

Mrs Cheryl Edwardes; Ms Alannah MacTiernan; Mr Shane Hill; Ms Katie Hodson-Thomas; Chairman; Mr Terry Waldron; Mr John Hyde; Mr Martin Whitely; Mr Rod Sweetman

Division 50: Planning and Infrastructure, \$410 625 000 -

Mr Edwards, Chairman.

Ms MacTiernan, Minister for Planning and Infrastructure.

Mr M.L. Harris, Acting Director General, Department for Planning and Infrastructure.

Mr P. Frewer, Deputy Director General, Department for Planning and Infrastructure.

Mr K.A. Stone, Acting Executive Director Maritime Division, Department for Planning and Infrastructure.

Mr B.G. James, Acting Executive Director Metropolitan, Department for Planning and Infrastructure.

Mr M.A. Burgess, Acting Director Transperth, Department for Planning and Infrastructure.

Mr R.E. Carleton, Chief Financial Officer, Department for Planning and Infrastructure.

Mr P.M. Melbin, Executive Director Corporate Management, Department for Planning and Infrastructure.

Mr R.D. Farrell, Policy Officer, Office of Minister for Planning and Infrastructure

Mrs EDWARDES: Minister, can I refer you to page 816 and a topic that is a favourite to you, the establishment of the Armadale Planning Authority. You have budgeted \$750 000 this year, \$250 000 next year. Can you identify what that money is going to be expended on?

Ms MacTIERNAN: Yes. There will be a number of things. Firstly, obviously, we will need to have premises, so there will be the premises. There will be sitting fees for the chair and the board members. Presumably we will need various consultants to be engaged in the preparation of the master plan. That is basically what it will be; to get the authority up and running.

Mrs EDWARDES: Staff or support for the authority.

Ms MacTIERNAN: Staff will basically be provided through DPI and Landcorp but obviously there will need to be consultancies engaged to do a lot of the specialist work in the preparation of the master plan.

Mrs EDWARDES: So first on the agenda is to develop a master plan for that region.

Ms MacTIERNAN: Absolutely, but also at the same time we recently announced that we have allocated \$6 000 000 for the redevelopment and relocation of the Armadale railway station to bring it in line with the mall. That will be one of the projects that will be worked on from the outset in conjunction with the development of the master plan.

Mrs EDWARDES: Thank you.

Mr HILL: Minister, I refer to division 50 which deals with the appropriation for the new Department for Planning and Infrastructure or DPI and note that while there is no separate division for the Ministry for Planning, there is a separate division 53 for the department of transport. At page 817 seven outputs are identified for the DPI. Can the minister, perhaps with the assistance of the acting director general explain to the Committee (1) the Government's reasons for proceeding with the fusion of the Ministry for Planning and at least part of the Department of Transport into this new department; (2) whether the process is complete yet; and in summary how the outputs set up on the top of page 817 relate to the functions of the new department; and the last one, whether the shading in the output columns for the future years indicates that those outputs may be redefined as the new department becomes better integrated.

Ms MacTIERNAN: I did explain at the outset that we were fusing these two agencies together. I think we have explained in many forums that it certainly does not make sense to us, and I think it is generally accepted - it is not good planning practice to separate out land use and transport planning and that it is very important that we bring those two together. We also wanted to ensure that we had in relation to planning for different sorts of transport a more focused approach that was more mode neutral and so that we would identify a transport task and then work out which mode was in fact the best way to satisfy that transport task rather than, for example, have, because funding was with a road agency, for example - that any freight - there would be a very strong bias towards satisfying the freight task through roads without a proper focus on what the other alternatives might be.

As I have said, the process is not yet complete. There will be legislation required. These agencies are not purely administrative. There is a web of legislation that is involved so to some extent we have done what we have been able to do on a pure administrative basis. Those things that require legislation will be done when we have the legislation through parliament. We are hoping that we will have that introduced in the next four weeks.

[10.20 am]

Mrs Cheryl Edwardes; Ms Alannah MacTiernan; Mr Shane Hill; Ms Katie Hodson-Thomas; Chairman; Mr Terry Waldron; Mr John Hyde; Mr Martin Whitely; Mr Rod Sweetman

Mrs HODSON-THOMAS: Yes. My question refers to community consultation again, Minister, and it is dot point 3, page 815 under, "Significant Issues and Trends". I wonder whether you can clarify for me how you plan to engage both industry and community. I know how you did it in my electorate where we were dealing with a specific issue but this is much broader.

Ms MacTIERNAN: Perhaps if I can give you an example from the road train summits, and I released that report yesterday and unfortunately - we have had *The West Australian* journalist over there - when it was written up, there was no reference made whatsoever to the process because I think the process is what really underpins the result because without a decent process what we wanted to achieve in terms of tightening up the operation of the heavy haulage industry we would never have been able to achieve it. What we had to do was get industry to be aware of the community and local government concerns and get them working with those groups to come up with a solution that basically all the stakeholders were prepared to sign off on. It was a painstaking process. It took us months and months to set it up. We had four conferences.

Basically, although you have to confine numbers because otherwise you could never get that proper consulted process going, all major stakeholders were asked to contribute. For example, in the road train one we had the livestock transporters, we had the transport forum, the Livestock Transporters Association, the Pastoralists and Graziers, the WA Farmers Federation as well as local government, as well as all the regulators. We had various community activists that belong to various action groups as well as, and I think this is a very important part too, a group of randomly selected members of the community who lived in affected areas who had not previously had, you can say, an agenda who were asked to come along and participate as well.

We worked through those with a very skilled facilitator and then having had those conferences set up a smaller implementation team, again representing that same group of stakeholders. They worked through all the results that came out of those conferences and came up with a set of basically manageable outcomes that we could put in place. That is the same process that we are going to be going through, that coastal planning committee; same process. We have gone to the HIA, we have gone to the development industry. We have gone to the tourist operators. We have gone to the community activists and the Conservation Council and said, "Okay. These are the parameters. We don't have any predetermined outcome. You work on it. You come up with something -"

The CHAIRMAN: Minister, I do not want to interrupt you but I think we have pretty well the answer.

Mrs HODSON-THOMAS: Can I ask another question further to that?

The CHAIRMAN: Yes.

Mrs HODSON-THOMAS: Minister, I know in my situation I was included in that process. It is not always that members of the opposition are invited to these things and I would just ask if you could at least show some courtesy to us to extend an opportunity to be involved. I know the member for Ningaloo may have been involved in one and perhaps even the Chairman, but I am wondering if you could -

Ms MacTIERNAN: Certainly any interest that is expressed by opposition members - Terry, you were also involved in the one we had in Katanning.

Mr WALDRON: Yes.

Ms MacTIERNAN: I think my very good friend, the member for Kalgoorlie, was.

Mrs EDWARDES: Attempted to be involved.

Ms MacTIERNAN: No, he was. He was actually a facilitator.

Mr HYDE: That was another one.

The CHAIRMAN: Members, I am sorry, I need to bring you back to what we are actually here for.

Mrs EDWARDES: Yes, sorry.

Ms MacTIERNAN: It is the member that is asking the question.

The CHAIRMAN: I understand that, Minister.

Ms MacTIERNAN: Mr Chairman, I do want to take that opportunity. Certainly I do not recall being involved in any of the processes by the previous Government. We have bent over backwards to get members involved in these conferences.

Mrs EDWARDES: Minister, page 834, the last dot point before the Capital Works Program is provide funding for installation of secure and accessible bicycle storage facilities at major bus and train stations. I have written to you in respect to providing funding for installation of secure and accessible gofer-mobile storage facilities at

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major bus and train stations. We have an ageing population. It is something that our senior citizens wish to be as independent as possible for as long as possible. I have a constituent who does not want to get on the train with his gofer-mobile. He wants to leave it at Whitfords train station. He does not want to go to Clarkson or Joondalup when they make arrangements up there. It is too far, too many major roads for him to cross in a gofer-mobile, and whether you could actually do a pilot perhaps at Whitfords train station to begin with.

Ms MacTIERNAN: We are certainly looking at that and we are looking at a disability plan in particular for the extensions to the rail network. We are actually looking at establishing a special committee to look at ways in which we can in fact improve the access to the disabled on the new network. That will obviously form part of it.

Mrs EDWARDES: That is several years away, Minister. Is there something we can do in the meantime?

Ms MacTIERNAN: Can I tell you that we have a number of stations that we are in the process of rebuilding over the next couple of years and what we will be doing will be entrenching that within that system. The Maylands railway station, of course, has new levels of access for the disabled and I think the idea of storage for these gofer-mobiles is a good idea and will be part of the planning for those new stations. I do not think it is a couple of years away. If you look at the station upgrade program that we have planned, we will be having stations coming on stream in the next year or two.

The CHAIRMAN: Is this a supplementary?

Mr HYDE: Just to follow up from that, I know that Claisebrook station in my electorate is, I think, \$3 million for an upgrade this year. Obviously with its proximity to Royal Perth Hospital there would be some merit in its consideration.

Ms MacTIERNAN: Yes, and can I say too, member for Perth, as you would be well aware, I have recently signed off on a proposal that would see a swathe of land outside the East Perth railway station being transferred to the Ministry for Housing for disabled housing. I am very keen. They wanted public housing. We have really put the argument to them that it should be housing for people with disabilities. We have some ideas of how we can actually integrate the planning for that complex directly into the station so we can provide direct access for people with disabilities right into the heart of the railway station. It is a very innovative plan. I think those are the sorts of areas where we really will need to give concentration to providing for the disabled and the frail.

Mr HARRIS: What we might be able to do in the short term though is look at the dimensions of the bicycle units themselves and if we can change the dimensions perhaps to accommodate those vehicles as well, then that is something we can have a look at.

Mrs EDWARDES: Maybe we can organise a meeting down at my office and at Whitfords train station just to look at my constituent's problem.

Mr FARRELL: The other issue we have, of course, is what the person does at the other end.

Mrs EDWARDES: He wants to get on a bus.

Mr WALDRON: Minister, I refer to page 843, school bus subsidies. There is a reduction in regional school bus subsidies by \$2.619 million from the estimated actuals of 2000-01 to the budget 2001-02 and I just want to ask, does the subsidy provided include the subsidy paid to the parents of country school children for the mileage for driving their child to the school bus?

Ms MacTIERNAN: Sorry, does it what?

Mr WALDRON: Does this subsidiary provided include the subsidy that is paid to parents when they have to drive their children to get on the school bus in the country areas? I think it is around about 16 cents a kilometre.

Ms MacTIERNAN: Yes, it does.

The CHAIRMAN: It does.

Ms MacTIERNAN: Yes.

Mr WALDRON: So that amount is included in there.

Ms MacTIERNAN: That is correct. Do you want an explanation as to why the figure has changed?

Mr WALDRON: Yes, I would.

Ms MacTIERNAN: It has to do with the change from the policy of school of choice. There is a change of Government policy. Perhaps, Mark, you could go into detail about it.

Mr HARRIS: This allocation is essentially maintenance of the current program under its current arrangements.

Mr WALDRON: Right.

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Ms MacTIERNAN: Whereas there was going to be a change in policy to school -

Mr WALDRON: Of the school bus policy.

Ms MacTIERNAN: Yes.

Mr WALDRON: There is a review going on at the moment of that. Is that correct?

Ms MacTIERNAN: Yes, it is linked in with the broader educational policy relating to school of choice.

Mr HARRIS: It also varies from year to year, depending upon school populations, their age profiles and so forth.

Mr WALDRON: To me it appears as a reduction there. How is that actually going to be applied? What areas are reductions going to apply to?

Mr HARRIS: It may not be a reduction of service on the road because of the fact that kids move from school to school, from age to age. There are about 800 and something-odd individual school bus contractors who are the recipients of subsidies under this item, plus a whole bundle of parents who, as you rightly identified, are paid travelling allowance essentially when they drive their kids to and from school. Depending on what the cohort looks like at any particular time, if you have 40 kids on the bus one year and you move to 30 kids on the bus the next year, then the allocation changes accordingly. So whilst the number can vary up and down, the level of service does not change.

[10.30 am]

Mr WALDRON: The level of service is not really affected.

Mr HARRIS: It is a demand-driven service so where a child is eligible, the subsidy is paid.

