

Ms Rita Saffioti; Mr Dean Nalder; Mr Mick Murray; Mr Murray Cowper; Mr Peter Watson; Chairman; Mr Frank Alban

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**Division 73: Commissioner of Main Roads, \$1 164 030 000 —**

Ms W.M. Duncan, Chairman.

Mr D.C. Nalder, Minister for Transport.

Mr R. Waldock, Commissioner.

Mr P. Woronzow, Executive Director, Finance and Commercial Services.

Mr S. Troughton, Managing Director.

Mr D. Snook, Executive Director, Road Network Services.

[Witnesses introduced.]

**The CHAIRMAN:** I give the call to the member for West Swan.

**Ms R. SAFFIOTI:** My question relates to commonwealth grants referred to at the bottom of page 819 of the budget papers. What understanding does the minister have of the funding profile put forward by the commonwealth for the freight link project Roe 8?

**Mr D.C. NALDER:** It is only one week since it was announced and we are waiting for that confirmation. My understanding is that the total funding will be \$925 million, which is broken into two components. The main one is the \$866 million that I heard the Premier refer to earlier today. We still need to engage with our federal counterparts to finalise a lot of this stuff, but the commonwealth has advised me at this stage that it intends to up-front the project. Beyond that, we still need to do a lot of the groundwork. We have the business case for Roe 8 but this is now a much bigger project, as we are looking at taking it through to the ports, which will require various grade separations along Stock Road through to Leach Highway and then along Leach Highway and High Street. Some funding for High Street was already in the budget, and I think it captures all of it now as one major project. The nearly \$1.6 billion includes all those aspects and also a grade separation on Stirling Highway at Marmion Street. I will give a little more detail to provide better information to the member. Roe 8 involves the construction of five kilometres of new dual carriageway from Kwinana Freeway to Stock Road, and it includes that interchange at the freeway. It is a major engineering project, as we want to ensure that at the same time it links onto Murdoch Drive. Part of the reason the hospitals were placed where they are is that it was always intended to have two major thoroughfares, being Roe Highway and Kwinana Freeway. It is really an imperative and a priority for us that when this project gets going, that intersection be done as quickly as possible. Again, I have not seen final numbers on any of these things, as it is still early, although I have been given an estimate because I was surprised to find that major works are needed at that intersection. Those works at that intersection of the freeway and the hospital alone will cost in the vicinity of \$265 million. Part of that is because of the way the intersection was built there when Roe 7 was finished. It should have been set up from the outset so that Roe Highway could continue but it was not. It therefore requires major engineering works and a major cost, which is unfortunate and should have never occurred.

**Ms R. SAFFIOTI:** Can we go through the numbers? It is a total cost of \$1.6 billion. There is a total of \$925 million from the commonwealth, which includes all works, but \$866 million is for the Roe 8 section only.

**Mr D.C. NALDER:** No. The Roe 8 section is estimated to cost \$740 million. I believe \$20 million has been expended on the project to date with a lot of the planning works already undertaken. The rest of the project is really grade separations. There is another major grade separation at the corner of Leach Highway and Stock Road. At this time we do not have numbers or estimates around that, which makes it difficult to work out what the rest is. There are rough guidelines and all I have is a broad guideline on the rest of it. We have been saying that it is \$1.6 billion but \$1.575 billion is the number that has been agreed with the federal government. The reality is that we still need to do a lot more work. They are really rough estimates at this point to get an understanding of the budget.

**Ms R. SAFFIOTI:** Just to break that down, it is \$1.575 billion.

**Mr D.C. NALDER:** Correct.

**Ms R. SAFFIOTI:** How much is from the commonwealth?

**Mr D.C. NALDER:** It is \$925 million all up.

**Ms R. SAFFIOTI:** And how much is from the state and how much is from the private sector?

**Mr D.C. NALDER:** It has been agreed broadly on the public component that the federal government will fund 80 per cent and the state will fund 20 per cent. The remainder will be private equity, if you like—a private partnership. Some of those numbers still need to be finalised. As we refine this project and get it worked out, we

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will finalise the numbers. The commonwealth has put a figure in its budget but that could move based on the final figures. The commonwealth is indicating that for the public component, 80 per cent will be the commonwealth's, at \$925 million, we will make up 20 per cent and the remainder will be funded by the private partnership.

**Ms R. SAFFIOTI:** I have a follow-up question. I am sorry, I am asking a lot of questions just to get the key to the answer. There is \$1.575 billion made up of \$925 million from the commonwealth, so that is \$250 million from the state and the rest from the private sector; is that right?

