

# **STANDING COMMITTEE ON ESTIMATES AND FINANCIAL OPERATIONS**

**2020–21 BUDGET ESTIMATES AND  
2019–20 ANNUAL REPORTS**



**TRANSCRIPT OF EVIDENCE  
TAKEN AT PERTH  
WEDNESDAY, 18 NOVEMBER 2020**

**SESSION TWO  
MAIN ROADS WESTERN AUSTRALIA**

**Members**  
**Hon Alanna Clohesy (Chair)**  
**Hon Tjorn Sibma (Deputy Chair)**  
**Hon Diane Evers**  
**Hon Aaron Stonehouse**  
**Hon Colin Tincknell**

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**Hearing commenced at 11.15 am**

**Hon STEPHEN DAWSON**

**Minister for Environment representing the Minister for Transport, examined:**

**Mr PETER WORONZOW**

**Acting Commissioner, examined:**

**Mr DES SNOOK**

**Acting Managing Director, examined:**

**Mr LEO COCI**

**Managing Director, Office of Major Transport Infrastructure Delivery, examined:**

**Mr PHILIP D'SOUZA**

**Acting Executive Director, Finance and Commercial Services, examined:**

**Mr MAURICE CAMMACK**

**Director, Budget and Investment Planning, examined:**

**Mr PATRICK ABROMEIT**

**Policy Adviser, Minister for Transport, examined:**

**The CHAIR:** Good morning, members. On behalf of the Legislative Council Standing Committee on Estimates and Financial Operations, I welcome you to today's hearing. Have you all read, understood and signed a document titled "Information for Witnesses"?

**The WITNESSES:** Yes.

**The CHAIR:** It is essential that all your testimony before the committee is complete and truthful to the best of your knowledge. This hearing is being reported by Hansard and a transcript of your evidence will be provided to you. It is also being broadcast live on Parliament's website. The hearing is being held in public, although there is discretion available to the committee to hear evidence in private. If for some reason you wish to make a confidential statement during today's proceedings, you should request that the evidence be taken in closed session before answering the question. Members, before asking a question, I ask that you identify whether it relates to the budget papers or an annual report, and provide the relevant page number. Minister, do you have a brief opening statement of no more than two minutes?

**Hon STEPHEN DAWSON:** I do not, Chair.

**The CHAIR:** Members, you have approximately 12 minutes each. We will start with Hon Diane Evers.

**Hon DIANE EVERS:** First off, I am looking at the budget, page 613. At the top of it, it just talks about a cycling route that you are doing. I just want to say that I am pleased to see the work on the cycleways. I appreciate the one just north of the city along the freeway. It has made my cycle commute considerably smoother. I note the \$50 million to be invested in a new cycleway just west of the Causeway bridge. Great! Many people are interested in it. I am interested with Main Roads doing the cycleways now and putting more effort and money and time into those, are there

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continuing efforts on behalf of Main Roads to look at alternative transport methods to actually extend the way people can commute rather than just being on the roads?

[11.20 am]

**Hon STEPHEN DAWSON:** Did you want specifics about that cycleway or just generally?

**Hon DIANE EVERS:** What I am interested in—it is great seeing the cycleways. I think that is really good, but are there other options, other things that you are looking at, to extend Main Roads in ways they can do that are not just dedicated to getting individuals driving in their own internal combustion vehicle?

**Hon STEPHEN DAWSON:** Main Roads is doing this because it is a bridge. It is usually the Department of Transport that does this work. But I am not sure, honourable member, if you were here in the last session when I answered a question of Hon Samantha Rowe in relation to not only the Causeway bridge that is listed here, but also the different principal shared paths that are on the drawing board for the forward estimates, essentially. There were five or six of those extensions to the freeway where there were cycle paths being built at the same time. That was a question for the last session.

**Hon DIANE EVERS:** Right. So cycleways are still within transport, Main Roads. It is only because this is a bridge and that would be the only time they would get involved.

**The CHAIR:** Alternate transport methods are a question for the Department of Transport or public transport.

**Hon STEPHEN DAWSON:** The infrastructure is delivered by Main Roads but the policy is with the Department of Transport.

**Hon DIANE EVERS:** Yes, I get that. I am interested in the infrastructure. Main Roads is very good at infrastructure, so wherever they can do that that extends and gives people opportunities to not just be on roads is a positive thing. That was not a question.

**Hon STEPHEN DAWSON:** I will ask Mr Woronzow to comment.

**Mr WORONZOW:** Thanks for the question. The government has a \$200 million cyclepath investment program. Probably half of that are PSPs associated with major road infrastructure. With every major piece of infrastructure that we deliver, such as NorthLink, we deliver an associated principal shared path. It is our standard practice. To do that has been our standard practice for the last four or five years. All projects of the government as an investment program going forward will have a PSP associated with it and that will be delivered by Main Roads.

**Hon DIANE EVERS:** That is good.

**Mr WORONZOW:** The only other thing I can add, member, is that when we deliver a new major project, we will look at connectivity issues with the existing cycle PSP network. In the process of delivering that new piece of infrastructure, we will make sure that it ties in to the existing cycling network, and then in some cases—in many cases—that means some additional work that would normally be outside the scope of the project.

**Hon DIANE EVERS:** Outside the scope, but you still do undertake it, which is good, because I understand that lots of times local government is involved in cyclepaths, so you are working with them to connect them together; is that right?

**Mr WORONZOW:** That is correct. The cycling initiative is a collaborative process. It is coordinated by the Department of Transport, but is a collaborative process between local government and Main Roads but, as I said, coordinated by the Department of Transport.

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**Hon DIANE EVERS:** My next question is at 7.1 on page 612. This is with regard to the regional state road safety improvement program. In there I understand that you talk about sealing the shoulders—a great idea especially on those country roads—and audible centre lines being installed on every road. I am wondering: will there be an effort to go back and install the audible centre lines and audible lines on the shoulders across the country road network? This has been shown to be very effective at limiting crashes.

**Hon STEPHEN DAWSON:** I can start off with that and then let us see who might add to it. We have a range of planned works—that is, to convert unsealed shoulders to fully sealed shoulders to focus on maximising the seal width and installing audible edge lines. The approach for high-volume heavy vehicle routes and routes that exhibit a high number of head-on crashes would also include a one-metre wide median treatment with audible centre lines where possible. The rationale for doing it is that sealing shoulders and installing audible edge lines substantially reduces the chance of run-off-road and head-on crash types by 43 to 67 per cent, depending on the existing carriageway formation. So it is anticipated that this would provide a 61 per cent reduction in killed and serious injury—KSI—crashes based on 2031 traffic.

Main Roads has identified 17 400 kilometres of regional or rural roads that can be treated with this approach. At a cost of \$100 million a year, funding the full program would allow an accelerated delivery in nine years instead of 44 years based on current construction rates. This would result in an estimated 2 127 people being saved from either death or serious injury over the 35 years of difference between the delivery schedules. That is a significant amount—17 400 kilometres—of regional roads where it is planned to do this work.

**Hon DIANE EVERS:** To do the —

**Hon STEPHEN DAWSON:** The fully sealed shoulder and —

**Hon DIANE EVERS:** When you do the new sealed shoulder, though, do you put in the audible lines at the same time?

**Hon STEPHEN DAWSON:** Yes.

**Hon DIANE EVERS:** Both on the centre line and on the shoulders?

**Hon STEPHEN DAWSON:** The project involves both.

**Hon DIANE EVERS:** And that would do all the works that you have planned? I am not sure—17 000 kilometres is probably a lot, but nowhere near the number that we have actually got out there.

**Hon STEPHEN DAWSON:** It is. Obviously, in the budget before us is \$100 million to do the work, so we will start that.

**Hon DIANE EVERS:** That is good. I am really pleased about that. It is definitely a lifesaver. One other question I have—it is further down the page, 7.2, the Bussell Highway duplication, stages 1 and 2. I would like an update on how that is going and when you would expect that to be finished?

**Hon STEPHEN DAWSON:** Just a bit of background. The 46-kilometre section of Bussell Highway between Bunbury and Busselton is a four-lane divided dual carriageway, aside from a 17-kilometre section between Capel and west of Busselton. The project will upgrade this section from a two-lane single carriageway, with passing lanes at approximately five-kilometre intervals in each direction, into a dual carriageway in both directions. Once completed, the project will provide an uninterrupted 46-kilometre dual carriageway between Busselton and Bunbury, and, obviously, it will improve travel times and safety for both local residents and tourists.

In terms of where we are at, it will be done in two stages. Stage 1 is the construction of a five-kilometre section of new carriageway between the Capel bypass and Hutton Road, along with

upgrade works on an existing section of carriageway. Then stage 2 will be the construction of the remaining 12-kilometre section of new carriageway between Hutton Road and Busselton. That includes duplication of three bridges over the Abba, Sabina and Ludlow Rivers.

What we are trying to do, essentially, is to address the following: excessive traffic congestion and delays, particularly during public holiday weekends—and there will be longer and more frequent periods of congestion over time—unaccepted network resilience and a poor safety record of the Bussell Highway in this area. So the works started in October. It was \$4.5 million worth of preloading works, which required up to 12 months to bed down and compact. In January this year, the pre-construction work to compact the stage 1 section with sandfill was completed. Then the earlier work undertaken by the state government allowed us to award the contract for stage 1 works three months than earlier planned.