Ms MacTIERNAN: Can I just explain too that there is some rationalisation going on here? For example, in my area we have a number of school buses going up from Armadale basically up to schools in the hills, particularly the private Catholic schools mainly, and what we have agreed in consultation with the parents is that the children will now get the train from Armadale either to Maddington or to Gosnells and then link in with the bus services from Gosnells and Maddington because basically we had an underutilised rail system that was basically being replicated by these specialist school bus systems. So that is a question of rationalising and getting better use out of the infrastructure that we provide.

Mr WHITELY: Minister, my question relates to output for policies and plans.

Ms MacTIERNAN: Sorry, which page?

Mr WHITELY: It's division 50, page 826, which specifically refers to the commencement of development of various integrated transport plans in the metropolitan area last financial year and also to support the national integrated logistics network projects. In response to a recent grievance raised by me in the House relating to the Tonkin Highway extension, minister, you referred to comprehensive metropolitan freight review which you said was currently underway.

Ms MacTIERNAN: Yes.

Mr WHITELY: Can you advise whether the review is being conducted by DPI under this output 4 or by Main Roads? What is the nature and purpose of the review and how the review relates, if at all, to the integrated transport plans and the national integrated logistics network projects described at page 826?

Ms MacTIERNAN: In relation to the metropolitan freight network review, this is very much a DPI project rather than a Mains Roads project because we are trying to now think of how we plan for the expected very major growth in the transport task around the Perth metropolitan area. Obviously as Perth grows, as economic activity increases the freight network, which is already pretty much under duress, I think you would say, around a million of the key points, particularly in and out of the Fremantle Port, in and out of the Kewdale area - there is already major congestion. This is obviously going to only get worse as the freight task continues. If you look at the projections, for example, for the Fremantle Port for the growth in container trade each day, they are very dramatic and so we really need to say, "How are we going to deal with this problem of moving freight around the metropolitan area?"

There has been all sorts of road strategies drawn up in the past and, as the member for Carine would well know, these have a tendency to cause a great deal of conflict within communities as the extension of the Reid Highway did, as the extension of the Roe Highway undoubtedly will if it goes ahead in its current form that it has been traditionally planned. So we have this huge task building up. We have a lot of certainly community activism against the creation of more roads so we have to work out how on earth we are going to do this. What we want

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to do, again using that same model that we have done with the road train forums, is get industry, commerce, the transporters and the community groups together to look in fact how we are going to solve this problem of getting the freight moving around the metropolitan area.

We very much want to move away from just a focus on roads. We want to look at how we might better use the rail network, what might we have to do in terms of developing new technology and filling in bits of the infrastructure to get a better use of rail. It is really a subject of considerable scandal that less than five per cent of the container traffic in and out of Fremantle goes by rail. We have a rail network there worth hundreds of millions of dollars that is lucky to have two or three trains on it a day, if that.

For the last four months there has been an extensive process of getting various stakeholder groups together to develop issues papers. We have gone out to the public now and asked for expressions of interest for general community members that want to participate in the forum, and I have to say we have had a very great response including the member for Carine who has indicated that she wants to be involved. We will be selecting 120 people at the end of the day to attend a weekend congress where we will go through all of these issues and see if we can't come up with some sort of consensus on the way forward. We would then, as we did, with the road train conference, need to sit down with a smaller implementation team to work that through to some set of detailed outcomes.

Mrs HODSON-THOMAS: I refer to dot point 4 on page 816 that refers to programs to inform and motivate the community on the transport system and choices in transport planning, which are obviously increasingly important to cater for a growing and ageing and more urbanised population. Minister, given the Government's position to reduce the advertising costs for all agencies, how do you propose to inform and motivate the community to use public transport, especially given the reference on that same page under, "Decisions taken since the election: travel, advertising and consultancy savings?"

[10.50 am]

Ms MacTIERNAN: This refers basically to TravelSmart. We made a pre-election promise that we would reinstate TravelSmart as a program that had demonstrated considerable success in actually converting people from being private transport users to public transport users and in fact that reference is largely to the TravelSmart project. The state budget includes \$6.3 million for TravelSmart in 2001-02 with forward estimates of 5.1 for the following year and \$3 million for the third year. This is going to allow us to take that TravelSmart marketing program to a population of 170 000 people.

Member for Carine, are you familiar with the TravelSmart program? It is an intensive personalised campaign. As I said, the pilot study that was done in South Perth some years ago demonstrated a very significant capacity to change public behaviour. We are not going out with just a generalised advertising campaign. This is a highly targeted, specialised and demonstrably successful program that we have been prepared to commit to because we think it is important that we do something to change the level of public transport use in Western Australia. I think of all the Australian capitals we have the lowest share of the travel class going to public transport and that is something that we intend to turn around.

Mrs HODSON-THOMAS: Thank you.

Mr HILL: Minister, I refer to pages 816, 834, 843 of division 50 which identifies expenditure of \$14.5 million in this financial year on high and wide load corridors by means of payment to Main Roads. Can the minister advise what this expenditure is for and whether it will benefit the state?

Ms MacTIERNAN: Thank you very much. One of the major issues for our heavy fabrication industry has obviously been the capacity to move the fabricated items from whence they were fabricated to where they need to go. Also to some extent there is also the need from time to time to transport heavy machinery, particularly for the mining sector, through the metropolitan area. The problem with high/wide loads obviously is that you have a problem of intersecting often with overhead power lines. Basically what this project is designed to do is to remove those overhead power lines from along those routes which have been designated as high/wide load routes and upgrade the road surfaces and intersections to do it.

At this particular stage in the first instance we are focusing very much on the Jervoise Bay-Fremantle corridor because this is an important part of making that whole Jervoise Bay development work. There are some areas, for example, that were proposed along Albany Highway, the southern metropolitan reaches of Albany Highway, which industry has agreed that we should put on hold at this stage, because obviously in extending the Tonkin Highway and the Roe Highway the proposals in those other areas will not be required but we certainly are getting this under way on the Jervoise Bay- Fremantle route.

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Mrs HODSON-THOMAS: Further to that, on page 816, "Decisions taken prior to State Election, High and Wide Load Corridors, Rail Safety Initiatives", I refer to both those particular line items, Minister, and they are not funded beyond this financial year. Does that mean they are not being continued with at all or are they complete?

Ms MacTIERNAN: The high and wide load program?

Mrs HODSON-THOMAS: And the rail safety initiatives.

Mr HARRIS: It is a defined project which has an end point which is why the funding drops away.

Mr HARRIS: We have identified a certain number of things to do and this will allow us to do it.

Mrs HODSON-THOMAS: Fine. Thank you.

Mr HILL: Minister, I refer to page 831 of division 50 which lists "Major Initiatives For 2001-02, Enhance public bus services in Geraldton." What enhancement has the Government funded and do they meet Labor's pre-election commitment to contribute \$100 000 to trial a seven-day shuttle bus service for seniors in Geraldton?

Ms MacTIERNAN: We have allocated an extra \$130 000 a year, member for Geraldton, to trial the new shuttle service for seniors and we have actually already introduced the service. In this process we have not only assisted seniors, but have expanded the current public transport services obviously to the benefit of other people in the community. This revamped service obviously, as the member would be well aware, is a lot more convenient. It has new direct routes replacing the old one-way loop route which meant that if one wanted just to go from A to B or wanted to go from B to A, one had to go right around from B to Z and back then through A, so we have improved the timetables. For the inner city shuttle service there are more bus trips and services to suburbs that currently have no access to buses and a new terminus will be located in Anzac Terrace which will improve the whole image and comfort associated with public transport.

Can I say, that is a very important factor and one of the features of our rail station upgrade program is to actually make people feel more comfortable about the whole public transport experience. If they are getting out of their cars and going onto a windswept, cold, ugly railway station, it is not something that is going to attract them. We really do need to do a lot of work to get the whole level of the facilities up to a better standard, so we are creating an attractive environment that people are going to want to come to, feel comfortable with and make that big transition to leaving their cars at home and using public transport.

Mrs HODSON-THOMAS: My reference is page 816 under decisions taken since the election where it refers to "Improve and extend bus routes". There is an allocation of \$500 000 there, Minister. Can you clarify what these proposals will entail and are there any specific details available to indicate which bus routes will be extended and those to be improved?

Ms MacTIERNAN: No.

Mrs HODSON-THOMAS: Further to this, Minister, is there any funding in that to re-assess the Mandurah suburban bus routes? The member for Dawesville has asked me specifically to ask that.

Ms MacTIERNAN: Can I say that we have not made a decision as to which of the competing needs will be funded under this project. Basically this is an expansion project and there is an enormous unmet need out there in terms of buses and we are not going to be able to satisfy all of that need with this sum of money, but we are very determined to have a look at what the various proposals are that have been put forward, including that which has been put forward by the member for Dawesville, and make a strategic decision based on really the area of need.

I think one of the things that we have to look at is, there certainly are some areas where because of the low economic standing of the community, many people are much more dependent on public transport and we have to make sure that those people are in fact properly provided for. That will be one of the factors that we need to take into account. There are a lot of people out there who are very isolated because of the lack of bus services. There are a lot of new suburbs coming on where younger people just simply have no capacity to move out of those areas because there is no public transport.

[11.00 am]

Mr HYDE: Supplementary to that, is that purely that line item for new bus routes?

Ms MacTIERNAN: Yes.

Mr HYDE: Would that also include new CAT services?

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Ms MacTIERNAN: Theoretically it could. Basically what we said before the election is that we would allocate \$8 million for additional public transport services, an extension of the network, so theoretically it could, but there will be, member for Perth, as you can imagine, a lot of competition and, as I say, a lot of the newer areas in particular I think will probably get the focus for that. I should point out for you just on that, the Perth parking levy of course is the major funding item for the Perth CAT bus system.

Mr HYDE: Yes. I will come to that later.

Mrs HODSON-THOMAS: Minister, again I refer to page 816. There is an allocation of \$250 000 this financial year and a further \$250 000 in the forward estimates for 2003-03 to upgrade vehicle access and parking at Hillarys. In relation to that, Minister, can you advise if there are any plans to move the ferry location, because it largely causes a lot of parking problems at Hillarys, and whether in fact there have been any further approvals for the research centre that was going to be up at Hillarys?

Ms MacTIERNAN: Yes. We had meetings with the various lessees at the Hillarys shopping centre before the last election. Mike, if you could give us an update on that.

Mr HARRIS: Yes. There are discussions with ferry operators about relocating the ferry. There are a number of serious issues about wharf design and jetty design that are yet to be resolved and it is fair to say we have not resolved those. As the minister said, discussions with the lessees are also continuing because they have concerns about traffic flow and people flow essentially and we are still working our way through those issues.

Mrs HODSON-THOMAS: So no decision has been taken.

Mr HARRIS: Not at this point, no.

Mrs HODSON-THOMAS: Minister, I note that there is an allocation for expanding the regional airports development scheme and it is not funded until 2004-05 to the value of \$2 million. Can you advise why there is not anything allocation in the prior years? My understanding was, there was an election commitment of \$8 million, but it was previously funded at \$2 million per annum in any case.

Ms MacTIERNAN: As I understand, and perhaps if we can find the relevant part, on that particular line item is simply the extension of it and it appears elsewhere.

Mr HARRIS: There is an allocation in the base funding for each of those three years of \$2 million.

Mrs HODSON-THOMAS: I am not referring to the -

Mr HARRIS: It sits within the base funding allocation. The previous extension of the program each year provided \$2 million in each of the years where those dashes appear on page 816. The \$2 million that shows on 816 is the extension of the program into a fourth year.

Mrs HODSON-THOMAS: Right.

Ms MacTIERNAN: This is a list of policy decisions, so that funding that was there previously is still there.

Mrs HODSON-THOMAS: It is still there.

Mr HARRIS: \$2 million a year.

Mr HYDE: On page 836 which deals with the department's capital works program, there is a reference to the CAT buses there with estimated expenditure of \$1 million in this financial year. Is this related to the proposed extension of the CAT bus system into East Perth in my electorate or does it merely replace buses on the existing services or perhaps both?

Ms MacTIERNAN: Which line is this one?

Mr HYDE: Page 836.

Ms MacTIERNAN: I just want to make sure that we get the right line here.

