

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND JUSTICE STANDING COMMITTEE

INQUIRY INTO THE PROTECTION OF CROWDED PLACES FROM TERRORIST ATTACKS



**TRANSCRIPT OF EVIDENCE
TAKEN AT PERTH
WEDNESDAY, 21 FEBRUARY 2018**

SESSION ONE

Members

**Mr P.A. Katsambanis (Chairman)
Mr M.J. Folkard (Deputy Chairman)
Mr Z.R.F. Kirkup
Mr A. Krsticevic
Mr D.T. Punch**

Hearing commenced at 10.18 am

Mr RICHARD JAMES SELLERS

Director General, Department of Transport, examined:

Mr MARK BURGESS

Managing Director, Public Transport Authority, examined:

Mr PETER JONES

Acting Executive Director, Transperth System, Regional and School Bus Services, Public Transport Authority, examined:

Mr STEVE FURMEDGE

Director, Security Services, Public Transport Authority, examined:

Mr RAYMOND PATRICK BUCHHOLZ

General Manager, Marine Safety, Department of Transport, examined:

The CHAIRMAN: On behalf of the committee I would like to thank you for agreeing to appear today to provide evidence in relation to the inquiry into protection of crowded places in Western Australia from terrorism acts. My name is Peter Katsambanis and I am the Chairman of the Community Development and Justice Standing Committee. The other members of the committee are the member for Dawesville, Zak Kirkup; the member for Bunbury, Don Punch; and the member for Carine, Tony Krsticevic. It is important that you understand that any deliberate misleading of this committee may be regarded as a contempt of Parliament. Some of the questions that we ask today may require answers that contain sensitive or confidential information. If this is the case, the committee is able to take evidence in a closed session. Hansard will continue to make a transcript of the session, but the transcript will not be publicly available unless the committee or the Legislative Assembly resolve to authorise its release. If you need to go into closed session, just let us know and we will try to manage that. Your evidence is protected by parliamentary privilege; however, this privilege does not apply to anything that you might say outside of today's proceedings. Before we start with our questions, do you have any questions around the proceedings or the process today?

Mr SELLERS: We are happy to get started, thanks, Chair.

The CHAIRMAN: Do you have any brief opening statements you would like to make?

Mr SELLERS: Same; happy to get started.

The CHAIRMAN: I am happy for the members to start asking questions.

Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP: I guess we might start with the PTA, from my perspective, if we can. I am very interested to understand, I suppose, the stadium station—in this case, the security arrangements that exist there as part of the holistic approach that the PTA has taken to address security concerns. I know that you have a quite sophisticated camera set-up. I know that the PTA has been well-versed in making sure, I suspect under your guidance, director, that you watch what happens very closely. Given the exceptional movements that exist in and out of Perth Stadium station, I am interested in how you guys responded. I am keen to understand the jurisdictional issues that might exist and how

you interact with Optus Stadium more generally speaking, and I am also keen to discuss some issues in relation to the tunnel security and the environment there. We can maybe start there.

Mr SELLERS: Sure. What I might do in answering, because there were several questions in there, is to start with Mr Burgess and then move to Steve from there if we can.

