

**COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND JUSTICE
STANDING COMMITTEE**

**INQUIRY INTO POLICY IMPLICATIONS OF
AN AGEING COMMUNITY**

**TRANSCRIPT OF EVIDENCE
TAKEN AT PERTH
WEDNESDAY, 15 OCTOBER 2014**

Members

**Ms M.M. Quirk (Chair)
Mr M.P. Murray
Dr A.D. Buti**

Hearing commenced at 10.01 am

Mr REECE ALLAN WALDOCK

Director General, Department of Transport, examined:

Mr MARK ANTHONY BURGESS

Managing Director, Public Transport Authority, examined:

Mr ALBERT SYMCOX

Manager, Traffic Management Services, Main Roads WA, examined:

The CHAIR: Good morning.

The Witnesses: Good morning.

The CHAIR: Thank you very much for coming. As you would be aware, we have some formalities to go through before we get into the evidence. On behalf of the Community Development and Justice Standing Committee, I thank you for your interest and appearance before us today. The purpose of this hearing is to assist the committee in gathering evidence for its inquiry into policy implications of an ageing community. You have been provided with a copy of the committee's specific terms of reference. I will begin by introducing myself and the other members of the committee present. I am Margaret Quirk, the Chair. On my left is Mr Mick Murray, the member for Collie–Preston, and on my right is Dr Tony Buti, the member for Armadale. The committee is a committee of the Legislative Assembly of the Parliament of Western Australia. This hearing is a formal procedure of the Parliament and, therefore, commands the same respect given to proceedings of the house itself. Even though the committee is not asking you to provide evidence on oath or affirmation, it is important that you understand that any deliberate misleading of the committee may be regarded as contempt of Parliament. This is a public hearing and Hansard will be making a transcript of the proceedings for the public record. If you refer to any document or documents during your evidence, it would assist Hansard if you could provide the full title for the record.

Before we proceed to the questions we have for you today, I need to ask you a series of questions. Have you completed the "Details of Witness" form?

The Witnesses: Yes.

The CHAIR: Do you understand the notes at the bottom of the form about giving evidence to a parliamentary committee?

The Witnesses: Yes.

The CHAIR: Did you receive and read the information for witnesses briefing sheet provided with the "Details of Witness" form today?

The Witnesses: Yes.

The CHAIR: Do you have any questions in relation to being a witness at today's hearing?

The Witnesses: No.

The CHAIR: Mr Waldox, would you like to make an opening statement?

Mr Waldock: No, other than to say that we are delighted to be here, particularly in some of the work which we will share with you in public transport, but certainly Main Roads as well, so relating to the questions you have indicated in your letter. I guess the only other thing I would say is that when we talk about seniors today, seniors is very much classed as what we call “universal access”, which picks up disabilities as well.

The CHAIR: You would all be aware of the demographics and that we have an ageing population.

Mr Waldock: There are two of us here today in that demographic, Madam Chair!

The CHAIR: We are all in denial up here! What I wanted to ask was that obviously a lack of transport has more implications for seniors than it does for other members of the community because of the social isolation. What participation do you have in government policy or senior officers groups in relation to planning for future needs of seniors?

Mr Waldock: I will answer that, and then I will pass over to the experts. Certainly Main Roads has two key categories of ongoing engagement that heavily includes seniors. The Public Transport Authority is a little bit different. In the Public Transport Authority we get out into the communities, particularly in shopping centres, and try to engage all levels of community with any new product offering. So when we are talking about any new routes, or a new product like a smartcard or SmartRider and the like, for any new initiative we go out and have focus groups, including seniors, but as well as that we have community liaison on a regular basis. I suppose those are the two key areas by which we liaise with the seniors community. We can go into that in more detail if you wish.

The CHAIR: I was really asking whether there are any formal groups within government that you participate with.

Mr Waldock: I guess we do. We have three plans that accord very closely, as you might expect, with Age Friendly WA. We have disability access and inclusion plans, all of which are up to date. Two of them go out to 2017 while the other one, Main Roads, goes out to 2016. Those plans have been formulated within intra-government agencies, so we work pretty closely across agencies to make sure these plans hopefully pick up the key issues for those communities. They can be made available to you.

The CHAIR: Presumably, you work with local governments as well?

Mr Waldock: Yes. In fact, you might want to talk about local government, Albert, because you deal a lot with local government in terms of road initiatives.

Mr Symcox: That is right. We generally help local government set the standards in what should be provided for access for disability, as inclusive plans for all road related issues. Main Roads has its disability access and inclusion plan and that recognises working with local governments to deliver those requirements. We do have areas within Main Roads that are dedicated to dealing with local government, so it cascades down all the way through.

The CHAIR: So when you talk about access, presumably you are talking about things like the sound traffic lights?

Mr Symcox: That is right.

The CHAIR: Those little curvy things—I am sure you have a technical name for them. I am talking about those step-downs where you can either wheel a wheelchair or a baby carriage.

Mr Symcox: That is right.

Mr Burgess: They are kerb ramps.

The CHAIR: Kerb ramps—thank you very much.

Mr Symcox: And the cut-outs, we tend to go for the cut-outs through the islands these days instead of having ramps up and down. In the plan we touch on the provision of audible and tactile traffic signals—that is with the push buttons and noises, which is obviously for the benefit of everybody. The ground surfaces are tactile, so you know when you come to the edge of the road or, if you are in the median, when to stop and take care.

The CHAIR: Is there a standard speed for crossing a pedestrian crossing?

Mr Symcox: Yes, it is 1.2 metres per second.

The CHAIR: Have there been approaches by local governments to change the 1.2 metres per second in areas that have a high population density of seniors?

Mr Symcox: Yes. We respond on an individual basis. There may be an aged centre near traffic signals and our officers go out with local government to meet with people at the centre to discuss how to use the signals in some instances, because we can talk about countdown times later, but the aged community has issues understanding the flashing red man. But we go there to explain it and look at the timings, and in some cases we can protect the movements by holding up traffic movements, so we can add in more time if required.

The CHAIR: Is that a common thing? Have you added on more time to many places?

Mr Symcox: We try to work with the parallel system so that drivers give way but, in some instances, yes. What happens, we have an introductory green man, which is an invitation to cross. That could go for up to four to six seconds depending on the location. That is added into the flashing red man walk time. If you start at the beginning of the green man, the walk time is probably around one metre per second, so it is an improvement overall. The 1.2 is for the clearance. So you walk on the flashing red man and you have the full distance to complete your walk at 1.2 metres per second.

[10.10 am]

The CHAIR: We had heard evidence from the City of Melville which, as you might know, is considered very age friendly and has received international recognition to that effect. It told us that Main Roads was unsympathetic about its representations to increase the time to cross a busy road through signals.

Mr Symcox: That is to maintain the standard. We assess a location on an individual —

The CHAIR: What is the standard?

Mr Symcox: It is 1.2 metres per second.

The CHAIR: Is that appropriate irrespective of who is crossing the road?

Mr Symcox: That is the Australian standard.

The CHAIR: Are you aware that in some overseas jurisdictions the time given for crossing roads has been changed to accommodate seniors and other people who might have difficulties?

Mr Symcox: Are you referring to pelican crossings, where times can vary? If you are at a pelican crossing or a pedestrian crossing, we have pelican or puffin crossings that can detect movements on the crossing to extend the time—so we do have that facility.

The CHAIR: We were seeing just ordinary traffic lights, like a normal red and green man.

Mr Symcox: It depends on the country. The United Kingdom uses the same standard of 1.2 metres per second.

The CHAIR: Other jurisdictions have a countdown that tells you how long you have to go.