On 21 June this year, the Australian and state governments announced that \$85 million in funding had been allocated for the construction works to commence. On 13 July, tenders were called. On 27 August, construction of stage 1 was awarded to Raubex Construction Pty Ltd. Then on the weekend commencing 5 October, the stage 1 works commenced. The anticipated completion date of that stage 1 is June 2021. It has started. Then, obviously, in terms of stage 2—so the preparation work has started for that and that includes the design of the road and bridge; obviously, environmental approvals will be needed for that, and also service relocation. So that work is happening now, but stage 1 started a few weeks ago.

[11.30 am]

**Hon DIANE EVERS:** My final question is just on the Albany ring-road. I have spoken about this before. I recognise it is going ahead—all the contracts are done; the first shovel has been turned. It is listed in the works in progress on page 613 of the budget papers. My interest is just that there seems to have been, over the last 25 years, many different ideas considered for this. This one has been hit on once the federal government contributed \$135 million to it. In a question I asked previously, I was told there would be a thousand trucks a day by 2030. By doing that, it limits the opportunity to use the Down Road industrial site as a hub to store grain to get it to the port much more easily via rail. Can you tell me whether there were ever any studies done to see if possibly this road was not needed and that those thousand trucks a day might be better off travelling via the rail from Down Road to the port?

**Hon STEPHEN DAWSON:** Sure. Look, I will make the comment at the outset that this was an election commitment by the McGowan government at the last election, so it is something that we are focused on delivering. I just want to correct you: I think you said the commonwealth contribution was \$135 million; it is actually \$140 million. The state contribution is \$35 million, so that might have been the mix up. It is an 80–20 split. In terms of whether studies were done previously, I am not sure whether anyone can talk about studies. Maybe Mr Snook can. I know we will have a difference of opinion on this project. I am aware of your previous comments on it, but I just reiterate that this was an election commitment and something that we are delivering for the Albany community. Mr Snook, can I ask you to answer.

**Mr SNOOK:** There were planning studies done for the various options to look at what the Albany ring-road could look like. It looked at the distances that the heavy vehicles were travelling to get to the port. I believe that one of the options that was included as part of the work was to look at Down Road, but out of all of the planning work that was done, the current alignment was the favoured one and turned out to be the one that we are proceeding with.

**Hon TJORN SIBMA:** Referring to page 613 of the budget papers, I would just like to ask a few questions about the “Leach Highway—Carrington Street to Stirling Highway” project, which I think

also incorporates the High Street roundabout, if I am correct. I understand that there are two schools in proximity to that project, particularly the East Fremantle Primary School. I am just interested, in the interim, with school crossing safety. I wonder whether or not that plan incorporates the construction of an underpass.

**Hon STEPHEN DAWSON:** Sure. There are certainly two underpasses planned that I am aware of—one at Forrest Street and one at Montreal Street. That is obviously about improving pedestrian access but also cycling connectivity. I have a map but I do not have the location of the school that you referred to on my map, but certainly there are a couple of underpasses planned.

**Hon TJORN SIBMA:** Can I understand when construction of the underpasses might be completed?

**Hon STEPHEN DAWSON:** I am not sure we have that detail. Certainly, the plan is to have the project completed by May 2021. Obviously, school goes back in February. Do we know? I will ask Mr Coci to comment.

**Mr COCI:** Building two underpasses is part of the current contract, which is earmarked to be finished towards the middle of next year.

**Hon TJORN SIBMA:** Noting the time difference between the commencement of the 2021 school year and the completion of the underpass, can I get some understanding of how the school crossing will be facilitated for those three or four months?

**Hon STEPHEN DAWSON:** I am told that school crossings are led by police.

**Hon TJORN SIBMA:** I assumed so, but I thought I would chance it.

**Hon STEPHEN DAWSON:** Mr Coci, again, do you have an answer to that?

**Mr COCI:** I am aware of the issue and I understand that the contractors have given it particular attention. There are traffic controllers who I believe are dedicated to assisting the crossings at those key times.

**Hon TJORN SIBMA:** I am happy with that. With respect to another dimension of this, being the actual widening of High Street that has been necessitated, can I ask how many trees were removed as part of that widening of the road process and what species they were?

**Hon STEPHEN DAWSON:** We do not have that information with us.

**Hon TJORN SIBMA:** Would I be able to get that by way of supplementary information?

**The CHAIR:** Just restate the question.

**Hon TJORN SIBMA:** The question is: how many trees and what species of tree were removed as part of widening High Street?

**Hon STEPHEN DAWSON:** Yes, absolutely, we can provide it.

*[Supplementary Information No B1.]*

**Hon STEPHEN DAWSON:** Obviously, environmental approvals were needed for this project and obviously a great deal of work was undertaken with the EPA in relation to it, but we can provide it to you by way of supplementary information.

**Hon TJORN SIBMA:** Thank you. My next series of brief questions pertain to movements presumably into the port. They relate to the movement of what are designated as oversize overmass loads. Is there someone available to confirm what the maximum width of an oversize overmass, or OSOM, load will be allowed through the new upgraded route, including through the roundabout?

**Hon STEPHEN DAWSON:** I will ask Mr Snook.

**Mr SNOOK:** I do not have that information, so I will have to take that as a supplementary.

**Hon TJORN SIBMA:** I am particularly keen to know whether the width is six metres or 8.5 metres. I am led to believe that that has an operational and/or economic impact. If that could be part of the supplementary information provided, that would be much appreciated.

*[Supplementary Information No B2.]*

**Hon TJORN SIBMA:** I might also need to seek a supplementary answer with respect to the maximum combination length of a truck moving through that roundabout, if that is possible to confirm.

**Mr SNOOK:** I can provide the maximum length for a restricted access vehicle. That would be 27.5 metres.

**Hon TJORN SIBMA:** Can I ask a follow-up question about the determination of that length? It has been put to me in good faith that—I will not say the industry average—there appears to be a 30-metre-length combination that is more commonplace in the eastern states. Is that true? If so, why do we have a difference?

**Hon STEPHEN DAWSON:** Mr Snook again.

**Mr SNOOK:** The 30-metre-length vehicle that you are talking about is used in some locations over east for some ports. At the moment, we do not use the 30-metre vehicles just because by not using them, we encourage the use of the rail. If we put more traffic onto Leach Highway, clearly that makes it more congested. However, we are looking at that into the future as to whether or not we allow the 30 metres. The performance of the 30-metre-long vehicles would be similar to a 27.5-metre-long vehicle for the turning movement. The 30-metre vehicles should be accommodated by the roundabout.

*[11.40 am]*

**Hon TJORN SIBMA:** Thank you. That is quite illuminating. Forgive my deep ignorance of this, but for my illumination, will the roundabout be designed to accommodate a 30-metre combination truck or not?

**Hon STEPHEN DAWSON:** I think that is what Mr Snook was saying.

**Hon TJORN SIBMA:** I thought that is what he was saying.

**Hon STEPHEN DAWSON:** Mr Snook said that a 30-metre truck could navigate around the same —

**Hon TJORN SIBMA:** Could go through but will be discouraged.

**Hon STEPHEN DAWSON:** The 30-metre trucks are not licensed in Western Australia at this stage. It is only the 27.5-metre one that Mr Snook mentioned earlier.

**Hon COLIN TINCKNELL:** My first question is something that I have waited nearly half my life —

**Hon STEPHEN DAWSON:** Before you go into it, just tell me where you are looking so I can prepare the answer.

**Hon COLIN TINCKNELL:** It is in budget paper No 2, volume 2, on page 605. The WA recovery plan refers to Stephenson Avenue between Scarborough Beach Road and Mitchell Freeway. We are planning to allocate \$40 million of funds to fix up that mess that has been there for 60 years, and it is a fifty-fifty.

**Hon TJORN SIBMA:** Half of your life!

**Hon COLIN TINCKNELL:** Maybe more than half my life!

I believe it was planned in the 1960s and we have not quite finished it off yet. It is that mess around Scarborough Beach Road in Innaloo and “Stephenson Highway”—it was going to be a highway but it is now called an avenue. My question is: does that include an exit and entry to the freeway?

**Hon STEPHEN DAWSON:** The estimated cost of this project is \$165 million. This again was a commitment at the last election. It is 50 per cent funded by the commonwealth and 50 per cent by the state. In terms of access to the freeway, Mr Coci will answer.

**Mr COCI:** I can confirm that it is. This section of Stephenson Avenue will be connected to the freeway, so there is a fair amount of works at that junction, and it impacts on the Cedric Street interchange as well. The focus will be directing the traffic to Stephenson Avenue.

**Hon STEPHEN DAWSON:** The planned works are the extension of Stephenson Avenue north from Scarborough Beach Road over the Mitchell Freeway to Cedric Street. There will be a new grade-separated interchange at Mitchell Freeway and Stephenson Avenue. There will be the removal of the freeway connection at Cedric Street, and then there will be a local road network and shared path connections and enhancements.