Mr BURGESS: All of our stations are designed, obviously, as very robust structures, but specifically security considerations are taken, and Steve will talk to those, but clearly things such as cameras, camera views and clarity of images. There is a desire to see people a number of times as they come in and out of a station. It is interesting, because a lot of the stuff that is there for design purposes for normal day-to-day work actually works for the security function as well. We always want to be able to contain how many people are on a platform, which could be as much about operational issues, so if there was a hold-up on one of the train lines, clearing one particular platform, because there are obviously six platforms there. We can hold people. I have been, and I think Steve has been to all if not most, but I have certainly been to every one of the events at the stadium so far, watching in the lead-up at city station and at stadium station right the way through the event and then the egress, taking people away. We actually have to be able to control how many people are on the platform for operational reasons, in case there is a hiccup—you do not want overcrowded platforms. Part of the ability is where you contain people. We actually position transit officers and customer service staff so that we can cordon off crowds. There is obviously what is called a corral area at the front, where we can corral the crowds. That is as much about crowd management and space management and making sure people do not get so crowded on a platform that they push onto the tracks. All of those issues—being able to control where the crowd is, how you are managing the crowd—all jumps into the other sphere also of security management for other purposes, because you are able to make sure that you know where the numbers of people are and you can control them and contain them. We have a room at the station. Our main room has been on TV a few times but we do not always advertise where it is. Our main room where we are watching cameras all the time is at the Public Transport Centre. There is a mini version of that at stadium station, which has a vision of train control—where all the trains are and knowing is there a hiccup and do we need to manage any hiccup on the train system—and also all the cameras up showing where the crowds are coming from—crowds coming from the stadium, crowds on each platform, crowds on the concourses. With the radio communication that exists, the people in charge of that room can tell the transit officers on any particular concourse or out in the waiting areas, “Do this; do that; hold those people there.” All of that is built into the design of the station, probably in some ways the same as other stations, but this one is obviously on steroids, because all of those considerations were there from the get-go. Steve, do you want to add more about the design features?

Mr FURMEDGE: Yes, thank you, Mark. Obviously there is a bit of a flavour from a CT perspective—I know that is a concern with the committee—so I will say that there is the 2005 intergovernmental agreement between the Prime Minister and cabinet and Premier and cabinet from every state. That is the framework that has developed consistency across the nation, and that is the framework we have used ever since then for all of our stations. This station is not a standalone. The PTA is very good at managing huge crowds over many, many years, so we have learnt those lessons well and truly. It is also about access controls; it is about the design of the stations. It is more about the pre-planning, too, where we have been involved in the planning right from day dot virtually, so we have been represented on every committee pertinent to the stadium and its commissioning. Also in relation to the intergovernmental agreement, and the reason why I keep referring to that is, it is my framework. At the end of the day, there is my evidence file, which I have always kept—not just because this committee has been put together. It is in relation to making sure that the PTA is

updating that, so that we can show the evidence that we are meeting our intergovernmental agreement of 2005. Part of that is creating risk assessments. Even though we have got a stringent risk-assessment program within the PTA and annual workshops in relation to updating that and reviewing those, the stadium has gone through that process specifically because it has its own little nuances as well. We have done that. We have also run exercises with the police and FESA and other first responders leading up to the commissioning of the station. Then, as Mark said, we have had virtually the whole executive of the PTA and myself there on each day that we have had so far, making sure it runs smoothly and making sure we are not finding any resources we need or any manning issues, which we have not. We are in that review process at the moment and just going through that. Really, we treat it like our main critical infrastructure, which is Perth city station or the Perth underground, and for major events like the sky show and New Year's Eve, so that is how we treat it as well. In relation to a counterterrorism perspective, we have gone through the risk assessments, we have gone through the exercise regimes and now we are going through an operational review process on each event that occurs.

Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP: Do you share that information with government? I realise that no doubt you are subject-matter experts in this respect. Those plans and information that you do put together, is that shared with cabinet or executive government in any way?

Mr FURMEDGE: Obviously it is open source to government. Obviously we protect that. We are also under stringent audit processes with the rail regulator. The PTA is unique for an agency because we do not just have the generic legislation and acts that we have to be scrutinised under, we have specific acts, including our own specific act and the rail safety act. From that perspective, we have an audit every year. The Office of the Auditor General has come through many times over the years. My particular area in security is overseen by the Corruption and Crime Commission. I have had an 18-month review of my area on use of force and other operational matters. Every incident we get involved in from a security perspective is actually overseen by our manager of integrity and professional standards, who is my Corruption and Crime Commission liaison. We have internal investigators, and each investigation is actually then reviewed by the Corruption and Crime Commission. From a sharing perspective, it certainly is there for anyone who wants it to be reviewed. We do not openly then share it unless there is—it is like the military: need to know, need to go situation. It is not open source to the public.