**Mr D.C. NALDER:** If the member considers that our contribution is one-quarter of the commonwealth's, that is the funding that we are expecting to get out of that. One-quarter of \$925 million is a bit more than \$260 million, and the remaining contribution of the \$1.575 billion is the private equity component.

**Ms R. SAFFIOTI:** Will the proposed toll be applicable only to the new works being undertaken or will it be applicable to other parts of the freight network?

[8.00 pm]

**Mr D.C. NALDER:** I have discussed this with the Premier. When we talk about tolls—I will use the comments that he made today—we think of tolls as something that everybody is charged. We are looking at a freight charge and we have agreed to investigate that. As part of that process, a lot of work still needs to be undertaken. We need to engage with the industry and understand the productivity that will be gained from this. I would like to understand the time, the fuel and the maintenance that will be saved with the project so that we can understand the gain from doing this for the industry; and, as such, we can look at an equitable charge. Then we will need to work through what is fair and equitable. It is too early at this stage to give a commitment on what that might look like. We have not really commenced anything. We have been waiting for confirmation from the federal government that the funding will be provided, and it has confirmed that in the past week. We now need to move on with the other stages. The first thing that needs to occur is the environmental approval, and an independent environmental process is being undertaken at this point; it is nearly finalised. We are hopeful that that will clear up any issues within the next few months and allow us to further continue what we need to do with our funding component and determine a freight charge, but we will not wait for that environmental process. We are commencing that work now, but it is too early to give a more accurate picture of that because at this stage we do not know.

[Mr P. Abetz took the chair.]

**Mr M.P. MURRAY:** On page 812 of the budget papers, reference is made to the importance of the road transport industry to service regional areas. What funding has been made available for the Coalfields highway east from Collie to Arthur River, considering that Main Roads has identified that \$65 million worth of upgrades are needed; and, if there is no funding, will the minister reverse the decision to allow road trains to come down that section of the road?

**Mr D.C. NALDER:** Yes, funding is available for the Coalfields highway east of Collie. There are two components. The first is a \$10 million allocation for Arthur River. The member knows how the road comes in from Wagin and there is the staggered T-intersection. We are looking at some major engineering works there. There is still a bit of work to be done. It has been indicated to me that a major roundabout is being considered, similar to the entry at Mt Barker. There is still a bit of work to go so it is a bit early to confirm that, but \$10 million has been allocated to that.

Further towards Collie, there are two projects. Another \$10 million has been allocated and that has been split roughly in half, with \$5 million for each. One is at Gibbs Siding Road and the other is at Bowelling. I do not know where Bowelling is, but I understand it is on the other side of Darkan. All-up there is \$20 million. They were considered to be the three most important sections of that road that we need to focus on at this point.

**Mr M.P. MURRAY:** Considering that there is \$20 million for that road and one of the main sections is an intersection, not the road itself, where road trains will mix with other traffic, will the minister consider at least limiting the number of trucks that will travel on that road? What was the reason for making the decision to allow that to be used before the roadworks were done, considering the number of accidents that occur on the west Collie highway?

**Mr D.C. NALDER:** For the detail of that question, I will throw to Mr Des Snook.

**Mr D. Snook:** There are about 500 vehicles a day at the Arthur River end of Coalfield Road and that level increases going to Collie. Around Darkan there are around 3 000 vehicles a day and through Collie there are about 5 000 vehicles a day. We expect an additional 100 vehicles a day from the Bunge Australia exercise, so we believe that the road is quite capable of taking that amount of traffic. However, we also operate our

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heavy vehicle services section and from time to time we will put our transport inspectors down there to do inspections of the vehicles that go through there.

**Mr M.P. MURRAY:** That is disgraceful.

**Mr M.J. COWPER:** I understand there is also some \$27 million to do the Coalfields highway in the Murray–Wellington electorate. I note that there were some headlines about that and the previous government admitted to dropping the ball on this particular subject. I just want to make sure that we have the money to —

**Mr M.P. MURRAY:** Why does the member not get on and do his job?

**Mr M.J. COWPER:** I am doing it right now.

**Mr M.P. MURRAY:** Six years ago it was promised.

**The CHAIRMAN:** Member for Collie–Preston!

**Mr M.J. COWPER:** How much did the member’s government spend?

**The CHAIRMAN:** Member, please address yourself to the Chair.

**Mr M.J. COWPER:** I am asking the minister a question.

**Mr P.B. WATSON:** This is not supposed to be political.

**Mr M.P. MURRAY:** It is good to see that the member is awake for a change!

**Mr M.J. COWPER:** The last time I saw a mouth like the member’s, it had a hook in it!

**The CHAIRMAN:** Member, you need to ask a question, not give a preamble.

**Mr M.P. MURRAY:** The member will get a hook all right, but it will be a right one!

**The CHAIRMAN:** Member for Collie–Preston, I will need to call you if you do not desist.

**Mr M.P. MURRAY:** So there is only one side in this argument.

**The CHAIRMAN:** Member, have you asked your question?

**Mr M.J. COWPER:** I have asked the question.

**Mr P.B. WATSON** interjected.

**The CHAIRMAN:** Member for Albany, I call you to order. It is unacceptable behaviour to call into question the ruling of the Chair. I call you for the first time.