Mr HYDE: It is down at the bottom, CAT Buses, not "CATS".

Mr HARRIS: That is not the extension into East Perth.

Ms MacTIERNAN: It is not. Could you explain what this one is?

Mr HYDE: Do you want me to keep going?

Ms MacTIERNAN: Right, go on.

Mr HYDE: Could the minister or Mr Harris perhaps confirm to us whether there is a direct link between the increased revenue from the Perth parking licence system and increased expenditure on the CAT bus service? I

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notice from estimates last year that it certainly appeared to me that consolidated revenue was deficit funding the CAT system, whereas it has certainly been my view that it should be a stand alone item. Rather than pulling funding for roads in the north west or the Kimberley, the city should be self sufficient in CAT needs.

Ms MacTIERNAN: Sure, I agree. That funding allocation that appears in the budget there is for the Fremantle CAT system and the increase in the proposed expansion of the Perth CAT system is funded from those revenues from the Perth parking licence system. As you would be aware, we increased the Perth parking licensing fees quite considerably, but they are still very modest compared with other capital cities. That increase in fees provided a total of \$5.5 million each year was used to fund projects such as the CAT system. It has also been used to fund various pedestrian and cycle facilities.

So we have made a strategic decision that we believe that it is important that we get a bit more realistic about the fees that we charge for vehicle parking in the centre of Perth. That is the other part of the equation. We have to have a carrot and stick approach to this public transport use. If you continue to provide plentiful ultra-cheap parking in the central business district, you are actually undermining your strategies to get more people onto public transport. So we have increased those fees quite significantly and that extra revenue that has been generated is being used to provide better quality public transport in Perth and to improve cycleways and pedestrianways.

Mr HYDE: Given that that was not the line item, are you able to tell me where the line item is with that \$5.5 million?

Mr HARRIS: It is embedded in our general budgetary provisions. There is no specific line item for it. This one appears because it is a particular expansion for our system. All of the CAT system in the city, as the minister says, comes out of the Perth parking levy which comes into our general revenue and then goes back out into the CAT bus system for maintenance of the routes, part of it for replacement of the buses at some time in the future when they need to be replaced and partly from the increased revenue contemplation of the expansion into East Perth.

Ms MacTIERNAN: It goes into those global figures whereby we purchase bus services.

Mr HYDE: And obviously Subiaco is in the consolidated figures as well.

Mr HARRIS: Yes, that is right, but not out of the Perth parking levy.

Mr HYDE: Good.

Mr WHITELY: Minister, I refer to page 825 which appears to show a steadily increasing percentage of Transperth bus fleets conforming to ECE standards. Minister, can you advise me of the nature of these standards, which are presumably environmental standards, and whether you are satisfied in Transperth's progress towards 100 per cent compliance given that the target next year still only 43 per cent?

Ms MacTIERNAN: Obviously, as you are aware, one of the difficulties we have in meeting some of the environmental standards is the decision that was made some time ago to go with diesel buses rather than natural gas buses. I do not know, Member, whether or not you are familiar with the controversy that followed that.

Mr WHITELY: Yes, I remember it.

Ms MacTIERNAN: We have been working to have those contracts renegotiated so that future orders can comply with what we believe is the acceptable environmental standards and so that we can actually transfer the system to a gas system. We are currently working on that with the company. The company, as far as we can see, Daimler Chrysler, are still working on developing their acceptable gas engines and we are intending to have very direct talks with them over the next couple of weeks to see what can be done to improve this because we are concerned that WA may be getting technology that is certainly not state of the art in relation to environmental requirements.

[11.10 am]

Mrs HODSON-THOMAS: I refer specifically again to page 816 where it states there is a redirection of train security. Can you, Minister, expand on where these moneys are specifically being redirected?

Mr HYDE: What page was that?

Mrs HODSON-THOMAS: 816, and it is the second-last line item at the bottom of the page.

Ms MacTIERNAN: Member for Carine, you will be aware that prior to the last election we made a commitment that we would institute not only a guard on every train and a new WAGR transit guard in replacement of the privatised security operation, but also one of the components of our undertaking was that we would introduce 50 transit police who would be dedicated. There would be at any one time within the Police Service 50 police

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dedicated to train security. That line item there reflects the payments that will come from the transport budget directly to the police in order to fund that. We think it is important to ensure that those officers are in fact dedicated to this task so these funds will be moved into the police budget.

Mrs HODSON-THOMAS: Minister, further to that, in relation to the safer transport task force rail security initiatives which appear on page 833, dot point 3, is there any consideration being given to perhaps expanding the squad to include buses given that there are enormous problems for bus operators currently? They are experiencing a number of ongoing wilful damage problems to their buses which obviously causes commuters travelling after hours a sense of fear, if you like, and there is a decreasing patronage service. Is there any policy initiative or consideration being given perhaps to expand the service over to buses as well?

Ms MacTIERNAN: I have to say, member, I think what we are doing on trains is a very large step forward and obviously there are budgetary limits on what we can do and we have to actually target those areas of the greatest need. We currently are spending around \$800 000 a year on bus security. Because the very nature of bus transport, it is not as vulnerable to those problems that trains are and so the needs are very, very different. If you actually look at the issues raised by passengers in our passenger satisfaction studies, it is very much rail that is the focus of concern.

There are real problems in buses in terms of damage but from my discussions with bus operators one of the biggest problems that faces them is buses being attacked by missiles from the outside. This is not something that can actually be dealt with so having a security officer on a bus is not going to deal with what is a fundamental and bizarre problem that has emerged, which is the number of people that apparently find some sort of satisfaction and pleasure in hurling very large rocks at buses either from overpasses or from the sides of road.

Mr HYDE: You are not developing a Star Wars system to protect them then.

Ms MacTIERNAN: A satellite defence system to protect us from the missiles.

Mr HYDE: Yes.

Ms MacTIERNAN: We are trying to work out ways in which we might be able to reduce that problem but obviously putting a security guard on the bus is not going to address that. As I say, it is most unfortunate that we have people in the community that think that this is somehow or other an amusing activity, but it is, of course, very dangerous and has the potential to be dangerous both to the driver and to the passengers.

Mrs HODSON-THOMAS: I was specifically more interested to see whether there was a proposal or a policy or whether you have had any discussions whereby you would consider a mobile unit to address hot spots in different areas, Minister. I am not suggesting that there is a guard on every bus.

Ms MacTIERNAN: I have an officer here who can perhaps tell us about the bus security arrangements, if you would like. Is that acceptable, Mr Chairman?

The CHAIRMAN: Yes, certainly.

Mr BURGESS: As the minister mentioned, we spend in the order of \$800 000 now with a commercial security provider. That consists of a combination of static patrols at various bus stations around the metropolitan area and mobile patrols that follow buses, particularly on high profile routes where we have had incidents. We also have the flexibility to have mobile patrols north and south of the river to respond to incidents as bus drivers call them in or as we are made aware by nature of passenger complaints of incidents occurring. We do have a capacity to respond within existing resources.

Mrs HODSON-THOMAS: When you talk about the mobile patrols, how many mobile patrols are there?

Mr BURGESS: Typically there are two at the moment. They are not there all the time but there is a north of the river and a south of the river patrol. Additionally the officers at static locations can respond to incidents if required.

MRS HODSON-THOMAS: Thank you, Mr Chairman.

Mr HILL: Minister, I refer to page 831 of division 50, which lists supporting the work of the ministerial task force on north-west air services as a major initiative. I note that the Government has recently announced an increased subsidy to maintain an air service within the north-west. Can the minister or one of her advisers explain the background to that decision to the Committee, including how the increased subsidy will be funded on the basis on which it was granted?

Mr HYDE: Where is that - on page 831?

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Mr HILL: 832, the second dot point.

Mr HYDE: The second-last dot point, Major Initiatives.

Ms MacTIERNAN: Obviously this is all now somewhat in a state of flux in the wake of the events of the last couple of days. We have recently given a subsidy of \$185 000 to enable the north-west regional airlines to continue a modified Broome-Port Hedland-Karratha-Exmouth service. This subsidy will be made up of cash and in-kind donations from the Department of Planning and Infrastructure, the WA Tourism Commission, Broome International Airport Holdings, the Shire of Broome-Exmouth-Port Hedland-Roebourne and the Kimberley Development Commission. Basically those parties all got together and put in a subsidy that would enable us to see that service continue.

If I can just use this opportunity perhaps to make some general comments, I think in the wake of what has happened in Western Australia over the last week and a half with the collapse of Ansett and Skywest with it, we really do have to give some real consideration to what we are going to do generally across the state. My concern is that we need to have a system in place here that ensures that we can have adequate coverage of all of our network. My concern is that perhaps in the hands of a single big operator, we may not see all of those routes serviced. We also need to make sure that there are some routes which are currently serviced which you could say are skinny and which might pay their way in a marginal sense but do not pay their way in an average sense. If a company can make sufficient money from other routes that it can carry this particular route purely paying its own way, so being self-sustaining on a marginal economic basis, then we really need to put in place a system that will prove that protection.

I think we have got to look at the degree to which on some of those turbo prop routes, for example, we need to put in an element of regulation so that if you want to fly, if you want to service your area, Geraldton, you have also got an obligation to service some of those routes which are less profitable. That is going to be the big challenge that we face. Who knows where the dice are going to fall? I do not think anyone knows at the moment who is going to end up with what, but we have to be very conscious. Something I will be taking to government is the need to ensure that all of those current turbo prop routes are serviced and that the eyes just are not picked out of those.

Secondly, we really have to start talking to those mining companies and look at the way in which their use of fly in, fly out charter vehicles has actually undermined the RPT system so that communities that should be able to be getting something out of the fact that they have a mine site in their area. Whilst they do not have a group of worker using their town because of fly in, fly out they should at the very least be having an air service but what has happened is that the mining companies have sought to cut their returns and have gone on to charter and that has undermined the capacity for airlines to provide the regular scheduled passenger transit system. That has to be something that we have to address in this deregulation; otherwise we could be actually left as a result of what has gone on over the last couple of weeks with a very depleted airline system around the State.

[11.20 am]

Mrs HODSON-THOMAS: Minister, I refer to page 817. I refer to the totals in the appropriation and forward estimates. There appears to be a decrease of \$46 046 000. Minister, can you tell me what the real decrease in the total funding is, taking into account the three per cent underlying inflation rate? What is the real decrease in capital works funding? I refer specifically to page 835.

Mr HYDE: What is the line item on 817?

Mrs HODSON-THOMAS: The bottom line item, Total Consolidated Fund Appropriation. The difference between \$456 671 000 and \$410 625 000 is \$46 046 000.

Ms MacTIERNAN: Between?

Mrs HODSON-THOMAS: The estimated actual in 2000-01 and 2001-02.

Ms MacTIERNAN: You note the big difference there between the budget and the estimate.

Mrs HODSON-THOMAS: Minister, I am actually asking where in fact have savings been achieved in this budget. I wonder if you could clarify that for me.

Mr HARRIS: Part of the answer lies in the PURD project. There are probably fifty components that make up the variation from year to year. To go back to last year's budget compared to actual, there were increases in the budget to accommodate the introduction of the PURD project, particularly capital works, which forced the actual up compared to the estimate. This year's budget does not have the same level of capital works for the PURD project because we had major construction work for bridges and tunnels in particular and acquisition work

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attached to that project, which we do not have this year. We will have in subsequent years but not this year. That is an example of the reason for the apparent spike and then drop away again.

As far as savings are concerned, the efficiency dividend and priority dividend is \$17.2 million in total which represents the major variation in comparative purposes, one year on, compared to last year.

Ms MacTIERNAN: As you say, there was something wrong with the budgeting process last year obviously.

Mrs HODSON-THOMAS: It also includes the superannuation component this year as well.

Mr HARRIS: Yes, and also allowances for capital use charge and a whole bundle of other variations that have come into this year. As I said, there are probably fifty elements to the variations which when you add them all up represent pluses and minuses on both sides, part of which are described on page 816 in those policy decisions that you have been progressively working your way through.

Mr HYDE: I refer to page 834 which lists the provision of funding to continue construction of the Perth bicycle network and also to page 843 which shows a breakdown of the transfer payments to Main Roads for bike paths. That is coupled with the high/wide corridor spending. In Labor's pre-election transport policy we did promise to allocate \$20 million over four years for the expansion of dedicated bike paths in Perth and regional centres and a number of those through my electorate. Does the total spending now provided for by the Government in these budget papers meet that commitment?

