

Chairman; Ms Alannah MacTiernan; Mr Terry Redman; Mr Dan Barron-Sullivan; Mr Ben Wyatt; Mr John Castrilli; Mrs Judy Hughes; Mr Mick Murray; Mr Gary Snook

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**Division 39: Planning and Infrastructure, Service 1, Transport System Planning and Regulation, \$86 594 000; Service 3, Land Accessibility Planning, Tenure and Policy Development, \$25 829 000; Service 4, Integrated Land and Transport Policy Development, \$22 171 000 -**

Mrs D.J. Guise, Chairman.

Ms A.J.G. MacTiernan, Minister for Planning and Infrastructure.

Mr G.S. Martin, Director General.

Mr K. Kirk, Chief Financial and Procurement Officer.

Dr. N.J. Binning, Acting Assistant Director General, Operations.

Mr N. Belyea, Executive Director, Transport Industry Policy.

Dr. M. Movritz, Executive Director, Urban Innovations.

Ms J.I.P. Molin, Executive Director, State and Regional Policy.

Mr S. Beyer, Acting Executive Director, Urban Policy.

Mr M.R. Allen, Executive Director, Statutory Planning.

Ms A.M. Leonard, Acting Client Manager.

Mr L. Preece, General Manager, WAPC Services.

Mr T.M. Hillyard, Manager, WAPC Land Asset Management.

Mr J.E. Dawkins, Chairman, Western Australian Planning Commission.

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

**The CHAIRMAN:** A quorum is present. This estimates committee will be reported by Hansard staff. The daily proof *Hansard* will be published at 9.00 am tomorrow.

The estimates committee's consideration of the estimates will be restricted to discussion of those items for which a vote of money is proposed in the consolidated fund. This is the prime focus of the committee. While there is scope for members to examine many matters, questions need to be clearly related to a page number, item, program, or amount within the volumes. For example, members are free to pursue performance indicators that are included in the budget statements while there remains a clear link between the questions and the estimates.

It is the intention of the Chairman to ensure that as many questions as possible are asked and answered and that both questions and answers are short and to the point.

The minister may agree to provide supplementary information to the committee, rather than asking that the question be put on notice for the next sitting week. For the purpose of following up the provision of this information, I ask the minister to clearly indicate to the committee which supplementary information she agrees to provide and I will then allocate a reference number. If supplementary information is to be provided, I seek the minister's cooperation in ensuring that it is delivered to the Committee Clerk by 9 June 2006, so that members may read it before the report and third reading stages. If the supplementary information cannot be provided within that time, written advice is required of the day by which the information will be made available. Details in relation to supplementary information have been provided to both members and advisers and accordingly I ask the minister to cooperate with those requirements.

I caution members that if a minister asks that a matter be put on notice, it is up to the member to lodge the question on notice with the Clerk's office. Only supplementary information that the minister agrees to provide will be sought by 9 June 2006.

Will members indicate which division they wish to start with? I take it that we are starting with division 39 as listed.

**Ms A.J.G. MacTIERNAN:** That is right.

**The CHAIRMAN:** Members should advise whether they wish to change the order so that I know in advance.

**Ms A.J.G. MacTIERNAN:** We will begin with division 39. Given that there are so many different agencies, the representatives have been asked to attend at different times. I propose to discuss Main Roads at 10.30 am and the Public Transport Authority at 11.30 am. Does that timetable suit the members of the committee?

**Mr D.T. REDMAN:** Madam Chair, it was my understanding that we would be discussing divisions 39 and 42 concurrently.

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**Ms A.J.G. MacTIERNAN:** Yes, we can do that. I would rather discuss division 39 first and then I can swap the Western Australian Planning Commission people around. Perhaps in the first hour we can talk primarily about division 39 and then move to division 42.

**Mr D.T. REDMAN:** That is fine by me.

**The CHAIRMAN:** Members must be clear about this. If members wish to discuss the matter so that the question encompasses both divisions, I will need a motion to that effect. If members want to allow a broad discussion, I will put the questions separately. At this time, I will allow some latitude to discuss both divisions, but I will put the questions separately. Is that okay with the committee, or do members want me to put them together?

**Ms A.J.G. MacTIERNAN:** If it is acceptable, I suggest that for the first hour we deal with division 39. Some of the issues will range over the two divisions during that discussion. After the vote on division 39, we can talk about specific issues in division 42.

**The CHAIRMAN:** That sounds good. Are members in agreement? Excellent. Members on my left need to seek the call. I will then allocate accordingly. The question is that the appropriation be recommended for division 39.

**Mr D.F. BARRON-SULLIVAN:** I refer the minister to the fourth item, "Speed and Red Light Fines", on page 682 of the *Budget Statements*. The budget papers provide for a very significant increase in revenue from these fines. The estimated revenue will increase from \$44 million to nearly \$63 million, which is an increase of nearly \$19 million or 43 per cent.

**Ms A.J.G. MacTIERNAN:** I apologise that perhaps there should have been some further clarification. All licensing matters will be handled by the Minister Assisting the Minister for Planning and Infrastructure, Minister Templeman, because he has responsibility for all licensing matters.