Mr SELLERS: I might just ask you, Steve, to also talk about your interaction with police and others on the state emergency committee in terms of planning around the events, because I think that probably goes closer to the question that was asked as well.

Mr FURMEDGE: One of my operations managers has a meeting with the police transit unit. We have that on a weekly basis on operational matters, especially coming into planning of events. We also have targeted operations on any security issues that we see are popping up over our entire system. I have a close liaison, based on my background—I was 18 years in the police prior to coming on board as the head of security 16 years ago with the PTA, but I was specifically in the bureau of criminal intelligence and covert operations for 13 years. Counterterrorism is my speciality. I am an internationally published journal author. I have been invited to speak at international world security forums in San Diego later this year, so we really see ourselves as benchmarking, not just statewide. It is important to benchmark, but we are tied in with the critical infrastructure protection unit from the state police and the state intel, which is my background as well, so we have direct liaison with them. We have this intelligence sharing going backwards and forwards. We are also on numerous national security committees. That is how we are able to benchmark. The PTA is in a unique position where when I first came on board we created a counterterrorism plan, where most agencies did not have one prior to the Madrid or London bombings of 2004 and 2005. Then when those events

occurred, I was called up by the Department of Transport and Regional Services over in Canberra and then I was flown around, being best practice and showing other critical infrastructure operators how we were doing things. We also then had the development of the Trusted Information Sharing Network, which was a national security network with government agencies and operators from the whole of Australia. I am the only inaugural member that is left on that committee. I have been instrumental in developing, with a superintendent from Queensland, a rail and policing security forum, which is still going now. We developed it in 2007.

There is also a lot of other committees that we are on—critical infrastructure, resilient forums and so forth. The PTA is well represented for now about 15 years.

[10.30 am]

Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP: Again, subject-matter experts in that case. I was keen to understand executive government oversight. I have only got one more in relation to stadium station. Are there specific hardening mechanisms that were ever assessed as needed or required at stadium station or in the interaction of the public—the pedestrian flow between stadium station and the stadium itself—or indeed in the pedestrian bridge? I am keen to understand what that look likes as well given that is a large volume of people being moved in a very constrained space. Are there specific mechanisms that have been put in place at the behest of the PTA or, indeed, Transport as a broader focus for those two areas?

Mr FURMEDGE: The hostile vehicle mitigation strategies were very good and instrumental with the planning to consult with us over that, and especially in relation to my major concern, the pedestrian bridge, and then we had a hostile vehicle mitigation strategy in relation to appropriate bollards at each end because we saw that that could be a vulnerability, and the same with the corralling, that was from more of a mass gathering perspective. The camera CCTV interface, that was very important as well. These were all mechanisms —

Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP: Director, when you say “important”, I assume you mean the technology is up to step for it to be used for a range of opportunities or options in terms of technologies that could be applied to it?

Mr FURMEDGE: Definitely. I was part of a USIP, urban security initiatives project, originally 15 or 16 years ago when I first came on board and that was actually where the PTA put up optic fibre backbone through the whole of its system. We are the only one in the whole of the country that has been able to do it, probably because we are a bit of a smaller system. All the other networks would love to have what we have but they are too big and they cannot get capital funding to retrofit it, but we have an optic fibre backbone and we have built in redundancies for optic fibre for solutions for the future. We also did enhanced security lighting on every single station, because it is no use having digitised camera with great resolution if you do not have good lighting. It was a big fund, it was a big project, but it has actually paid dividends to make us really the best in the country. We only had seven-day retention was the standard by the Ombudsman across the whole of the country. We were the first to bring in a 30 or 31-day retention of images across the system. The PTA also was lead agency on the development of the national code of practice for CCTV and really when they wrote that, they just looked at what we had put in place and really adopted that as best practice and a code of practice.

Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP: So really the intent then, I suppose, from Parliament’s perspective and as the elected representatives representing the people of Western Australia, we are going to be assured that stadium station is best practice because in fact PTA operates best practice across all its stations in that case.