**Hon COLIN TINCKNELL:** That is fantastic. Underneath that, paragraph 15 says that \$16.1 million will be targeted for high-risk intersections in the metropolitan area. My question is not about that. My question is: have we got a similar sort of spend, or any spend, on high-risk intersections and other areas in the wheatbelt? I looked through many areas of the budget, and I can see where money is being spent on big regional towns but not a lot in the wheatbelt. I have targeted the wheatbelt because we have a high death rate on roads in the wheatbelt.

**Hon STEPHEN DAWSON:** I am just waiting for the note. There is work happening in the wheatbelt. There is the black spot funding and there is a wheatbelt secondary freight network project. The Wheatbelt Regional Road Group—that is 42 local governments—has identified 80 wheatbelt secondary freight routes totalling 4 400 kilometres that require upgrading to improve freight efficiency and connectivity and also provide continuous and safe RAV routes. So, some projects are happening in that regard.

Separately, the road safety program—the state black spot program—directly targets improvements to the safety of roads with a proven crash history or high-risk locations. Funding for the program is mainly focused on the cost-effective treatment of hazardous road locations. That is a \$20 million ongoing program. Half the funds in that are spent in the regions and half in the metropolitan area. Then, 50 per cent of the funds are allocated to state roads and 50 per cent to local roads. In the last round, some money was spent on the Collie Lake King Road and Rajander Road in the Shire of West Arthur. That was to widen the intersection and the approaches. There was also funding for the Collie Lake King Road–Farrell Road intersection to widen the intersection and the approaches.

In terms of local roads, there is some money for the Kununoppin–Mukinbudin Road in the Shire of Mukinbudin, the Northam Pithara Road and Konnongorring West Road in the Shire of Goomalling and the Calingiri–Wongan Hills Road and Carani East Road in the Shire of Victoria Plains. They are some of the ones that have been funded so far. In 2020–21, \$197.46 million will be spent in the wheatbelt on roads.

**Hon COLIN TINCKNELL:** Thank you for that, director general and minister. The high rate of deaths in the wheatbelt has obviously been a major problem for us for many years.

**Hon STEPHEN DAWSON:** Honourable member, there is a further project. The Great Eastern Highway and Old Northam Road in Wooroloo and Sawyers Valley project will have benefits for the wheatbelt. That is an approximately \$14.5 million project too. So there are a few projects of significance happening out in the wheatbelt, and obviously for the reasons that you have suggested. The deaths and serious injury numbers from the wheatbelt are particularly high, so that is the focus at the moment.

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**Hon COLIN TINCKNELL:** That is really good. On the previous page, page 604, paragraph 5 talks about increased Aboriginal employment. How many FTEs do we have in Main Roads in Aboriginal employment, or even if we have part-timers, but FTEs are obviously the important ones?

**Hon STEPHEN DAWSON:** This is a really good story, honourable member. I am just trying to find the note. There has been a focus on Aboriginal procurement. Obviously, a lot of the Main Roads' work is actually done by contractors right around the state. There has been a focus on procuring work from Aboriginal businesses. There have been 39 contracts at a value of \$26.11 million awarded to Aboriginal businesses. Main Roads' strategy to increase opportunities for inclusion of Aboriginal businesses via the supply chain and the road construction industry resulted in indirect Aboriginal participation, employment and a business spend of 466 000 work hours, which equates to 272 FTEs. Further, there were 36 Aboriginal trainees. There was an Aboriginal business spend of about \$62.3 million.

I have to give credit to Main Roads in this regard. Right across the north west of the state in particular, we have seen some really good, positive success stories. For the Broome–Cape Leveque Road, which has just finished essentially, 55 per cent of the workforce was made up of Aboriginal people. That was a significant job creator for that community. On the Outback Way, there have been 11 local Aboriginal trainees who have completed their certificate III in civil construction plant operations, and they will be involved in the construction work. On the Great Northern Highway upgrade at Maggie's Jump Up to Wyndham Spur, 32 per cent of the workers were from local Aboriginal communities, 14.7 per cent of the contract spend was with Aboriginal businesses, and there were five trainees on the project. On the Great Northern Highway Muchea north section, the contractor, which has been WBHO Infrastructure Pty Ltd, entered into a single subcontract arrangement with Aboriginal business Dadaru–Garli joint venture. They have delivered a significant component of the works and there have been Aboriginal participation targets in that.

We have a range of projects, but certainly Aboriginal involvement has gone from one per cent in some, right up to 45 per cent in other projects, and that has been local Aboriginal involvement. There has been significant time and effort put into this area and we see it now and it is great. There have been real jobs and real training opportunities for Aboriginal people, particularly in the north of the state where Main Roads has done it very, very well but also in the wheatbelt and in the metropolitan area too, so it has been significant.

[11.50 am]

**Hon COLIN TINCKNELL:** That is very pleasing, minister. I remember asking similar questions four years ago when I first got on this committee and it was not a good story. What the minister just told me is a good story.

**Hon STEPHEN DAWSON:** Yes, I give credit to Minister Saffioti. She has worked incredibly closely with Main Roads on that; so much so that it has not just been about jobs, it has also been about the attitude of the agency. There have been cultural awareness sessions, and traditional smoking ceremonies, where appropriate, at the beginning of projects. It has been significant. I should say that separate to that, Main Roads has 19 Aboriginal employees and also three Aboriginal clerical and technical trainees at the moment. There has been a culture shift and a focus on this area and it really is paying dividends.

**Hon COLIN TINCKNELL:** Staying on the same budget paper, the fourth paragraph on page 616 states —

Over the next two budget years, significant works are currently scheduled to be carried out as a part of the METRONET program of works.

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Where are these works situated over the next two years? I can guess, but I would really like to know.

**The CHAIR:** Obviously, honourable member, it is the roadworks related to the Metronet developments that we are asking for?

**Hon COLIN TINCKNELL:** Yes.

**Hon STEPHEN DAWSON:** I will ask Mr Woronzow to give a response to this.

**Mr WORONZOW:** In May, the minister made a decision to put all the high-level engineering resources of Main Roads and the PTA in a collective area. It is called the Office of Major Transport Infrastructure Delivery, so the delivery of major rail and major road projects are all being done in the one area. Leo Coci heads up that area. In relation to what specific works will be delivered over the next two years as part of the Metronet program of works, there are a number of grade separations on the Armadale line. OMTID will be delivering the Morley–Ellenbrook line. They are delivering the Thornlie–Cockburn line and are currently in the marketplace to tender bids for the Byford line, so a significant amount of works will be done collectively by that new OMTID group—we have Main Roads people and PTA people. They have been brought together to get the synergies out of that level of engineering expertise.

**Hon COLIN TINCKNELL:** It is a lot, director general, and you believe that you can do that in two years?

**Mr WORONZOW:** The contracts for the Morley–Ellenbrook line and the Yanchep line have been let and good progress is being made. They are about 20 per cent complete. The contract was awarded a month ago for the Morley–Ellenbrook line. We are hopeful of getting environmental approvals by the end of the year. Great progress has been made and industry keep feeding back to me that they have the capacity and the appetite. We are seeing that they have the ability to deliver it. Certainly the agencies have the expertise to supervise the contractors delivering.

**Hon SIMON O'BRIEN:** I refer to “Other New Works” on page 615 and to the Thomas Road bridge in connection with the rail extension. I understand it was announced that works would commence in November. Have those works commenced? Has all the land required for the project been acquired?

**Hon STEPHEN DAWSON:** Certainly in relation to the commencement of it, it is due very, very soon and I am told that it will happen this month. Completion is anticipated by 2022. In relation to parcels of land and the acquisition, I am told that we continue to engage with local communities. One of the designs that is being considered requires a small section of a single property. This land has been zoned road reserve in the metropolitan region scheme since the 1990s. We are in ongoing discussions with that property owner in relation to the acquisition of that land.

**Hon SIMON O'BRIEN:** How long have you been in discussions with that property owner? Can you tell us any more about that—any problems there might be?

**Hon STEPHEN DAWSON:** I cannot tell you how long we have been involved in the conversation with them but I can tell you that we had a meeting at the property with the landowner on 10 September, and the conversations continue with that landowner, but it is still to be landed.

**Hon SIMON O'BRIEN:** Still on the subject of that bridge, where is the government in the process of environmental assessment to the project? Have they commenced? Have they been completed? What is involved?

**Hon STEPHEN DAWSON:** Obviously I cannot give you an answer as the Minister for Environment. I will have to give the agency's response.

**Mr WORONZOW:** Under Main Roads' statewide clearing permits, the amount of clearing that is required to be done there will be covered by that permit. We are confident that before any

significant work happens, we will get the environmental approvals under that statewide clearing permit.

**Hon SIMON O'BRIEN:** And there are no other aspects associated with the project that might need EPA approval?

**Mr WORONZOW:** No.

**Hon SIMON O'BRIEN:** That deals with that, so we are not going to see any of the key dates for construction affected by those processes?

**Hon STEPHEN DAWSON:** Not related to the environment, no.

**Hon DONNA FARAGHER:** I refer to page 607 under "Service Summary" because I am not quite sure where best I ask the question that I have held over from the previous hearing, if that is okay; that is probably the best general spot to put it. This relates to the construction of an assembly and maintenance facility at Bellevue. Minister, you will recall that in the previous estimates I asked whether traffic modelling has been undertaken with regard to the impact of the closure of Robinson Road; and if so, (a) I would like to know about it; and, (b), if there is anything that can be provided through supplementary information I would appreciate it.