**Mr D.C. NALDER:** The first question was about the east, but \$27.5 million has been allocated for some works for a 19.5-kilometre section of the highway from just west of the Wellington Dam turn-off to Collie.

**Mr P.B. WATSON:** He is going to hit someone and nothing happens.

**The CHAIRMAN:** Member for Albany, the minister has the call, not you.

**Mr D.C. NALDER:** An upgrade is proposed to get rid of the tight curves through there. We know what the problem is. What is interesting about this is that if we go back to the funding and we get the facts straight on this, we find that research was done on the Coalfields highway back in the late 1990s.

**Mr M.P. MURRAY:** Is that before the horse or after the cart?

**Mr D.C. NALDER:** In 1999, Main Roads identified \$40 million worth of upgrades for that road. The first of the two \$20 million upgrades identified by the Court government were completed in 2000. The second was budgeted to be completed before the end of 2005. The Gallop government won the election and it abandoned that second pledge. Nothing was done for the remainder of the time that Labor was in government.

**Mr P.B. WATSON:** The Liberal Party is in government now.

**Mr M.J. COWPER:** Dropped the ball; play on.

**Mr D.C. NALDER:** In August 2008, the Liberal government then committed —

**Ms R. SAFFIOTI:** We have been less political than these guys.

**The CHAIRMAN:** Members, the minister has the call.

**Mr D.C. NALDER:** In the *Bunbury Mail* of 20 October 2010, the shadow transport minister, Ken Travers, admitted that Labor dropped the ball on the Coalfields highway. That is a quote.

**Mr M.P. MURRAY:** What is the government doing now?

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**The CHAIR:** Members, the minister has the call.

**Mr D.C. NALDER:** In 2010, he admitted that these guys had dropped the ball. To date, we have spent \$25 million on it and we have allocated another \$27.5 million to deal with the west side. There have been some challenges with the west side, because it goes through state forest.

**Mr M.P. MURRAY:** Be careful, minister, honestly, because it has been discussed in here previously. The Labor Party supported any excision of that forest if the government brought the bill into the house, but it did not.

[8.10 pm]

**Mr D.C. NALDER:** We still have to go through the proper processes. The member wants us to go through the proper formal environmental processes when it comes to Roe 8, yet he does not want us to go through the proper formal environmental process when it comes to his electorate.

**Mr M.P. MURRAY:** We are looking at an old road reserve.

**Mr D.C. NALDER:** Is that what the member is suggesting?

**Mr M.P. MURRAY:** Yes.

**The CHAIRMAN:** Through the Chair, please.

**Mr D.C. NALDER:** Sorry, Mr Chairman. We have \$27 million committed to doing this. We want to do it as quickly as we can. We understand the issues and concerns around it. We are focused on delivering it and that is what we intend to do.

**The CHAIRMAN:** Members, I remind you that this is not a debate; it is an opportunity to ask questions of the minister.

**Mr D.C. NALDER:** Thank you. We have the \$27.5 million to do the work that is required to fix up the 19.5-kilometre section west of Collie that is a problem and a concern for everyone, and we want to deal with it as quickly as we can.

**Mr M.P. MURRAY:** On page 817 of the budget papers is a reference to “Wellington Dam Turn-off and Roelands Hill Dual Lanes”. I am referring to this because it is the same issue. If the minister reads the budget papers, he will see that there is no estimate or money shown for works east of Gastaldo Road to repair one of the sections where a person was killed and a second one recently in the same spot.

**Mr D.C. NALDER:** I am not aware of that specific detail so I will defer to Mr Des Snook.

**Mr D. Snook:** The \$27.5 million that is allocated in the budget papers is for the improvement from west of the Wellington Dam Road turn-off and extends through Gastaldo Road to the existing section that has already been improved. It is a 10.2-kilometre section and it covers the section where that recent fatal crash occurred.

**Mr D.C. NALDER:** I want to add one final point. On radio last week, the Leader of the Opposition was supporting the Bunge contract in Bunbury to export grain. That is the member’s leader and the only way to get grain there is by truck.