Mr FURMEDGE: Exactly, and what we also do is looking at software solutions. When I was in covert operations, a lot of people talk about facial recognition; I know that will come up before the committee. Everyone loves to watch the movies and also the series on the TV, but years ago when I was in coverts, I looked at facial recognition for obvious reasons. The technology has advanced but not to the point where people believe it has. It is still not cost effective. The PTA has always had an understanding with the police, based on my background with intel, that should that occur we would then say that it would probably be more appropriate for the police to maintain a database from a legal perspective as well in relation to CT applications, and that we would merely be a donor in relation to they plug in, they manage the privacy concerns, which would be more appropriate, but it would have a higher national and statewide security aspect to it, which would assist. We have always had that out there. When the government started the statewide CCTV project, we were the lead agency because we would be the lead donor in the whole of the state in relation to that product. We have also looked at other things such as human behaviour recognition. Like I said, a lot of these things we sponsored with Curtin University a while ago and others, a project looking at facial recognition development. It still has not got to the point we would be comfortable putting a business case up that would be viable. But certainly all of our standards always are with the future in mind and that in particular, the software applications, is exactly where we are looking for the future so you have really hit that on the head where we are looking at.

The CHAIRMAN: Can I ask around CCTV, you obviously have a very extensive network. Do the police have real-time access to it or at the very least the ability to plug in and gain real-time access if they need it?

Mr FURMEDGE: There was a project called the Blue Iris project—I think you may be aware of that—and that was in relation to getting and registering all cameras in the state. We have actually complied to that and, like I said, with the state CCTV strategy, we have been one of the lead agencies offering all our services in relation to that. There were some technical issues with that. In 2011 leading up to CHOGM, we had the MCC developed, which was the Maylands command centre. I had one of my managers there, an operational manager, who through the whole time had access and had the cameras beamed up on the big boards there. The police still use that using dongles and other technologies for the latest sky show. In answer to your question —

The CHAIRMAN: For what, sorry?

Mr FURMEDGE: For the Australia Day sky show, because that is one of the biggest events for the state in relation to the movement of people and security risks. We give them access to that and provide manning for that. There is also our central monitoring control room, which is the best in Australia and which Mr Burgess has mentioned is at the public transport centre. We have always had that option where the police can come there and man and we give them an operator and they can sit over the shoulder of the operator and direct any camera they want. We have had that relationship with the police, but as far as live time going to their systems, they do not, and the reason being there are technical aspects to it, there are resource issues and also just the actual time to have an operator looking at that, where it is almost like a double-up because my area is manned 24/7, then you have already got operators looking at that. We have a direct line to VKI, the communications area for the police, so if my operators see anything, my shift commander will then contact the police immediately. The police have come and looked at it before and I have had some police ministers come through my centre. It is like they can see that we have such a tight liaison with the police and intel sharing that it is really not here nor there who is actually sitting behind the screen.

The CHAIRMAN: If you report something to the police, it is the report that they action on, but they do not have any ability to plug into your system and monitor what they are seeing at the time unless they come to your centre.

Mr BURGESS: They can plug in, and like Steve said, the Maylands command centre that was done for CHOGM was their centre over the Maylands police facility. They set up the big screens and so on themselves, which are still there. I am not sure what it is doing today, but the last time I saw it, it was still there. So they can, but as Steve was alluding to, they can only watch so many screens at a time. We have our own fibre optic—that is our great advantage over everyone else—that runs up and down the train tracks and in some cases has redundancy with an aerial route as well, and that is why we have access to so many cameras. That hardware is not there necessarily for the police to come and watch all our cameras and, as Steve said, it would be an overlap anyway because they would just be watching the same thing our guys are watching.

The CHAIRMAN: Sure. I recognise that they are not going to sit there 24/7 and look at it, but if there is an incident they would want to be able to plug in.

Mr BURGESS: But they can plug in.

Mr SELLERS: With the 30-31 days, we are saving the tape and if there is an incident, it is all backed up and it is there to go through. The team—there is a lot of standing warrants and things that are settled through the CCTV system.

