent, they took advice and the advice came from two separate reports. It is already on the public record, of course, that one of the reports that was not brought to my attention or that of the managing director indicated that there were some issues. So that is where we are at.

**Hon KEN TRAVERS:** Was a report untaken prior to the approval or after the approval—the one you just mentioned there?

**Mr Waldock:** The report actually, I think, was done prior to the approval, but we were not made aware of it. So I think that report was done prior to the approval. What has happened, of course, is that we made a very early call. I happened to be on leave at the time, but it was a very early call that we were going to turn it off and make sure we reviewed the whole issue again and came back with timely advice to the minister regarding whether it was safe to proceed or not. That process is being worked through as we talk.

**Hon KEN TRAVERS:** So there was a report done by Main Roads that raised concerns with that site?

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**Mr Waldock:** It was not done by Main Roads, no; there was no report done by Main Roads. There were reports done externally, and one of those reports in fact indicated that there were some issues that needed to be clarified.

**Hon JIM CHOWN:** There was not only one report.

**Mr Waldock:** There were a number of reports, yes, as I stated.

**Hon JIM CHOWN:** But there was only one report that had some indication of issues.

**Mr Waldock:** That is right.

**Hon KEN TRAVERS:** But it was done for Main Roads, that report?

**Mr Waldock:** Yes, it was.

**Hon KEN TRAVERS:** So how was that report not brought to the attention of the decision-makers prior to a decision being made to approve that sign at that location?

**Mr Waldock:** It was held at an officer level and it was not put through the system, as it were.

**Hon KEN TRAVERS:** But why?

**Mr Waldock:** That is a question that has been asked, and it was just an error of judgement by the officer concerned.

**Hon KEN TRAVERS:** So it was never provided up the line?

[3.00 pm]

**Mr Waldock:** It was not provided up the line.

**Hon KEN TRAVERS:** Who was the ultimate decision-maker in the agency that approved that road sign?

**Mr Waldock:** The ultimate decision-maker in the agency is neither agency. The ultimate decision-maker is in fact the Department of Transport; so the Department of Transport also did its due diligence on the issue, looking at Main Roads reports et cetera, which were available, and provided me with a clear recommendation.

**Hon KEN TRAVERS:** But who in Main Roads was the ultimate person responsible for providing advice to the Department of Transport?

**Mr Waldock:** I think I am the Commissioner of Main Roads, so I would be the person.

**Hon KEN TRAVERS:** So you failed to advise yourself?

**Mr Waldock:** I did fail to advise myself. I want that recorded for posterity!

**Hon KEN TRAVERS:** I find it quite extraordinary that it was ever approved in that location, because even I as a simple, humble backbencher of this Parliament can go and grab the Austroads research report on the impact of roadside advertising, which makes it very clear that one of the things you would never do is put a road sign in a particular intersection's decision-making points and merge points, as they are likely to be demanding of attention and you should not have road signs visible in those areas. I am still trying to work that out even with you with your vast knowledge. How did we get to approve a road sign that was clearly sitting in a merge point? I think that is the main issue, is it not, because it was actually visual in a merge point on that freeway? Regardless of the normal issues, there will always be debates about road signs on freeways, but that specific site was a very poor site because it was at a merge point. How did that ever get approved?

**Mr Waldock:** As I say, there are a number of reports and we are still doing work on it. But with the greatest of respect to your knowledge and to my knowledge, the fact of the matter is that this is a very specialised form of understanding. One needs to be a traffic engineer who looks at both guidelines, and every state has its own guidelines but we certainly are working within what is acceptable. Austroads have got statements there, but Austroads is only an adjunct to the warrants,

and please understand that. This is certainly not a cut and dried case and there are other issues. It is purely not just merge; it is all to do with what are called luxes, actually it is the lighting, and it is also in terms of the speed of slides moving through; the delays.

**Hon JIM CHOWN:** Surely the member appreciated the signage was only up there, I think, for less than 24 hours before a decision was made to close it down and review the whole process and the signage itself.

**Hon KEN TRAVERS:** I do appreciate that, because I think once anyone looked at it, they realised that it was in the wrong location and you turned it off, and I think that was a good decision.

**Mr Waldock:** I do not necessarily agree. I mean, let us let the process go. I think the issues with the community were not about the merge. The issues with the community were about the lighting and the actual delays between slides and those issues.