[9.10 am]

**Mr D.F. BARRON-SULLIVAN:** So we are not dealing at this stage with the whole of the Department for Planning and Infrastructure?

**The CHAIRMAN:** No. We are dealing only with services 1, 3 and 4 in division 39. The remainder of the division will be allocated to the Minister Assisting the Minister for Planning and Infrastructure.

**Mr B.S. WYATT:** I refer to page 644. The final dot point under "Major Initiatives For 2006-07" states -

Upgrade the public boat ramps at Tantabiddi and Bundegi to provide improved trailer boat access to the waters of Exmouth.

Can the minister please provide an update on those public boat ramps?

**Ms A.J.G. MacTIERNAN:** I thank the member for the question. An amount of \$1.5 million has been provided to the Shire of Exmouth to plan for, and upgrade, the two main boat launching ramps at Tantabiddi and Bundegi. Around \$20 000 of that amount has been provided through the recreational boating facilities scheme. A further \$1.5 million has been provided from the consolidated fund for the construction works. This is part of the planning for the Ningaloo coast. Those facilities will be delivered this year. The first ramp to be constructed will be Bundegi.

**Mr G.M. CASTRILLI:** I refer to the "Major Policy Decisions" on page 657, specifically the fourth item, "Multi-purpose Taxi Diesel Subsidy". I also refer to the sixth dot point on page 665, under "Major Initiatives For 2006-07". In November of last year the minister announced a \$5 fuel subsidy for each trip taken by an MPT vehicle. However, that subsidy is available only for metropolitan multipurpose taxis. Can the minister give me rationale for not offering that subsidy to MPT drivers throughout the state?

**Ms A.J.G. MacTIERNAN:** The cost structures for the operation of taxis in country areas are very different from those in the metropolitan area. For example, plate fees tend to be a lot higher in the metropolitan area, and that feeds into the cost of providing the service. However, I am certainly prepared to look at the issue, if it is an issue, with the country taxi fleet drivers. It has not been raised with me specifically. The reason for the subsidy is to try to bring down the cost structure of MPT vehicles. An MPT vehicle costs about \$70 000. I am not sure how many MPT vehicles are in the country taxi fleet. However, as I have said, I am happy to look at that matter.

**Mr G.M. CASTRILLI:** I thank the minister. I hope the minister will look at that matter, because it has been raised with me. Although some of the cost structures in country areas may be lower, I suggest that other cost structures may well be higher. The MPT service is provided for all Western Australians. Therefore, if the minister would look at that matter, it would be much appreciated.

**Ms A.J.G. MacTIERNAN:** No problem.

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**Mr D.T. REDMAN:** The second last dot point on page 656, under “Significant Issues and Trends”, refers to transport energy. I am particularly interested in the reference to renewable fuels, such as biofuels. Has the minister taken any steps to ensure that metropolitan public bus fleet operators are encouraged to create a market for locally produced biofuels, particularly biodiesel?

**Ms A.J.G. MacTIERNAN:** That is a good question. Moves are afoot in this area. However, at about 11.30 am we will be dealing with division 41, the Public Transport Authority of Western Australia. We have made it very clear that we want the public bus fleet to be doing that work. The PTA is the operational division through which we are delivering this subsidy. Therefore, it will be in a better position than I to give the member an update on that subsidy.

**Mrs J. HUGHES:** The sixth dot point on page 665 refers to the provision of an improved MPT service to meet the needs of people who are confined to wheelchairs. Can the minister give me some more information on that matter?

**Ms A.J.G. MacTIERNAN:** The issue of multipurpose taxis has been very difficult. The MPT operators have had a very high cost structure. That is due partly to the requirement that the vehicle that they purchase must have the capacity to carry two wheelchairs. That has meant that only a limited range of vehicles has been available. The other difficulty is that the only vehicle that has been available for that purpose is not capable of being converted to gas. Therefore, they have had to purchase a high-cost vehicle, and they have also had high running costs, because they have had to run their vehicles on diesel. Another problem is that because of the high level of employment in this state, many of the MPT operators are finding it difficult to obtain drivers. Also, many people who are attracted to the taxi industry are not necessarily the most comfortable about dealing with people with a high level of disability, as occurred in the unfortunate incident over the weekend when a driver refused to take a person and his guide-dog. That has meant that we have had to look at a raft of ways in which to improve the operation of MPT taxis. The first initiative that we have taken is the MPT plate buyback scheme. That scheme will reduce one of the cost structures for the industry, because it will remove the speculative value of the plates. The government is also offering a rebate of \$8 500 for every new or replaced MPT vehicle to help with the fit-out cost. That will also help drive down the cost structures. The MPT operators will now be able to lease plates at \$100 a week. That compares favourably with the rates that are available in the private market. The government has also introduced a \$5 fuel subsidy for each wheelchair trip undertaken by an MPT operator. The final thing the government has done to try to resolve this problem is establish a cadetship system. Under that system, people who agree to be an MPT driver for two years will have the full cost of their taxi licence paid for by the government. That will encourage more people to become MPT drivers.