Mr Waldock: We can talk about that because we are bringing in the first of our countdowns next week.

The CHAIR: Where will that be?

Mr Symcox: It will be wired up on Saturday. It will be at the end of the mall on Murray and William Streets near the train station.

The CHAIR: That is more to do with getting people off the roads so that traffic congestion is not too much.

Mr Waldock: I think it makes people far less anxious because what happens now with the green and red men, particularly with some of the demographics, is they get a bit anxious, as Albert will show you. But research done in England and Adelaide has shown that people are far more comfortable when they can see the numbers—they get a sense of that is theirs. It is far clearer and they are far more relaxed about the crossing. Do you want to talk about that, Albert?

The CHAIR: Unless you are someone who cannot count 1.2 metres per second, in which case you get stressed out about it.

Mr Symcox: So basically you start with a red man and, obviously, you do not walk on a red man. Then you will get the invitation to walk, which is the green man. The time at Murray and William Streets will be six seconds. Then you start your walk and then the countdown time will kick in and start counting down.

The CHAIR: What is the reason for it?

Mr Symcox: We are replacing the flashing red man because the flashing red man does not give people any indication. When you walk up to an intersection, you see the flashing red man, but you do not know what stage it is at so you could enter late and not know how long you have to cross. But with the numbers, you can work out what time is left to cross.

The CHAIR: Just going back to the Melville situation, the city has suggested that the response of one of your officers—it would not have been you—was that it would hold up traffic. Is that your principal concern?

Mr Waldock: Can I respond to that?

The CHAIR: Sure.

Mr Waldock: I am not sure it is the principal concern, but what is very clear to us because we have been doing some trialling on Canning Highway is that there is little doubt that between Riseley Street—I am well aware of Melville, I live in Melville and I know the mayor and the chief executive very well—

The CHAIR: Did you get yourself in there early, did you?

Mr M.P. MURRAY: It is a wonder you have not fixed it already!

Mr Waldock: I have made it worse because we have stopped a lot of the rat running—I was a rat runner through Applecross—by hardening up the lights to give Canning Highway maximum time to try to clear. There has been significant improvement in capacity on the road. We know what the traffic jams are like, we know the travel times and we know the economic cost of that congestion. We are trying to play with all sorts of issues to relieve some of the congestion. We are looking at putting bus lanes there. In the future we will be looking at some very big initiatives, but some very expensive initiatives. Clearly, part of that whole equation is pedestrians, but it has to be looked at as a whole equation. During peak times particularly we do not see many crossings. In fact, we put one up at Ardross Street, which is a new crossing and, again, that had a significant effect in terms of the capacity of traffic. We have to manage all of that. I can understand why this committee would be extremely concerned if it felt that indeed seniors and pedestrians in general were disadvantaged. I do not think that they are disadvantaged; we just have to balance that.

The CHAIR: In the next decade or so the percentage of seniors will go from 17 per cent to 21 per cent. What percentage does it need to reach before these crossings become a reality?

Mr Waldock: It is interesting, is it not, just how you might go. I will let Albert and Mark comment. Certainly when we try issues like grade separations—in other words, overpasses—even if we get the grades right, and we build it to one in 12 to get the grades right, the fact of the matter is that people hate using them. People want to pass at grade; that is, just at the crosswalk. You asked at what stage: we will continue to look at it. Potentially it will be a good opportunity to look at pedestrian phasing when we do the significant widening of Canning Highway, because we would have more capacity.

Mr Symcox: I agree with Reece. It is important to keep the traffic on the arterial road because it frees up the local streets where there is obviously a lot more pedestrian movement. It is important to keep the traffic there and that is why we are trying to add in capacity and make it more efficient.

Mr Waldock: Albert, maybe we could look at off-peak longer phasing?

Mr Symcox: Possibly.

Mr Waldock: That is something to consider. I think I got a pushback there. I think I just got a Main Roads pushback!

Mr Symcox: It is a bit more complex. It all comes down to the flashing red man. People will ring up council and say that they do not have enough time because they do not understand the flashing red man because there is no measurement on it. So they get halfway and then the flashing red man starts flashing, but there is still enough time to cross. Quite often officers will go out and walk people across the road. There is quite a lot of time.

The CHAIR: Just before I let my colleagues ask some questions, another issue that I have noticed—I have had a couple of stints on crutches over the years—is that some kerbs seem to be quite high. Is there a standard measurement for a kerb because some seem higher than others?

Mr Waldock: We certainly have a standard to meet disability standards.

Mr Symcox: That is right. We use a semi-mountable kerb in some instances. Barrier kerbs can be used where there are high volumes of traffic, but very rarely.

Mr Burgess: On bus routes, for example, there is a prescribed standard, a desirable standard for kerbs.

The CHAIR: Especially because you have to line them up with your buses.

Mr Burgess: That is exactly right. The whole idea, particularly because we have invested in low-floor accessible buses, is that if the kerb is at the right height, then depending on the —

The CHAIR: The driver actually comes into the kerb.

Mr Burgess: He comes to the kerb and depending on the status of the person—I mean, if it is clearly someone with a mobility impairment, the driver will lower the ramp, but it requires the kerb to be at the right height. If it is not at the right height, the ramp will not work.

Dr A.D. BUTI: There is often a problem with who has responsibility—council or Main Roads. There is an issue in my electorate which council tried to flip off to Main Roads, but it is a council issue. However, one area that is definitely a Main Roads issue is Armadale Road. I know that I am making this local as the member for Armadale, but it is impossible for seniors to cross that road. Numerous requests have been made by ratepayers associations et cetera. As far as I am aware, Main Roads has not been responsive to those requests. Between 30 000 and 40 000 cars travel at 60 to 70 kilometres an hour every day and there is no pedestrian crossing. People are trying to cross that road on gophers. What is Main Roads doing about that?

Mr Symcox: Obviously we look at each case on its merits. I am not fully aware of all the actions on Armadale Road, but that is something I could take away and look into for you.

The CHAIR: What sort of criteria do you look at if you say that you look at a case on merit? What sorts of things are relevant?

Mr Symcox: It depends on what type of crossing you are looking for. If it is ramps —

Dr A.D. BUTI: There is no crossing—that is the point. There are none at all.

Mr Symcox: Are you talking about signalised pedestrian crossings?

Dr A.D. BUTI: There is not even a crosswalk. There is nothing—that is the point.

Mr Symcox: And it is a four-lane road?

Dr A.D. BUTI: It is dual carriage, four-lane.

Mr Symcox: We would not put in a zebra crossing in that situation. With pelican crossings with lights, there are warrants that we like to be met as far as numbers are concerned.

Dr A.D. BUTI: There are 40 000 cars a day.

Mr Symcox: I am sure it meets it. But there is also the pedestrian movement.

[10.20 am]

Dr A.D. BUTI: What are elderly people to do when they want to cross the road to go shopping? I am talking about the area between Albany Highway and the railway line where the many aged people living on one side of the road have to cross the road to shop at the shopping centre. Can you suggest what those with gophers or walking sticks should do to cross that road?

Mr Symcox: I guess that is what the committee is about—looking after the ageing population. Perhaps we need to review how we do business in the future.

The CHAIR: I have got to say, it is a problem now, not the future. It will exacerbate in the future.

Mr Waldock: Certainly we will look at it. I do not think you have written to Main Roads formally, have you?

Dr A.D. BUTI: The ratepayers association did and we also wrote to Main Roads.

Mr Waldock: I did not see it; I would have remembered if I had seen it. We will have a look at it.

Dr A.D. BUTI: I think even Alannah before me, who was the minister —

Mr Waldock: I think if Alannah had wanted it, she would have got it somehow!