**Mr M.P. MURRAY:** Well, fix the road.

**Mr D.C. NALDER:** I am just saying —

**Mr M.P. MURRAY:** The minister made a statement; I will make a statement.

**The CHAIRMAN:** Member! This is not a debate.

**Mr M.P. MURRAY:** He was not answering the question.

**The CHAIRMAN:** It is not a debate; he does not need to answer your question. That is the minister’s prerogative. Minister, have you finished your response?

**Mr D.C. NALDER:** I have, indeed.

**Mr F.A. ALBAN:** I refer to local road grants and subsidies under the heading “Details of Controlled Grants and Subsidies” at the bottom of page 821. I understand funding for works on Gngangara Road, which is a local road, comes from this source. This road, a major east–west route, is recognised within my electorate as one of the most dangerous local roads. In 2013, it attracted a Labor election commitment of \$10 million. Can the minister advise whether the Liberal–National government has matched that commitment; and, if so, what is the time frame for completion?

**Mr D.C. NALDER:** The original \$10 million committed to this project by the previous Labor government was not enough. It was well under the funding level required to deliver on this project. I am pleased to advise that the

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Liberal-National government is providing around \$27.6 million to facilitate works on this important local government road. As a result of state funding, the City of Swan has completed a \$4 million dualling of Gngangara Road between Pinaster Parade and Drumpellier Drive, and the installation of traffic signals at the intersection of Gngangara Road and Drumpellier Drive was completed in December 2012. Construction of a \$1 million roundabout at the intersection of Gngangara Road and West Swan Road was completed in July 2013. In addition, works underway between now and 2016 include the duplication of Gngangara Road between Alexander Drive and Beechboro Road North, estimated to cost approximately \$14 million. It is expected that construction will commence mid-2014 and be completed in 2016. The duplication of Gngangara Road between Beechboro Road North and Drumpellier Drive is estimated to cost approximately \$12.9 million. It is a committed project under the Metropolitan Regional Road Group to which the state is contributing \$8.6 million. The construction of this section will depend on obtaining approval to enter state forest. This approval will require the approval of both houses of Parliament. The City of Swan is hopeful for a start in mid-2014 and completion in 2016. Works are underway at the intersection of Beechboro Road North and Gngangara Road to install traffic signals at this busy intersection. As members can see, we are seriously committed to this and, working in partnership with the City of Swan, we are getting this much-needed upgrade delivered, and it will significantly improve safety and traffic efficiency.

**Mr F.A. ALBAN:** Fantastic, thank you.

**Ms R. SAFFIOTI:** The minister commented that it requires both houses to excise that part of the forest. When will the minister bring it to the Parliament?

**Mr D.C. NALDER:** I will need to refer to the director general to get his support in answering that question.

**Mr R. Waldock:** Are we talking —

**Ms R. SAFFIOTI:** The minister just said that the section between Drumpellier Drive and Beechboro Road North requires the excision of a forest, which requires state parliamentary approval. Given you guys are in government, when are you going to bring it to Parliament?

**Mr D.C. NALDER:** I will pass it to the managing director if I can.

**Mr S. Troughton:** The project is being developed by the City of Swan. It is the city's project so it will have to advise when it can take it up.

**Ms R. SAFFIOTI:** Does the state government not have to bring it to Parliament?

**Mr D.C. NALDER:** I will have to take that on notice because I do not know. We will have to come back and confirm when that will be brought before the house.

**Ms R. SAFFIOTI:** Can I provide some advice? When the minister wants to kick us, he should get the information right before he comes in, otherwise he will look stupid.

**The CHAIRMAN:** That is not a question. Has the minister agreed to provide some supplementary information?

**Mr D.C. NALDER:** I have indeed.

**The CHAIRMAN:** Minister, please clarify for the record what you will provide.

**Mr D.C. NALDER:** We will provide an anticipated date for when we will seek approval from Parliament to enter the adjacent state forest. That was really immature from you guys; you disappoint me.

*[Supplementary Information No A13.]*

**Ms R. SAFFIOTI:** My question again relates to toll roads. The minister said on radio that any freight toll introduced in WA should extend to Perth Airport and the Swan Valley. I am referring to the commonwealth grants and the asset investment program on page 819. I again ask: is it still the minister's view that a freight toll should be introduced for not only the Roe 8 section but also other works already in the state budget?

**Mr D.C. NALDER:** The point I made earlier on this was that when it comes to a freight charge, we need to engage with industry and look at the most equitable and fair approach to take. I would think it is prudent of us to consider sharing that load across more than just one section, but it is too early for us to provide a definitive response to that. We need to do the work as far as understanding productivity gains, engaging with industry and working out what is the fairest approach to take on this issue.