**Mr M.P. MURRAY:** I refer to page 672. The eighth dot point under “Major initiatives For 2006-07” refers to the establishment of an intermodal facility at North Greenbushes. That will be a significant program, and I am interested to know how it is progressing.

[9.20 am]

**Ms A.J.G. MacTIERNAN:** That is a very good question. There were a number of delays because of planning problems with the City of Bunbury and the attitude that it was taking on the development of port facilities, which led to a whole sequence of matters going before the State Administrative Tribunal. Unfortunately, we had the allocation in the budget. We were keen to go and the Australian Railroad Group was keen to go, as was WA Plantation Resources. All those matters have now been resolved, and it will commence in the next couple of months. There are three elements: the upgrading of the Picton-north Greenbushes railway, the establishment of the train loading facilities for woodchips and the construction of the new siding at the Bunbury port. We are pretty keen to see this kick off within the next couple of months. Within the next 12 months we are hoping to get the woodchip rail service up and running, and six months after that, the log services.

**Mr D.T. REDMAN:** My question relates to page 681. The first line item under “Details of Controlled Grants and Subsidies” relates to “Aviation (Public Air) Subsidies”. There is a figure of \$852 000 in the 2006-07 budget. Where and how is this money spent and is there any funding for subsidised air travel between Broome and Derby in 2006-07, assuming that that is what it relates to?

**Ms A.J.G. MacTIERNAN:** The figure relates to a range of services. We subsidise the Broome-Fitzroy Crossing-Halls Creek service. That is a major part of that subsidy. We also subsidise the Broome-Derby route. Whether we continue with that will depend on whether we get a new project up. The Shire of Derby/West Kimberley is very keen for the subsidy, which is around \$300 000, to be redirected to underwrite a direct service from Perth-Derby. The shire sees that as something that will deliver greatly for the area. We are going through the EOI process to see if an airline is prepared to do that. We are really trying to tie down the mining companies up there.

**Mr D.T. REDMAN:** Minister, what is an EOI process?

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**Ms A.J.G. MacTIERNAN:** It stands for expression of interest. We are asking companies that are interested.

**Mr D.T. REDMAN:** What is the likely time frame for an outcome of that process?

**Ms A.J.G. MacTIERNAN:** We would want something to be sorted out within the next three months to see if it is prospective. It will depend very much on the preparedness of the mining companies, such as Aztec Resources and Kimberley Diamond Company, to commit to it. They make a lot of positive statements. Local communities should be getting regular passenger transport services out of the fly in, fly out arrangement. At least that would provide some other spin-off benefits to regional communities. We have made it very clear to the mining companies that we do not want them chartering these services. Where possible, we want to see RPT services being delivered.

**Mr D.T. REDMAN:** Is the service that you mentioned that provides flights from Broome to Fitzroy Crossing and Halls Creek also subsidised by the mining companies?

**Ms A.J.G. MacTIERNAN:** No, none of the flights is subsidised by the mining companies, and we are not asking them to do so. We are asking mining companies to use them rather than use charters. The Fitzroy Crossing-Halls Creek service is subsidised by the state government.

**Mr D.T. REDMAN:** Was there no necessity for a commitment from the mining companies in that case?

**Ms A.J.G. MacTIERNAN:** Not for those. Obviously, the Perth-Derby route could work only if we had a substantial commitment from one or more of the mining companies. I think BGC is one of the other companies that has been approached because it is doing the contract mining for Aztec.

**Mr D.T. REDMAN:** The minister mentioned the Perth-Derby route. The second part of my question related to the Broome-Derby route.

**Ms A.J.G. MacTIERNAN:** The shire is saying that a Perth-Derby route has a greater priority than a Broome-Derby route. There has not been great usage of the Broome-Derby route. As we are spending, as is our wont, all this money on country roads, the Derby Highway is being significantly upgraded. Each year when we go up there, a new section has been done. The actual road trip is getting quicker. It is like having a Perth-Bunbury air service. Once the good roads are in, the attractiveness of an air service reduces. It makes sense, and we are doing this at the request of the shire to redirect those funds to another project.

**Mr B.S. WYATT:** Currently we are being driven by a desire for our commodities. Nationally, we have been caught a bit short with infrastructure, particularly in Queensland, regarding ports. The fifth dot point from the bottom of page 665 refers to studies to identify the infrastructure requirements to meet the expected increase in iron ore exports from the Pilbara and the mid-west. Could the minister give me some detail on the nature of the studies being undertaken?

[9.30 am]

**Ms A.J.G. MacTIERNAN:** This is a very interesting issue, particularly in light of the non-decision by the federal Treasurer this morning on the question of whether he would allow Fortescue Metals Group to access the BHP rail link. Mining companies and the various players are moving their plans forward with great rapidity and there is a desire to move to new deposits and have those deposits released. Hamersley Iron, which traditionally shipped out of Dampier, also has deposits on the other side of the Pilbara. Likewise, BHP, FMG and Hope Downs have deposits across the Pilbara. It is now getting to a point at which there is great competition for the port space and for new port locations. Obviously, some locations are more desirable than others. A lot of the existing ports are reaching basin capacity, so we have to look at whether we need new ports and how we ensure that these are equitably made available to all the players that have ore bodies spread across the Pilbara. We are looking at the distribution of the ore bodies, when those various ore bodies are likely to come on stream, what companies and sets of companies they are with, what rail conduits would be needed to move that product to port, and what additional ports, if any, would need to be put in place to allow them to access those ports.