Ms MacTIERNAN: Yes, \$20 million has been allocated in the budget for the continuation of the network. \$18 million has been given for stage 2 of the Perth Bicycle Network and \$2 million for the Country Pathways Scheme. Stage 1 of the program resulted in a total of \$23 million spent over that four-year period. Stage 2 extends and enhances the quality of services on the network adding 122 local bicycle routes, taking the network up to more than 1 500 kilometres, but I can assure you, member for Perth, that they will not all be around Perth. I seem to recall that some of those ones that missed out in stage 1 indeed were the routes along the Armadale-Maddington area and we will be making sure that the south-east corridor gets its share. I notice the roads to recovery money in the town of Vincent seems to - there seems to be a lot of cycleways in the town of Vincent now.

Mr HYDE: There was good leadership.

Ms MacTIERNAN: Good leadership; a cycle-friendly city.

Mr SWEETMAN: Minister, I just want to ask a question in relation to page 817. If it does not fit under output forward, then simply link it to the consolidated fund at the bottom of the page. It is in relation to stamp duty. Again you will have a chance to whack us over the head. We are the ones that put the stamp duty up. Have you made any allowance -

Ms MacTIERNAN: Stamp duty on what?

Mr SWEETMAN: On transport vehicles, on new vehicles and new road transport equipment. Stamp duties applying to heavy haulage in particular is my concern because we have seen a lot of prime movers purchased outside of the State, a lot of the dollies and trailers of various configurations, particularly Queensland where you only have to pay a stamp duty component of about \$8 000, whereas in Western Australia now for a similar configuration, similar rig, you are paying about \$30 000 to \$32 000. My understanding is that Treasury has not made a lot of money out of putting up stamp duty by, I think, the two per cent that we did about two or three years ago. So if Treasury has not made any money out of the extra stamp duty and realising that the transport, particularly the manufacturers, are losing out -

Ms MacTIERNAN: And distributors, yes.

Mr SWEETMAN: That is right.

Ms MacTIERNAN: It is an issue. I have to say it is an issue. It is a Treasury issue. It is something that the Treasurer has taken up. I do not know whether there is the capacity to do this, but the member for Perth actually did the review for the Treasurer on this matter. I do not know whether I could pass the question over there, but it is not strictly within our portfolio area, though I do acknowledge it. You might have to talk to the member for Perth after this session about it, but we are conscious of it as a Treasury issue and we are actually, as I understand, looking at the degree to which in fact we are losing revenue as a result of that.

Mr SWEETMAN: Just on a point of order, it probably is a Treasury issue and I think there is some disagreement certainly between the industry figures that I looked at and the Treasury figures so I think it is a really important issue and there is certainly a lot of anecdotal evidence there, as you would be aware of, but I think Treasury is the place for it.

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Mrs HODSON-THOMAS: Page 827, Minister, output 5. Output 5 refers to education and regulation and it shows a sharp decline or cut in costs from \$25 503 000 last year to \$20 820 000 this financial year, a fall of 18.4 per cent. Can you explain what the reason is for the decline?

[11.30 am]

Ms MacTIERNAN: Sorry, 825?

Mrs HODSON-THOMAS: I think the figures are actually wrong, Minister.

The CHAIRMAN: 827, is it?

Mr HYDE: The budget figures are wrong.

Mrs HODSON-THOMAS: Yes, the budget figures under Estimated 2000 says \$25 503 000 as opposed to the estimate in this budget as being \$20 820 000. Can you explain the fall of 18.4 per cent? What is the reason for the decline?

Ms MacTIERNAN: Decline from where to where?

Mrs HODSON-THOMAS: The total cost of output on that first line refers to -

Ms MacTIERNAN: All right.

Mr HYDE: There is explanation (e).

Mrs HODSON-THOMAS: It says -

Discrepancy in output costs and total cost is due to allocation of overheads resulting from complexities inherent in the Machinery of Government changes. These will be addressed during the year and rectified in the Annual Report.

I can read that, yes. I have read it.

Mr HARRIS: Part of the comparative issue that we have here is that the Department of Transport is partially split at this point in time with the majority of it having moved, with the exception of Licensing and Road Safety, into the new department and part of it not. Some of the overhead allocations sit entirely within DPI and not within Director of Transport and we provide the service back to Department of Transport, particularly in corporate services areas, HR, salary, payroll and a bundle of things like that. That has added a complication to our budget comparative figures which occurs in most outputs. When we get the whole of the department back in one place with the exception of road safety, we will get the comparatives back into alignment, but for the time being we have a slight mismatch between our corporate services overheads in particular and the allocation of FTEs between what, in effect, are two departments at this point in time. That is part of the explanation.

Mrs HODSON-THOMAS: Is it the reverse in output 6 where you have passenger and freight services? In the total cost of outputs there the estimated actual is \$334 447 000 as opposed to \$364 679 000 where there is an increase of nine per cent. Is that the same explanation?

Mr HYDE: What page, sorry?

Mrs HODSON-THOMAS: Sorry, 829.

Mr HARRIS: Partly; partly not. Again it is a mix of a very large number of items. Some programs also have expansion components in them and the outputs reflect that. For example, the bicycle network issue that we just talked about before has a deliberate policy injection of funding attached to it. So in part my answer to do with overheads is the answer. In part it is some programs getting additional funding and some programs having reduced funding.

Mrs HODSON-THOMAS: Is it possible to get details of those programs that are getting the additional funding by way of supplementary?

Ms MacTIERNAN: Yes, we can do that. I have them here.

Mr HARRIS: It is the second one that you refer. Also the other aspect to it is the application of capital user charge and accrual appropriations for matters like depreciation where they are starting to kick in in programs that have large asset bases attached to them, which the public transport one does, then you get a disproportionately large increase, whereas if you go back to education and regulation, there is a very low asset base attached to it so you do not get the same sort of jump as a consequence of capital user charge in particular. They are examples of explanations why there appears to be a variance.

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Mrs HODSON-THOMAS: Thank you.

Ms MacTIERNAN: To make that clear, that is not an increase in actual expenditure. It is just that they are allocated differently across the different agencies.

Mr WHITELY: Minister, I refer to the references at pages 816 and 834 to the upgrading of bus shelters. Does the description at page 816 of this expenditure as a decision taken since the State election mean that if it were not for Labor's pre-election commitment to undertake a \$2 million program to upgrade bus shelters, then this investment would not have been made? Also, Minister, a technical matter: why is the expenditure included at page 834 in output 7 instead of capital works?

Ms MacTIERNAN: Maybe I will get the director general to answer, but in terms of our commitment it is true that previously, up until I think about 1994-95, bus shelters were actually provided through the Department of Transport largely. A decision was taken that that thereafter would become a local government responsibility and it has meant that lots of local governments in areas where they are not well resourced local governments have basically not been able to provide bus shelters, and we have seen the standard of bus shelters in some of those areas fall behind, so in this program we have reinstituted and accepted the responsibility again for bus shelters and I go back to the point that I made earlier. It is important to make sure use of public transport is comfortable and convenient and the provision of bus shelters is part of that process.

Mr HARRIS: The reason they are treated this way is because it is a grant program, so we do not actually end up owning the asset at the end of the day. Bus shelters are local government assets, not State Government assets, so we express them through the income statement rather than capitalise them through the balance sheet.

The CHAIRMAN: Can I just reflect back on what specific line we are dealing with there because it is of some interest to me?

Mr WHITELY: Page 816 actually has the line item and it is down at the bottom, in the chart down the bottom there about six from the top, "Upgrade bus shelters", \$500 000 annexed. That is for the next four years.

Mr HYDE: Chair, will the department be devolving that to the Department of Local Government or will it deal directly with councils?

The CHAIRMAN: No. It is a grant scheme by application, so councils will make application.

Ms MacTIERNAN: It will definitely be through DPR because, as I said, we see it as an integral part of the provision of the public transport network.

The CHAIRMAN: I beg you for my indulgence. The question is then, does it apply to country towns also because Bunbury has an extensive public transport -

Ms MacTIERNAN: Of course, yes. We can foresee a lot of applications coming forward. I do note there are some areas obviously too where you will have noticed on a lot of the major roads, certainly around Perth, that there are bus shelters with advertising in them and obviously in those locations where it is possible to actually get the equivalent of private sector sponsorship of them, they would perhaps not be viewed as highly as those areas where it is not possible to get such sponsorship. We would also be trying to look as well at relatively high volume shelters as well in terms of it, perhaps shelters outside schools, for example.

Mr SWEETMAN: Minister, I want to ask a question at page 816, "Expand the Regional Airports Development Scheme" in the block of decisions taken since the State election basically. Just in relation to the RAD scheme, it has been very popular, the regional airport development scheme. I have been to a lot of the openings of these airports that the State has been able to fund over the last few years. That fund was set up to assist particularly shires in developing all weather, sealed airstrips in their shires, but I guess the eligibility criteria when the program started off was very high because a lot of people were competing for the funds. I am just wondering whether or not we are getting into the spirit of this a bit because I went to an opening of an airport just recently and there is more bitumen there on the airport than there is in the entire town, including the main street.

Ms MacTIERNAN: Is that Kalbarri?

[11.40 am]

Mr SWEETMAN: It is in my electorate. No, Kalbarri is not. I am just wondering whether or not now we are getting a bit head of ourselves. We are lowering the bar as far as eligibility goes, I believe.

Ms MacTIERNAN: You are certainly not the first person. In fact one of our members made the comment that perhaps we might be able to use some of those funds in other ways to assist the rural aviation industry and I

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think there is some merit in that. I do not think we want to go through some of the mistakes that, for example, went through in the 60s with road building where things were tarmacked and roads expanded just because the money was there. I do think that we have to be mindful that we make sure we actually get value for money out of that. I do think we have to be very careful that we are assessing these properly and not just giving them because the money is there, but I can say to you that whatever we do, the money will be kept basically to encourage regional aviation. If this is not the best way to do it or we have really satiated the demand for the development of the airports, then we will look at other ways in which we can assist the aviation industry in regional Western Australia. I just comment too that there are still a number of emergency strips, for example, that we have to deal with. They are not so glamorous, but I think that is something that we have to be prepared for.

Mr SWEETMAN: That is right, and I am trying to differentiate between the two because quite often a lot of the RAD's money is being applied to strips that could not be classified or would not have made it through the eligibility procedures purely on the emergency aspect of the application. These airstrips, once they are put in, do not alleviate the local shire from some considerable cost on an annual basis for maintaining those strips. Bitumen in particular, unless it is used regularly, dies. It starts to crack up and peel away, so within four or five years, particularly the underutilised airstrips will fall to pieces if the shire does not do a roll every week down the airstrip.

That is costly. It is probably twice as expensive to maintain as an all weather gravel strip, so that has to be taken into account, but separate to that the landing fees issue. If the State is picking up substantial contribution of putting in these high class pavements at regional airstrips, then we should be able to somehow dictate or regulate the amount they can charge in landing fees. It is one of the issues that certainly the commercial carriers have really taken up. Out of the six most expensive airstrips to land on in Australia, four of them are in WA. They will tell you that, so things are clearly getting out of control. While the airlines are under pressure to reduce costs of tickets, there is a lot of reasons why they really cannot do it.

Ms MacTIERNAN: I think that is right. It is quite clear that a number of the shires, who will remain nameless, have seen their regional airport as a bit of a cash cow and have funded a whole lot of other no doubt worthy projects within their shires from these landing fees. In part in some of these instances you can have some sympathy with them because the view, for example, of a lot of these shires is that they do not get nearly as much out of the mining industry as they should for their local projects and they see this as a back door way of actually trying to achieve this, because in a number of those towns that you are referring to a very substantial percentage of the air traffic is in fact mining air traffic, so they see this as a way of getting some rough justice in terms of some money that they can then feed back into their area.