**Ms R. SAFFIOTI:** Does the minister support the introduction of tolls on projects that have already been funded?

[8.20 pm]

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**Mr D.C. NALDER:** So we are clear, the government is also funding a major component of the freight link. We are looking at the shortfall on that freight link that we seek funding on. I understand the productivity over it all. This is now creating a freight corridor that extends from the port all the way through to Muchea. I have described it as becoming like a second freeway in the City of Perth. I would like to understand the best approach to take. If we look at the entire project, we see that it is costing well in excess of \$3.5 billion. From a private component perspective, if we look at Northlink WA, Gateway WA and Perth Freight Link, we see that the figure is around 10 to 15 per cent. Personally, I have a view that, yes, we would want to consider that for a freight charge for industry and heavy trucks, which is what we keep talking about, but it is just a personal perspective at this time. We need to do a lot more work on engaging with industry and really understanding the fairest and most equitable approach to take.

**Ms R. SAFFIOTI:** Can I confirm that the time frame for the estimated completion date is 2021? Also, are any costs included in the upgrade—that is, a widening of the Stirling traffic bridge in Fremantle as part of that project?

**Mr D.C. NALDER:** With this freight link, the project really starts at the Marmion Street grade separation. This funding does not include anything on Stirling Bridge.

**Ms R. SAFFIOTI:** I asked a question about the time frame and the minister did not answer that.

**Mr D.C. NALDER:** I am sorry; did I miss a part of the question?

**Ms R. SAFFIOTI:** Yes, about the time frame for the project.

**Mr D.C. NALDER:** It is anticipated that it will be completed in 2021, but I will say that we have a lot more work to do on that at this time. A lot of work has been completed on the Roe Highway stage 8 section, but a lot more work remains to be done on Stock Road, Leach Highway and High Street.

**Ms R. SAFFIOTI:** The minister expects the entire amount of commonwealth funding to be in the forward estimates—that is what the Premier said today—even though the project will be finished in 2021 and most of the project work will be undertaken outside the forward estimates.

**Mr D.C. NALDER:** I cannot comment on how the federal government has applied its funding at this time. It is early. The federal government has offered to put money up-front for our project. It has put that money in its budget. I think that is a question better directed to the federal government than to us at this time. I am really appreciative of the relationship that we have had with the federal government and the work that we have been doing together. Given the funding constraints that we have, I am really appreciative of the fact that it has agreed to up-front the money and allowed us to back-end our component, which is giving us a bit more flexibility in time to work out how we can fund our component. However, I also add that we have an opportunity. When the federal government offers us \$925 million and our component is \$260 million, we would be crazy not to try to find a way to do that. We have a lot of work to do on this project. We are thrilled that we are being given the opportunity to do it. This will have massive benefits for the broader community, and we look forward to delivering this project in the speediest and best way we can.

**Mr M.J. COWPER:** I refer to service 5, “Road Network Maintenance”, on page 816. The minister may be aware that a recommendation of the Keely report was to look at the number of strategic bridges in and around the Darling scarp as a result of the bushfires that occurred at Roleystone. A bunch of engineers were sent to the East Coolup bridge, which is the strategic bridge over the Murray River in Coolup that links the Boddington goldmine to the Bunbury port. Apparently, as a result of an engineering certificate, the bridge had a load restriction placed on it and it needs replacement, as I understand. I wonder whether the minister could give us an update on how we are going. Two fire seasons have now passed. The problem is that the fire trucks have restricted access over this bridge. Of course, the school buses and the heavy vehicles going to and from Boddington have to go an additional 30-odd kilometres on their journey.

**The CHAIRMAN:** The member should try to keep his question fairly short.

**Mr M.J. COWPER:** I am just trying to give the minister a bit of background while he finds his notes. Thank you, Mr Chair. I wonder whether the minister can give us an update on where we are at with that one, because it is a very important bridge in my electorate.

**Mr D.C. NALDER:** Yes. This is the Coolup East road bridge.

**Mr M.J. COWPER:** Correct.

**Mr D.C. NALDER:** The final design has now commenced, with completion of design drawings and contract documentation expected in October this year. Main Roads’ primary objective is to ensure a high level of safety for all road users. The decision to place a 10-tonne load limit on the bridge was not made lightly; it was deemed

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necessary after extensive investigation. The fact that this restriction also had to be applied to all vehicles that exceed the mass limit, including the local school buses and fire trucks, even in the event of a bushfire, indicates the seriousness of the situation. For the department, it was about safety first in all circumstances.