Dr A.D. BUTI: She did not get everything, I can assure you.

Mr Waldock: I was terrified of Alannah the whole time! Do not record that, please!

Dr A.D. BUTI: You were not Robinson Crusoe there anyway!

Can I go to trains for a minute? I have a couple of issues. Often I travel on the Fremantle train and then try to connect to the Armadale train. I can run and sometimes I just make it, sometimes I miss it. Is there any coordination to allow certain time for people who may have mobility issues to connect, otherwise they have to wait for the next train, which could be 15 to 20 minutes?

Mr Waldock: I will kick that off. Certainly in off-peak, it would be 15 minutes and eight minutes at peak. Unlike most systems in most capital cities throughout Europe and Asia, which have automatic closing times on the second, we do not have that. Our drivers have dabs, as they call them. They look down the length of the train and they do hold doors back for certain people. Clearly they have timetables to run to so they are given the opportunity to make a judgement call, bearing in mind they have to meet a schedule. Those schedules are getting tighter and tighter as there is more and more patronage. I will let Mark get into it, but generally speaking we do a lot of customer satisfaction surveys on this—seniors are part of that—and we have done enormously well with what people see as the level of service we provide on our trains. We are happy to make that available.

Mr Burgess: It gets into that complexity of which train waits for which train. It is almost a case of chasing your tail. It is quite hard to get every train to connect to every other line. I appreciate what you are saying. We do try to allow the connection times if you sensibly can let one line—bearing in mind we have two through lines, Mandurah to Joondalup, which is clearly a through line and very easy for people to stay on the train and then the Midland and Fremantle line. The Armadale line obviously stops in the city. Maybe one day it will be a through line to somewhere—who knows? Therefore the scheduling becomes quite difficult in trying to make sure every person off each line—a Mandurah person coming in, a Joondalup person coming in, a Fremantle person coming in and a Midland person coming in—can connect across to every other service. If you can picture that in your mind, you would end up chasing your tail trying to make sure that everyone connects with everyone. We try to make sure that wherever possible, where we know there are strong connections, that the schedules work so that such connections are possible, but the point I am trying to make is that you will never be able to do it for everyone. We have tried for as many people as we possibly can to make the connection. The underground connection that was achieved in the recent Perth City Link rail project was a positive step. Getting connections straight off the old Perth station platforms to the Perth underground concourse level took about two minutes off most people's connections and took at least a minute off the travel time of someone who uses the lifts. Whenever we can, we are trying to streamline it, but it is the case that we will never get every train waiting for every passenger possibility off every other line. It is quite a complex equation.

Mr Waldock: The advantage and disadvantage as we move to 2.7 million people in 2031 and 3.5 million people in 2046-2050 is that we will be moving to far tighter train headways. That means there will be less opportunity to hold doors, but the good news is that there will be more opportunity to wait 2.5 minutes until the next train comes. With our future planning there will be advantages and disadvantages to work through.

Dr A.D. BUTI: The correspondence to Main Roads is by email, but I will get my office to check.

An elderly person came into my office and complained that no-one stood up for him on a train. He had just had an operation. I experienced that myself when younger people did not stand up. Often you hear an announcement on a train to please stand up, blah, blah, blah. I have written to the minister about this. What is the policy and can a mandatory element be put into it?

Mr Burgess: There is a really long story to this! In a legal sense, Alannah, when she was minister, exercised the one option available to us. After the 50c fare was brought in for students, if one of our officers asks them to stand up and they refuse to stand up, they can be compelled to pay full concession fare. It is a complex process to make that happen. They do not have a ticket machine with them and they cannot take the differential off them. But that is really the only thing up our sleeve. Other than that we rely on community values and people being decent. We generally find that most people are very good about it. Your story is not unique. Occasionally, we get those same letters about there being no respect from certain parts. I do not think it is necessarily always kids. It is quite strangely mixed across the community

Mr Waldock: Sometimes there are good stories. A woman on the Fremantle line who was heavily pregnant asked a young person for a seat and after the young person said no, she vomited all over him. That was a message!

Mr Burgess: More often than not people do stand up. I think Reece was offended the first time someone stood up for him, but that is by the by! More often than not people do stand up and what is great is that sometimes the community steps in and says, "Young fella, you should be standing" and that usually happens fairly quickly. We have had some pretty clever marketing campaigns around that. Some of those jingles and you know some of the messaging that goes out in poetry form and so on. That has had some pretty significant pick up nationally and internationally. That is some pretty clever messaging.

Mr Waldock: There are lots of posters on the trains as well.

Mr Burgess: Yes, although some people were offended by the baby poster. There was a media campaign saying how offensive that was. We live with it.

Dr A.D. BUTI: I find your posters on trains very effective overall.

The CHAIR: Presumably the free public transport after nine o'clock and three o'clock is when there should be more seats available.

Mr Burgess: Absolutely.

Mr Waldock: It really has been a good initiative.

The CHAIR: On that issue, there is the problem with station parking. I cannot recall the number of times a senior has said to me that frankly it is illusory because by the time they get to the station, there is no parking. Is there a real solution to that without limiting parking for other commuters?

Mr Waldock: Can I have a go at that first? There are some public policy issues here. Clearly, we have actually maxed out cheap car parking and the future will be connecting through to buses and of all those connecting buses, 95 per cent of them would be the same zoned areas, so they will still be free. Everything is free. If we held a lot of car parking back for people coming after hours, for one it would be a challenge to do that if we developed the technology. In terms of the cost of congestion and the wider economic externalised costs, it would be a lot more expensive because what we are really doing then is forcing more people to take less car parking, more people to take the roads during the peak, and that is really not where we want to go. It is a complex public policy area we grapple with. I understand what you are saying. There is no easy answer.

[10.30 am]

Mr Burgess: Reece did implement something five or six years ago, which was as much as we could do at the time; that is, those that were tagged as the drop-off bays were the morning peak, so you were allowed only 15 minutes in them, and after the peak they became available. They exist at only the bigger stations typically, but at least there was some effort to —

Mr Waldock: It was not a massive number of car bays but it was a start.

The CHAIR: Would you contemplate rolling out that generally or not?

Mr Waldock: It is just a matter of space. The bigger stations have transfer points for that, big drop-off points. We can live with that.

Mr M.P. MURRAY: It is probably a bit of a different spin on the whole thing about country. We hear about all these beautiful things you have in the city. It is certainly not the same in the country. It is a four-hour trip by bus from Collie to the city. I have had numerous complaints from the elderly. Some are saying now that they are driving, and I think we are contributing to problems on our roads because of our set-up for aged people. As somebody said, there are people having crashes in their 80s and we think, "Why were they doing that?" I think it is because the people in departments will not listen about how to set it up so that it is age-friendly. I am talking about the fact that the bus does not hook up with the *Australind* train. Now you have more ads saying that you want more people to travel, because there are 2 000 people dropped off in the Collie area who do not go on the *Australind* who really want to, but there is no hook-up. Then they get to Perth and they go to their specialist appointment and they cannot get home. They then need to find a night's accommodation before they come up. Pensioners are finding that very difficult, but I have had no success whatsoever in trying to make it more age-friendly to live in country towns. That is something I believe your department has to work a lot harder on. Four and a half hours on a bus for an 80-year-old person is a long time. The bus drives past the train, where they could have a bit of freedom to walk around or get a cup of tea on the way down. Do you have a comment on that?