**Mr SNOOK:** Main Roads is assisting PTA and Metronet with the analysis of traffic in that area and the options that can be developed to address the concerns that local stakeholders have for access around there. We are doing that work now. I have not got any final results. From the minister's point of view, I do not have any results now, but we could take it on notice when we finally get the results.

**Hon STEPHEN DAWSON:** I am loath to make that promise, given that I am not —

**The CHAIR:** Sorry for the interruption, minister, but in part that might be also difficult because if you cannot make the deadline for returning answers before Parliament is prorogued, that might make that difficult. That is a technical question.

**Hon STEPHEN DAWSON:** Sure. I am only the representative minister, so obviously the minister has not seen the report either. I am happy to raise it with the minister, honourable member, and once it comes in, if there is a way of sharing that with you, we will do that.

[12.00 pm]

**Hon DONNA FARAGHER:** Thank you. Sorry, it is just a bit hard to hear from over the side in terms of the answers being given.

**Hon STEPHEN DAWSON:** Sure. So Mr Snook had said that the work has not yet been completed. There is no kind of final report yet, so that is still outstanding. He was happy to say we could provide by way of supplementary, but I cannot—without checking with the minister; the minister has not seen it yet. So it might not be in before Parliament rises for the year, so my undertaking to you is I will have a conversation with the minister; and if it can be provided at a later date, I would do that outside this process.

**Hon DONNA FARAGHER:** Thank you. Perhaps, just picking up on one point, if I heard correctly, you did indicate that there were options being considered. Can I just get some clarity in terms of what those options at least are? I think you mentioned there has been consultation with affected members of the community, so some detail on the options would be appreciated.

**Hon STEPHEN DAWSON:** Sure. Mr Snook.

**Mr SNOOK:** I cannot give details of the options because we have to develop them up, so it is still at the early stages of doing the work.

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**Hon DONNA FARAGHER:** Okay. I would just ask one further question on that. Do those options relate to the immediate impact with regard to Robinson Road, and does that also include traffic modelling and options relating to other areas such as Bellevue, Koongamia and other parts that obviously utilise Clayton Street a lot and will then utilise Robinson Road? I just want some clarity around whether you are simply looking at Robinson Road or adjacent areas.

**Mr SNOOK:** It will be adjacent areas as well as Robinson.

**Hon DONNA FARAGHER:** Thank you.

My next question is at page 614 under “Works in Progress”. It is the section relating to Tonkin Highway corridor upgrades and grade separations at Hale, Welshpool and Kelvin. With regard to the proposed Hale Road upgrade, is it expected that there will be some traffic impact with regard to a number of local roads heading onto Welshpool Road? What safety improvements are being investigated along the various Welshpool Road intersections as part of the Hale Road project?

**Hon STEPHEN DAWSON:** I can respond to that. I will state at the outset that upgrades to the Tonkin Highway and Hale Road intersection are jointly funded, again, by the state and commonwealth. The first concept for the upgrade to the Tonkin Highway and Hale Road intersection was a simple flyover, but it did not include access ramps onto Hale Road. Following the release of that concept plan, the local member for Forrestfield, Stephen Price, has been actively engaging with, and seeking feedback from, the local community. That community consultation was passed on to the transport minister, who asked Main Roads to look at other solutions.

So the new proposal will grant Hale Road access to more than 80 per cent of traffic users by providing north-facing ramps. Users will also have access to south-facing ramps at Kelvin Road. South-facing ramps were investigated for the Tonkin Highway and Hale Road intersection, but I am told were not a viable option due to their impact on private land, increased project cost and significant impacts to Aboriginal heritage and Bush Forever sites. That option would also require extensive land acquisitions, and the state government obviously seeks to avoid private land and home acquisition where possible—this being a last resort.

**Hon DONNA FARAGHER:** Minister, thank you for that. I am aware of all of that —

**Hon STEPHEN DAWSON:** Oh, sorry.

**Hon DONNA FARAGHER:** — albeit that the community is still not happy with regard to the latest proposal. My question, though, still relates to whether or not there has been consideration of safety improvement options required along various Welshpool Road intersections given the fact that some local residents will utilise, perhaps more frequently as a result of this change, those roads to get onto Welshpool Road to then utilise that intersection.

**Hon STEPHEN DAWSON:** I am not sure how much extra information we can give you, but Mr Snook can provide a response.

**Mr SNOOK:** When we do these major projects, as part of the whole project we look at the access from the local roads into the main part of the project that we are doing. So, automatically out of our design process, we will check all local roads accessing into Hale Road and Tonkin Highway, and so we will pick up any intersections that may have safety issues as part of the overall project.

**Hon DONNA FARAGHER:** Have you already picked them up?

**Mr SNOOK:** Yes.

**Hon DONNA FARAGHER:** Yes. What intersections are those and which ones will have the improvements made?

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**Mr SNOOK:** At this stage, I cannot give you specifics, but what I am saying is as part of the overall project, we will look at the connecting roads, and if any safety issues come out of that, they will be addressed by the project.

**Hon STEPHEN DAWSON:** This project still has some way to go, as I understand it. The anticipated calling for expressions of interest is around the middle of next year, so we have got that time frame to work out the issues.

**Hon DONNA FARAGHER:** By that point you will have further detail in respect of those local roads and the improvements that will be required.

**Hon STEPHEN DAWSON:** Yes. You would hope so.

**Hon DONNA FARAGHER:** Yes?

**Hon STEPHEN DAWSON:** Absolutely. Yes.

**Hon DONNA FARAGHER:** Just a couple more questions in relation to that. With regard to the proposed intersection upgrades at both Welshpool Road and Kelvin Road, what are the timings for each of those projects? Have plans been released with regard to what those intersection upgrades will look like; and, if so, could I have a copy?

**Hon STEPHEN DAWSON:** I am told that Hale is the first cab off the rank, followed by Welshpool and then by Kelvin. In relation to Tonkin Highway between Gateway WA and NorthLink WA, I am told a business case has been completed. An alliance contract was signed in June with the Tonkin Gap Alliance, which comprises BMD, Georgiou Group, WA Limestone, BG&E and GHD, and the construction of the project has commenced. That started a few weeks ago.

In terms of Welshpool, Hale and Kelvin in particular, the expression of interest has got a date of April 2021. The RFP is due in June 2021, so it is anticipated then in December 2021 a contract will be awarded and construction would start early 2022.

**Hon DONNA FARAGHER:** Thank you for that. Have any images been released of the proposed interchange at both Welshpool Road and Kelvin Road at this stage or is that happening later?

**Hon STEPHEN DAWSON:** No. We are still in planning for that. They have not been released.

**Hon DONNA FARAGHER:** Thank you. My final question is: has Main Roads identified any environmental constraints with regard to these two interchanges in the improvements that you are seeking to deliver?

**Hon STEPHEN DAWSON:** Not yet, but that work is being done now. Unlike the earlier project that Hon Simon O'Brien asked about, specific environmental approval will be needed for this, so it will not be captured by a Main Roads' general clearing permit that they have got previously. They would definitely have to go through the EPA for this.

**Hon DONNA FARAGHER:** For both Kelvin Road and Welshpool Road—is that right?

**Hon STEPHEN DAWSON:** It is my understanding, yes.

**Hon DONNA FARAGHER:** So it will need to go through at the EPA?

**Hon STEPHEN DAWSON:** Yes.

**Hon DONNA FARAGHER:** Thank you very much.

**Hon JIM CHOWN:** Minister, in the state budget paper 2020–21, “4 Years of Delivering for the Kimberley” and “Upgrading Roads Across the Kimberley”, listed there is the Broome–Cape Leveque Road; the Bidyadanga Access Road; Gibb River Road; Duncan Road; Great Northern Highway and

the Tanami Road, which has \$42.7 million allocated in that particular paper. But when you go to budget paper No 5, page 179, there is no mention of the Tanami Road or the \$42.7 million.

[12.10 pm]

**The CHAIR:** Does the honourable member mean budget paper No 3?

**Hon JIM CHOWN:** Sorry; yes. What did I say?

**The CHAIR:** Can you just give your first reference?

**Hon JIM CHOWN:** It is the “WA State Budget 2020–21: 4 Years of Delivering for the Kimberley”.

**The CHAIR:** What page is it for the first reference? Do you have that?

**Hon JIM CHOWN:** It is page 2.

**The CHAIR:** Of budget paper No 2?

**Hon JIM CHOWN:** Yes.

**Hon STEPHEN DAWSON:** I will ask Mr Cammack to provide an answer to that.

**Mr CAMMACK:** In relation to Tanami Road, Duncan Road and Gordon Downs Roads which you mentioned that were listed, they are not listed on the Main Roads asset investment program because they are on the local road network. That is the works that are jointly funded between the commonwealth and the state government on an 80–20 basis. They are not itemised individually within the Main Roads budget papers, but the funding exists for those roads. I think you also mentioned Broome–Cape Leveque Road. Again, that is a local road and that is being delivered by Main Roads. We spoke about the Aboriginal involvement in that. But because they are not a Main Roads asset, we do not list them in the asset investment program.