I guess we have a little bit of sympathy for that, but I do think with the shake-up that has occurred in the last couple of weeks, and it is going to continue, there may need to be perhaps a move away from seeing those airports as cash cows. It will depend to some extent on supply and demand. If you have an area that is really booming and the mining companies want to come there because they have a lot of resource projects getting up and running, the shires are obviously and probably quite properly going to continue to charge high rates. If it is actually going to be to the detriment of air services, I think you will find the local authorities becoming more reasonable and certainly in relation to the recent troubles those airports did indicate a preparedness to knock down their fees where it was necessary to participate in that process of getting the airlines back up and running.

Mr HILL: Minister, at page 835 of the capital works program, there is a reference to the Coral Bay access road and boat launch facility, with the major expenditure of about \$2.4 million occurring in this financial year. Can the minister perhaps with the help of her advisers explain to the committee the nature of that expenditure and the benefits the Government believes will flow from it?

Ms MacTIERNAN: This is part of what we obviously need to do at Coral Bay. I think we spoke earlier about what was happening on that coast basically from Coral Bay to Exmouth. It has really been subject to a massive growth in tourism, and in tourism that has been fairly - "disorganised" is not the right word but free-form tourism, and that has created a great deal of pressure, environmental pressure, and some would argue has turned what has been a paradise into a bit of quagmire. This has been part of our plans to preserve the unique maritime environment at Coral Bay.

The funding will allow for the relocation of the existing boating activities which will improve swimmers' safety because that has been a big issue as I understand it at Coral Bay at the main beach and assist in the ongoing management of the area's precious coral formations. Projects to be funded include an access road, carpark, amenities building, charter boat facilities, a jetty and boat launching ramp and catwalk. There are other infrastructure issues which fall outside my portfolio, obviously water being the key one, that do need to be addressed. Members may be aware that the member for Peel has been appointed as having responsibility to chair

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a committee that is looking into ensuring the coordination of all the infrastructure in Coral Bay - a nice little job for him.

Mr SWEETMAN: Do you understand clearly where the boat ramp is going to go now? That is definitely, once and for all, finalised? It is part of the cost that you just enunciated.

Ms MacTIERNAN: Are you asking that question?

Mr SWEETMAN: Yes. I am just saying categorically that the appropriation is there. Do we know exactly where the boat ramp is going to go? I know with all the goodwill in the world you can make an appropriation but if the region is still fighting about where the road and where the ramp is going to go, we might be still talking about this in four years time. That is all.

Ms MacTIERNAN: South Monkhead but not finally decided? Can we perhaps ask Kim to come forward? We have not got down to the level of detail of exactly where it is going to go.

[11.50 am]

Mr STONE: As the minister has indicated, the member for Peel now has the running I believe. Tom Stephens I think asked him to take it over. He has been down discussing the issue with us. I understand that a final decision has not been made on the location of the boat ramp. I think people would be aware there are two main alternatives being explored. One is South Monk Head and the other one is in North Bill's Bay, so one is south of the existing prime swimming beach where the boats are actually launched over the beach. That is South Monk Head, and one is the north of the bay where the main activity takes place. That is referred to as North Bill's Bay.

One of the concerns we have expressed to the member for Peel is that with the uncertainty about Maud's Landing, we have a concern that the State in essence could to some extent be wasting its money with a facility at North Bill's Bay. That is the view that has been expressed by DPI in terms of the technical issues, so there are technical issues with the North Bill's Bay site in terms of sand movements and some of those sorts of things which make the ongoing maintenance much more expensive, where at South Monk Head we do not have the same problem, but at the end of the day that is in essence a planning decision which the member for Peel understands from talking to all the parties involved.

Ms MacTIERNAN: The member for Ningaloo might like to talk. Do you have a particular view?

Mr SWEETMAN: Yes, and it is really not contingent on whether or not Maud's Landing goes ahead either. It is just making a decision for all the right reasons. There are a couple of concessions or compromises that have to be made with either location.

Ms MacTIERNAN: We would certainly welcome your input and would be pleased if you would discuss these issues with the member for Peel.

Mr SWEETMAN: The south position is the preferred location if that is the route that boats are always going to take coming into Bill's Bay, but the north location is the best if we are going to redirect them to come in through a different gap in the reef.

Ms MacTIERNAN: We are happy to use your local knowledge.

Mrs HODSON-THOMAS: Mr Chairman, I asked a question which it was suggested that I ask in this division. The line item I am going to refer to is at page 820 but probably is not specific to that - "The Metropolitan Coastal Strategy will be commenced." The member for Dawesville has asked me to ask a couple of questions in relation to his particular area and dealing with storm damage as a result of storms and how that will be funded and whether there are any allocations to provide more marine officers in the area.

Ms MacTIERNAN: To provide more marine officers where?

Mrs HODSON-THOMAS: In that region, Dawesville or Mandurah.

Mr STONE: No.

Ms MacTIERNAN: No.

Mrs HODSON-THOMAS: Thank you. That was a bit of a supplementary to that, Minister, from the member for Dawesville, but if you can answer specifically the storm damage issue for him.

Mr HARRIS: We have a variety of programs as far as coastal protection is concerned but they generally fall into three categories. Our dredging program we do at Dawesville and Carnarvon and several other places around the country. That program continues. Our smaller coastal protection program which from memory was a couple of hundred thousand dollars or thereabouts - maybe slightly larger than that - is not continuing, not in terms of specific expenditure by the department. However, the technical advice that we have always provided we will

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continue to provide to local councils who at the end of the day have the primary responsibility for that coastal protection activity. Our expenditures were by and large in conjunction with expenditures by local councils.

The third category is the major storm damage category from, for example, cyclone or some major event. Now, we have never provided budgeted funding for major emergency events of that sort. They have always been dealt with on a case-by-case basis depending on whether they happen or not primarily and the severity of them and what sorts of other programs, common or otherwise, might be applied in particular circumstances.

Mrs EDWARDES: I refer the minister to page 833, the second dot point. I cannot find a line item for the Perth urban rail, other than referring back to here. If you want to refer me to another page or section, please do so.

Mr HARRIS: The capital works program.

Mrs EDWARDES: I still cannot find Perth urban rail.

Mr HYDE: Page 835, the end of Metropolitan - the final line item.

Mrs EDWARDES: Thank you, member for Perth. The questions are though for the Clarkson and Greenwood stations. Have the tenders been let? If so, when and, if not, when are you likely to be? Has the contract also been signed which was expected to be signed for the tenders of the supply of the new rail cars in mid July? Has that all occurred and are we on track?

Ms MacTIERNAN: No. The rail car tender has not been signed. We are still trying to work our way through the issues associated with the finance package. There is no difficulty with the technical or the hardware aspects of it but it has been more difficult to assess the way in which these are going to be financed. As you may be aware the previous Government had always considered that these would be acquired as part of an operating lease, so all the preparations had gone down that line. It is not so clear now to us that the operating lease provides the best value for money and that in fact we can justify the additional cost of an operating lease. These are complex technical questions about the assessment of risk, how you quantify the assessment of risk transfer so that you can compare what it would cost to acquire the rail cars as a straight Government purchase or whether it would be required as an operating lease as contemplated by the previous Government.

Mrs EDWARDES: When do you think you will be making a decision on it?

Ms MacTIERNAN: We are having ongoing discussions with Treasury on this because basically it is now very much a Treasury issue and we will have a clearer picture of that in the next week.

Mrs EDWARDES: And Clarkson and Greenwood stations?

Mr M. HARRIS: Both Clarkson and Greenwood station construction contracts will be led as part of the current extension. We have started the earthworks component from Currumbine to Clarkson. The station packages are about finalised and will go out either just before Christmas or in the new year but both stations will be part of the extension program through to 2003.

Mrs EDWARDES: Minister, the timing then seems to be very tight -

Ms MacTIERNAN: Yes, there is absolutely no doubt about it.

Mrs EDWARDES: - in terms of opening still in mid September 2003. Is that still the anticipated time?

Ms MacTIERNAN: Member for Kingsley, we are still working to that timetable but you are absolutely right. I have no interest in saying otherwise. Trying to work through this issue of financing and this very complex issue of whether or not you get value for money from going with an operating lease has taken longer than we would have hoped. I have to say the previous Government did various preparatory work that took this down the direction of an operating lease. It would be a lot easier for us if we could just say, "Yes, operating lease, that would be fantastic," but we are having to really reassess now whether or not we can justify, as I say, the additional costs that occur with an operating lease on the basis of risk transfer.

We are talking about very substantial sums of money. We have the budget allocations. There is no reason why we would be wanting to slow this down but we are not going to see a repeat of the matrix affair nor are we going to go into a financing arrangement that ends up costing the taxpayer an extra \$30 million or so that cannot be justified by way of risk transfer. So there has been very detailed negotiations going on with WA treasury corp on that point.

The CHAIRMAN (Mr Edwards): Thank you, Minister.

Mrs HODSON-THOMAS: I have a supplementary question which relates further to the extension to Clarkson. I understand that the rail car storage depot will be moved and I wonder if you can tell me exactly where that location is and if all the approvals have been met.

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Ms MacTIERNAN: It is to be moved to an area north of the -

Mr HARRIS: Nowergup; up at Nowergup.

Mrs HODSON-THOMAS: Up at?

Ms MacTIERNAN: Nowergup.

Mr HARRIS: Further up than Clarkson.

Mrs EDWARDES: Is there a line where you can pinpoint the direction?

Ms MacTIERNAN: Yes; north.

Mr HARRIS: Virtually directly north.

Mrs EDWARDES: It is a long way north.

Mr HARRIS: Virtually directly north of Clarkson, extending up through the middle of the - you know where the freeway reserve is?

Mrs EDWARDES: Yes.

Mr HARRIS: The train is in the middle of the freeway reserve, so it is just extending the line, a single line, up to that location.

Mrs EDWARDES: Yes. I think we are talking a lateral point about where the station is likely to be located.

[12 noon]

Mr HYDE: You are after a GPS position.

Mrs EDWARDES: Something similar.

Ms MacTIERNAN: We will be supplementing a GPS number.

Mrs EDWARDES: Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN: Can I take that seriously, Minister?

Ms MacTIERNAN: No, it is a reference point you are after.

Mr HYDE: Thanks, Chair. I have a rail ticket. I refer to the references to TravelSmart at page 835 and also at page 836 and elsewhere in division 50 to the TravelSmart program which has been an issue of some debate in my electorate. It appears that the current Government is committed to spending more than \$6 million - I think it is \$6.394 million - on the program this financial year. I note at page 830 the average cost of the program per household contacted is \$142.65. What benefits does the TravelSmart program bring to the State and is the minister satisfied that the program is value for money?

Ms MacTIERNAN: I think it is the best shot that we have at dealing with this complex issue of how we actually improve the share of public transport in the total transport market. We went through these issues a little bit earlier. A pilot study was undertaken, as the member would be aware, in South Perth in 1997 and it did demonstrate some very real gains. The figures that were given were 17 per cent to 20 per cent to 26 per cent increase in public transport patronage, 14 per cent reduction in car driver trips, 33 per cent increase in transport related physical exercise, \$300 to \$500 savings per household in terms of reduction in car running expenses and in terms of broad socioeconomic analysis it is given as a \$30 return for every \$1 invested.

I think we always have to be prepared to go and reassess these things. One of the things that persuaded us that there was merit in investing in this is that when they went back a couple of years later after the pilot had been conducted, as I understand it, they found that these changes in behaviour had actually been sustained. That is my understanding of it. I suppose it would be fair to say that in 1997 we were a bit sceptical about it but certainly when we saw that the changing behaviour appeared to have endured for a number of years after the study had been completed, we thought this is a worthwhile project to take out and take forward into a fuller implementation stage.

We spend an enormous amount of money, I think something in the order of \$3 000 093 a year on public transport. This really represents, I think, a very reasonable addition to that to actually try to get better utilisation of that money that we are spending. We are spending an enormous amount in developing the physical infrastructure, an enormous amount in the operational cost and this project seems to us to be one of our best chances of actually getting better use out of that money that we are spending for capital and recurrent costs.

The CHAIRMAN: Thank you, Minister. A supplementary?

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Mr HYDE: Yes, part of the question on page 830 where it is "TravelSmart households contacted". It says that there are 45 000 households so that means for the \$6.3 million we get 45 000 households contacted.

Ms MacTIERNAN: Let us just check that because I understood we were looking at -

Mr JAMES: South Perth was 15 000 households, 36 per cent of the total.