Mr Burgess: Yes, I agree with what you are saying; it is not easy. One of our challenges is that the Transwa system is really just the three train lines—the *Australind*, the *Prospector* to Kalgoorlie and

the *AvonLink*—and basically 22 coaches in the government road coach network. That area is just in the bottom half of the state. There is a finite amount you can do with those resources. As I recall, the Transwa budget is about \$34 million a year; it is not a massive budget. But having said that, we have to try to use that as wisely as we can. In December last year I know that you and a number of other members from the south west would have been concerned because trimming occurred on what were contracted Transwa services rather than Transwa coach services proper. In response to your concerns, and some community concerns, we redirected the Pemberton coach two days a week, as I recall. That coach comes up from Pemberton via Collie and Bunbury to Perth. I know what you are saying, that the people want a direct trip.

Mr M.P. MURRAY: Via Bunbury, Rockingham—you get a free trip around the world.

Mr Burgess: I know what you are saying, but that is the nature of coach services, they will stop at every point along the way. That is just the nature of the beast, I guess. I take your point: they can get a direct trip to Perth, but it is in a coach seat and there is not the same freedom of movement as there would be on the train.

Mr M.P. MURRAY: The real point is that a lot of people are now going back to cars, which again is your problem because they are on the roads and sometimes probably should not be. They are probably good enough to drive locally in a small country town but now we are putting them in a position where they are driving to Perth. That really concerns me. It also raises the question of why would people live in a country town as they get older; why would they not shift to the city? Again, it puts the pressure back on the age facilities in the city.

Mr Burgess: There are always these competing issues. I think people would say that, for example, a \$550 fuel card, which I think has been indexed and is more now, was a great initiative at the time, but in some ways it is an interesting set of outcomes that it achieves because it occurred and then we had the extension of the Kwinana Freeway and the highway all the way to Bunbury, which is a very attractive road to use. The \$550 fuel card means that it is an attractive proposition to go in the car. We noticed a big dent in *Australind* patronage when those couple of things emerged in a very similar time frame.

Mr M.P. MURRAY: But also if your bus does not hook up to the *Australind*—my understanding from the Collie Visitor Centre is that about 2 000 have dropped off bookings through there that you are not getting on the *Australind*. The point I am trying to make is that you cannot have it both ways. Along with that is a subsidy for the *AvonLink* of \$155. The bus service through Collie is \$55, yet the bus service was cut. I know it was a political decision, not yours, but I am just letting you know. That is the type of problem we have in the south. It is a long trip from Pemberton on a bus to Perth.

Mr Waldock: Quite frankly, regional areas are difficult with public transport in particular —

Mr Burgess: In a big state.

Mr Waldock: — in a big state. It does not respond to your issues, but I guess it is \$550 in a fuel card per pensioner, and 76 per cent of the fuel cards go to age pensioners, so it is not disabled people, and there has been enormous growth, as you know, so we have a budget of over \$25 million a year. To some extent that was recognition, of course, of the locations and the difficulty in trying to provide public transport services. But I do acknowledge that there are gaps and we understand what you are saying.

Mr M.P. MURRAY: You are saying the gaps are there, but the thing I am trying to point out is that community concerns and working with the community to get a better service has not been done. The department itself has been very bullish in saying that this is the way it is going to be and that is the way you are going to have it.

Mr Waldock: We will again have a look at that. The issue is that we are in a terribly constrained environment. We do look at the number of passengers and these decisions are not made on the basis

of something arbitrary; we look at the actual volumes all the time. There are criteria. I understand that there are gaps and people get upset and hurt, but we have to make some hard decisions at times. Clearly, you are not very happy with our decisions.

Mr M.P. MURRAY: That is an understatement.

The CHAIR: What figures do you get around the demographics of who catches public transport? Do you have figures on how many seniors catch the train or the buses? What are the percentages or figures there?

Mr Burgess: We have had a seniors SmartRider program. I might pass this document over because it gives you a fair sense of that. It almost comes to, I think, your first question, Chair, which was about engagement with seniors. On the public transport side, particularly in the metro, but as much as we can in the country as well, we have had a long history of engaging with seniors. We have a small community education team in Transperth; just two part-time teachers. They visit schools and also seniors groups, whether through Probus clubs, age centres, the office of seniors. They have a Get on Board program where they teach them about public transport in their area and how to catch it. It was an interesting experience for us when we were developing SmartRider, which has been a remarkably successful product—without doubt the best in Australia. It cost roughly \$30 million for SmartRider and this state should be very proud. On the east coast, where the cities are not the quantum of different sizes, they have spent \$1 billion to \$1.5 billion for cards that do not work terribly well. We got that for \$30 million. When we were developing that, we particularly targeted seniors, and the picture I have here reflects that. We brought them into our first control group, then we brought them substantially into the upgraded control group and we did a special trial with seniors. It was funny because some of the public servant-type staff at the office of seniors were saying that we should be careful because this was a group that was vulnerable to changes in technology. And we said that we all knew seniors, we all had parents, and we were not so sure that they were that vulnerable to technology. A lot of them lap it up. Sure enough, that is exactly what happened.

[10.40 am]

The CHAIR: They can join the programs like Get on Board, they can go out at the invitation of seniors groups, and then they have what is a static presentation. They do not take them down to the station and show them how to use the machines?

Mr Burgess: They will do that if they want to as well.

The CHAIR: They will do it?

Mr Burgess: Yes, they will do that as well.

The CHAIR: But it is a question of people proactively contacting —

Mr Burgess: For many decades there has been a Seniors Week—it is often at Burswood—and we always take a stall there for both Transperth and Transwa. We often advertise in *Have a Go News*. We get a good volume of seniors through that stall.

The CHAIR: I wanted to ask about the transition from having to surrender their driver's licence into public transport. This is the sort of thing that should be done, whether or not it needs to be rolled out more broadly. In an ideal world, what extra resources do you need? I am talking in terms of our recommendations.

Mr Burgess: My sense is that we probably meet most of the demand for presentations and so on. If there was a modest increase in that budget, and it would only be modest, that would be useful, I guess. There is always the chance that someone is not a member of the Probus Club or is not connected through their local age centre or does not go to Seniors Week so they have no knowledge. We try to make our website fairly seniors-friendly.

The CHAIR: Have you heard of a program called UQDRIVE in Queensland?

Mr Burgess: No.

The CHAIR: It is about an eight-week program. People basically prepare to give up their licence. They go along to this group and they are taken out on buses and trains and shown how to use the machines so there is a lack of fear about getting on public transport. They know how to access timetables and all of that.

Mr Burgess: I have to be honest, Chair, I reckon the seniors groups themselves would jump at that opportunity. You probably do not need to pay public servants to do it. When we engaged those seniors in that photograph through the SmartRider, they trained people at our stations, not just seniors. They said they would train everyone in how to use this thing. They were fantastic.

The CHAIR: I must admit I am an infrequent user of the train, but when I do I find that there is a lack of explanation on the machines about certain issues.

Mr Burgess: It may be a wisdom that comes with age, because seniors seem to get it!

The CHAIR: No, I just think that if you are a foreigner, for example, even just stuff there, you can buy the cards, whatever. With the old MultiRider you could get it at a lot more places.

Mr Waldock: That has not come up in any research, though.

The CHAIR: Well, I am a very special case!

Mr Waldock: With seniors particularly, as you know, they get their card as part of their Seniors Card, so they have a SmartRider issued to them straightaway.

Mr Burgess: We provide the card stock and the machines that produce them and the office of seniors manages the distribution.

Mr Waldock: To answer your earlier question, on the bottom of page 3 you can see that we have 8.5 million seniors and pensioners a year taking free travel on public transport and they are the greatest advocate to their friends and everybody else of how easy it is.

The CHAIR: All right. That is okay.