**Hon JIM CHOWN:** Sorry; I could not quite hear what you were saying for some of the time. For clarification, the moneys are allocated somewhere in the budget for these roads. Is that what you are saying?

**Mr CAMMACK:** That is correct.

**Hon JIM CHOWN:** But it is under a different section?

**Mr CAMMACK:** That is correct.

**Hon JIM CHOWN:** Okay; that is fine.

**Hon STEPHEN DAWSON:** Essentially, they are not a Main Roads asset, so they do not appear in the asset investment program because they are local roads, but the money is in the budget elsewhere.

**Hon JIM CHOWN:** Where are these moneys coming from then?

**Hon STEPHEN DAWSON:** They are coming —

**Hon JIM CHOWN:** Are they coming out of MRD recurrent funding?

**Hon STEPHEN DAWSON:** Yes, they are. Obviously, with those roads, there is a commonwealth contribution as well as a state contribution.

**Hon JIM CHOWN:** Thanks, minister.

In budget paper No 2, volume 2, at page 617 is the table “Details of Controlled Grants and Subsidies”. It says —

Western Australia Natural Disaster Relief and Recovery Arrangements Funding Applied to the Local Government Road Network

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In the 2019–20 budget, the amount was \$107 million and the actual used was \$38.59 million. Then we go to page 604, where it states —

Western Australia Natural Disaster Relief and Recovery Arrangements Update

The budget estimate was \$10 million for 2020–21. Then we go forward to page 606, and paragraph (e) at the bottom states —

Natural Disaster Expenditure on Local Government Roads occurring after 2019–20 will now be recouped by local governments directly from the Department of Fire and Emergency Services. The 2020–21 figure reflects the finalisation of claims prior to the change.

Could I have some clarification in regard to the figures, because it is quite confusing, on what has been spent, what was actually raised and whether all those local governments have received the money as stated?

**Hon STEPHEN DAWSON:** Obviously, that program that you referred to is known as WANDRRA. Since 1 November 2018, a new determination was released by Emergency Management Australia. As a result of this new determination, the process is now known as DRFAWA, being Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements Western Australia. Main Roads no longer administers the roads process on behalf of DFES, so asset owners now go directly to DFES. Main Roads remains the road asset expert and, as such, offers comment when requested by DFES. During the state budget process, Main Roads reviews outstanding claims from previous events and updates expenditure estimates, where appropriate. Essentially, it is not us anymore; DFES now does the WANDRRA stuff.

**Hon JIM CHOWN:** So are we aware that all local governments have received their allocation or not?

**Hon STEPHEN DAWSON:** I do not know. We would have to ask DFES.

**Hon JIM CHOWN:** This is money for roads.

**Hon STEPHEN DAWSON:** Sorry; it is the way the program works. I am not trying to fob you off. Let me try to be helpful. Mr Cammack, do you have any further information?

**Mr CAMMACK:** Yes. The Western Australia natural disaster relief and recovery arrangements are in the Main Roads Western Australia budget papers. We are working through the claims that have been submitted by local government, and the vast majority of those funds have already been provided to local government, but there may be some claims that are still to be submitted or assessed. They will be funded once all the information has been provided and assessed appropriately. As the minister said, the Department of Fire and Emergency Services now looks after the disaster relief and recovery arrangements, so any events that occurred after November last year will be assessed by the Department of Fire and Emergency Services. I am aware that they are processing claims and they will make payments to local government once the information has been submitted to them.

**Hon JIM CHOWN:** So, on previous occasions in regard to this funding under natural disasters when roads were involved—they normally are—the department would make an assessment of those applications and pass them forward. Are you saying that DFES now does that?

**Hon STEPHEN DAWSON:** For disasters after 1 November 2018, DFES does it. It takes advice from Main Roads, but we do not administer the program anymore. That was not our decision, obviously; that was Emergency Management Australia who changed that.

**Hon JIM CHOWN:** Yes. I just find it a bit bizarre that the experts are not involved in the process, being Main Roads, as opposed to DFES, and they have to request information.

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**Hon STEPHEN DAWSON:** That is why you see in the table “Details of Controlled Grants and Subsidies” that the money reflects that we do not have it in our budget anymore, because DFES does it.

**Hon JIM CHOWN:** Do we have any figures on how many applications are yet to be assessed?

**Hon STEPHEN DAWSON:** We think there are two claims from past disasters that are outstanding.

**Hon JIM CHOWN:** Thank you.

I cannot find anything in the budget regarding the Geraldton bypass proposal. Am I missing something, or are there some figures there for the Northampton development bypass of Geraldton?

**Hon STEPHEN DAWSON:** I am told that Main Roads is investigating the ultimate regional road network requirements between Dongara and Northampton, which includes a bypass of Geraldton. That work is in the early stages, I am told. The planning study was recently completed and released for public consultation.

**Hon JIM CHOWN:** So the public consultation process is underway, but there are no actual figures in the budget for development or for anything else at this stage, so I would assume that it is many years away?

**Hon STEPHEN DAWSON:** Not necessarily. I am told that an Infrastructure Australia submission for upgrades to North West Coastal Highway and Brand Highway is being developed at the moment. We are looking for some money from Infrastructure Australia. We are in the planning phase, essentially.

**Hon JIM CHOWN:** What is the department’s time frame regarding this proposal to Infrastructure Australia? I assume that submission will go forward at some stage this year or next year.

**Hon STEPHEN DAWSON:** It is being developed, so whether it goes forward this year or next year, I am not sure. Obviously, you are aware—you represent the area—that it is something that has been talked about for a very long time in the midwest. Main Roads has completed a draft alignment study. That followed years of investigation and consultation. That has identified the preferred route for the project. Now that it has been identified, we will continue to seek the community’s input into the proposed corridor, including from landowners, local government and community members. As I said, that consultation is open now. We have only just started the process for the project, so currently no funding is allocated towards it, but once those planning studies are completed, we will look at funding sources, including applying for funds from the commonwealth.

**Hon JIM CHOWN:** Thank you, minister. What sort of consultation process will be undertaken by the department in regard to the proposed route?

[12.20 pm]

**Hon STEPHEN DAWSON:** I will ask Mr Cammack to comment, please.

**Mr CAMMACK:** At the moment, there has been consultation with local government. I am aware that there is a meeting that is going to be held tomorrow where there will be transport industry representatives who will be consulted in regard to the proposed alignments and obtain feedback from them as to what they believe is appropriate or not appropriate. There is local government and industry consultation and it is also open for public comment, so the public can provide commentary on what is being proposed in the planning study.

**Hon JIM CHOWN:** Will any public meetings be carried out in, say, the places of Walkaway and Dongara, for example?



**Mr CAMMACK:** I am not aware about the detail regarding whether there are any planned or proposed at this stage.

**Hon JIM CHOWN:** I do recall, for example, Miling, which is quite a small hamlet, had some controversy in regard to whether or not they wanted a bypass. The department conducted a poll. Would anything along those lines be carried out?

**Hon STEPHEN DAWSON:** We are certainly open to it, honourable member. The public comment period is open until 31 March 2021, so we will see what comes back and then we will ascertain at that stage what further consultation we have to get to and how granular it has to be. By all means if you have suggestions on what is needed, you are very welcome to put them forward to the minister and I will make sure that she considers them.

**Hon JIM CHOWN:** Sure.

**Hon STEPHEN DAWSON:** But I will reiterate we are at the very early stages for this. The likelihood is that the project will cost in the order of probably \$900 million to \$1.1 billion.

**Hon JIM CHOWN:** That would be a bit light, minister.

**Hon STEPHEN DAWSON:** Can you hear me—sorry?

**Hon JIM CHOWN:** Yes, I said \$900 million would be a bit light I think.

**Hon STEPHEN DAWSON:** Again, it just depends on where it lands but —

**Hon JIM CHOWN:** It would be more like \$1.5 billion.

**Hon STEPHEN DAWSON:** My figures and my advice says between \$900 million and \$1.1 billion, but, anyway, we will see what comes back after the consultation and we will work out where to from there.

**Hon JIM CHOWN:** I would like to put a question on notice, Chair. Would the department be able to send me the traffic count, as it currently stands, for the heavy vehicles passing through Geraldton? How many of those vehicles only go to Geraldton and back, and what others actually bypass the town itself?

**Hon STEPHEN DAWSON:** I am not sure we have that figure about how many go to Geraldton —

**Hon JIM CHOWN:** That is why I put it on notice, minister.

**Hon STEPHEN DAWSON:** I am not sure we have it at all, but certainly, I am told that the —

**Hon JIM CHOWN:** The department should have those numbers.

**The CHAIR:** Member.

**Hon STEPHEN DAWSON:** — traffic along the existing highways through Geraldton now exceeds 15 000 vehicles a day.

**Hon JIM CHOWN:** Yes, but that is not just the heavy vehicles. That is all vehicles, I assume?

**Hon STEPHEN DAWSON:** That is all vehicles, yes.

**Hon JIM CHOWN:** This is 15 000 vehicles a day pass through Geraldton?

**Hon STEPHEN DAWSON:** Yes, travel along the existing highways through Geraldton.

**Hon JIM CHOWN:** In the previous session, minister, I asked a question to the PTA and they flicked it back to Main Roads.