The risk of non-adherence to this load limit could necessitate a full closure of the bridge and, in the worst case, the collapse of the bridge, similar to what occurred at the Elleker–Grasmere Road bridge in the great southern. Main Roads' priority is to preserve the integrity and safety of the bridge until works to replace either a superstructure or the entire bridge can be completed. Appropriate load limit signage has been installed by Main Roads at the bridge and on adjacent main roads. This signage was further enhanced and cameras were installed to overcome continued use by some of the larger vehicles. The cost of replacing the bridge would be in the order of \$100 million, and such funding would need to be secured outside the normal bridge maintenance program, which cannot provide that level of expenditure. The advice I have at this point is that it will cost \$100 million. Dependent on the outcome of the reduction to the local roads program, Main Roads may be in a position to fund a replacement structure from the local roads state initiatives program.

**Mr M.J. COWPER:** It is a very high bridge.

**Mr M.P. MURRAY:** As the member for Murray–Wellington has only just found out where the Coalfields highway is, I feel that I must ask further questions. The member has not mentioned it in this house in the six years that he and I have been here.

**The CHAIRMAN:** Will the member please address his question to the minister.

**Mr M.P. MURRAY:** Please bear with me. The question I ask relates to the Wellington Dam turn-off and the Roelands Hill dual lanes. How is a decision made about which area —

**Mr D.C. NALDER:** Sorry; keep going.

**Mr M.P. MURRAY:** Is the minister sure he heard it? Does he want me to start again?

**Mr D.C. NALDER:** No, no; keep going.

**Mr M.P. MURRAY:** Okay. What is the decision-making process about which sections of road are repaired and fixed first, considering that in one section there are three white crosses and in another section there are two white crosses, yet the works have not been done in that area and are still to be done in those areas?

**Mr D.C. NALDER:** I will defer to Des Snook for that level of detail to provide a more accurate response than I can provide.

**Mr D. Snook:** I apologise to the member; I missed the first part of the question.

**Mr M.P. MURRAY:** The adviser should not apologise because the minister was talking and he would not have heard. The first part of the question was about how the decision-making process is done when crosses are on the side of the road to indicate where people have been killed. How is the decision made about which section should be fixed when X amount of money is allocated to that road?

**Mr D. Snook:** Just for clarification, is it a general piece of road or a specific piece of road?

**Mr M.P. MURRAY:** I think it is at the 18.793-kilometre mark. If you do not know where the crosses are in your job now, I suggest you go and walk and take your redundancy with you, because if that is where it has got to —

**The CHAIRMAN:** That is not a question.

**Mr M.P. MURRAY:** If you want to play smarties, it is where the crosses are.

**The CHAIRMAN:** Member, he —

**Mr M.P. MURRAY:** He asked me the question and I am answering the question.

**The CHAIRMAN:** I wish you were.

**Mr M.P. MURRAY:** Three crosses have been put on the winding bit just west of the Wellington turn-off. The other part is on the Hamilton bridge. If you do not know that by now, get out of this place.

**The CHAIRMAN:** Mr Snook?

**Mr D. Snook:** That is —

**Mr M.P. MURRAY:** Through the minister.

**The CHAIRMAN:** The minister has already deferred to him.

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**Mr D. Snook:** That is the 10-kilometre section of road that still has to be reconstructed. That will be reconstructed and realigned with the \$27.5 million that has been allocated. Those sections of road have curves that will be, as I said, realigned and made safer. That requires an excision through the forest, and that is why that section of road has been left until last. The other sections of Coalfields highway, in the whole \$53 million project, were easier to get started first, so they were done first.

**Mr M.P. MURRAY:** Is Mr Snook telling me that the decision is not made about the worst sections of the road; it is about the easier bits to do being done first?

**Mr D. Snook:** I am saying that when we have a project to deliver and we have a section that is more difficult to start earlier, the idea is that we start the sections that are easier to start earlier.

**Mr D.C. NALDER:** I just also add that they were not done on the basis that they were easier in the sense of they were less safe and all that; it was on the basis that from an environmental approvals process and all the other processes required, it was easy to get these ones going. We wanted to start something as soon as possible; these other ones needed to go through other processes that were taking time, and it is the follow-up funding that is helping now get that done so that we can move on those ones now.

**Mr M.P. MURRAY:** I am still concerned, even from Main Roads Western Australia's point of view; that is the minister's view, but Main Roads' view is slightly different in that it is saying do the easier sections first. The number of deaths along those particular sections has not been counted in the prioritising of which part is to be done first.

**Mr D. Snook:** I am sorry; I did not clarify that properly earlier. When the design is done and the whole section of road was designed; we say that a "preliminary design" was put over it. Certainly, that 10-kilometre section of road was a priority. Certainly, the crashes and the alignment of the road meant that it was a priority; however, as part of the design process there is a consultation that occurs between the various stakeholders who use the road and the various landowners through there, and that particular section of road had a number of preliminary designs put on it. Through the consultation process, the stakeholders were providing feedback all the time. The stakeholders were not satisfied with the initial designs. The people from our south west region were working very hard to get that piece designed, but it took them longer to design than some of the other sections, and that is why.