Mr BURGESS: Every day there is a policeman coming into our building to pick up DVDs and so on.

The CHAIRMAN: I am sure.

Back on to Optus Stadium and stadium station, both from a safety and counterterrorism perspective, which is generally for protecting people in crowded places, has the lack of a footbridge caused you concern or meant that you have had to change your operational strategy?

Mr BURGESS: We have had discussions about if there was an incident. If there was an incident, for example, on the train station—I will be frank; we have considered all the realms of incidents occurring at a train station from the more extreme that we are talking about today down to operational incidents. If there was a very unfortunate suicide, for example, on our tracks at an awkward point, just as we are trying to clear a crowd, that could cause you as much grief as anything else. We have looked at: where do you then move that crowd to, what are the mechanisms to move the crowd, have we got the PA systems to make sure the message is clear? It means you need to push a lot more back to the Victoria Park side whereas you have not got that other avenue to push them and put them over the river. It is more of an operational challenge than it is a high-level security challenge, I think, from our point of view. Steve, do you want to make any comments on that?

[10. 40 am]

Mr FURMEDGE: Obviously, we have had to make arrangements for that and obviously even from the planning of services, it has actually been a burden not having the bridge at the moment. Obviously, it was planned that the bridge would be done by the time of the commissioning of the stadium. We have adapted well, which is why we have probably put more scrutiny and more men on the floor in relation to making sure that we are dispersing the crowds appropriately and safely. Luckily, with that area and the design of the area, there is enough dissipation to remove, if there was some kind of security event, to actually start evacuating people and dispersing the crowds so that there is not a mass gathering. That area itself, with its design, lends itself to that even without the footbridge.

Mr SELLERS: I guess just to tie a little bit of it together: in the build-up to the open day, where there was a crowd moving in and out through the entire day, when we did the traffic management and foot traffic flow, the experts had us using a slightly different route to get into the station, which still had cameras and other things on it. That was a change from the way the station is set up. For the ODI, or the one-day international, where people come, sit and watch the sport and then go, the ingress and egress points were still the same ones that were planned all along.

Mr A. KRSTICEVIC: Just on that point, you said you have procedures for every incident that you could conceivably think of. How many of those have you gone through a practical process and simulated that to be able to confirm that your procedures and processes are accurate? We have all had lots of examples where on paper things look fantastic and then when the incident occurs, you think that there are about half a dozen things that we could have done differently or better. I would be interested to know, especially with mass evacuations, have you simulated any mass evacuations and what the consequences of that could be with additional incidents that occur around the periphery?

Mr BURGESS: We have not simulated a mass evacuation with a mass, if I can put it that way—with a big crowd. We have certainly gone through test train events in terms of running the trains and trying to work out any bugs there and now we have had the live events and that has been very helpful to get to that point. There was a specific multiagency emergency event leading up to the stadium opening, which I will get Steve to talk to.

Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP: A trial like a practice run or an actual event?

Mr BURGESS: It was all agencies involved with an incident simulated into —

Mr SELLERS: First responders.

Mr BURGESS: But it did not have a cast of thousands, if that is what you are asking as a crowd, a real crowd. I know what you mean because we do that periodically.

Mr A. KRSTICEVIC: So you think your procedures will work but you cannot confirm that they will work?

Mr SELLERS: The question was have we actually gone through and run some tests and trials. In a moment, Steve will talk to that.

Mr BURGESS: The only thing I would say is that we do that fairly often. Because fire alarms go off and things like that, we move mass crowds fairly often out of what are crowded stations. Generally, almost in all cases, they are false alarms. There are things inside the tunnels—I hesitate to show this, but I do not think I will give this in-camera—but there are systems in the city tunnel, for example, that are designed to detect smoke and things like that. But if a kids lets a balloon go in there, unfortunately it also triggers those systems. That has happened a number of times and we have evacuated the station with thousands of people a number of times. For other reasons there has also been false alarms in there, and a couple of real incidents where there have been small fires as well. We are used to the idea of evacuating large numbers of people. We have not done it at that scene, but the PTA, along with the other first responders, did a simulated incident prior to the stadium opening.