**Hon KEN TRAVERS:** You mentioned the two reports. Can we have both of those taken and provided as supplementary information, please?

**Hon JIM CHOWN:** Yes; not a problem.

*[Supplementary Information No C10.]*

**Hon KEN TRAVERS:** When will a final decision be made on whether that sign remains or goes?

**Mr Waldock:** I do not want to give a final time because it has to go through its process, but my sense is we are doing a full report and that report —

**Hon JIM CHOWN:** I would assume that a decision would be made before the end of this year.

**Mr Waldock:** Without question.

**Hon KEN TRAVERS:** It may be that I will have to ask it under the PTA, but is there an ongoing cost to the state by having it switched off?

**Mr Waldock:** That is still under discussion with APN.

**Hon KEN TRAVERS:** Going quickly to another area, in terms of your budget papers you have a reduction in terms of your maintenance budget by 15 per cent or \$55 million this year and \$60 million next year. How are you going to achieve that reduction?

**Hon JIM CHOWN:** I will probably get Mr Stephen Troughton to address that question, but prior to Mr Troughton doing so, yes, there has been a reduction of around 15 per cent in regard to maintenance, but the member needs to be aware that under the current economic climate, tenders are coming in at a much cheaper price than ever previously experience by this government. So I would assume that that reduction will not mean less maintenance work being undertaken throughout the road network of this state. But Mr Troughton can certainly add to that, I am sure.

**Mr Troughton:** Yes, we are getting better prices. We are also looking at how we can do things better across the state, so we have been looking at a review of all the agencies and also to prioritise what we need to do. What is important to us is maintaining the asset, the pavement, so we are focusing on that program. We are looking at non-priority areas that we have cut back on. An example would be, clearly, litter. We are getting a few more complaints around litter, so we have cut back on the number there.

**Hon KEN TRAVERS:** So you are just not doing patrols to clean up litter?

**Mr Troughton:** We have reduced the patrol numbers. But also we are looking at how we procure. Certainly we are looking at tendering more work this year. Often we gave it through on a contract; now we are actually putting stuff out to tender because the market is far more competitive. We are doing our best to make the dollars go further.

**Hon JIM CHOWN:** And they are.

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**Mr Troughton:** And they are. Certainly we are also looking at internal restructures, reorganisations, working with our partners—we have four ISP partners—looking at where they can reduce money and make savings within their organisations too. We are working across the board to make those numbers work.

**The ACTING CHAIR:** Can I just ask a question on this?

**Hon KEN TRAVERS:** Of course you can!

**The ACTING CHAIR:** You mentioned that your litter patrols have been reduced, and I have noticed that a lot of shires no longer provide rubbish bins at truck bays. Is that contributing or exacerbating the problem with rubbish on main roads?

**Mr Troughton:** It is a difficult one to answer. I think the answer is yes. It is interesting that the cost of providing bins and rubbish collection is huge to Main Roads and to shires. We work very, very hard in the regions to work with shires to make sure that there are collections available and there are pick-up available. It is an ongoing issue and it is getting worse. What we are seeing, particularly as people, residents, are starting to use them, people are starting to use our bins for general purpose rather than using their own bins and other things. So I think there is a lot of education we need to do in this space as well, and we are working very hard to really try to make it work.

**The ACTING CHAIR:** A lot of those truck bays that do not have bins provided by the local shire, you step a metre off the road and it is just disgraceful.

**Mr Troughton:** Agreed.

**Hon KEN TRAVERS:** It worried me that we are not cleaning up the rubbish, but I do note you have reopened up your signs saying “Report rubbish” on all the freeways. You are saying you are going to put more contracts out. When you contract out work, whether it is project management work or construction work or design work, what quality assurance processes do you have in place to ensure that that work is all compliant with your policy manuals and Australian design codes, both external and internal guidelines, policies et cetera?

**Mr Troughton:** I will try to keep it reasonably short. Certainly, we have quality assurance across our organisation and that drives an audit and an assessment and review process; so not just financial audits but also quality, environmental and other audits. We also have independent reviewers, so as part of some of the bigger projects there is what we call a verification process, so there will be another consulting engineer checking the works that others designed. We have that independent check and there are different levels of checking required for different types of projects. On site we have a site superintendent service.

**Hon KEN TRAVERS:** I am just thinking about the design stage at the moment, so I am happy to focus just on the design rather than when we get to the construction stage.