It is a pretty fiercely contested matter at the moment. A number of the large companies are trying to lay claim to certain bits of real estate for ports and rail. We are saying that we want, first of all, to continue this overall strategic view so that we can get a holistic view. I hope that we will be able to move closer to having facilities that deliver third party control and access. It is a great disappointment that those provisions that were written into every state agreement about third party access being allowed along the lines that were built by the pioneer players have effectively been rendered meaningless.

**Mr B.S. WYATT:** Will those studies examine increasing the capacity of existing ports as well as locations for new ports?

**Ms A.J.G. MacTIERNAN:** That is correct. I refer to Harriet Point in Port Hedland as an example. Obviously it will offer significant capacity. Hope Downs believes it has the right to that port; BHP also wants the right to

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it. A number of smaller players and many people in the community want it developed for common users, so they can move some of the manganese product which is now at the west end of the town and which is creating some amenity issues for the local community. That is one area within an existing port in which a number of different players are competing for that space. Another example is Cape Ronsard, for which both BHP and Hope Downs are putting up their hands for control. This is why we are saying that we should have an overview. We started it three or four months ago and we are trying to be a little more strategic about how these things are allocated than has been the case in the past.

**Mr D.F. BARRON-SULLIVAN:** I refer to the second last dot point on page 656 of the *Budget Statements*. The member for Stirling alluded to it in a different context. I could not agree more with the opening sentence -

Transport energy is flagged globally as one of the critical issues facing society today.

Western Australia obviously has abundant supplies of petroleum gas and natural gas. Which agency is responsible for implementing the Labor Party's transport fuel policy? At the moment the Department of Industry and Resources is involved with the availability of domestic gas supply; the Office of Energy, which I assumed would be coordinating this sort of thing, has no involvement; the Department of Consumer and Employment Protection deals with price control matters and prices; and the Public Transport Authority deals with public transport. However, the minister's portfolio, generally, is the only one in which I have seen something relating to transport energy. Is the minister responsible for the Carpenter Labor government's transport fuel policy?

**Ms A.J.G. MacTIERNAN:** Yes.

**Mr D.F. BARRON-SULLIVAN:** Will the minister give me the specific details of what her government is doing to encourage and foster the use of natural gas and petroleum gas for vehicles? I say that because this state has abundant gas supplies. We are, in a broad economic sense, benefiting from the exploitation of those resources. However, the average Western Australian motorist is not seeing those benefits. We should have the cheapest motoring in the world, and we could if we were to extensively embrace natural gas and petroleum gas. All we have seen from this government is the scrapping of a subsidy to convert cars to run on liquefied petroleum gas. What research and development incentives, tax incentives, subsidies or pricing measures are in place as part of the government's transport fuel policy?

**Ms A.J.G. MacTIERNAN:** The government has certainly not made any decision to scrap the subsidy. I have made that very clear. We made a commitment to extend the subsidy for two years in 2004. As with every subsidy, as the member would expect, the government will look at the effectiveness of that subsidy; and that will happen this year. That subsidy is in place, and it is my expectation that, for some of the reasons the member has suggested, that subsidy will prove to have been effective, and I think there would be a very good case for continuing it. We are looking at whether it needs to be expanded or needs to be more clearly targeted. At the moment it is encouraging a number of motorists to take the LPG option. That review will be done over the next six months, together with an examination of a report we commissioned some time ago into what needs to be done to increase community resilience to cope with the fact of higher fuel prices. It is not expected that petroleum prices will decrease. Things such as the government's investment in hydrogen buses were designed to assist the companies developing hydrogen technology to develop a viable alternative -

**Mr D.F. BARRON-SULLIVAN:** What about natural gas specifically? What is the government doing about developing the technology and the market for natural gas so that people can drive around with fuel that costs 30c a litre rather than have to pay exorbitant amounts for petrol, as they do at the moment?

**Ms A.J.G. MacTIERNAN:** One of the very big things we did when we came into government was to cancel the Liberal government's order for about 700 diesel buses, and switch production to gas buses. That, of course, is a major change and a fillip to the gas industry.

**Mr D.F. BARRON-SULLIVAN:** I am talking about private motorists.

**Ms A.J.G. MacTIERNAN:** I am talking about development of the industry. We have also been working with the industry to deal with freight vehicles. Freight vehicles are now moving to gas, and we have been able to provide length and loading concessions to those vehicles, because they face particular challenges in carrying their gas cylinders while trying to conform to the traditional configurations. We have been working cooperatively with the freight liners to encourage them and to make it easier for them to switch to natural gas.

**Mr D.F. BARRON-SULLIVAN:** Madam Chairman, perhaps it might make it easier if I ask the minister to provide supplementary information. Will the minister provide information on the report she mentioned earlier?