Ms MacTIERNAN: In these figures here we have extended to a population of 170 000 people.

The CHAIRMAN: Minister, excuse me just a moment. If your adviser is going to speak, they need to come to the table and speak to you.

Ms MacTIERNAN: Could I ask Bruce James to come over here now?

The CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

Mr HYDE: My understanding was that \$142 per household was the cost and I am just looking at the raw data in the estimates saying 45 000 households so that is where I am unclear.

Mr JAMES: My understanding is that the first allocation of \$6.4 million is for 170 000 people. There is an average of about two people per household so it will be more than that for the whole allocation over the three or four years.

The CHAIRMAN: Member for Perth, I would like to move on so if you need to follow that up, please deal with the minister.

Mr HYDE: Yes.

The CHAIRMAN: Members, I need to draw your attention to the fact that you have approximately an hour. I now have five other questions already on my pad here and the member for Carine is the next one. I would ask you to try and keep your questions short and, Minister, with respect, try and keep your answers as brief as you possibly can. I would appreciate that.

Mrs HODSON-THOMAS: I want to combine two questions into one. I refer to page 835 under, "Works in Progress: Kenwick to Mandurah Railway Preliminary Works" and "Perth Urban Rail Development". Can you explain and clarify what these funds are being earmarked for on both of those two line items?

Ms MacTIERNAN: You are looking at our expenditure for this particular year.

Mrs HODSON-THOMAS: 2001-02.

Ms MacTIERNAN: There are ongoing preliminary works to be done. As you would be aware, we are still proposing to develop the spare line between Kenwick and Thornlie and possibly Nicholson Road and obviously the Glen Iris to Mandurah portion which comes into that is still being proceeded with. I will hand over to sort of itemise the \$5 million.

Mrs HODSON-THOMAS: Perhaps I could ask for it by way of supplementary so that we can move on.

Ms MacTIERNAN: We will give you an outline of it.

Mr HARRIS: It is a very simple answer. The Kenwick to Mandurah preliminary works is to do with the tunnel at Kenwick Junction to take the line out of the existing Armadale line and swing it around towards the freeway and then the tunnel at the freeway itself to bring it back into the middle of the freeway and then about 14 kilometres down the freeway the tunnel to take it back out of the freeway and on its alignment down towards Rockingham and works associated with that. That is what the balance of the \$5 million is, for completion of that part of the work.

Mrs HODSON-THOMAS: Right.

Mr HARRIS: The \$12 million Perth urban rail development is the next stage of contracts partly to do with the Clarkson extension and partly to do with preliminary works on the way down to Mandurah.

Mrs HODSON-THOMAS: Thank you, Mr Harris.

[12.10 am]

Mrs EDWARDES: Can I refer the minister back again to the capital works item dealing with the urban rail and her proposal to proceed with the rail down the freeway? I bring to your attention that I am totally against the visual pollution that this is going to have on the foreshore. Minister, you have been on the public record as saying before that planning ought not to be about cost so therefore if it is a cost thing in terms of bringing the rail on the Perth foreshore, then I suggest you are going to have more -

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Ms MacTIERNAN: Sorry, is there a question?

Mrs EDWARDES: I will get to the question. You are going to have more people like Bessie and her broolly out there protecting that Perth foreshore. Can I ask you what is going to be the public consultation? Are options going to be put forward such as bringing perhaps the rail up past Parliament House and bringing in that direction and saving our Perth foreshore from that visual pollution?

Ms MacTIERNAN: Obviously there is a huge difference in view here about the relative aesthetics of trains versus cars.

Mrs EDWARDES: That road should be sunk too at some point of time. Give a commitment to that.

Mr HYDE: You have done nothing in eight years.

Mrs EDWARDES: It was on our planning.

Ms MacTIERNAN: I would have to say that proposal really is bizarre. That would cost \$500 million and I could just imagine the degree of enthusiasm that the member for Ningaloo, for example, would greet the expenditure of \$500 million in order to enhance the views of perhaps 200 or 300 people that live along the South Perth Esplanade. That anyone that has had any serious pretensions to government could actually even put a proposition like that, I find inconceivable. If that is the best that you can think of how we can spend \$500 million of taxpayers' money, I would suggest you will be in the political wilderness for a long time. In terms of this visual pollution over the foreshore, I want to stress that we are taking this rail line on an existing freeway route.

We are not adding one inch of bitumen in order to do this. Yes, there is overhead hardware, but I have to say, member for Kingsley, that there has been vast improvements on the design of that hardware over the past decade. The sorts of absurd conjectures that are being made - 1940s technology is being raised. We have seen my good friend the Lord Mayor come up with a design proposal that might have been accurate if we were bringing Pilbara iron-ore trains over The Narrows Bridge and into the city instead of modern aluminium-framed trains. We are hoping that we will have some very good visuals available in the next month or so so that people can have a very clear idea of what this alleged pollution is.

Mrs EDWARDES: Are you only going to do the one option linked out to the people, not a couple of options into the city centre?

Ms MacTIERNAN: Just as the previous Government made a strategic decision back in 1994 that it was going to take the rail out via Kenwick, we have made a strategic decision that we are taking it into the centre of the city. Things like detail such as where the locations of the stations might be are the sort of detail that obviously will need to be developed as part of the master plan. The sort of detail such as where we start the underground will be part of the master plan stage, but the fundamentals of having agreed to bringing this across The Narrows into the city is not negotiable. We have told the City of Perth that we are prepared to look at that option around by Parliament. I have to say that there are some very powerful -

The CHAIRMAN: Minister, sorry -

Ms MacTIERNAN: Can I just make this point?

The CHAIRMAN: I think we have the gist of what you are saying and I think the answer has been accommodated.

Mr HYDE: I do not think it has. I do not think we have had the issue of Parliament House knocked on the head. I think the minister is getting to the issue.

The CHAIRMAN: Minister, perhaps briefly there, if we could.

Ms MacTIERNAN: We certainly have said that we are prepared to look at it. Indeed before we made that decision we did look at it because we were wanting to keep open all of those options. We wanted to think very broadly what is going to give us the best outcome, but I have to say I would find it very hard to believe that we could show that it was more beneficial to the community to actually have public transport coming via Parliament House. As much as I would love to think that the population holds us in such high regard and great affection that they would rather come here than the Murray Street Mall, I suspect that that is not the case.

From a planning point of view to be able to actually get our major conduit of public transport coming across, why not the foreshore? For years, for decades, we have been talking about how we are going to bring people to the foreshore. All of a sudden with an Esplanade station we have the possibility of doing that. How are we going to get people right through the centre of the city? Other cities have had to retrofit a rail link around the

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city. We are actually being given an opportunity now to bring the rail right through the heart of the city where people want to go, not Parliament House where I suspect they do not want to.

The CHAIRMAN: Minister, I suspect we do have the answer, thank you. I am sorry. I am going to cut you off there because I know there are other people who want to ask questions. I think the member for Kingsley has her answer. Member for Greenwood, was that a backup question or not?

Mrs HODSON-THOMAS: No. I do not know that the minister actually answered the consultation process, but I do not even want to go there at the moment.

The CHAIRMAN: All right. The court is actually with the member for Ningaloo.

Mr HYDE: Can I ask a supplementary question in relation to that last question?

The CHAIRMAN: Not at this stage. I would sooner we keep moving on this. The member for Ningaloo, thank you.

Mr SWEETMAN: Thank you, Chairman. Page -

Mrs EDWARDES: The Chairman can spot -

The CHAIRMAN: Members, it is not an open forum for discussion. It is a matter of question and answer, so please try and keep that in mind. Thank you.

Mr SWEETMAN: Minister, just looking at part of dot points 6 and 8 on page 16 and then going to the economic and fiscal outlook figures, you intend to lobby the federal Government to widen and upgrade Great Northern Highway north of Halls Creek.

Ms MacTIERNAN: Yes.

Mr SWEETMAN: Certainly that is a worthwhile project. I wonder if as a part of that lobbying you are doing something about the fencing program. It seems for all intents and purposes to have stalled.

Ms MacTIERNAN: This is really in the main roads budget. I can answer it.

Mr SWEETMAN: It just deals with the deaths, trauma, road safety issues that are actually part of the dot point on page 816, but I can handle it in main roads.

The CHAIRMAN: Minister, are you happy to answer?

Ms MacTIERNAN: I will just quickly answer it and we are talking here of fencing along some of the main roads to keep stock off the road, which, mind you, should probably be of some interest to the people that own the stock as well.

Mr SWEETMAN: They have obligations once the fencing goes in, yes.

Ms MacTIERNAN: That is right. The funding that we made available was in fact to construct the fences. Now the pastoralists and graziers have come back and said that they would like us to maintain the fences when the fences have been subject to inundation. We have indicated that where there has been some extreme event, perhaps a cyclone or a flood, we are prepared to look at it, but we are certainly not prepared to take on the responsibility of maintaining the fencing to those properties on that main road.

Mr SWEETMAN: No. I agree with you.

Ms MacTIERNAN: It is a joint obligation.

Mr SWEETMAN: I do not have an argument with that. Thank you.

Mr WHITELY: Minister, there is a reference in the capital works program at page 835 to "Safer Transport Taskforce (Rail) Security Initiatives" for which there is over \$800 million allocated this year. There is also reference in "Outlook 7, Infrastructure Development and Management" at page 834 to "provide funding for the installation of barrier entries to enclose rail stations to reduce fare evasion and to improve station security". Minister, can you explain whether these items are related and what the benefits of this expenditure will be?

Ms MacTIERNAN: Do you want to answer that one?

[12.20 pm]

Mr HARRIS: The barrier entry issue is not only to do with reduction of fare evasion, but it is also preparatory work for the Smart ticketing project when that comes along and it is also to do with security at stations as well,

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so that once you go through the barrier, then obviously you have had a ticket so you are there to catch the train and not there to do other things.

Mrs HODSON-THOMAS: Can I ask a supplementary question? That means a reduction in the Westrail fare evasion squad as a result of the new initiatives?

Ms MacTIERNAN: No, not at all, because although the figures that we had been provided in opposition were that fare evasion was around 3.8 per cent, it is actually in our view probably something more like 15 per cent. What we are seeing is patronage figures are actually going up and we suspect that that is since we have increased the crackdown on fare evasion. We suspect that that is not because the number of patrons is going up, but basically the number of patrons that are being recorded has been going up. This barrier entry program will be unrolled gradually and, as we build new stations, we will be building that into the principal stations; obviously not every small station, you have to be a bit realistic about that, but certainly the major stations which have the major thoroughfares, and it is all going to take a while for the system to be covered.

We are certainly getting value for money out of our revenue protection officers, but we are going to be integrating that now as part of that WA Transit Guard where all of those roles of the customer service assistants, the revenue protection and the security will be rolled into the single operation that is conducted through the WA Transit Guard.

Mrs HODSON-THOMAS: Can I just ask further to that, quickly, how many passengers are on the metro rail network and buses? Can you provide that?

Ms MacTIERNAN: Yes. My recollection is, and we can confirm that, at the moment it is around 28 million passenger boardings a year for rail. Perhaps Mark Burgess might have those figures, but roughly it is around 28 and 46, is it not?

Mr BURGESS: It is fairly close. It is in the order of 82 million total boardings per year.

Mr HYDE: That is an eight per cent increase this year.

Mr BURGESS: 6.7 per cent across the board. I think it was eight per cent in the bus area, six per cent or so in the train area and 15 in the ferry area.

Mrs HODSON-THOMAS: Thank you.

Mr HILL: Minister, there are references in the budget papers to the procurement and trial of a SmartCard ticketing system. I refer, for example, to pages 831 and 834 of division 50. Can the minister explain the expected benefits of a SmartCard system? Given past speculation in *The West Australian* newspaper, does the Government intend to use the card as a driver's licence as well?

Ms MacTIERNAN: The short answer to the last part of that question is no. If anyone has actually been to places like Hong Kong, you can just see what advantages public transport patrons can get from the use of a SmartCard system. It can be as anonymous as buying a multirider. If one decides one wants to buy a \$30 SmartCard or, as they have in Hong Kong where you can actually buy a watch and every month go and have your watch regenerated and recredited with funds, there is absolutely no need for anyone to know who you are, but what we are proposing to do is to offer an additional facility, so that if you wish, you can have your SmartCard linked to your bank account so that when the amount of credit in your SmartCard expires, an automatic deduction can be made from your bank account to regenerate it.