**Mr Waldock:** The design?

**Hon KEN TRAVERS:** The design of when you project manage, when it gets project management.

**Mr Troughton:** We have design reviews at 15 per cent and 75 per cent as part of our standard process.

**Hon KEN TRAVERS:** But do you review every item that comes in, or do you only do a random sample of them?

**Mr Troughton:** No. Every design that we do should have a formal design review process as part of it, and that is pretty standard across the sort of engineering profession.

[3.10 pm]

**Hon KEN TRAVERS:** Are you able to provide—I am happy for it to be supplementary—the number of designs that fail to meet your guidelines and standards? For example, as I understand it,

when you got the design for the Great Eastern Highway upgrade, the plans that came back from the people who did it had a range of issues that did not comply with what you normally require for Main Roads—runoff into a national park et cetera. I am trying to work out how often does that occur. How often do you check them? How often do you identify errors and what is the process after that?

**Mr Troughton:** I will be honest.

**Mr Waldock:** Always!

**Mr Troughton:** Design is an iterative process. Every design that comes in gets red panned and has issues with it. In every space I have worked all around the world it is the same thing.

**Hon KEN TRAVERS:** It never happened under Mr Snook's old team!

**Mr Troughton:** I can guarantee it did, and if he is shaking his head now he is in serious trouble!

There is always work, there are always disagreements and there is always a view on how to do stuff. Engineering of this nature is not a finite thing so we always have different views. You would probably be interested to know I actually look at a number of projects. Things that I am interested in, I get the final drawings and I review them and I red pen them. It is probably not part of my role, but that is what I used to do. I think that every level —

**Hon KEN TRAVERS:** You can take the engineer out of engineering!

**Mr Troughton:** No, you cannot. Everybody has a view on these things and about what is right and what is wrong. If somebody ever got a design right the first time, I would be very surprised.

**The ACTING CHAIR:** Hon Ken Travers, did you have a supplementary question out of all of that or are you satisfied with that answer?

**Hon KEN TRAVERS:** If you maintain statistics of the projects that you get done outside and the number of issues that are then identified when you review them inside, how many projects do you review and to what level? I would imagine there are different levels of review, as well.

**Mr Troughton:** There are different levels of review, depending on the complexity of the project. Every project should be reviewed and I should think every project goes back with comments.

**Hon KEN TRAVERS:** If you keep stats, can we get those as supplementary?

**Mr Waldock:** Can I be clear of the question, if I may? Are you talking about when Main Roads in-house designs or works through a consultancy design on the basis of a construct-only contract or when our contractors come back from D and C—design and construction? Which design element are you talking about?

**Hon KEN TRAVERS:** It is when you contract out the design and when you do design-and-construct contracts. Obviously when you design in-house, I would hope that the commissioner has good quality control to ensure in-house designs are spot on. But if you keep stats on the review process in-house, I am happy for those as well.

[*Supplementary Information No C11.*]

**Hon KEN TRAVERS:** I refer to the Perth Freight Link. The government has taken the decision. The Premier announced that we are going to see almost two million containers going through Fremantle port. Based on your conservative modelling for container numbers, he said that we are not going to see a port for 15 years. Based on your 4.5 per cent growth rates, beyond 2021, it will be around 1.7 million; and if we get the long-term average growth rate, it will be over two million. So let us assume around two million containers going through Fremantle harbour as a result of the construction of the Perth Freight Link. What modelling have we done on the impact that that will have on the road network into and out of Fremantle port? Has any modelling been done on the impact of the government's decision to keep the port going to two million containers a year?

**Mr Waldock:** Our figures are different, so that is a healthy start.

**Hon KEN TRAVERS:** Different from the Premier's figures?

**Mr Waldock:** No, our figures in terms of the number of containers are different.

**Hon KEN TRAVERS:** Different to who?

**Mr Waldock:** Than your two million. You mentioned two million.

**Hon KEN TRAVERS:** In 15 years' time, you will have, according to your figures, 1.7 million —

**Mr Waldock:** Yes, 1.7 million, not two million.

**Hon KEN TRAVERS:** That is using growth figures that are low, but then you also have the high growth figure which would be over two million. So it will be between 1.7 million and over two million.