**Hon STEPHEN DAWSON:** I think we are aware of what the question was, honourable member, so I will ask Mr Cammack to provide an answer to that.

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**Mr CAMMACK:** Can I, through the Chair, just ask for the question, so that I am aware of the detail?

**Hon STEPHEN DAWSON:** Sorry; I thought you were aware of it. We were aware; you ask it again.

**The CHAIR:** Honourable member and for the purpose of *Hansard*, could you just restate the question?

**Hon JIM CHOWN:** Sure. My question to the PTA was: in regard to commercial freight lines, what are the basic parameters to make them commercially viable or viable for public funding? For example, what is the minimum tonnage per kilometre on a rail line that would trigger the possibility of public funding? I am sure there are other parameters as well.

**Mr CAMMACK:** At the moment, the transport portfolio is working on a business case submission following on from the “Revitalising Agricultural Region Freight Strategy” that was released in mid-2020. As part of that, we are looking at what multimodal solutions there are to the transport task for the wheatbelt areas—that is, the broader wheatbelt from Northampton through to Esperance. The idea behind that is to try to make it as efficient as possible to get the grain exported out of the wheatbelt area.

In terms of the parameters that make a particular transport mode the most viable, we are working with CBH and Arc Infrastructure to understand some of the parameters that they use in making some of those commercial decisions. That will form part of the business case and the options assessment. I do not have any particular benchmarks that we have or are using, but what we will do is work with CBH and Arc Infrastructure to understand that and then undertake economic analysis. We will look at issues such as road maintenance costs and rail maintenance costs in determining benefit–cost ratios; safety benefits from using a particular transport mode; road user costs and rail user costs so that we understand whether a particular option is more cost-effective and provides broader benefits; and travel time savings, which is typically what we have in an economic analysis for determining a benefit–cost ratio. We will use some of the information from CBH and Arc Infrastructure to guide that process. We will also be looking at environmental and social impacts of using one mode versus another mode when we are looking at a range of different options for transporting the grain from the farm to the port.

**Hon JIM CHOWN:** When is this economic analysis going to be finalised?

**Hon STEPHEN DAWSON:** Mr Cammack again.

**Mr CAMMACK:** We are working on the business case where we are targeting April next year. We are doing data gathering at the moment and the discussions I mentioned with CBH and Arc Infrastructure. We will then start to put options together and be guided by the agricultural freight strategy that I mentioned previously. Then we will start to do the economic analysis on the options. We are hoping to complete it around April next year.

**Hon JIM CHOWN:** What is the step after that? Once you have reached B against A or C is the preferred option, then you go and look for funding for that option—correct?

**Mr CAMMACK:** That is correct. The process we are working towards is putting together an Infrastructure Australia submission. Infrastructure Australia has already identified the wheatbelt secondary freight route as a problem of national significance —

**Hon JIM CHOWN:** Yes, but when we are talking about freight work, we are talking about rail and road, are we not?

**Mr CAMMACK:** Sorry; I understand. What we are doing is we have put an amended stage 1 over to do just as you say—to expand that to be road and rail. That is being considered by Infrastructure Australia. We will get an understanding of whether they believe that broader problem is of national

significance, given that the secondary freight route in the wheatbelt has already been accepted as having a nationally significant problem. Without prejudging what the IA board may do, we are looking at a broader issue, so I suspect it will continue. The stage 2 assessment will then start to look at what costs are involved and that opens up the conversation for governments to consider investment opportunities.

**Hon JIM CHOWN:** So why in the PTA session in regard to tier 3 rail lines did the minister state that—I am not sure if they have been allocated in the budget or it was a proposed figure of, say, \$110 million for the tier 3 line, which is between Quairading and York—we have not got to that point yet, but we now —

**Hon STEPHEN DAWSON:** No, I did not say that money had been allocated.

**Hon JIM CHOWN:** You correct me on what you said.

**Hon STEPHEN DAWSON:** What I said is that was the estimated cost.

**Hon JIM CHOWN:** The estimated amount, yes. Why would we have an estimated amount when this study has not been finalised?

**Hon STEPHEN DAWSON:** We estimate things all the time—just ballpark figures, essentially. Until you actually —

**Hon JIM CHOWN:** With due respect, minister, we have just heard from the department that this proposal has a long way to go.

**Hon STEPHEN DAWSON:** Absolutely.

**Hon JIM CHOWN:** We can have estimated amounts for many things, but just because there is an estimated amount does not mean it is ever going to happen.

**Hon STEPHEN DAWSON:** Absolutely not; I agree. An estimate is just an estimate; people ask questions all the time.

**Hon JIM CHOWN:** Absolutely. It actually means nothing until we have a firm proposal in a budget.

**Hon STEPHEN DAWSON:** But it also guides —

**Hon JIM CHOWN:** We can do endless studies, minister, but most of them do not come to fruition.

**The CHAIR:** Are you going to let the minister respond, honourable member?

**Hon STEPHEN DAWSON:** Essentially, an estimate is an estimate. Two different things —

**Hon JIM CHOWN:** My question is in regard to tier 3 lines —

**Hon MATTHEW SWINBOURN:** I have a point of order. I am trying to listen to the minister's response and the member keeps speaking over the minister.

**The CHAIR:** Thank you, honourable member; I am capable of chairing as much as I am of requiring the member to wait for an answer from the minister.

[12.30 pm]

**Hon STEPHEN DAWSON:** I am not sure what the question was. I was just making the point that an estimate —

**Hon JIM CHOWN:** I have one more question.

**Hon STEPHEN DAWSON:** The microphone is still on.

**The CHAIR:** Honourable member, the minister is speaking. If you to continue down this road, I will not have any hesitation in bypassing you. Minister.

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**Hon STEPHEN DAWSON:** I was making a point that an estimate is essentially that—a ballpark figure for what a project might cost. Obviously, for any project until a business plan has been done and proper planning has taken place, you do not know what the final cost is but at that stage then, you can put money in budgets and plan for the future.

**The CHAIR:** Have you any other questions, honourable member?

**Hon JIM CHOWN:** Yes, just one. Thank you, minister, for that clarification.

**The CHAIR:** Go ahead, honourable member.

**Hon JIM CHOWN:** My question is, at this stage there is no firm proposal for tier 3 lines to be rebuilt or built until the study is finished and the government and the commonwealth make financial allocations to it.

**Hon STEPHEN DAWSON:** I think we are very keen to see what we can do. Multiple agencies across government are working on the issue.

**Hon JIM CHOWN:** That is never going to happen.

**The CHAIR:** Everyone missed my roads reference in that exchange, except the advisory officer and Hon Simon O'Brien. Hon Ken Baston.

**Hon KEN BASTON:** I refer to page 603. On virtually the bottom line is Spoilbank marina. I presume that the Spoilbank marina is from Port Hedland. Is that correct?

**Hon STEPHEN DAWSON:** Yes, that is correct.

**Hon KEN BASTON:** Can you just tell me how advanced it is and expectations of the future?

**Hon STEPHEN DAWSON:** We can only answer in relation to the road part of it. We are not responsible for the main Spoilbank marina project. It is the port. We can only answer in relation to the haulage route. I understand that work has commenced. The sod turning was done last week, so it has started. It was awarded to an Aboriginal company to construct. I think they are called Garli Pty Ltd.

**Hon KEN BASTON:** That is constructing the actual marina or just the road.

**Hon STEPHEN DAWSON:** No, not the marina, just the haulage route, the road essentially. The marina stuff is the Pilbara Ports Authority.

**Hon KEN BASTON:** So the marina, what time frame is on that?

**Hon STEPHEN DAWSON:** I do not know. You would have to ask the Pilbara Ports Authority. Our part of it for this session here today, which is the road into it, that started last week.

**Hon SAMANTHA ROWE:** Minister, my question is around the smart freeway projects and the reference is page 614, budget paper No 2, volume 2. The line item is "Transforming Freeways—Roe Highway to Narrows Bridge—Smart Freeways". I am wondering if you are able to advise the impact that this project has had on the congestion around Kwinana Freeway and how the Mitchell Freeway smart freeway project will benefit residents in the northern suburbs.

**Hon STEPHEN DAWSON:** Sure. I can certainly give that a try. An anecdote first of all, my office staff tells me it saves them 10 to 15 minutes in the morning so they are very happy with it and get in to work on time. So it was a \$56 million project and it was basically looking to deliver a quicker and smoother journey between Roe Highway and the Narrows Bridge during the morning peak hour. Historically, traffic entering the freeway from Canning Highway during peak periods was a major contributor to congestion, and so by converting the existing emergency lane from Canning Highway to the Narrows Bridge into an additional traffic lane, this bottleneck has eased. Opening of the

project, along with a number of other completed projects on Kwinana Freeway northbound, will see significant improvements in journey times from Rowley Road to the Narrows Bridge, and those works complement the other major transport infrastructure projects that we have underway in the southern suburbs, and they include obviously the Thornlie–Cockburn Link and the North Lake Road Bridge.