Obviously then that has the same potential for breaches of privacy that any credit card transaction has or any automatic deduction transaction has. We will be obviously requiring any merchants that we deal with or the operators of the system to implement the highest standard of privacy but, as I said, for those people who are very concerned about this, they can purchase their SmartCards with complete anonymity if they so wish.

Of course it goes back again to this notion that we keep stressing that you have to make using public transport as easy as possible. As you know, we have some pretty antiquated ticketing machinery down there. You have to have a fistful of coins. We have now put in in the last few months some change machines. A contract has gone out for a whole series of change machines, but that is only an interim step. People can get a card which simply records their entry point and their exit point and an automatic deduction is made. Again, it just makes it so much simpler and that is what the aim of the whole exercise is.

Mr HYDE: A sup to that.

The CHAIRMAN: Yes, quick one, member for Perth, thank you.

Mr HYDE: How far away are we from a tender with the SmartCard?

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Ms MacTIERNAN: We are quite close actually, I think.

Mr HYDE: This may be a Treasury question so you may wish to handpass it there. Obviously with ERG being a local Perth company who is a world leader in this technology, is there any provision in government buying practices for competitive advantage for the local -

Ms MacTIERNAN: Any company will be subject to the advantages of the buy local policy which I think is a 10 per cent provision.

The CHAIRMAN: Up to a certain amount.

Ms MacTIERNAN: Yes, but I think you are right. We have in WA a company which one would expect to be pretty competitive in any event. The request for proposals will go out on 21 December; this is the anticipated time line. We are hoping to be able to nominate a preferred tenderer by 21 June 2001 and the aim is to have the system up in place and ready to be implemented by the time we open the new train stations at Greenwood, Clarkson and Thornlie.

Mr HYDE: Excellent.

Mrs EDWARDES: If I can refer the minister to page 818 which is output 1 and in particular to page 820 which is the first dot point dealing with Bush Forever and the processes. I have written to the minister in respect of the Hepburn Heights conservation area which is a Bush Forever site. It is number 303. It is also interim listed on the register of the National Estate. It happens to have been designated also as a site for a fire station and a Western Power substation and whilst the substation is not proceeding at the moment, the fire station is and even in the Premier's wonderful *Budget WA 2001* brochure he says, "New fire station, Hepburn Heights, \$800 000."

Let me tell you the community out there are not going to be very happy when they get that in that area in their letterboxes yesterday, today or tomorrow because anything that is going to take away any aspect of that conservation area which has been preserved since you were last in government - and I might go back to the fights of those days. Will you please ensure that that Bush Forever site is protected and that Government agencies who have plans for any Bush Forever site rethink their plans and those areas?

The CHAIRMAN: Minister, before you answer, I wonder how related that is to expenditure. If you can give a brief comment on it.

[12.30 pm]

Mrs EDWARDES: 820, first dot point.

Ms MacTIERNAN: I would like an opportunity to match polemic with polemic, if I might, Mr Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN: I am mindful of the time and I ask you to be so.

Ms MacTIERNAN: Stop the questions then rather than the answers. I do not have any problem with it being asked and I do not have any problem answering. I have a problem with allowing the question to be asked but not allowing it to be answered.

The CHAIRMAN: I will ask you for a brief answer.

Ms MacTIERNAN: It certainly is our policy to ensure that all of those Bush Forever sites are protected. As you would be well aware from your previous role, it is possible within any designated Bush Forever site, and I am sure you talk at great lengths with the private sector about this, to ground truth a particular site. Whilst a site as a whole might be classified, it might be categorised as Bush Forever - there are on a number of sites - and I am not making any judgment about this one because I do not know the details.

Mrs EDWARDES: But these are government agencies. You have control.

Ms MacTIERNAN: Yes, we have control but also it is understood that the Bush Forever was a very broad brush and it was always appropriate then to go forward and have a look in detail at the site, as I say, to ground truth it, to work out whether or not it was appropriate. Do not get me wrong, I have made no determination in relation to this one, but whether or not it is appropriate to select out part of that site for development, I do not know. Do you have any comment? Paul, if you can give us anything about this particular site.

Mr FREWER: I am not aware of any fine details.

Ms MacTIERNAN: We will certainly take your comments on board. As you can imagine, I certainly do not have a detailed knowledge of every Bush Forever site but, as I say, the process, as you are well aware, member for Kingsley, is that you have a general classification. All of those sites will be protected but within any one site it is possible to work out what might be a permissible building envelope because sometimes within those sites

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there are degraded areas. Even though there might be areas for high conservation, some of the other areas are not, but I have no knowledge of that particular site.

The CHAIRMAN: Is this a supplementary question related to expenditure, member for Kingsley?

Mrs EDWARDES: Broadly based.

The CHAIRMAN: I will indulge you, Minister.

Mrs EDWARDES: Minister, the policy, though, you came to government on was that where Government departments or agencies have control over Bush Forever sites, they were going to be asked not to utilise those sites. They were going to have those sites protected.

Ms MacTIERNAN: We will make sure, member for Kingsley, that we abide with Government policy in this regard.

Mrs EDWARDES: Thank you.

Mrs HODSON-THOMAS: I refer to the redirection of trade facilitation trust fund figure that appears on page 816, bottom line. I understand that this fund was actually established under the coalition and it was largely to address assisting ports in their trade facilitation role and I am just wondering where the funds have gone now.

Ms MacTIERNAN: The funds never existed, as you may know from your briefings in Broome, member for Carine. No? There was a proposal by the previous Government to set up a trade facilitation fund and it was an idea not without merit. We determined when we looked at the competing priorities that it was not something that we were able to accommodate at this particular time. So there were no funds in the trade facilitation fund so there is no sense in which the funds have gone anywhere. The fund was never set up. We have had other priorities basically.

Mr SWEETMAN: Minister, page 816, trial of North-West shipping service. A total sum \$7 million is to be allocated to that over the life of the trial. Have you specific loads in mind that you are looking at sending north by reinstating State Shipping for a period of time?

Ms MacTIERNAN: Yes. There has been certain product that has been suggested to us; that if there was a more regular turnabout, there was other product that could be carted. For example, take alcohol which currently goes up by road. It has been suggested, for example, if you had a 10-day turnabout, you could get a lot more of that going up by ship because basically people cannot hold the volumes that they would need if they could only be serviced every 21 days. Some people have put similar arguments in terms of groceries. Also general mining supplies, if a more frequent service is one that people are more prepared to use. If you have that long lead time of three or more weeks between services, then people are less likely to use this for other than a one-off item.

This again goes back to what we are trying to do; to work out whether or not there are ways. Would we be saving money on road maintenance by increasing the subsidy with shipping? If we were able to get a significant quantity of heavy haulage off our roads and onto shipping, then arguably that \$3.5 million is more than saved in terms of reduction on road maintenance. That is the sort of equation that we are trying to work through.

It was quite interesting. When we first started talking to some of the shipping operators, some of them were not that keen and then a few others came forward with some very innovative suggestions and indicated a great deal of interest, and then what we found was that some of the other earlier operators that we had seen suddenly said, "Yes, actually we think this could be done. We think there is a lot more product. We think that we could link up." One of the arguments is, maybe we could be linking up with Dili. Maybe we could be doing some trips up to Indonesia, much like the old State Ships did previously. All of that will be put in the mix when we go out to tender next year.

Mr SWEETMAN: I think what you have to be mindful of, Minister -

The CHAIRMAN: This is a supplementary?

Mr SWEETMAN: As a supplementary. The trucks on the Great Northern Highway, just dealing with the north of the State, North West Coastal Highway, are not exactly bumper to bumper. Basically here to Port Hedland is a daily service and there is any number of trucks servicing those destinations and they can service them within 24 hours, so you do get fresh produce into there without any difficulty at all. What has happened over a period of time is that more than ever now very few trucks are coming back to Perth empty. They are picking up backloads and it might be talc from a certain operation. It could be gypsum from somewhere else. It could be salt from somewhere else. Also the horticultural industry along the Gascoyne River and other places as well now is dependent on the frequency of service. Everything is very finely balanced. My concern is that if there is

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a massive shift across to shipping for one reason or another, then all of a sudden a lot of other pieces of infrastructure are probably going to fall in on themselves.

Ms MacTIERNAN: There are different arguments about that. There are other arguments. For example, one of the absurdities that goes on is that all that horticultural produce from the member's area goes down to Perth and then it goes back up again to the northern parts of the State. We might get some more direct servicing for Carnarvon. A lot of the mining equipment which actually would travel a lot better by shipping is in fact going up by road, basically again often because of the lead times with just a single ship service. This is obviously designed for the Pilbara and for the Kimberley and we really do want to see whether or not there is a demand for it and whether or not it brings positive benefits to the State. That is why I have it as a trial. Certainly we will be looking at those sorts of unintended consequences that the member talks about, but I have to say we cannot continue to simply load all of this stuff up on roads. Whilst it might be very few trucks by the time you get up to the far north, it is obviously denser closer to the ports of origin.

There is also a question with those roads being cut off for many weeks a year and no matter how much we put into road funding, even under the previous Government and ministers that were very strongly focused on roads, we still had those roads in the north of the State regularly cut off. If there is only one mode of transport in there, they are vulnerable.

Mrs EDWARDES: Can I refer the minister to page 816 under "Major Policy Decisions"? I have a couple of questions relating to that item, if I may. Could you explain to me the figures that are listed there for parity in wages policy? What does that mean?

Ms MacTIERNAN: Mike, do you want to explain that?

Mr HARRIS: It is the allocations provided by Treasury to bring our staff under workplace agreements and enterprise bargaining arrangements to parity over time.

Ms MacTIERNAN: The policy that you were asking about in your first question.

Mrs EDWARDES: The management initiated redundancy savings. I take it that those figures are figures because they are in the negative that obviously will the return back to Treasury.

Mr HARRIS: That is right.

[12.40 pm]

Mrs EDWARDES: I know the member for Carine asked a question about the redirection of train security funds - that that money is going to police.

Mr HARRIS: Yes.

Mrs EDWARDES: What is that money relating to? Is it FTEs, a loan? How many FTEs and what other figures are comprised in there?

Mr HARRIS: In salaries related to FTEs?

Mrs EDWARDES: How many FTEs are being transferred to police?

Mr HARRIS: No FTEs were transferred.

Mrs EDWARDES: Just the money.

Mr HARRIS: Yes, just the money. We had not actually hired the staff.

Mrs EDWARDES: So it is not existing security staff.

Mr HARRIS: No.

Ms MacTIERNAN: No. They were not listed as FTEs anyhow because their services were purchased under the contract.

Mr HARRIS: This allocation was originally housed in our budget for obvious reasons. The decision was then made by Government to provide the service out of police rather than out of DPI, so the allocation was shifted across, but no people.

Mrs EDWARDES: Thank you.

Mr SWEETMAN: Minister, page 816 again, going down to the bottom of the page, "Relocation assistance for Ningaloo Residents." I assume that that is the first tranche of the \$1.5 million for buyback of horticultural properties on the Gascoyne or assistance to relocate elsewhere.

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Ms MacTIERNAN: Yes, that is correct. Paul, would you like to comment a bit further on that?

Mr FREWER: Yes. The commitment was made following the Carnarvon floods to do it over two years, so there is \$750 000 this year and \$750 000 next year for the purpose.

Mr SWEETMAN: Minister, during the immediate recovery after Cyclone Steven and the consequential flooding from that, that was a proposition that I encouraged the Premier of the day to look at and which he backed. There is a problem there and it is not for me to be highlighting problems that you are going to come across, but there are some practical reasons on behalf of my constituents I need to raise with you in relation to that and that is that half of the industry wants to be bought back. The ones that should be bought back, because they suffered the worst flooding, will be there with the dozers, the guns and the machetes to stop you buying them back. There will be no forced resumption, so you will end up relocating or resuming properties that are not the worst affected. I think you have to reassess that \$1.5 million and I still think you can -

Ms MacTIERNAN: You think it is not enough or you think it is too much?