**Mr Waldock:** No, no.

**Hon KEN TRAVERS:** Let us not argue. I will take your 1.7 million for now!

**Mr Waldock:** Our modelling is based on 5.6 per cent growth, which is a very healthy annual growth.

**Hon KEN TRAVERS:** Reducing to 4.65 per cent after 2021.

**Mr Waldock:** What I am suggesting is that our modelling, and based on assumptions we made, it is 1.7 million. Our sense is at that stage, our modelling has been based on, 23 per cent on rail and the rest on road. Those are the numbers we are talking about. We are talking in that order of 1.3 million TEUs on the road system at that stage. That is what we are talking about.

**Hon KEN TRAVERS:** So we are now only using 23 per cent on rail? We used to use 30 per cent.

**Mr Waldock:** No, we have always said the target, but I am trying to be realistic. If you have a better sense, please share it with us, because our sense is that this is a hard business, as we have discussed in this chamber before, and certainly we will continue to do everything we can, as we have. We put enormous investment into rail, but our sense is that —

**Hon KEN TRAVERS:** The point I am getting to is that we have now increased to 1.7 million containers, 23 per cent on rail, so 1.3 million on the roads.

**Mr Waldock:** That is it.

**Hon KEN TRAVERS:** What modelling has been done as to the impact of that on roads other than the Perth Freight Link—so Leach Highway, Curtin Avenue, Stirling Highway, West Coast Highway and Canning Highway? As you know, you cannot force all the trucks —

**Mr Waldock:** If I can paraphrase what I think you are saying, you would like to understand what scenarios we have considered as part of leakage onto other roads outside the Perth Freight Link.

**Hon KEN TRAVERS:** That is one of the elements of it. I am particularly asking what modelling has been done on the impact. As part of that modelling, you may do a scenario of leakage or you might do a scenario of making it compulsory that no truck can travel to the port other than by the freight link. What modelling has been done in that regard?

**Mr Waldock:** As I say, as part of the Perth Freight Link we looked at leakages and different scenarios. Mr Woronzow is better placed to give the detail, but certainly we have looked at what the number of trucks on the Perth Freight Link would be in 2031 and we have also clearly looked at what leakage might be on other roads. That was part of the business case development.

**Hon KEN TRAVERS:** What is the leakage? How many do we expect on the Perth Freight Link and what is the expected leakage?

**Mr Waldock:** Again, Mr Woronzow might know. I am not sure of the leakage figure, but it was a fairly conservative figure, was it not?

**Mr Woronzow:** The director general is correct; it was a conservative figure that was used in the business case around leakage from the modelling and it was 42 per cent.

**Hon KEN TRAVERS:** Leakage?

**Mr Woronzow:** Leakage.

**Hon KEN TRAVERS:** So 42 per cent on that 1.3 million will be using roads other than the Perth Freight Link?

**Hon JIM CHOWN:** It is a possible leakage.

**Mr Woronzow:** That is right. As we said, it was a conservative figure. The figure that was used, 42 per cent, was a conservative figure to give some robustness into the potential income stream from the project.

Going back to your earlier question about modelling around the wider traffic network, when we ran the model for Perth Freight Link from the direct route from Muchea into the port, we also ran our ROM24 model that is used in Main Roads with oversight from GHD. All the roads that the member talked about we did include, looking at the implications. Roads such as Leach Highway west of Stock Road, Kwinana Freeway south of Leach Highway, Leach Highway east of High Road, Roe Highway west of Karel Avenue, South Street east of Karel Avenue, Kwinana Freeway south of Roe Highway, and Stirling Highway north of Canning Highway, as an example, were taken into account to look at the implications.

**Hon KEN TRAVERS:** Are you able to provide the expected traffic volumes on those roads as supplementary information?

**Hon JIM CHOWN:** It is in the business case and it is commercially sensitive at this stage, so we are not prepared to respond to that.

**Hon KEN TRAVERS:** It is probably also commercially embarrassing as well.

**Hon JIM CHOWN:** That is an inappropriate comment in regard to this piece of infrastructure.

**Hon KEN TRAVERS:** No. Minister, these sorts of things have always been provided. You are taking the risk; you are not going out to the private sector to take the freight user charge, so there is no commercial risk. You are doing it yourself, so it is a nonsense.

[3.20 pm]

**Hon JIM CHOWN:** That is your interpretation.

**Hon KEN TRAVERS:** Is that not correct? Are you going to the private sector to run your FUC?

**The ACTING CHAIR:** We are off the path here a little bit now. Do you want to have this as supplementary information? The department can come back and say it is commercial-in-confidence.