In terms of the Mitchell Freeway, so in the 2020–21 budget, there is \$100 million. That has been allocated to rolling out the technology southbound along the Mitchell. That has been jointly funded by the state but also the commonwealth. That will see coordinated RAM signals installed along 16 ramps from Hester Avenue to Vincent Street. We believe that the technology will alleviate pressure on the road network, but also improve safety and connectivity for people living and working in the northern suburbs. It will also lead to more reliable journey times and provide congestion relief for the more than 180 000 motorists per day that use that stretch of road, so the Mitchell southbound. The technology has obviously had great success along the Kwinana Freeway. Between Roe Highway and the Narrows Bridge, motorists have been saving around that 10 minutes during peak hour. The expressions of interest for industry to deliver the second part will open before the end of the year and the project is due to commence late next year. It is a significant investment. With that \$100 million, there is more than 700 direct and indirect jobs expected to be created over the life of the project. It is a win for those 180 000 motorists but also a win for local construction companies as well.

**Hon SAMANTHA ROWE:** Sorry, did you say 700 jobs?

**Hon STEPHEN DAWSON:** Seven hundred direct and indirect jobs anticipated from it. Did I get all of your question?

**Hon SAMANTHA ROWE:** Yes, thank you.

**Hon MATTHEW SWINBOURN:** My question relates to page 614 of budget paper No 2, volume 2, and it relates to the Tonkin Highway corridor upgrades. Most specifically what I am interested in is the stage 3 extension of Tonkin Highway from Thomas Road to South Western Highway, which, I believe, is a project that has been jointly funded by the commonwealth and state governments. What I am interested to hear from the minister is the progress that the government is making towards the delivery of that project.

**Hon STEPHEN DAWSON:** Sure. I am very happy to give you some information on that. Obviously, this has been around a long time and you are nothing but consistent in terms of asking questions in relation to your electorate. Well done!

That Tonkin Highway extension will extend Tonkin Highway south from Thomas Road, Oakford to South Western Highway south east of Mundijong. The proposed design includes about 14 kilometres of four-lane dual carriageway from Thomas Road to South Western Highway, construction and/or upgrades of intersections at Thomas Road, Orton Road, Mundijong Road and South Western Highway; a grade separation interchange at Bishop Road to allow for continued rail operation; and a bridge over the Perth to Bunbury rail line and Wright Road. The project is on Infrastructure Australia's infrastructure priority list. As we know, the south east corridor is an important and fast-growing area. Obviously, Byford, Armadale, Kelmscott and Gosnells are faced with significant volumes of heavy vehicles and other through-traffic travelling to and from the south west and wheatbelt regions. Extensive planning, project development and stakeholder community consultation and the confirmation of scope and the various approvals are underway now. A freight rail realignment planning study is being finalised. That is to determine the preferred alignment, but also the feasibility of constructing the realignment and the road extension concurrently. That is our preference. Expressions of interest will be sought in early mid-2020–21 and construction is

anticipated to begin mid-2022. That is obviously subject to the various environmental and statutory approvals that will be needed. Obviously, we need to finish the project scope but certainly middle of next year, start, and then mid the year after for a completion.

**Hon MATTHEW SWINBOURN:** I understand that the stage we are at now is waiting for federal government environmental approvals. Is that correct and is there any indication of when we might get a response to that?

**Hon STEPHEN DAWSON:** You are correct. I have not got any information, though, as to where that is at, unfortunately, honourable member.

**Hon MATTHEW SWINBOURN:** That is probably a question for the federal environment minister rather than the state environment minister.

**Hon STEPHEN DAWSON:** It probably is but certainly just in relation to this, I think it is probably something that I could not get you, but I happy to find out afterwards and if I find out, I will let you know.

**Hon MATTHEW SWINBOURN:** I appreciate that.

**Hon STEPHEN DAWSON:** Just with this again, the total corridor estimated cost is \$1.391 billion and, again, 20 per cent came from the state, the commonwealth made a significant contribution and there is Metronet money in there as well.

[12.40 pm]

**Hon MATTHEW SWINBOURN:** I think some of that deals with Hale Road and Welshpool Road.

**Hon STEPHEN DAWSON:** As well—that is the whole corridor, yes.

**Hon MATTHEW SWINBOURN:** It is the package of it.

**Hon STEPHEN DAWSON:** You are correct.

**Hon TJORN SIBMA:** I refer the minister to page 613 of the budget papers, paragraph 10—above the table—“Metropolitan Amenity Walls”. There is a \$10 million allocation to that project that appears later in the budget papers. Would the minister be able to provide a list of roads or areas that have been identified for that program or could make use of that funding; and, if so, what are they?

**Hon STEPHEN DAWSON:** Sure, I can do that. Amenity walls had to be constructed or extended at the following locations: Stirling Highway northbound between Marmion Street and George Street in East Fremantle; Karel Avenue between Roe Highway and Farrington Road in Leeming; Reid Highway westbound between Mirrabooka Avenue and Wanneroo Road in Westminster; and Hepburn Avenue westbound between Fairfield Drive and Alexander Drive in Ballajura. These walls will essentially provide privacy screening for residents and also help to mitigate the traffic noise. That \$10 million came out of the COVID-19 recovery package that was announced in about September.

**Hon TJORN SIBMA:** How was the decision made to identify those particular areas? Were noise audits or noise surveys undertaken, for example, to determine the placement of those walls?

**Hon STEPHEN DAWSON:** They are amenity walls rather than noise walls. But as part of the COVID-19 process, agencies were asked to bring forward projects that they thought were priorities, but also that created jobs, so it is about getting the economy ticking over again and getting up again. These would have been on a list provided by Main Roads through the minister to Treasury and essentially everything got ticked off—well, things got ticked off through that process.

**Hon TJORN SIBMA:** Just for clarification, I do not think that any of those —

**Hon STEPHEN DAWSON:** Sorry; just further to that, they were walls that Main Roads had already got either environmental approvals or statutory approvals that were required.

**Hon TJORN SIBMA:** So, they were ready to go?

**Hon STEPHEN DAWSON:** Things that were ready to go immediately. The intention is to have them done by the end of 2021.

**Hon TJORN SIBMA:** Is there any scope for the allocation or the extension of this program as it relates to elements along the NorthLink project?

**Hon STEPHEN DAWSON:** I understand NorthLink is being looked at at the moment and that will be a separate process. This \$10 million is purely the cost associated with those four projects that I previously identified.

**Hon TJORN SIBMA:** Quickly, with respect to NorthLink, is there a noise survey or a noise audit being undertaken; and, if so, will those results be made public?

**Hon STEPHEN DAWSON:** I understand a survey has been undertaken. There are meetings planned with the local community who are affected by it. Once that happens, the intention is to make the survey, or the details, public.

**Hon TJORN SIBMA:** Could you please confirm when those community meetings might take place? I do not need specific dates, but what are you planning to do?

**Hon STEPHEN DAWSON:** I am told that they are taking place at the moment, so they are happening at the moment. But the intention is that once they happen, to release the information.

**Hon COLIN TINCKNELL:** Just a quick one, minister. I am very, very happy to see Bussell Highway duplication stages 1 and 2. That has been a really dangerous road; I use it most weeks, two or three times. It talks about stage 1 and stage 2. I would like to know the approximate dates when stage 1 would be finished and, then, when stage 2 would be completed.

**Hon STEPHEN DAWSON:** I think I might have given that information earlier on, honourable member, but let me have a look. The stage 1 works have commenced and the intention is that they will be completed by the end of June 2021. For stage 2, the preparation works are happening, or continuing on that, and that includes the road and bridge design, the environmental approvals and the service relocations.

I do not have a date for that, but the stage 2 request for proposal—so the RFP—is expected to occur in mid-2021. Then the construction is anticipated, or expected, to start in late 2021. As I said, that preparation work is happening now and there are some approvals that need to happen, but that is the indicative time line.

**Hon DONNA FARAGHER:** I might go back to page 607 under “Service Summary”. Two parts: this is where I asked a question with regard to Robinson Road. I have one other question, I am sorry, because I need some clarity on that part, if I may. As we discussed previously, I understand options are being considered with regard to managing impacts on local roads. I appreciate you cannot at this stage provide that to me, but what I do want to know is: in the previous estimates hearing, I recall that the Metronet team indicated that the proposal to close Robinson Road would be provided to the City of Swan and released for public comment, I think, towards the end of the month. My question is whether or not the options that are being considered to manage the impact on the local roads will also be available at that same time. I think the minister would appreciate it is important to see what those options are when you are looking at a proposal to close a road.

**Hon STEPHEN DAWSON:** We do not know. I am sorry, we do not have that information, so we are not aware.

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**Hon DONNA FARAGHER:** Can I ask that that be taken on notice, because I would like to know if that information will be provided at the same time as the public comment period with regard to the closure of Robinson Road.

**Hon STEPHEN DAWSON:** I am not sure we will have answer for you by the end of the period when the answers to further questions are due. Put it this way: if an answer can be provided in the time that we have available to provide answers, then we will provide it. But my advisers tell me that they are not clear if that answer will be ready.

**Hon DONNA FARAGHER:** I think that it is either a yes or no answer. I do not think it is that difficult. If I could ask that it be put on notice and we will see what answer we get from the minister.  
*[Supplementary Information No B3.]*

**Hon DONNA FARAGHER:** I am going to ask this question here because this is the area we have asked about with regard to road matters relating to Metronet projects, and it is with regard to the Bayswater train station. Can I ask whether or not comprehensive traffic modelling has now been undertaken with regard to any matter surrounding local road impacts concerning the Bayswater train station project? I have particular reference to King William Street, as well as Olfe Street and perhaps also the intersection of Guildford Road and King William Street.