Obviously, this spans the length of the train lines: there will be an issue with an ageing population about access to toilets. That is a chestnut that comes up from time to time.

Mr Burgess: I know this could sound silly, but it is intended to be quite serious. Among our various brochures—we produce timetables for every route and every train line—we produce a guide to Transperth toilets. That is available as a brochure amongst our many brochures in our racks and stands, because there are particular sections of our community, whether it is people with disabilities or seniors, who want that information.

Mr Waldock: As a general rule we are becoming more toilet friendly. I would perhaps like to take this committee to show you the toilets. We have people manning those stations during all operation periods, yet some of our more difficult youth have feeding frenzies in destroying those toilets and it is a massive issue. We use stainless steel, we do not have mirrors, we use everything we can so they cannot smash our toilets and, quite frankly, often seniors would not want to use them. Having said that, we are becoming more toilet friendly. We have some toilets going into the central city now as part of Yagan Square and we have put them in the latest Butler station. We are thinking about that. It is a very difficult issue, not just the cost of the toilets, but the ongoing operation and maintenance.

Mr Burgess: The general policy position we have is that the toilets are at the end-of-line stations and at the formal bus–train interchanges, where people might have to dwell between their bus and their train. Where we have a station that is really designed as walk on and catch, and Park ‘n’ Ride—they are often not manned all the time, so the potential for damage to the facilities is greater—we tend not to have them.

The CHAIR: What is the sensitivity around people who will not get on public transport if it is a certain distance or people who will not use public transport if there is more than a certain time between each bus or train?

Mr Waldock: We have done a lot of work on that.

The CHAIR: What do you operate on now?

Mr Waldock: There is a 500-metre accessibility standard.

Mr Burgess: We aim to have people within 500 metres of a bus route and/or train station. Our research says that train stations are more attractive than that; that for the more mobile members of the community they will have a catchment of 800 metres to one kilometre. That is borne out by lots of research we have done. But our aim is 500 metres, and we are marked on that every year. We use GPS data and population data, house data, to measure that every year. We are in the low 80s at the moment for the wider Perth area.

The CHAIR: What about timing between buses or trains?

Mr Burgess: The worldwide position is that the ideal situation is to have people having access to public transport on a 15-minute frequency. Given Perth is such a massive area, that is not always possible. That accessibility measure is based on that. It is based on whether in the peak period someone is 500 metres from a route in the peak direction at a 15-minute frequency. That is what we are measured on, but clearly in the off-peak hours, we do not have everything running at 15 minutes.

The CHAIR: So if you are below those sorts of levels, clearly the patronage drops off and then you decide to get rid of a bus route because there are not enough people using it, for example.

Mr Burgess: We do not loosely get rid of bus routes. We are fairly focused on the fact that if you do not provide a reasonable service during the whole core of the day, including the middle of the day in the off-peak period, we are not providing the service that government would expect us to.

Mr Waldock: Interestingly enough, when we do drop off services under budgetary pressures, we continue to review that. The bus or train services tend to be late at night and it is certainly not the key period for seniors or pensioners. It is interesting. We do the most complex intercept survey every year under our passenger transport monitor survey. We can give you the detailed numbers, but certainly seniors are a large part of that very large survey population. We do get a sense of what the issues are. We are running at about 90 per cent on trains and low 80s for buses in terms of customer satisfaction. Certainly, with the trains, we continue to win the national Canstar award in terms of most satisfied customers in the whole national system. We can do better, but we do not do badly.

The CHAIR: I have a number of people say to me that they see big buses driving around at eight o'clock at night with two people on them. I know that you have consistently said that there is no economics in having smaller feeder-type buses out of hours. Is that still the case, and why is that the case?

[10.50 am]

Mr Burgess: Typically, a good proportion of the bus driver shifts are split shifts. They are used to working split shifts so they are on the morning shift, they will be away for a couple of hours and then they come back and run the afternoon shift. The people who are driving the bus at eight o'clock at night, depending on what their shift arrangements are, will have done peak-period trips; in other words, they have done trips with a full standing load or a full bus and they have probably done a couple of them, and then they are doing the eight o'clock one with a lesser number of people on it. If you said that at seven o'clock all drivers are to take their bus back to the depot, switch off and get out a small bus, you are probably talking about an hour to an hour and a half of non-productive time for the driver in his shift which, whilst we have contracted bus companies, we

will pay for it in the contract payments—you do not get it for free—and then we would have to duplicate the fleet; for every big bus, you would have to have a small bus that sits there for most of the day and does not do anything. It is not just us; no-one in the world does it.

The CHAIR: I think Denver or Boulder, Colorado, have the hop, skip and jump network.

Mr Waldock: As part of taxis and public transport, we are looking at community transport-type initiatives and in this emerging new world of special charter vehicles, there may be some opportunity to bridge that gap a little bit by contracted other arrangements. We will look at that. It is not easy. We have to make sure that we still protect our brand. Whilst Mark is right, we have to increase the fleet and it is difficult for shift arrangements. We will have more fleet, because we will have the same number of buses for the peak, plus other buses for the non-peak. But I think it is something we should consider looking at, because I think you are quite right. Even the optics are not good when you see a large bus carrying three people. The fact of the matter is most of the costs are in the drivers; nevertheless, I think we should continually monitor that.

Dr A.D. BUTI: One of the issues there, though, is that motorists complain about the big buses hogging up the road.

Mr Waldock: It is safer.

Dr A.D. BUTI: Security and safety on trains: I do not think the actual statistics bear out the worry or concerns the public has. However, if you go on the various lines, you do see a difference.

Mr Waldock: Are you talking about the public?

Dr A.D. BUTI: Yes, the public.

Mr Waldock: Are you talking about the community or the user community?

Dr A.D. BUTI: Well, both. People come to my office who are users who say that they feel very unsafe on the Armadale line. There must be some statistics that bear that out because I did get an answer to a question on notice saying that security on the Armadale line is much, much larger than it is on the other lines.

Mr Waldock: Oh, it is. That is where we have most of our transit officers!

Dr A.D. BUTI: Maybe there are some areas of concerns there.

Mr Waldock: We have all that data and we can certainly make it available.

Mr Burgess: The results are on the website.

Dr A.D. BUTI: It is a very difficult issue for you. I am just asking how you plan to try to improve the public perception of it.

Mr Burgess: What Reece is alluding to is in the last probably eight years in particular, that number has crept up bit by bit as in the public perception. We broke it down to “on the bus” or “on the train” and then “at the station” and then we do that by day and by night. You can see there are a whole range of different measures there. The surveys that Reece is talking about—the annual passenger satisfaction monitor, which has been going for about 22 years—is very much apples to apples so you can follow the trend lines. It is not a different set of questions every year. The only time we change it is when there are new technology changes, so we had to modify the ticketing questions to pick up going from MultiRider to SmartRider, so it was modified a little bit; otherwise, it is a very consistent set of questions. We ask them about safety on board at night, during the day and at the station night and day. Pleasingly, there has been an upwards trend. Clearly, a lot of that was when there was an increase in security numbers. Alannah introduced a higher number of transit officers and that was a very positive thing in a security sense. We aim to have officers on every train after seven o’clock at night. I say “aim to have” because if they deal with a situation, it often means they have to de-board with the individual, so that train may not have someone on board for a period of time until we get someone back on board. We are very focused on

night-time and we are focused on intelligence, not just our intelligence but police intelligence. We work pretty closely with the police. Even though the police asset was reoriented to the ROG—the regional operations group—they maintain a small core that does intelligence work for the transport system. They work very closely with our security team. We have an FTE count of about 330—I cannot remember the exact numbers—of which we have transit officers in about 270 and a contractor making up the rest. We have recruited well. We have never been able to recruit the full number because we have a high bar that you have to get over to get into the transit officer workforce. They are a very well trained team, and all of our surveys with the public say that almost all the public think they do a fantastic job.