**Ms A.J.G. MacTIERNAN:** It has been publicly released.

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**Mr D.F. BARRON-SULLIVAN:** Okay. Secondly, will the minister supply a copy of the government's policy on transport fuel? Thirdly, will the minister advise -

**Ms A.J.G. MacTIERNAN:** I am quite happy to provide, by way of supplementary information, the report, and I think I have probably tabled it in the past.

**Mr D.F. BARRON-SULLIVAN:** However, because the minister does not have a policy, she cannot provide it.

**Ms A.J.G. MacTIERNAN:** The request for the other documents can be put on notice.

**The CHAIRMAN:** Which report is that, for the sake of the *Hansard*?

**Ms A.J.G. MacTIERNAN:** It is a report that we commissioned in 2004 on how we provide resilience within the community -

**The CHAIRMAN:** Thank you. I will allocate -

**Mr D.F. BARRON-SULLIVAN:** One bit of information -

**The CHAIRMAN:** Does the member wish to have the information or not?

**Mr D.F. BARRON-SULLIVAN:** Definitely.

**The CHAIRMAN:** Good. I will allocate a supplementary information number.

[*Supplementary Information No A12.*]

**Mr D.F. BARRON-SULLIVAN:** Will the minister include as part of that information the number of LPG cars presently used in organisations within her portfolio, including her ministerial office?

**Ms A.J.G. MacTIERNAN:** I think it is really important to always look at a range of alternatives. In our ministerial portfolio we have moved to the even more fuel-efficient hybrid vehicles. I think it is important to look at our performance across the board in the total move away from eight-cylinder vehicles, and from six-cylinder vehicles to four-cylinder vehicles. I think members will see a strong performance there. Members should look at the move to gas and also to the hybrid technology that, in terms of fuel efficiency, is performing even better than the gas-operated vehicles.

[9.40 am]

**Mr D.F. BARRON-SULLIVAN:** Will the minister give a breakdown of all the vehicles in her portfolio, including her office, by the type of car, fuel they use, and so on?

**Ms A.J.G. MacTIERNAN:** I will certainly give the member what information we have available.

**The CHAIRMAN:** Will the minister provide that information by way of supplementary information?

**Ms A.J.G. MacTIERNAN:** Yes.

[*Supplementary Information No A13.*]

**Mr G.M. CASTRILLI:** I refer to the second last dot point under "Major Achievements For 2005-06" on page 664 and the sixth and eight dot points on page 665. I am having difficulty determining where the allocation for the multipurpose taxis subsidy is shown in the budget papers. Also, reference is made in the second last dot point under "Major Achievements For 2005-06" to cadetships. Where is the allocation for that funding shown in the budget?

**Ms A.J.G. MacTIERNAN:** That money is funded from the taxi industry development fund. All the money received from leasing the metropolitan taxi fleet goes into the taxi industry development fund, and that money is then spent on measures involving the taxi industry. There is the occasional transfer fee from an existing transferable plate that is transferred, and a payment is made at that point. However, the lion's share of the money in the taxi industry development fund comes from the lease payments.

**Mr G.M. CASTRILLI:** The eighth dot point on page 665 reads -

Implement the recommendations of the Country Taxi Review to provide fair returns to drivers and owner/drivers while offering the public an efficient, economical and safe service and address the requirements of the National Competition Council.

When will that happen, how will it happen, and what do the recommendations include?

**Ms A.J.G. MacTIERNAN:** The review is under way. It is in operation now.

**Mr G.M. CASTRILLI:** How will it be achieved? Exactly what recommendations are in that review, and how will they be delivered?

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**Ms A.J.G. MacTIERNAN:** A lot of it is associated with the distribution of plates and the mechanism that we would adopt for the issuing of new plates, and that formula is under way. Also, it dealt with the principles of how we fix taxi fares. As I understand it, those provisions are already under way. I can provide the member with a copy of the report that was produced. My understanding is that the provisions in the report that refer to the formulas that are used for the issuing of new plates and the fixing of fares are already in place.

**Mr G.M. CASTRILLI:** I seek that information as supplementary information.

**The CHAIRMAN:** Does the minister agree to provide a report in terms of the taxi industry?

**Ms A.J.G. MacTIERNAN:** Yes.

*[Supplementary Information No A14.]*

**Mr G.M. CASTRILLI:** The minister referred to price fixing. I am sure it is not a case of collusion, but how are the fares set?

**Ms A.J.G. MacTIERNAN:** We set the fares and there is a mechanism by which they are amended. In Perth, for example, it is amended with reference to the private motoring index. It is my understanding that this report into country taxis was also tied to increases in the metropolitan area. I will clarify that.

**Mr M.P. MURRAY:** The sixth dot point on page 664, which is the twentieth dot point under “Major Achievements For 2005-06”, refers to the development of improved oil spill equipment. What is the government doing to protect our coastline from the threat posed by the hundreds of ships that are moving along our coast each day carrying tonnes of oil or fuel that could ruin our coastal environment if there was a spill, as has occurred in other countries?