**Hon STEPHEN DAWSON:** We think modelling has been done, but it would have been undertaken by the Metronet team, and, obviously, they were in the last session.

**Hon DONNA FARAGHER:** This is why I have asked here because in the last session I was asked to ask questions relating to road impacts in this section relating to Metronet. I am doing what I was asked in the previous session.

**Hon STEPHEN DAWSON:** I am sorry; I am not trying to be difficult.

**Hon DONNA FARAGHER:** Consistency would be good.

**Mr WORONZOW:** Thanks, member. The modelling that you are referring to has been done and it has been done on a holistic basis, so it is just not around the Bayswater station. It is broader than that. It has only very recently been done, I suppose hence the confusion. It has only been done in the last period of time and we are still trying to understand what that modelling is telling us.

**Hon DONNA FARAGHER:** So the understanding of the modelling, is that being done by Main Roads or is that being done by Metronet?

**Mr WORONZOW:** It is being done by a combination of Main Roads and the Metronet team. Obviously, the Metronet team is responsible for delivering the station, Main Roads is providing the information about the consequences of some of the road movements, and a combined team is considering what that modelling is saying, trying to understand what it means and what it means for the local road network.

[12.50 pm]

**Hon DONNA FARAGHER:** Are you able to provide any information on the impacts on those local roads, either now or through supplementary information, particularly relating to Olfe Street and any impacts concerning King William Street?

**Mr WORONZOW:** As I said, it has only recently been done. We are considering what that modelling means. The answer is that we cannot provide it now.

**Hon DONNA FARAGHER:** Why not? You have indicated that you have provided some information to Metronet. It would be useful to provide some information, because this is of concern to some members of the community.

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**Hon STEPHEN DAWSON:** Sure. It is still under consideration. As Mr Woronzow said, it has just come in and is still under consideration.

**Hon DONNA FARAGHER:** How long will it be under consideration for?

**Mr WORONZOW:** It may be a number of months. Anyone who has actually seen the raw data from those modelling exercises—as I said, it is not just related to the station; it is a broader model —

**Hon DONNA FARAGHER:** I understand that.

**Mr WORONZOW:** There is a process where people need to verify what the modelling is saying. It is coming out of our STEM, and then people need to interpret what that means. In some cases, it may mean that we need to do some microsimulations to understand what that higher level model is trying to tell us.

**Hon DONNA FARAGHER:** A document was released last year through Metronet with regard to areas that would require further consideration. That included Whatley Crescent, Coode Street, King William Street and Guildford Road. It also referenced Olfe Street. Can you confirm whether or not the comprehensive modelling that has been undertaken includes these streets, and has anything been identified at this stage that causes some concerns?

**Hon STEPHEN DAWSON:** The modelling picks up most of that area, but, no, we do not know enough about the data yet to say what the impacts might be. That is the work that Mr Woronzow referred to.

**Hon DONNA FARAGHER:** And we do not have a date as to when we might have that information?

**Hon STEPHEN DAWSON:** No, that is between that team. There is a team looking at that work, but my understanding is that it is some time away.

**Hon SIMON O'BRIEN:** I wanted to ask about a couple of bridges in my region. One is mentioned, being the Queen Victoria Street crossing over the Swan River. This is referred to, of course, in works in progress on page 613 of the *Budget Statements*. The other one I am sure I could shoehorn, if required, into some broad service levels 3 and 4, although it is not specifically mentioned. The first bridge project is the Queen Victoria Street bridge, or the old Fremantle bridge as it is colloquially referred to, and it is now funded into the out years. I was wondering if you could briefly update the committee, even by some further information out of session, on progress on the alignment question, which of course is exercising a lot of local concern. The second bridge is the Canning Bridge. I refer here to another old wooden structure that was probably extended beyond its expected use-by date. What is the future for that, which presumably you are contemplating in the context of Canning Highway, west of Canning Bridge, with all of the large-scale developments going on either side of Canning Highway there and the increased populations? Could you please update us on what plans are for that bridge as well, please?

**Hon STEPHEN DAWSON:** Sure. I can certainly give you some information in relation to the Queen Victoria Street bridge. For the benefit of members of the committee, the proposal is to demolish the existing Fremantle Traffic Bridge. I am told that an early concept plan has been developed and a community consultation program started in the middle of this year—I think in August this year. That is to identify the priorities for residents and other bridge users. The consultation will also help identify how the project can best retain and enhance the heritage value of the crossing while still meeting project requirements within the environmental and engineering constraints of the area. Procurement of an alliance contract for the completion of the project commenced in July and expressions of interest were sought in August. A contract is expected to be awarded in early 2021 and then construction is expected to commence late next year. There has been feedback from the community about the proposed location of the new traffic bridge. That consultation continues with

the local community. A decision has not been made in relation to the final alignment as yet because those conversations continue with the local community. In terms of the Canning Bridge, are you talking about the bus interchange at Canning Bridge?

**Hon SIMON O'BRIEN:** No. To refresh the minister's memory, there are two bridges at Canning. One is the old wooden bridge, which contains general traffic, and then of course there is a further bridge that goes across the freeway, and that is where the bus interchange is. I know there are talks about that. They are combined, obviously, but the old wooden one is my primary concern.

**Hon STEPHEN DAWSON:** I will ask Mr Snook if he can comment on that.

**Mr SNOOK:** At the moment, we are doing our regular maintenance on the bridge to keep it operating, but at this stage we have not got a firm plan of when there would be a replacement or other improvements to the bridge. Really, we are just doing the maintenance at the moment.

**Hon SIMON O'BRIEN:** If I may, Madam Chair.

**The CHAIR:** Of course.

**Hon SIMON O'BRIEN:** What is the life expectancy of just an ongoing maintenance program? Is there any urgency about plans for the future of that bridge?

**Mr SNOOK:** There is no immediate urgency, but we must keep up with the regular, routine maintenance.

**Hon STEPHEN DAWSON:** Obviously, just back to the Fremantle one on Queen Victoria Street, the maintenance on that has been significant over the last five years—I think about \$25 million or so. An amount of \$23.5 million has been spent on the maintenance of that. It is costing a lot, so the time is now to actually get a new bridge in place. It was built in 1938 as a temporary bridge, so it has lasted a lot longer than what I would call "temporary". That work continues.

**The CHAIR:** That is good solid work!

**Hon DIANE EVERS:** A great return on investment.

**The CHAIR:** Yes, a great return on investment; thank you, honourable member.

**Hon SIMON O'BRIEN:** All with old-growth timber in it, too; goodness me!

**Hon DIANE EVERS:** It stores the carbon if you do that, not to make woodchips.

**The CHAIR:** Okay. Can I get an indication from members if they have any further questions? Is your hand up, sir?

**Hon TJORN SIBMA:** Yes, it is. My question is a little bit generic, but it refers to observations made previously by the minister about the widening of the Mitchell Freeway. This is more of a user gripe and a representation on behalf of constituents. The portion of the Mitchell Freeway heading north that I am talking about commences in or around Glendalough station, going over Scarborough Beach Road, and heads up towards Cedric Street. If I can just note the kink in the lanes, which is actually quite acute, and the condition of the road surface—particularly between Scarborough Beach Road to at least the Hutton Road off-ramp—as it is showing its age. I wonder whether or not there is a commitment to redoing the line marking and resurfacing any time soon.

**Hon STEPHEN DAWSON:** There is certainly some work ongoing along the Mitchell Freeway, so there is some widening happening from Hutton Street to Cedric Street northbound. In terms of the exact spot, we will ask Des to comment on that.

**Mr SNOOK:** The works that are currently being done are just putting in pavement markings now that the widening works have been done. Certainly, I take your point about the condition of the

asphalt. The sections there will be re-asphalted in the coming asphaltting season through this coming summer. There will be sections of it that will be done through the next summer.

**Hon TJORN SIBMA:** Thank you.

[1.00 pm]

**Hon STEPHEN DAWSON:** For those of us who are interested in shopping and go to IKEA, you will be pleased to know that there is some work happening there to construct a double exit lane at the Cedric Street off-ramp to improve the traffic flow for road users essentially going to IKEA.

**Hon TJORN SIBMA:** It is between here and my electorate office, so I frequent that area. It also gave you an opportunity to reflect on another project, so it is a win-win today.

**The CHAIR:** I am so pleased about that. Thank you all.

On behalf of the committee, I thank you for your attendance today. I remind members that due to time constraints, the ELS will not be reopened for additional questions this year. For witnesses, I advise you that the committee will forward the transcript of evidence, which includes the questions you have taken on notice highlighted on the transcript, as soon as possible after the hearing. Responses to questions on notice are due by 5.00 pm 10 working days after receipt. Should you be unable to make the due date, please advise the committee in writing as soon as possible before the due date. The advice is to include specific reasons as to why the due date cannot be met.

I ask you to promptly leave the chamber for COVID-19 cleaning between sessions. Once again, I thank you for your attendance today.

**Hearing concluded at 1.00 pm**

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