Dr A.D. BUTI: I can understand concentrating at night-time, where you should, but most elderly people travel during the day.

Mr Burgess: Sure.

Dr A.D. BUTI: I have to say personally that I find most antisocial behaviour happens during the day when there probably are not as many transit officers.

Mr Waldock: It is probably antisocial, but it certainly does not come up on our monitor. But I must say, when I travel the Armadale line, it is not perfect, but I am not sure what we can do. One of the issues internationally, and it comes up clearly, the higher the patronage on trains, the safer people feel. We have to mainstream public transport so that it is not only the people who have perhaps lost their licence catching it, but it is the mainstream. The more we do that, the more people will feel comfortable. That is the challenge for us all.

The CHAIR: How much is the location of seniors taken into account when you consider where bus stops or taxi ranks should be located? Someone told me that in the city there seems to have been a moving of taxi ranks to less visible areas. Who controls the taxi ranks?

Mr Waldock: We do—Transport. Well, it is joint local government and Transport. They are owned by local government, but we certainly work with local government and the taxi industry to identify them. We all know about the issues in the CBD at the moment with the two-streets policy and the congestion issues. It has been a challenge—Albert would attest to this, I am sure—trying to find long-term taxi rank areas. But we put a new one at one40william, where I work. We have changed them slightly, but there are still as many and we do advertise them widely. Certainly, the taxi industry makes sure we do because it is their business but, again, if we can do better, we will. We have a high-level working group on that. Historically, we have provided grant money out of the taxi industry development fund to support some of these initiatives, particularly initiatives in Northbridge with the secured car taxi ranks as well for weekends. We continue to do that. If there are any issues, we would like to hear about them and perhaps we can work on them.

The CHAIR: What about having bus stops near where there is a high density of seniors?

Mr Burgess: Our service team are very conscious and very much in touch with the community. They know where assets are, such as schools and shopping centres. There are key criteria, key attractors, that they are very conscious of, whether it is schools, aged centres, retirement homes and so on. They will always try to take them into account when they design where a bus route is as well as where the bus stops are.

The CHAIR: I have a bit of self-interest here. One in my electorate is problematic at the moment for seniors.

I want to ask a general question. It is a seniors question but it is not strictly on public transport. The photo ID card that was brought in for seniors is administered by the Department of Transport. Can you answer a couple of question about that?

Mr Waldock: If I cannot answer them, I am happy to take them on notice.

The CHAIR: I am aware of a situation recently where seniors went along with their marriage and birth certificates but that was not enough to get a photo ID card. It was, however, enough to get a passport, so they were able to get a passport easier than they were able to get a photo ID card. The irony was that the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade then posted the passport by registered mail to the senior who then had to go down with a photo ID card to collect it. I have had a number of complaints; people are saying that it is more cumbersome than they expected. It seems to me a bit of a concern if it is easier to get a passport than it is a photo ID card.

[11.00 am]

Mr Waldock: The passport is clearly from the federal government, but we did have some significant community concern about 18 months ago when we brought in the strict rules. We have advertised it widely everywhere we can. Even when you walk into our modernised new driver vehicle centres, it is explained to you straightaway by the concierge why we need additional information, and the passport is a part of that. All I can say is that we do an enormous amount of work with the police in this space. I would not want to accord this too much, but there was a significant amount of abuse in terms of multiple drivers' licences and criminality. In fact, it was of such concern that a special taskforce was set up to try to reduce that. It is perhaps one of the prices we all pay to try to manage some of the wider community.

The CHAIR: Do you not see that there is a problem, people being required as part of their —

Mr Waldock: But there is a whole raft —

The CHAIR: One of the things, for example, is a card with a photo and your signature on it, but that is what you are applying for. You would not need it otherwise. If you can perhaps advise on the criteria because I think that will need to be reviewed. Part of the issue is, I suspect, the criteria in the regulations which we did not get to scrutinise in Parliament. I have a question on notice about the take-up. I think it will be low if they are the sorts of problems people are encountering.

Dr A.D. BUTI: Reece, I did check with my office and there is some email correspondence, so there you go.

Mr Waldock: Was it the commissioner?

Dr A.D. BUTI: No, it is just one of your officers; it did not go directly to you.

The CHAIR: With technology, you have spoken about at least having people explaining to groups about how to operate things like the SmartRider. With timetable information, obviously, a growing number of seniors will have access to computers but there is still a number who do not. I wonder for those who still require a paper timetable whether there is any consideration in perhaps putting it in bigger font?

Mr Burgess: There might be some small scripts down the bottom but as much as possible we have it in the desired font as decided through consultation with disability groups and so on. It becomes hard, obviously, because there is so much information on a timetable that unless you want people folding out half a tree, we would struggle to meet everyone's requirements. Our call centre is set up to deal with people with vision impairment, hearing impairment and people who speak other languages. We have as modern a call centre as possible. We actually won an award for that from the Office of Multicultural Interests because our call centre is so diverse in the ways it can provide information.

The CHAIR: From what you have said earlier, although transport is one of the important things for seniors, along with housing and a few other issues such as social isolation and health, you are not actively involved in any senior officers groups or policy groups that are looking at the seniors framework.

Mr Waldock: I suppose in terms of a formal group looking at just seniors, no, we take the same principle as universal access—we make them part of all our discussions rather than treat them as a separate group.

The CHAIR: What about Planning? Presumably you work closely with Planning.

Mr Waldock: In all the route planning Mark talks about, it is just fundamental as part of our planning processes.

Mr Burgess: With the Department of Planning, we are heavily engaged in terms of future network plans and respective land use.

Mr M.P. MURRAY: How do the country areas hook in with your policy development?

Mr Burgess: On the planning side? The same thing.

Mr M.P. MURRAY: Probably overall. There are areas, but I see it as sometimes we just get left behind because, as you said, it is a big world and we are a long way down the track.

Mr Waldock: Just on that, we have put an enormous amount of new dollars into major regional area public transport. A lot of those regional bus services were just private companies and we have actually made them part of the Transperth network with a set of newer buses that meet full accessibility standards. We roll them out to all the major regional centres. I think we have done a really good job in those regional towns.

Mr M.P. MURRAY: Can I just butt in there? I do understand what you are saying—I have seen that in Bunbury more so than anywhere else—but that causes me more heartache because the people out further say, “They have a bus running up and down the road 10 times a day that has one person in it, and I can’t even get from here to there.” That is the type of thing I am hearing, especially for the aged. Most of the others have their cars and they are not interested in it, but that is where I see some shortfalls in the whole system.

Mr Waldock: It is tough, and in regional areas particularly because, other than perhaps some small subsets, everybody has a car and that is the way they travel. I take your point: large distances, small population bases and low patronage is a challenge for us.

The CHAIR: Obviously, there are a range of issues about taxis that are contentious at the moment. One of the complaints National Seniors has raised with us is taxidivers inflating the cost of a fare once they know that an elderly person has a taxi voucher. Are you familiar with those complaints?