**Hon KEN TRAVERS:** I would like to ask for the modelling, then we can see what the Auditor General says about that. We will ask for that for all of those roads. Now the other thing of course is —

**Mr Waldock:** Can I just respond to clarify that? I am just trying to put the facts on the table. As the member rightly says, at this stage the state will take the risk, but certainly, as you could imagine, this is an enormously complex project we are going through in terms of heavy vehicle charging. It has so many elements in terms of the technology and the costs and the arrangements we will take into account, but as much as anything we have got a very supportive and interested heavy vehicle sector out there that will want to know and understand what the charges may look like. To that extent, rather than setting the horses and stampeding the horses, we are attempting to understand exactly all the issues of mass charging, location, distance and time charging, so we have a very clear

understanding before we talk to anybody. To that extent, you can understand why all this information is incredibly sensitive.

**Hon KEN TRAVERS:** Can I just clarify one last point on that modelling? That modelling you were talking about, is that based on 1.4 million containers or 1.7? Have you done the modelling on 1.7 or is it only on 1.4?

**Mr Waldock:** I thought I had explained to you we have taken out 300 000 containers for rail.

**Hon KEN TRAVERS:** No, but is the modelling done on 1.4 million containers in the port or 1.7 million containers in the port?

**Mr Waldock:** It was 1.7 million for the purposes — Sorry, it was 1.3. Let me get it right, there was a million tonnes on the road and there was 300 000 on the —

**The ACTING CHAIR:** Can I leave it there?

**Hon KEN TRAVERS:** It is really important to get this sorted out.

**The ACTING CHAIR:** Just a minute or two, because we have a member with some questions and we only have a few minutes left.

**Hon KEN TRAVERS:** So the modelling you have done in the summary of your business cases is only on 1.4, or are you saying now 1.3? Have you not done modelling on the 1.7 that the Premier talks about?

**Mr Waldock:** If I may, this was the base case but we have done scenario testing on other sides, as you would.

**Hon KEN TRAVERS:** Have you done any modelling on the traffic and the increase in cars that will be generated through that road and will then drive into the western suburbs, therefore requiring the Stephenson highway to be built earlier than you would otherwise have planned?

**Mr Waldock:** Again, Peter Woronzow would be close to it, but we certainly looked at both trucks and motor vehicles.

**Hon KEN TRAVERS:** Can we get all the modelling you have done about what impact it will have on car volumes on both the Perth Freight Link and surrounding roads, and particularly what increase that will lead to in the western suburbs of Perth, which the Stephenson highway would be one solution to?

**Hon JIM CHOWN:** We will take the question on notice.

*[Supplementary Information No C12.]*

**Hon ALANNA CLOHESY:** There was some money allocated in the budget for road safety measures on Toodyay Road from Middle Swan to Toodyay; we will just talk about that section for a second. In that scope of works, is there any money in the budget for a fourth lane on Red Hill in this financial year or the out years?

**Hon JIM CHOWN:** Not that I am aware of member, but Mr Des Snook can probably shine a light on that particular question.

**Mr Snook:** No, there is not any funding for that.

**Hon ALANNA CLOHESY:** All of the scope of works has been badged as road safety upgrades. How did you determine the priority for those—that they were the most important sections of the road to upgrade and works to undertake that would improve road safety?

**Mr Snook:** We have done a series of works up here over the last few years. Since the fatal crash that occurred at Noble Falls, we have done a lot of consultation with the Gidgegannup Progress Association and it has been very good. The community is really —

**Hon ALANNA CLOHESY:** They are a very active organisation.

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**Mr Snook:** Very active and very helpful too.

**Hon ALANNA CLOHESY:** And their knowledge of the local area is unsurpassed, of course.

**Mr Snook:** Correct. So we have worked with them to identify the sections that they had previously identified as being a problem. We have worked through that. The priorities were to fix up the curve at Noble Falls, plus about half-a-dozen intersections that were either side of Gidgegannup.