**Ms A.J.G. MacTIERNAN:** We recently participated in a national training exercise. It was hosted by the Department for Planning and Infrastructure, which is responsible for responding to oil spills in state waters. We had a simulated ship-sourced oil spill at the Kwinana port, and the team moved in to address it, using helicopters that were dispersing buckets, and large-scale oil response equipment. It involved the Australian Maritime Safety Authority and the Fremantle Port Authority. It was a three-day exercise and it was very successful. It shows that we have the technology and the capacity to deal very swiftly with oil spills. It is really important that we train people and have those sorts of skills at a high state of readiness. It was a great initiative by the department to not only go through the normal training, but also to have a practical exercise so that we can be confident that if a disaster did strike - that is, we had a ship of shame or another vessel that had sprung a leak - we would have the capacity to deal with an oil spill. It is a great move by the department. We have the equipment and the skill.

**The CHAIRMAN:** I advise members that currently I have the members for Stirling, Leschenault and Bunbury on the call sheet. It is 9.50 am and if members wish to switch to Main Roads at 10.30 am, they need to be cognisant that we still have division 42 to deal with before then.

**Mr D.T. REDMAN:** The third last dot point on page 665 states -

Develop a policy to determine the rationale for government involvement in subsidising passenger services (both air and land) in regional areas of Western Australia.

The government’s intention is to determine the rationale for government involvement in subsidising passenger services. Does the government intend to cut the subsidies for regional areas? What is the current government spending on subsidies for regional services?

[9.50 am]

**Ms A.J.G. MacTIERNAN:** The member saw that before when he was looking at the line item when asking his last question.

**Mr D.T. REDMAN:** It is the total spending on land as well as air travel subsidies, is it?

**Ms A.J.G. MacTIERNAN:** That is the subsidy. Does the member want the total?

**Mr D.T. REDMAN:** The dot point relates to both air and land travel subsidies in regional areas. Is it the government’s intention to cut subsidies for passenger services in regional areas?

**Ms A.J.G. MacTIERNAN:** No.

**Mr D.T. REDMAN:** What is the total current spending on subsidies?

**Ms A.J.G. MacTIERNAN:** The subsidies for land transport will occur in the Public Transport Authority budget. They would include subsidies for the *Australind* and *Prospector*. As well as the services that we subsidise, we also provide airfare subsidies to pensioners, for example, north of the twenty-sixth parallel. I am presuming that, because no-one from the department seems to know about this. The subsidies in this budget tend to be for air transport and some of the pensioner concessions. Within the PTA budget are embedded subsidies.

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For example, a person catching the *AvonLink* is subsidised to the extent of around \$57 per ticket; for the *Prospector* the subsidy is probably around \$90. The PTA coach services are also heavily subsidised, but it does not appear as a particular subsidy. I will, quite willingly, provide the member with a picture of all the different subsidies that are available for regional transport. Of course, one of the biggest subsidies is the \$90 million-plus that we spend on providing regional school bus services.

**The CHAIRMAN:** The minister is agreeing to provide that by way of supplementary information.

[*Supplementary Information No A15.*]

**Mr B.S. WYATT:** This question, which flows from my last question on ports, is on the philosophy underlying the operations of the department. The third dot point on page 656 reads -

If the Department is to partner successfully with industry and the community to anticipate and resolve capacity constraints, it must understand industry requirements . . . with particular significance for Indigenous people.

I do not need the specifics, but, in general, what industries is the department researching and partnering, and what processes are in place for the involvement of those indigenous people?

**Ms A.J.G. MacTIERNAN:** A couple of examples that we can talk about are the different parts of the department involved in this sort of work in the mid-west, where, as the member for Geraldton would know, there are issues surrounding how the product is moved. The newly formed iron ore industry in the mid-west is working very constructively with those companies to ensure that the freight is moved in a way that will be reasonably economic for those companies but will not massively impact on the amenity of the local community. They are working to get freight onto rail, which is a very similar process to that in which we were in partnership with WA Plantation Resources and the Australian Rail Group in the south west to develop a response not just to focus on the woodchip industry, but also to strengthen the woodchip industry and, for the first time in many decades, to get logs onto rail. That is one partnership. Another aspect is the native title component in the Department for Planning and Infrastructure, where very capable people have been working to resolve native title issues. In particular, in our townsite development program we need to settle native title issues to be able to release land across the state. The DPI native title unit has fundamentally been driving that work and the settlement of those issues.

**Mr D.F. BARRON-SULLIVAN:** On page 664, the third dot point refers to the good old skipper's ticket. These are specific questions, so I do not know whether the minister can answer them now or whether she will provide answers by way of supplementary information. What are the costs associated with recreational boat users obtaining a skipper's ticket? Will recreational boat users be exempt from sitting the practical examination for the skipper's ticket if they have been a recreational boat user for five or more years; and, if so, will recreational boat users who have not satisfied the full five consecutive years' criterion be unable to have prior practical sailing hours considered? I refer, for example, to someone who has been sailing for 20 years but has not had five consecutive years of owning and sailing a boat.

[10.00 am]

**Ms A.J.G. MacTIERNAN:** I will take that on notice. There has always to be some cut-off point. One could always find a hard case in which one could say there should be an exemption, but there has to be a system that is capable of being implemented. Frankly, it is not an onerous condition to meet. Someone who clearly has the level of experience that the member is talking about would not have a great deal of difficulty attaining the standards that have been set out. I will provide supplementary information on whether there is any other capacity for the recognition of prior learning. However, as I say, we are unashamed. We think this is long overdue. We note that the previous government entered into a national agreement to go down this path, but was unable to find the resolve to do it. A large number of people have already been doing their training, getting the assessment and getting their TL3 or equivalent certificate. However, the member's fundamental question is whether there is any other mechanism for the recognition of prior learning.