Mr Waldock: I am very much. In fact, we have done an enormous amount of work and we think that is nowhere near the issue it was. There were certainly instances, and it has been well recorded about the taxi users’ subsidy scheme fraud. We are onto it. Not only are we enforcing compliance very closely, we are looking at going electronic too, so it will make it a lot harder for people to abuse that. If we look at the taxi users’ subsidy scheme, which has been in place for many years now, 85 per cent of recipients were aged over 60, so it is very much the demographic that this committee is looking at. My sense is that it will get harder to abuse it, but I do understand that we are putting a lot more effort into it. It is interesting that we can tell we are getting some success, first, because we can take people to court, but more importantly the TUSS budget is not increasing—in fact, it is reducing—which means that taxidivers have worked out that if they play up, they will get caught, so they are managing themselves.

The other thing I would say about taxis—I know it is a huge issue with some of the new challenges—is that not only do we have about 118 maxi-taxis, the MPTs, we are rolling out about 90 of the new London cabs, which you have all seen. We are still going through the trialling of the London cabs to ensure they meet the disability standards. They do in London, but we have different standards in Australia. What it does mean is that even if they do not all meet the disability standards—we will get there; it is a work in progress—they do make it a lot easier for seniors. There is a lot more space, egress and access is so much easier and, perhaps more importantly, they

have a sense of real safety because they have audible loops, protection from the driver and certainly they are a lot more friendly. That is 100 new cabs, and they will be part of the Black and White despatch service, which also has the MPTs. If I were a senior, I would be looking at Black and White very seriously because they do provide the services that they probably will be chasing.

The CHAIR: I have a personal experience of coming a gutser out of a London cab recently.

Mr Waldock: I can only apologise on behalf of London cabs!

The CHAIR: It was nine o'clock in the morning, I might add.

I know that bus shelters are not a PTA responsibility, they tend to be local government, but do you have a standard in terms of accessibility that you like to enforce?

Mr Waldock: We work very closely with local government; Mark Burgess is living that at the present moment. Do you want to talk about that, Mark?

Mr Burgess: Shelters are obviously at a stop. I will give you the quick numbers: there are 12 700 stops in the Perth–Mandurah area and 2 600 stops in the regional towns that have a public transport town service. For a few years now, I think we are about five years in, we have been well progressed on the disability standards for the trains. Since they were bought, the trains have been low-floor and Perth stations are very good. We are not fully compliant on every front at a lot of the stations, but we are largely compliant at most stations. The key concern there is the horizontal–vertical gap, the gap between the edge of the train and the platform, which cannot be too little, otherwise you will clean up the platform as you go through, so there has to be a gap, but we try to have a tight gap there and virtually no gap in the vertical sense, so they match up in height. Clearly, as train wheels wear and so on, we must deal with all those variables and issues.

[11.10 am]

Our buses are the same. Since 1998 we have been rolling out these accessible buses in both Perth and, in the past eight years, into the regional towns as well. The disconnect, if you like, can be the bus stop itself. It used to often be an orange post in a sea of sand, and in many cases it still is. The challenge for local governments there is that they are responsible generally for the supporting path network that meets it, and it is often that that is missing. We appreciate their challenge. The point of contention for some years was who was responsible for the stop. The state could have argued for a long time, and we almost ended up in a legal situation where we were arguing with local governments about who owned the stop. The challenge is that the national disability standards are not clear. They tend to talk in vague terms like “operator” and “provider” and it became a point of contention as to who was the operator and who was the provider. It got to a point of silliness. We put a position to government and said that we would fund the work at the stop, which is a large concrete pad—not everyone enjoys that pad appearing in their front lawn, I might add, but they have to deal with that issue—with supporting tactile treatments so that the vision impaired are well prepared to use the stop. It needs to be at the right height so that when the bus pulls up, the person can step off easily, or if the ramp needs to be lowered, it is at the right level. We are talking broadly about \$10 000 a stop. We are well into all of that work but it is about a 15-year program. Currently, 2 706 of those upgrades have occurred and that leaves about 12 000 more to go. We are doing about 610 a year. There is a fair bit of work at every one of those stops. You are right, the shelter that typically sits there belongs to local government. There is an occasional one that is an Adshel shelter. Adshel is a commercial company that years ago said to local governments that because certain roads were main thoroughfares with lots of cars going through, they thought they could sell the advertising space. In some cases if the local governments jumped in early they would get a share of that revenue. Some of those who jumped in late did not get a share of the revenue. They are deals we do not know anything about per se. The challenge is that if it is an old shelter that has been there a long time, it is probably in the wrong location. It will not be set back far enough. We need

1.5 metres for mobility for gophers and so on, so often it means that the shelter has to be picked up and thrown away, or if it can be, moved backwards to the right location.

Alannah started the scheme some years ago, around 2002 to 2004, as a dollar-for-dollar scheme. So the state government puts \$500 000 aside each year and tells local governments to put in their bids to match it dollar for dollar and on a dollar-for-dollar basis they will put up some new shelters. That has generally been fully subscribed every year around the state. I do not think it needs more money; that is probably about the right level. There has still been some argy-bargy with local governments who want us to take over all of that responsibility. Our legal advice on behalf of the state is clearly that that is not our role. We are not responsible for the shelters or the bins—the amenity, if you like. The picture that comes to my mind is that ad you see on TV occasionally where all these things drop from the sky and it says, “This is what local government does for you.” Our argument is that putting bins on a street-side piece of furniture, which happens to be a bus stop, is the role of local government and our advice is that that would be a correct position. We think we are almost at a landing with that with local government. We have been working through that with both individual local governments and WALGA and we think we are almost in agreement on that. The way it works right now is that if we are doing up a stop in terms of putting down the pad, and there is a shelter there, we will try to work with the local government to refresh it; in other words, bowl over the old one and put in a new one out of the dollar-for-dollar scheme. More often than not that is working. That tends to be taken up by the local government as a good offer.

The CHAIR: What about standard design?

Mr Burgess: We came up with a standard design, but we cannot be overly prescriptive. At the end of the day, some of the local governments say that does not fit in with the make-up of their area.

Mr M.P. MURRAY: Why are the bus pull-offs not a bit deeper? Many times you see the bus is just out a foot and it blocks off a whole lane.

Mr Burgess: We always try to stay friendly on this side of the table, member, because it does become a challenge between us and Main Roads and local governments occasionally. If you had a bus company and bus drivers sitting here they would say, “Please don’t put me off, because even though legislation says that they have to give way to me, they don’t.” There is legislation that says drivers must give way to a bus that is pulling out of a bus bay, but it often does not happen and the bus drivers themselves will say that it is a challenge to get back out into the traffic. We have been working out a formula with Main Roads and that would be applied also to local roads—recognising that a lot of the roads we drive on are local roads, but the same formula would apply—as to how busy the road is, what speed is the road, how many people are being picked up at that stop typically and, therefore, how long would the bus dwell if it was sitting on the road. Those sorts of things are all in the formula to see whether it warrants a bus bay or not. Unfortunately, on some of the busiest roads there is not a lot of road reserve left, and so if we are going to put in a bus bay, it means that the state would be acquiring land off the adjacent property owner. The answer to your point about them not being deeper is that often we do not own the land and we would have to buy the land.

Mr M.P. MURRAY: I just thought the bus drivers had a standard rule: put the flicker on and do not look.

Mr Burgess: That may be what it looks like occasionally, I do not know. I actually got our management team—not all of them have a background in working at the hands-on level with heavy vehicles; I happen to have that background—and forced them off-road in a big car park where we had some parked buses and so on so they had a stronger appreciation of the challenge that it is to drive a bus in heavy traffic. It is not easy; it is a tough job.

The CHAIR: You have obviously read the strategic framework because that is part of our terms of reference. What role did your department have in developing that?