**Hon ALANNA CLOHESY:** Was a full road safety audit done for Middle Swan to Toodyay?

**Mr Snook:** Yes there was.

**Hon ALANNA CLOHESY:** Can I get a copy of that?

**Mr Snook:** Yes, we can provide that.

*[Supplementary Information No C13.]*

**Hon ALANNA CLOHESY:** Was a business case prepared with that?

**Mr Snook:** No. There is no business case prepared for that because we have identified these—I would call them—smaller-type improvements, like the intersection upgrades, but we have done shoulder grading through there. We have done clearing of vegetation. We have done improvements to the signage. We have also improved the line marking at certain places along the road and where there has been some unevenness in the road we have been through and done what we call “surface correction” on there to smooth it out. The priority was to bring the road up to as good a condition as we could in its current situation, which we have done through that maintenance-type work. We have then —

**Hon ALANNA CLOHESY:** So that is maintenance work as distinct from road safety. What I am getting at is that that work would have been done. How do you determine the difference between maintenance work and road safety work?

**Mr Snook:** I would respond to you to say that all of that maintenance work actually improved the safety of the road. The safety improvements that will occur will be the improvements to those intersections and to the realignment of the curve at Noble Falls.

**Hon ALANNA CLOHESY:** So that is the list on the question on notice that was asked. Did we get a number for that?

**The ACTING CHAIR:** Yes, it was C13.

**Hon ALANNA CLOHESY:** So there is no fourth lane on Red Hill. Several millions of dollars have been allocated in the budget for this year and notional amounts in the out years—\$3.2 million for this year, and \$6.4 million for 2015–16. In the strategic asset plan for 2014–15, a total figure of \$30 million was allocated to the total upgrade in 2014–15 and the out years. What is the difference between what was allocated there for that and what is in the budget and in answer to this question on notice? What is not in there? I am happy to take that on notice, particularly in the interests of time.

*[Supplementary Information No C14.]*

**Hon ALANNA CLOHESY:** I want to ask about the cycle lane on Toodyay Road. Is that included in the scope of works?

**Mr Snook:** There is no cycle lane.

**Hon ALANNA CLOHESY:** There is no proposal for a cycle lane at all on Toodyay Road.

**Mr Snook:** No. Correct.

**Hon ALANNA CLOHESY:** One other question on the Toodyay Road–Dryandra intersection in Toodyay in the wheatbelt region. About \$300 000 worth of work has been done on that corner. Are there any other road safety upgrades on Toodyay Road between Toodyay and Gidgegannup?

[3.30 pm]

**Mr Snook:** Yes. What we have done in the Toodyay shire section—that is a section in our wheatbelt region—there has been, again, some clearing works for vegetation, so vegetation clearing has occurred. As you said, the Dryandra Road intersection is being done in 2014–15. In 2015–16 we will start doing the improvement—the design and preconstruction work for the intersection with Morangup Road. Those works will go over years 2015–16 and 2016–17.

**Hon ALANNA CLOHESY:** Okay. You would not necessarily call that extensive, would you?

**Mr Snook:** The other part that we are looking at is to see if we can develop up a program where we could start to widen the shoulders—so put a meter-wide bitumen seal on each of the shoulders.

**Hon ALANNA CLOHESY:** There are no current works in that.

**Mr Snook:** No, there are not, but we are reviewing the sections where we might be able to do that.

**Hon ALANNA CLOHESY:** Have they been identified?

**Mr Snook:** That work is being done by the wheatbelt region at the moment, so we do not have that yet, but it will be developed up soon.

**Hon ADELE FARINA:** I just want an update on the Margaret River perimeter road. Where is it at? How much funding is in the budget?

**Mr Troughton:** I actually had a look at the first bit that was completed on, I think it was, Tuesday, and we had a little look at stage 2. I believe that we are still working through some of the environmental issues for the excision of the forest. I also believe that some of the pine stuff in there is about to be removed very, very soon. The problem we still have at the moment is that there are no funds allocated for stage 2 at the moment, so we are driving the project through on an environmental level. I think the design is pretty much complete to go out to a design and construct part, and we are working with other parties to try and pursue that project through.

**The ACTING CHAIR:** The committee will forward any additional questions it has to you in writing in the next couple of days through the minister, together with the transcript of evidence, which includes the questions you have taken on notice. Responses to these questions will be requested within 10 working days of receipt of the questions. 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 as to why the due date cannot be met. If members have any unasked questions, I ask them to submit these to the committee clerk at the close of this hearing. On behalf of the committee, thank you for your attendance today.

**Hearing concluded at 3.32 pm**

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