**Mr M.P. MURRAY:** Understanding that, it is still about the process, and the process involves other stakeholders. Are those other stakeholders other government departments? Are they all government departments?

**Mr D. Snook:** Some of the stakeholders were the government departments that look after forests. There may have been other stakeholders who were private landowners, but I do not know the extent to which the private landholders were consulted.

**Mr P.B. WATSON:** I refer to "Completed Works" on page 818 of the *Budget Statements*, which includes the Albany ring-road. That is interesting because the first stage was done by the previous government. I am just wondering why it is shown under "Completed Works". Money is budgeted there for 2013—an amount of \$800 000. Could the minister tell me what the "Completed Works" are?

**Mr D.C. NALDER:** Yes; I will give the member a fair bit of detail on this one.

**Mr P.B. WATSON:** The minister can just give me the bit of paper if he likes.

**Mr D.C. NALDER:** No; I will pull some bits out relevant to the member's question; there is a lot here and I will not give the member all of it. An amount of \$1 million was allocated over the period of 2012–13 and 2013–14 to advance the project development activities. Essentially, it is all the planning that has gone into what is the right thing to do for this. I had John Cecil on the phone last week sort of pushing on this one; I think it is his favourite issue down in Albany.

**Mr P.B. WATSON:** No, the gas pipeline is his favourite, minister.

**Mr D.C. NALDER:** He has not taken that one up with me; he has only taken the ring-road up with me.

**Mr P.B. WATSON:** That is another one the government has not done.

**Mr D.C. NALDER:** Let us not have a debate. At this stage the planning works are all progressing well and include an assessment of staging options and the provision of a revised cost estimate. It will be considered for future funding as part of a future state budget, but there is nothing in there at the moment to progress it further. It is just all of that—understanding what is required, what is the estimate of costs and so forth. That is what has been spent to date.

Ms Rita Saffioti; Mr Dean Nalder; Mr Mick Murray; Mr Murray Cowper; Mr Peter Watson; Chairman; Mr Frank Alban

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**Mr P.B. WATSON:** That was the same answer I got 12 months ago, minister.

When the federal Labor Party was in government, Mr Albanese gave the state government \$1 million, which was matched by the state government. I wanted to know what happened to that \$1 million that the federal government gave to the state government.

**Mr D.C. NALDER:** My understanding is that it was half a million each.

**Mr P.B. WATSON:** I apologise.

**Mr D.C. NALDER:** That was spent through 2012–13 and 2013–14 to do what I have just explained.

**Mr P.B. WATSON:** The minister is talking about road safety. I do not know whether the minister has been to Albany for a while, but if he goes up to that roundabout he will see grain trucks coming through, woodchip trucks coming through, school buses coming through and all the other traffic there, especially when school gets out during the day. Why has the government not put money into the budget for the ring road? As I said, the previous government put in the first stage; this government was going to do it in its first term of government, but nothing happened. It was forced into it when the federal government gave it the money, but nothing has been done since. This is probably one of the biggest road safety issues in the great southern and it needs to be looked at.

**Mr D.C. NALDER:** Yes, sure, I know the ring-road well, and I visit Albany regularly, as the member knows.

**Mr P.B. WATSON:** That is in summer, minister, when the school buses and the trucks are not there.

**Mr D.C. NALDER:** I also ride around that ring-road on a pushbike.

**Mr P.B. WATSON:** That is another danger there.

**Mr D.C. NALDER:** There is no question about those haulage trucks; I see them down there and I understand the issue the member is discussing. There is a challenge on everything we are trying to do as far as prioritising our budget and understanding where the major issues and concerns are. There are challenges right throughout the state. For us as a government it is about prioritising it. This ring-road is not cheap; my understanding is that it is very expensive.

**Mr P.B. WATSON:** The longer it is left, the more expensive it will be.

**Mr D.C. NALDER:** It is estimated that it will cost—I have not seen a full business case—\$325 million.

**Ms R. SAFFIOTI:** How much?

**MR D.C. NALDER:** An amount of \$325 million.

**Mr P.B. WATSON:** It would be cheaper to do a flyover then, minister.

**Mr D.C. NALDER:** Tell me about that; sorry, I should not engage in a debate.

**Mr P.B. WATSON:** Is it \$325 million?

**Mr D.C. NALDER:** That is the advice I have received.

**Mr P.B. WATSON:** Is that stages 2 and 3?

**Mr D.C. NALDER:** Correct—\$325 million. That is the challenge we have. Unless we can find a cheaper alternative solution that we can do at a lower cost, it makes it very difficult for us to achieve that project.