**Mr D.F. BARRON-SULLIVAN:** The other question was how much.

**The CHAIRMAN:** Can the minister confirm exactly what supplementary information she will provide?

**Ms A.J.G. MacTIERNAN:** That is what I am trying to clarify.

**Mr D.F. BARRON-SULLIVAN:** What flexibility is there for boat users who cannot satisfy the criterion of five consecutive years of boat ownership or activity? Some people might have spent years sailing boats from Europe to Australia, for example, but have not owned a boat for a while and cannot demonstrate five consecutive years of use. Is there some flexibility? Those people might have real sea legs.



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**Ms A.J.G. MacTIERNAN:** We must be careful about how that is assessed. It is hardly onerous for people to go through one day's training to get their TL3 or equivalent certificate, and that is something that they would be able to discharge.

**Mr D.F. BARRON-SULLIVAN:** I will not go on, but this is what peeves people about government. It is easy to say that it is only one day's training or it is only two hours' queuing at the licensing centre.

**Ms A.J.G. MacTIERNAN:** It is very easy for oppositions -

**Mr D.F. BARRON-SULLIVAN:** Let us return to the other question, which was how much.

**Ms A.J.G. MacTIERNAN:** Training is provided by private providers, so it is not something that the government regulates. The same applies to people who go to private driving schools; we do not set the fees that are charged by those private driving companies. We were very conscious that we did not want to introduce a licensing system, so the provision of the tickets, by and large, is being done by not-for-profit groups such as boating associations, or by private providers. However, we can give the member some idea of what we understand the price will be.

**Mr D.F. BARRON-SULLIVAN:** Having imposed the requirement, I would think that the government would at least monitor the cost that it is imposing on the community.

**Ms A.J.G. MacTIERNAN:** If there were someone here today from the department who knew anything about it, I would give the member that information.

**Mr D.F. BARRON-SULLIVAN:** It can be done by way of supplementary information. It is easy; that is how the process works, minister.

**The CHAIRMAN:** Will the minister state the supplementary information that she will supply?

**Ms A.J.G. MacTIERNAN:** I will provide information on whether there is any other mechanism over and above the five years' continuous registered boat ownership that would allow recognition of prior learning in the acquisition of the recreational skipper's ticket. I will also provide any information that we have about the cost of the provision of services by private providers.

*[Supplementary Information No A16.]*

**The CHAIRMAN:** I take this opportunity to remind members that there is an agreement to commence the next division at 10.30 pm, and we still have division 42 to go. The members for Bunbury, Kingsley and Stirling are currently listed on the call sheet.

**Mr D.T. REDMAN:** The member for Bunbury has left.

**The CHAIRMAN:** He was next on the call sheet. That solves that problem. I also ask members to be aware of the time in case a comfort break is required. The next member on the list is the member for Kingsley.

**Mrs J. HUGHES:** My question is about Hillarys Boat Harbour. Many of my constituents use the boat harbour as it is the closest coastal node. Reference is made to some upgrades in the capital works program listed on page 673. I found it interesting that the member for Hillarys understood that extra work was to be done on the extension of the Hillarys marina area. Can the minister give me further details on what is happening with the upgrade of Hillarys Boat Harbour?

**Ms A.J.G. MacTIERNAN:** I will get confirmation from the director general that these projects are planned for this year. A number of projects are being undertaken at Hillarys Boat Harbour, including the construction of the southern intersection, car park upgrades, improvements to the pedestrian networks, entry statements, lighting, furniture and soft landscaping. This year about \$2 million will be spent on that work. Another \$1 million will be spent this year on work to modify the breakwater; that is, an extension of about 70 metres at the entrance of the harbour. The idea is to reduce the wave swell as people enter the harbour. There has been some concern that the excessive wave climate is causing some damage to moorings at the E jetty. An amount of \$500 000 will be spent on refurbishing the floating pens, and a smaller sum of money will be spent on adding to an earlier project; that is, the asset replacement project, which involves the reconstruction of the frontage road at Sorrento quay and the construction of a pedestrian pathway. A number of projects are under way. It is important that we keep investing in Hillarys Boat Harbour. It has been an enormous success. I think there are about four million visitations to Hillarys Boat Harbour each year, making it one of the most highly visited tourist destinations in the Perth metropolitan area.

**Mrs J. HUGHES:** Are there no plans for any further extensions for commercial interests?

[10.10 am]

**Ms A.J.G. MacTIERNAN:** I will provide that information as supplementary information. Obviously the Wyllie group has wanted to further develop the area. No-one is able to tell us exactly what stage that is up to.