Mr SWEETMAN: I think you need about \$35 million if you are going to look at a buyback that the industry is going to ultimately be happy with. It is just a problem that you are not going to solve with buyback or relocation because too much of the industry is affected. We have now developed a flood model, the topographical mapping. The flood plain model has been developed and some flood mitigation proposals have been costed and there are options ranging from about \$2 and a half million up to about \$5 million. It may well be money better spent if you leave open the possibility of reassigning that \$1.5 million as part of the State contribution to implementing the flood mitigation works which would be of far more benefit to that half the industry that wants to be bought back for a whole variety of reasons.

Ms MacTIERNAN: Why did you advocate the other process?

Mr SWEETMAN: During the recovery of the flood?

Ms MacTIERNAN: Yes.

Mr SWEETMAN: Because I believed that was the best way to go about it, simply because I was confronted by people who were saying, "Look, under no circumstances do we want to be bought back." As I was saying earlier, a lot of the people you should be buying back, people who are worst affected by flooding, do not want to be bought back and others want to be bought back because they are small properties, they are marginal and, yes, they get a bit of flooding, but they do not want to be bought back because they are barely viable and they want to get off the property, so there is some restructuring of the industry needed, but this is primarily linked, this \$1.5 million was buyback and clearly -

Ms MacTIERNAN: What the member is saying is, it is not going to solve anything.

Mr SWEETMAN: It is not going to solve anything. You would get far better value from reallocating this \$1.5 million to flood mitigation works which is going to reduce the overall consequences of flooding to the industry.

Ms MacTIERNAN: I am quite happy to look at any submission that you would like to put in that regard.

Mr SWEETMAN: It is just to take that on board. It is something that has to be looked at.

The CHAIRMAN: All right. You are happy to leave it at that?

Ms MacTIERNAN: Yes. If you like to give us some more details of that, we would be happy to review your previous program.

Mr SWEETMAN: I backed away from it. It was something I said should happen, but I backed away from it.

Mrs EDWARDES: Page 838, the statement of financial performance. If I could refer the minister to the two last items under "Expenses" from ordinary activities, one is equipment repairs and maintenance which has gone up for this budget and continues to stay approximately at that level, if you could identify what that relates to, and also to other expenses. It is a pretty large item just generalised out, if you could identify what that relates to as well.

Ms MacTIERNAN: We can provide those by way of supplementary information if you would like.

Mrs EDWARDES: Both of those? Thank you very much.

Mr HARRIS: I do not have a list with me.

Ms MacTIERNAN: Yes. We will not be giving you every hammer and every nail.

Mr HARRIS: Major items.

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The CHAIRMAN: I would want to confirm that you will be providing that through supplementary information.

Ms MacTIERNAN: Yes.

The CHAIRMAN: Thank you, Minister.

Mrs EDWARDES: Page 815 and please forgive me, I was not here for a short time. I am talking about the first dot point, "Legislative amendments". If this has been asked, just let me know. When do we expect to see the legislation presented to Parliament and will it also incorporate at the same time the other proposed legislative amendments consolidating planning legislation? Are you going to do it in one Bill?

Ms MacTIERNAN: No, absolutely not. No. That would be far too complex. In terms of the consolidation legislation, there are all sorts of things in the draft legislation that was prepared by the previous Government that we would not be wanting to proceed with and all sorts of things that were put in over the last eight years that would want to take out. Especially under one particular minister for planning, there was an excessive desire to control every aspect of local government and provisions which, in our view, diminished the value of town planning schemes and we would be taking a very different position to that. So we see the consolidation as legislation that we would very much be wanting to work with local government and the industry before we put that forward.

Mrs EDWARDES: So that is likely to be towards the end of next year.

Ms MacTIERNAN: Absolutely. There are some things like an amendment to section 20(5) which was inserted, I think, around 1996 which we want to repeal early because, in my view, it is outrageous. It basically allows the WA Planning Commission to ignore town planning schemes in considering subdivision applications. I think that is highly inappropriate and so we certainly will be wanting to repeal that earlier as a separate thing, but in terms of the broader consolidation legislation it would not be appropriate to put it in with this administrative stuff because it really does go to the guts of that stuff that is very important to local government.

Mrs EDWARDES: So the admin one is expected this year.

Ms MacTIERNAN: Yes, absolutely.

Mrs EDWARDES: Mr Chair, if there are no other questions, pages 821 and 822, if I may, under "Major Achievements for 2001". Under 2001-2002, "The Gin Gin coast structure plan", we have made substantial progress. Last year as a major achievement it was looking at being put out to the public and finalised by mid 2001 and I note that it is not in the major initiatives for 2001-02. Can you advise whether or not that has happened? Under 2001-02 the Port Hedland area planning study will be released as a final plan. Previously as well that was expected to be released in mid 2001, so what is the expected time frame now on those?

Mr FREWER: The draft of the Gin Gin coast structure plan is still being subject to some debate within Government about the propositions that were in it. Certainly the option for heavy industry at Brittain Bay was one that has been hotly debated.

Ms MacTIERNAN: We have a different policy stance to the previous Government.

Mr FREWER: As the minister said, the Government has a different stance on it, so that still needs to be determined because it obviously involves some Government interests with respect to how to proceed and that still has to be resolved.

Mrs EDWARDES: So we are not looking at this year. It is likely to be then next year for that.

Ms MacTIERNAN: I would say so.

Mr FREWER: Yes, the study can be released and finalised this financial year.

Ms MacTIERNAN: As you can imagine, member for Kingsley, often there are some pretty major changes in Government policy that would impact on it and you cannot just simply forge ahead putting out a policy that does not reflect the -

Mrs EDWARDES: If you have to change that and put it back out to the people, people need to know though. I think that is the critical issue. People do not know where it is at the moment. The Port Hedland one?

[12.50 pm]

Mr FREWER: The Port Hedland one was subject to further work that was required to complete the storm-surge studies and the further analysis with respect to the storm events and water levels. They have been completed and the final plan is nearly ready for processing and release probably in the next month or two.

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Mrs EDWARDES: Thank you. Can I refer the minister to page 838 dealing with fees and charges? When the regulations were gazetted on 19 December last year, the next milestone identified by the department was actually the appointment of a disputes panel. Has this happened? Is it still going to happen? Is this something that the current Government is still -

Ms MacTIERNAN: Sorry, a disputes panel in relation to what?

Mrs EDWARDES: Under "User Fees and Charges" you have a line item there. The gazette was regulated last December and the next milestone for the department in respect to user fees and charges was the establishment of a disputes panel. Is that the current Government's intention? Are you proceeding with that or is that no longer on the agenda?

Mr FREWER: The formulation of the panel has been put forward but it has not actually met because there have not been any disputes. That is my understanding.

Ms MacTIERNAN: The advice is that the panel was established but has not met because there have been no disputes.

Mrs EDWARDES: Excellent. As long as it has been proceeded with, that is great.

Mr HYDE: When was the panel started?

Mr FREWER: I would have to check my details, but it was early this year.

Mr HYDE: Before the election or after?

Mr FREWER: After.

The CHAIRMAN: Member for Kingsley, is that the answer you wanted?

Mrs EDWARDES: Yes, that is lovely, thank you. Do I still have the floor?

The CHAIRMAN: Yes, you still have the floor.

Mrs EDWARDES: Page 818, Minister. It is again dealing with a general question, not a line item, if I can have the minister's indulgence on that. It is in respect to Port Kennedy. Can you bring the Committee up-to-date with what has happened with that in terms of the assignment of the rights or where we are?

Ms MacTIERNAN: I know that the member has a very close interest in this particular proposal. The situation obviously is quite complex and we want to get this right. The group that was the selected proponent has gone into receivership, I believe it is. Is that correct?

Mr FREWER: Administration.

Ms MacTIERNAN: That group is obviously no longer in a position to satisfy the terms of the agreement to develop. We were then asked by the administrator to consider a further proponent so the administrator could potentially transfer the rights from the company that they were administering to this new proponent. I understood that we had agreed we would consider that and we were subjecting it to some due diligence. Would you like to report, Peter Melbin, where that is now?

Mr MELBIN: Yes. Chairman, the minister did invite the administrator to submit a proposal. It was submitted. The minister then requested that the department take due diligence on that. The department engaged expertise to do that. That is still ongoing. The deadline for the department to provide advice to the minister is the end of October and that advice will be a recommendation as to whether this assignment is feasible or not and that will be subject to the due diligence as to whether they can do it.

Ms MacTIERNAN: We want to ensure obviously that the economic standing of the company is suitable to take on the tasks and do it well. At the same time I have the member for Peel who is down there ensuring that he is keeping the community informed in relation to the project and getting feedback from the community. Obviously there is a diversity of use and I know that you are in contact with people that have some concern about their access to the beach. The member for Peel is working through those issues with the local community and he tells me by and large the community is supportive of the development going ahead but it is a question of finding a suitable proponent.

Mrs EDWARDES: Thank you. Mr Chair, I have a number of questions on notice which I can link to line items, if I may, but deal with them all together, if I may seek the Committee's indulgence, primarily because they all pretty much relate around the same thing and that is the non-answer to questions on notice.

The CHAIRMAN: Member, before you go on, are there any other questions because I am conscious of the time?

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Mr HYDE: I did have a number of questions, but I was under the impression we were finishing up.

The CHAIRMAN: We will be, yes, that is correct.

Mr HYDE: We were trying to give the member the opportunity. You have had a fair few questions.

The CHAIRMAN: That was the reason I raised it. I am trying to be fair here.

Mrs EDWARDES: They have already been put on notice. What I want to bring to the minister's attention is that they have been answered by other ministers. Therefore, to say that it is not readily available would require considerable research and you are not prepared to allocate the State's resources to do so. Other ministers have provided that answer, and I am happy to put this back on notice again and ask the minister why she feels that she cannot answer it. I think it needs to be looked at again, Minister.

Ms MacTIERNAN: Member for Kingsley, can I say that we have almost an officer full-time answering your very detailed questions about particular staff members, how much particular staff members earn; very detailed questions that do not go to policy.

Mrs EDWARDES: It goes to openness and accountability. There has been habitual blocking of those questions, Minister, and it is very important if you are serious about openness and accountability.

Mr HYDE: I take a point of order. If there is a chance, I will ask a further question.

The CHAIRMAN: Member for Kingsley, you have made your point.

Mrs EDWARDES: I will put it on notice.

The CHAIRMAN: And I think the minister has heard it.

Ms MacTIERNAN: I dare say that we have answered many hundreds of questions in great detail, questions that go to pages and pages of a very detailed answer. I am surprised. You can resubmit those. It comes to a point though. I mean, how many resources can we at any particular point in time allocate to answering questions to do with individual staff members?

The CHAIRMAN: Minister, we are not here for a discussion. I will leave that.

Mr HYDE: On page 816, the fourth-bottom line item is travel, advertising and consultancy savings. In terms of the overall budget that is not a large figure. Can you give us some indication of where those savings may be able to be sourced, perhaps through Mr Harris?

Ms MacTIERNAN: To some extent obviously there has been a reduction generally in the overall level of each of those items.

Mr HARRIS: Exactly so. We have simply taken allocations off each of those items of budget expenditure and told divisions to live within a lower travel arrangement, for example, so we spend more time at home.

Mr HYDE: Obviously advertising is the key one but I am aware that we are certainly cutting down in general glossy advertising and what items are seen as being superfluous advertising, but we are still getting the important things - the road works bulletins. I am assuming you are not cutting those.

Ms MacTIERNAN: No.

Mr HARRIS: You are right. We are cutting the style in many cases, rather than the content and the material.

The CHAIRMAN: Members, I would remind you that if you wish to lodge questions on notice, they must be lodged with the Clerk's office. I make that as a reminder if you have any questions on notice. I am aware that we are a minute away from 1 o'clock. I hope you have had the opportunity of asking questions that you have wanted and the question and answer session has been to your satisfaction. Minister, I thank you for your cooperation and I thank you from where I am sitting to the members. I would assume that we will move on to put the question that in respect of division 50 the appropriation be recommended, because I know you are dealing with 51 and 52 this afternoon. However, I am aware that if there are any further questions you will not be able to ask them after this, so they will have to go on notice.

Sitting suspended from 1.00 to 2.00 pm