Mr Waldock: To be fair, I was not personally involved, but there is clearly a strong relationship because you virtually have a transport section and I think it picks up many of the key initiatives. There are a few we have mentioned today that are not there, but my sense is that not only have you picked it up, but they are fairly current. Some of it has picked up the issues such as practical driver assessments and how we have managed to be more senior-friendly or pensioner-friendly in that space. Whilst it talks about \$500 rather than \$550 for the fuel card, it is very good. There have certainly been some strong discussions.

The CHAIR: Is there anything else you think can be done to assist you to embed the framework into your planning processes?

Mr Waldock: Look, we can always do better, I am not for one moment suggesting that we do, but I think we do think universal. I guess the fact is that we lead the nation in terms of accessible rail stations and bus stations for that matter. I think we do think universal, which is certainly disabled but it is also seniors. I agree with you fully that our destiny is our demographics. If we are not already, we are all going to be seniors very soon and it is a burgeoning number, so we need to make this city work and we certainly need to make transport work for everybody. So just to answer, I think we are doing it pretty well, but I would certainly be very interested to see what your recommendations will be.

The CHAIR: In terms of liaison with local government, we have had some feedback from some quarters in local government that it is very hard to find someone within your agency to talk about these issues.

Mr Waldock: Is that transport or Main Roads or PTA?

The CHAIR: I think it would be Main Roads.

Principal Research Officer: Both Main Roads and PTA.

Mr Waldock: I personally go to local government week and set up a little table with other DGs and I speak to anybody in any local government, both regional and in the city, who want to talk to me about any issues of transport. Of all the issues that I have had, I have had mainly local governments in the regions talking about roads, roads, roads, roads, roads. Very rarely has any issue ever come up—I know most chief executives and they would pick the phone up. I am not suggesting you have not had complaints, but it is certainly not very front and centre to me.

The CHAIR: How feasible is it to have some sort of person who is identified? It might be part of their existing duties anyway, but just to be a bit more obviously identified as the go-to person in terms of these sorts of issues.

Mr Waldock: I suppose we could. We—Main Roads and PTA—also have a full-day session with all councils now, generally hosted by Main Roads to talk about any issues that they want, and that is locked into the calendar. That has only been going for two years, but it is the way we want to work more with local governments.

[11.20 am]

The CHAIR: I suspect that that is at too high a level.

Mr Waldock: Well, maybe, although it is middle management as well.

Mr Burgess: Certainly, our engineers and our service development manager at Transperth, he would be one of the people—a bit like Reece—who know all the shire engineers and city engineers. He would talk to them daily.

Mr Waldock: Do you think you might be getting some of your complaints from high-level people who do not know what is happening? It does happen.

The CHAIR: Just a final question, which is a standard one that we are asking everyone: if a fairy godmother would appear and grant you three wishes in terms of being able to improve transport infrastructure and services for seniors, what would those wishes be?

Mr Waldock: I think we need to have enough quality public transport throughout the whole network that makes people see public transport as an option of first choice. That has to be the future, but it is going to be a while coming.

The CHAIR: All right, that is one; and the other two?

Mr Burgess: We have not talked about it much today, and I will be frank, it is not me trying to be dismissive of it, it is just not our world, but Reece will remember this from many years ago, when he was ED in metro and I was head of Transperth, we actually did a bit of work on community transport. State government has never known: is it state government's world—clearly if there is a big dollar issue there would be some reluctance to say it is our world—or is it local government's world? Then there are lots of groups who delve into that as well, you know, community groups and charities and so on. There has been this utopia that people have talked about for years where somehow that all gets brought together cleverly, that those lazy small bus assets that sit out there in the back of someone's yard somewhere get used on a week-to-week basis. People always talk about volunteer drivers—"We can find some volunteer drivers"—but that becomes problematic in terms of whether they have police clearances and how the insurance arrangements work and so on. It has been this sort of area that no-one has really solved the problem of. In other words, it is not timetabled services, which is our world, it is about organised groups of seniors in this case or other community groups who want to collectively all go to the same place, whether that is a health facility or a library or a Probus meeting. No-one has really ever been able to crack that nut.

The CHAIR: In terms of coordination?

Mr Burgess: I am not suggesting that we want to be the ones to crack that nut, but it has been an issue.

Mr Waldock: It has been an issue. You talked about Denver. There has been a bit of work done on that. We have been at it for years and it just becomes too hard. I think, as Mark says, the risk profile, the government's profile, the insurance —

The CHAIR: Another thing, a lot of those buses are quite often provided by Lotteries; maybe Lotteries has to put some conditions in or, you know, what have you. Okay, that is two. What about a Main Roads one?

Mr Symcox: A funding source for grade separation, for footbridges or pedestrian underpasses, to provide that better access that we are talking about, because there is not a pool of money that you can just dip into. In some instances we have warrants that need to be met, but there might be network requirements that can override it, or local needs that can override a numbers criteria. If there was a funding source to allow at grade or grade-separated facilities.

Mr Waldock: I think grade separated is an issue though. One difficulty moving up is tunnels. In the public transport space we will not build another Maylands station. It is just that perceptions of risk and personal security are too great. We do lifts in stations now, and the level of damage —

Dr A.D. BUTI: Armadale.

Mr Waldock: Not just Armadale, it is on the whole system. We spend a fortune trying to keep it open.

Mr Burgess: A lift at Bassendean just got destroyed.

Mr Waldock: And Victoria Park.

Dr A.D. BUTI: Before you go, there is one area that we have not touched on—I am not sure if it is in your priorities or your jurisdiction—that fits in with trying to keep an ageing population fit. What about cycleways and making roads more friendly for cyclists, particularly aged cyclists?

Mr Waldock: Well, we are doing a lot of work in that. It is interesting that we have Cycle to Work Day. I actually had to give a speech next door at the Duxton Hotel, but it was actually perfect, because we sponsor that every year. I think it is a work in progress, but it is fair to say that we have increased the money over the next four years to \$40 million, and historically we used to get about \$4 million per year. So it has been a times exercise in putting more money in, local government grants, both regional and the city, but particularly for what we call our PSPs, our principal shared paths. We need to do more in this space; we have recognised that. I was talking to the managing director of Main Roads yesterday. I think the PSPs are good; they are made to Main Roads' standards. But do you know what I think? I think that whilst we continue to fight the war between people in cars versus cyclists and getting threatened and how we manage that—there is a major campaign on that at the very moment on the radio—I actually think that the threatened species that have not been mentioned is pedestrians on PSPs. I actually think that if I was walking along some of those PSPs as either a jogger or a walker, I would be terrified. I guess, the future is, and we have tried it in different places—it costs more money—but ideally we have probably got to lay more asphalt that is separate and give them the space, or at least put another metre onto our PSPs and colour it green, saying, “Stay off, this is for pedestrians”. I think we are doing a lot of work; we are putting more money in and extending the PSP network. I think that people appreciate that, particularly along freeways, railway tracks and other spaces as well, but the sense is that I think we can do more.

Dr A.D. BUTI: I am sure you have been following *The West Australian's* comparison with Vancouver.

Mr Waldock: Yes, I have been following it. Look, Peter Newman, if he was here, would wax lyrical for a long time. We are different though, and we have not got time to talk about it, but maybe another session.

The CHAIR: Thank you very much for your evidence before the committee today. A transcript of this hearing will be forwarded to you for correction of minor errors. Any such corrections must be made and the transcript returned within 10 days from the date of the letter attached to the transcript. If the transcript is not returned within this period, it will be deemed to be correct. New material cannot be added via these corrections and the sense of your evidence cannot be altered. Should you wish to provide additional information or elaborate on particular points, please include a supplementary submission for the committee's consideration when you return your corrected transcript of evidence. We will be tabling this report in November. Thank you.

Hearing concluded at 11.27 am