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[*Supplementary Information No A17.*]

**Mr D.T. REDMAN:** “Service 3” on page 668 states -

This service contributes to the Government’s State Strategic Planning Framework goal . . . controlling lot sizes and therefore the costs of infrastructure required to service each lot;

Does the department consider approving some departures from the established norms regarding lot sizes and its link to infrastructure costs when it can be demonstrated that services can be provided by other sources? In higher rainfall areas along the south coast, some people could provide water on their lots to their own site rather than have it provided by a reticulated service. However, the established position is that it can only go down to a certain lot size, after which reticulated water systems are required. Is the department considering a departure from those norms?

**Ms A.J.G. MacTIERNAN:** That policy is under review because it is a blunt instrument for trying to control the spread of development. It is important for the delivery of a range of services, including school bus services, to ensure that people are not living in areas where they will be highly dependent on a motor vehicle and will have to travel a long way to populated areas. We are trying to encourage the containment of rural residential living in areas around a town. That policy has tended to be tied to allowing that scale of development depending on the availability of reticulated water. However, water is not the issue. Water is being used as the issue when the real issue is the wish to limit fragmented development away from a town site. I have been concerned by that policy because it inappropriately uses water to control another issue. When we have a policy, we should focus on its objective and put some barriers around that rather than inappropriately using water to implement the policy. I agree with the member. More people could be encouraged to become dependent on tank systems, particularly in high rainfall areas. The current mechanism has been inappropriately used. I have recently asked the department to review that statement of planning policy. I have discussed reconsidering the policy with the chairman. Someone who owns a farm might want to subdivide it to make a lot of money from the sale. However, that requires a level of development that must then be serviced. It is very expensive for local governments to provide a high level of service to those types of communities. It is important that developments be kept to within a decent radius of a town centre, but approval should not necessarily be tied to reticulation.

**Mr D.T. REDMAN:** What is the time line for that review?

**Ms A.J.G. MacTIERNAN:** It will probably take a year or so. In the meantime we are capable of looking at subdivision proposals provided that they meet the other requirements of being within a reasonable distance of four or five kilometres from a town centre. If developments like that are proposed, we can look in advance at the final change to the policy and determine whether we can consider those developments. I can take up that matter with the chairman.

**Mr D.T. REDMAN:** Will that be an internal review?

**Ms A.J.G. MacTIERNAN:** Because it is a statement of planning policy that is other than a region scheme, it is the highest level of policy documentation. When we propose a change to that policy, it will be released for public comment before it becomes policy.

**Mr G. SNOOK:** I entered the chamber at the end of the discussion on recreational skippers’ tickets. Will the recreational skipper’s ticket be graded to reflect and meet the vessel craft size and gross tonnage to match competency requirements?

**Ms A.J.G. MacTIERNAN:** Not at this stage. Over time these requirements will be refined. The member must bear in mind that previously there were no requirements whatsoever, which was in breach of a national undertaking and was contrary to commonsense. It makes sense to place requirements on recreational skippers. As the member for Collie said, these measures have been met with a great deal of enthusiasm from the boating community because it recognises the importance of skippers having a certain level of training. It is important to put in place the principle that some mandatory training is required. When the system is up and running, further refinements can be made to it. Indeed, we would expect further refinements to be made to it. When drivers’ licences were introduced, they were generic licences. Over time the system became more sophisticated and required different levels of training for different types of vehicles. It is possible that in five years from now the government may consider it appropriate to have different levels of training requirements for skippers’ tickets. My task was to get a basic system up and running and to begin the sea change of understanding that it is important for people in control of a motorised vessel to have some idea of what they are doing and how they are meant to interact with other vessels with which they are sharing the waterway.

**Mr G. SNOOK:** I concur with the minister’s points. The minister is probably aware that I have had considerable experience as a professional fisherman and hold a master class 5 and other tickets. I can assure the minister that there is a need for recreational boat owners who drive vessels of a similar size to commercial

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fishermen and who encounter the same conditions and have the same responsibilities for their passengers as commercial fishermen to meet a defined level of competency. Perhaps it does not need to be the same level as commercial fishermen are required to meet.

**Ms A.J.G. MacTIERNAN:** That is what we have introduced. We have taken it from a system that had no requirement to demonstrate competency to a system whereby someone must demonstrate a level of knowledge and competence. I recognise and acknowledge - I think this is part of what the member is saying - that because of the wide range of vessels, in time it will be necessary to have a differentiated system. Although that is not the immediate task at hand, in five years' time another minister who must deal with this issue may decide that because the basics are in place it is time to further refine the system.

[10.20 am]

**Mr B.S. WYATT:** I refer the minister to page 747 division within 42.

**The CHAIRMAN:** We cannot refer to that division yet.

**Mr D.F. BARRON-SULLIVAN:** I have one more question. I thought I put my hand up straight after the member for Moore.

**The CHAIRMAN:** The member for Leschenault is next on the list to ask a question. We are dealing with division 39 at the moment. If members are planning to move to division 40 at 10.30 am we will need to move to division 42 very quickly. The members for Leschenault, Stirling and Moore are still on the list for division 39. Would the member for Leschenault like to ask his question now on division 39?

**Mr D.F. BARRON-SULLIVAN:** No; I will ask it on notice.

**The CHAIRMAN:** Are there any other questions on division 39?

**The appropriation was recommended.**