The CHAIRMAN: Out of interest—you could provide this as supplementary information—would you be able to provide us with the number of evacuations throughout your system that you say have been undertaken each year for the past five years. I am no more a regular user, but I still use it occasionally, and I know that it happens from time to time. If you could give us the numbers and maybe break it down into the nature of the incidents.

Mr BURGESS: And the location, Chair?

The CHAIRMAN: The location would help, too. I do not know how detailed your statistics are —

Mr BURGESS: They will be by location. They will be the old Perth Station, Perth Underground, Elizabeth Quay, the new underground Perth Busport.

The CHAIRMAN: That would be great. That will give us an idea of how often you do them. If there are estimated numbers of people who were evacuated, that would be good, too.

Mr BURGESS: Additionally to the real one, when an alarm goes off, we do drills as well.

Mr SELLERS: Mr Furmedge was going to talk about the first responder training exercise we did for fullness, if you want.

Mr FURMEDGE: On Tuesday, 12 December, at nine o'clock in the morning until 12.00 midday, we did a multi-agency exercise with the police and VenuesLive. Just talking about the interface, too, with the people who are managing the stadium as well. What actually happened was that we had a multi-agency exercise to test response to an emergency incident. We are talking about packed trains coming in. The scenario was to be a concert at which we anticipated up to 60 000 people. We are talking about the interagency interoperability between each other and the response, and also the communication lines and how we would evacuate them. So that is how it was done. It was done with VenuesLive, WA Police, DFES, St John Ambulance, the Public Transport Authority and Main Roads. We actually ran a full-time event at that time for three hours to anticipate what the nuances were for that specific one using the protocols and the procedures that we already had in place.

You were talking before about the register. We have an exercise register. We also treat events. A lot of times we have suspicious packages or bomb threats, so each time we do that, we have to evacuate the stations. We are talking about the critical stations such as Perth Station. So each one of those, the PTA is in a unique position in which each bomb threat or suspicious package stimulates the processes as if it were a real-time live incident, and so we are continually getting tested on that.

Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP: I imagine, director, that you provided a briefing note or something like that to report to the government as to how that exercise went. If it is appropriate, can we ask for that to be provided via supplementary information?

Mr SELLERS: I will.

Mr FURMEDGE: A lot of these exercises, if they are NCTC, will go through Premier and cabinet and the riding committee, so they would have access to it. This was driven by WAPOL, so WAPOL would probably be the more appropriate agency to see the write off, because every one does actually stimulate a report—a closed event report and also a debriefing. So that certainly has occurred.

Mr D.T. PUNCH: As a follow-up on the simulations, given the learnings that might come out of a simulation, is there a coordinating point that actually checks whether those learnings are incorporated in the various agencies' procedures or policy frameworks, and some process of confirmation that that still integrates into one response suite?

Mr FURMEDGE: I cannot speak for other agencies, but I do know that when the PTA is involved in any kind of exercise and there is a post-exercise report and debrief, we have actionable items and we have meetings after that. That has been the biggest stimulation of changes to PTA policy and procedures, and our training, because we also run an RTO. So our transit officers are in a unique position in which they do their counterterrorism training and then we have refresher training for our frontline staff on an annual basis as well. That actually exceeds anything any other agency, including WAPOL, does in relation to —

Mr D.T. PUNCH: So within PTA that is clear, but from the information you are providing there is not a lead agency that coordinates the integration of that across all agencies to make sure that all agencies have responded.

Mr FURMEDGE: Not that I know of, no.

Mr D.T. PUNCH: In relation to staff who have security obligations or duties, are they all permanent staff or does the department contract in companies or agencies or private staff?