**Mr P.B. WATSON:** When was the latest costing done on that \$325 million?

**Mr D.C. NALDER:** The advice I have is mid-2012.

**Mr P.B. WATSON:** If it had been done when this government first promised it in 2004, it probably would have been a lot cheaper.

**Mr D.C. NALDER:** I can speculate, like everyone else, on that.

**Ms R. SAFFIOTI:** We have agreed to have one more question, but I am handing it to my good colleague the member for Swan Hills.

**Mr F.A. ALBAN:** I refer to “Office of Road Safety — Urban Intersection Crash Sites” on page 818 of the *Budget Statements*. I understand that the upgrade of the Reid Highway–Lord Street intersection has been funded from this source. Reid Highway is a very important road in my electorate, and many of my constituents, as well as the member for West Swan, use it. Both Hon Donna Faragher in the other place and I have been pushing for many years for the upgrade of this intersection with Lord Street. Can the minister advise the progress of this project? I have seen it started, and it is another project that the previous government failed to deliver.

[8.40 pm]

**Mr D.C. NALDER:** Prior to answering that, I would like to correct a number that I used earlier.

**The CHAIRMAN:** Feel free to do that.

**Mr D.C. NALDER:** I said a number of \$100 million for the bridge, and I am sorry, but I added an extra zero. It is \$10 million. I apologise for that mistake.

With regard to the question just asked, this is an important project regarding Reid Highway, and I am sure that the road users who have to negotiate this intersection every day will appreciate the member's efforts when this is completed. This section of Reid Highway carries nearly 25 500 vehicles a day through the Lord Street intersection, and more than 11 per cent of these are heavy vehicles. This intersection also has a high crash rate. In response to requests for improvements, the Liberal–National state government has allocated \$8 million to the installation of traffic signals, together with widening and turning pockets. The \$8 million is provided from the government's road trauma trust account. This follows on from the government's decision to direct 100 per cent of the speed camera revenue to this account for road safety improvements. The works are being undertaken by the City of Swan, and council is taking the opportunity to fund a realignment of the northern Lord Street leg, and also make preparation for a southern leg, funded from developer contributions. The project is progressing well, and I understand it will be completed shortly and will provide greater safety and efficiency for all road users.

**Mr M.P. MURRAY:** I refer to page 818 and the first line item, Goldfields Highway, just for a bit of a change. The estimated expenditure for the Wiluna–Meekatharra section of Goldfields Highway is \$6.8 million. My understanding is that a lot more money will be needed to finish that road. What will that \$6.8 million be used for, and how much work will be done with that money? Due to the distance that contractors have to travel to work on that road, would it not be more cost effective to do the whole of the work that is needed while the contractors are there?

**Mr D.C. NALDER:** I will refer to Des Snook.

**Mr D. Snook:** As the member said, a lot of work is still required to be done on Goldfields Highway on the Wiluna–Meekatharra section. But in the project that we are looking at, eventually 21 kilometres of various sections of that road will be sealed. The project will provide for the sealing of the floodways, and it will also add various sections of eight-metre-wide seal on the embankment sections, which will provide opportunities for overtaking. So with this amount of \$6.8 million in 2014–15, a number of sections will be done.

**Mr M.P. MURRAY:** Is the minister aware that recently with the floods, people were cut off, because it is a dirt road, and it is continually washed away, and then the bill for that work has to be picked up by the shire, which has limited rating capacity—and we all know the issue about local governments. Why is there not anything in the forward estimates and why was not enough money budgeted to enable all this work to be done at once, to save money in the long run?

**Mr D.C. NALDER:** Yes, I am aware of the flood cut-offs, and that is something that we need to consider. But for the detail, I will need to continue to refer to Mr Snook.

**Mr D. Snook:** There is a limit to the amount of money that we have to spend on the roads here. On that section of road between Wiluna and Meekatharra, there are large sections that are unsealed. In the staged development that we are doing on that road, we find that it is necessary for us to treat what we see as the priorities; and the priorities are to seal the floodways, and provide sealed sections on the embankments to provide overtaking opportunities. That will give us two benefits. The sealed sections on the embankments will enable safer overtaking, because people will be able to overtake on the bitumen, so there will not be any dust that restricts the visibility. The sealing of the floodways will mean that when it rains and the road floods, we could close the road, and we would then reopen the road once the flooding had finished; and when the floodways are sealed, they will not get scoured out anywhere near as badly as they would if they were to remain unsealed.

**The appropriation was recommended.**