[10.50 am]

Mr BURGESS: On the bus side, yes. On the train side of our system, it is predominantly internal staff—that is, our transit officers, transit line supervisors, shift commanders and then you get into Steve’s management structure. It is a pretty tight team and they have all generally come through either police to get to us or they have been internally trained in our workforce and moved up. We have never had a full complement of transit officers. We have always supplemented that with our contract. At the moment that is with MSS. It is a very modest number. It would be a number around the 60 to 70 mark at the moment. We have about 340 transit officers and then a supervisor and a management layer on that, so we are probably at about 370 to 380, I would say. The entire transit officer workforce with the managers, but supplemented by those 60 to 70 MSS. We are very picky on our recruitment of transit officers. There are always a lot more applicants than actually get through the course. We do our own training. They do in-house training. It is a 12-week course. A lot of our recruits are from the police. They come from the police to us. They still do a training package but they may get a marginal reduction in training depending on some recognition of prior learning in the police. But, having said that, a lot of it is about our system, including things like how you work on the tracks and in and around the tracks.

Mr D.T. PUNCH: So with your contractors, are you satisfied that their staff would meet a similar level of competence in training?

Mr BURGESS: They will not be the same level as the transit officers. The transit officers have very specific training, as I say, around working on the railway in an electrified environment, and also have arrest powers. They effectively have the same arrest powers as police, and have pepper spray, a baton and so on.

On the bus side of the system, we have Wilson Security. But, from our point of view, it is one blue line. To give you a sense of that, the central monitoring that both Steve and I referred to at the Public Transport Centre has one side that is one line, but on the right-hand side as you walk in, it is all about watching the train cameras. The shift commander is sitting roughly in the middle 24/7, and on the left-hand side are the guys watching the bus cameras, and they all work together. There are Wilson guys in there as well talking to the Wilson staff out in the field, including their mobile patrols.

Mr D.T. PUNCH: Perhaps as supplementary information, if you could give us any information about the requirements that you have of your contractors in terms of their qualifications or police clearances et cetera.

Mr BURGESS: Mr Jones might be able to answer your question.

Mr JONES: Wilson Security provide us with security officers primarily on the bus side of the business, providing static and mobile patrols, and also CCTV monitoring, as Mark has mentioned. They are all licensed security agents, and all trained to a high standard, including internal training that Steve’s area, through the regional training office, provides. They have not got the same powers, but to the person in the street, they probably look pretty much the same. They dress the same. They work very well together in terms of any operations that we have on the go.

Mr D.T. PUNCH: But there is a difference in power?

Mr JONES: Yes, a difference in power.

Mr FURMEDGE: I could actually clarify that right now for you, if you like, about the transit officers.

The CHAIRMAN: We are going to run out of time, so if you could be extremely brief or perhaps we can deal with it in supplementary information as requested by the member.

Mr D.T. PUNCH: I am keen to know whether you have a similar level of analysis in relation to marine environments, and I am thinking of cruise shipping coming into ports, in terms of crowded places.

Mr SELLERS: The cruise ship terminal is with the port authority and is under its control. It would have to be one that I seek some information on; it is not under our direct control.

Mr D.T. PUNCH: So each of the individual port authorities would have their own response system.

Mr SELLERS: They certainly have, through the federal system, an agreed security plan for each port. I just do not have that detail with me today.

Mr D.T. PUNCH: Does Transport have any role in providing advice or support in the development of those plans?

Mr SELLERS: Not a formal role, but because the port authority works alongside our agency, occasionally they will seek advice from Ray or others on specific aspects, but the oversight of it comes from the federal legislation.

Mr A. KRSTICEVIC: Very quickly, on the security guards, you said that there are three different organisations—your own plus two other organisations—are you really careful about where you place those in the system? Do you use Wilson or MSS in some areas when they do not have experience? If they are plugging up a hole, they might not be able to meet the same standard. Are you conscious of that or do you use them liberally wherever they are needed?

Mr BURGESS: We are very conscious. Steve deliberately has the title of director of security covering all of PTA. Whilst Transperth manages the contract on the Wilson side, Steve certainly overlaps in terms of guidance and intel on security and so on. A lot of the bus stuff is related to the historical data, so we obviously work with the bus companies. The bus companies give us very good information on whether there have been rock-throwing incidents recently in some areas against the buses, and that helps to guide us. So we have a combination of mobile patrols plus static people at the bus stations. All those years of experience, knowledge and historical data guide a lot of the behaviour, and then the camera system sits over the top of that and helps to focus people who can see something happening or about to happen right now.

Mr JONES: I could probably add that during the week there are regular meetings between Steve, us—in terms of the bus security—and the police. There is a lot of communication going on all the time in terms of intel and where we should be placing. Quite often, we run joint operations.

Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP: I note that the Gold Coast public transport network has installed facial recognition software and the like as part of the Commonwealth Games. Are you watching that example and actively pursuing what could be implemented in the Western Australian context; and if so, where is that at?

Mr BURGESS: Quite some years ago, we were involved in a trial with Curtin, which had funding from us and others, and federal funding as well, on facial recognition. We are watching it develop closely. We are very hopeful that it gets to a point at which it is an absolute tool. At the moment, as Steve alluded to, it probably still has some bugs in it.

Mr SELLERS: A fulsome answer is that we also have one of our senior staff on secondment over helping run the Commonwealth Games in the bus network who will be coming back in a couple of months and obviously we will be quizzing that person around learnings.

Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP: If it is successful there, is it a fair characterisation to say that that is something that would be rolled out on the public transport network here; and, if so, what is the time line?

Mr SELLERS: It would be dependent on a business case, but certainly it is something we would enter into discussions with government on, yes.

The CHAIRMAN: Two quick questions on what used to be called the esplanade station and is now Elizabeth Quay Station. With the infrastructure and people movement around there now, it is starting to resemble, perhaps, places like Flinders Street in Melbourne where there have been significant incidents of people wanting to cause harm to pedestrians. Where does your remit end and where is the remit of the City of Perth? How do you coordinate that mixed space, which is partly on your property and then spills into City of Perth property?

Mr BURGESS: Really our remit is our property boundary, but, having said that, that is not where our area of interest ends. We are very interested in outside of our property boundary and making sure that people are safe, and that is that constant interaction with the police. We also have a pretty constant flow of information with the City of Perth, but it is mainly, to be honest, with the police in terms of understanding what they think are the threats.

The CHAIRMAN: Given recent incidents in other places in Australia, have you made any changes or considered any changes to the way that area flows or is protected?

Mr FURMEDGE: It is very interesting because we have identified state critical infrastructure, and Elizabeth Quay has always been classed as that, especially leading up to CHOGM with the Queen's visit, because she was going to be in close proximity there. Leading up to CHOGM, the PTA ensured that we had extra cameras put in there and on request by police that we liaise with the police in the lead up to CHOGM and make sure that area would service a visit from the Queen. The extensive risk assessments and coverage that was put in because of the Queen's visit has stayed in place. Also, the interface between us and the City of Perth in relation to their cameras ending here and ours starting there, we have a very good overlap and interface, in which our operators and their operators talk, and say, "All right, we have a suspect", or they will talk to us and we will go, "Right, we're taking over from" and we will tell them that we now have them on our system and then we will start tracking them from that perspective. So the interface is very, very important in the coverage.

The CHAIRMAN: Excellent. There are probably a few other questions that we might send through to you to be answered in writing.

Mr SELLERS: Happy to take them.

The CHAIRMAN: We have run out of time. Thank you for your evidence before the committee today. You will be sent a transcript of the hearing for correction of minor errors. If you could make those corrections and return the transcript within 10 working days, that would be very helpful. If you do not return the transcript, we will deem it to be correct. You cannot use the corrections process to introduce new material, but, of course, if you want to add any additional information you think the committee needs to now—something we have not asked you about—please feel free to make a supplementary submission either when you return the transcript or at any other time we are proceeding with the hearings. Thank you for your time.

Hearing concluded at 10.59 am
