

PORTFOLIO COMMITTEE NO. 6 - TRANSPORT AND THE ARTS

Monday 31 August 2026

Examination of proposed expenditure for the portfolio areas

**SPECIAL MINISTER OF STATE, TRANSPORT, ARTS,
MUSIC AND THE NIGHT-TIME ECONOMY**

UNCORRECTED

The Committee met at 9:15.

MEMBERS

Ms Cate Faehrmann (Chair)

The Hon. Mark Banasiak (Deputy Chair)

Ms Abigail Boyd

The Hon. Susan Carter

The Hon. Anthony D'Adam

Ms Sue Higginson

The Hon. Cameron Murphy

The Hon. Peter Primrose

The Hon. Chris Rath

The Hon. Natalie Ward

PRESENT

The Hon. John Graham, *Special Minister of State, Minister for Transport, Minister for the Arts, and Minister for Music and the Night-time Economy*

CORRECTIONS TO TRANSCRIPT OF COMMITTEE PROCEEDINGS

Corrections should be marked on a photocopy of the proof and forwarded to:

**Budget Estimates secretariat
Room 812
Parliament House
Macquarie Street
SYDNEY NSW 2000**

UNCORRECTED

The CHAIR: Welcome to the second hearing of Portfolio Committee No. 6 – Transport and the Arts for the inquiry into budget estimates 2026-2027. I acknowledge the Gadigal people of the Eora nation, the traditional custodians of the lands on which we are meeting today. I pay my respects to Elders past and present, and celebrate the diversity of Aboriginal peoples and their ongoing cultures and connections to the lands and waters of New South Wales. I also acknowledge and pay my respects to any Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people joining us today. My name is Cate Faehrmann. I am the Chair of the Committee. I welcome Minister Graham and accompanying officials to this hearing. Today the Committee will examine the proposed expenditure for the portfolios of Special Minister of State, Transport, the Arts, and Music and the Night-time Economy.

I ask everyone in the room to please turn their mobile phones to silent. Parliamentary privilege applies to witnesses in relation to the evidence they give today. However, it does not apply to what witnesses say outside of the hearing. I urge witnesses to be careful about making comments to the media or to others after completing their evidence. In addition, the Legislative Council has adopted rules to provide procedural fairness for inquiry participants. I encourage Committee members and witnesses to be mindful of these procedures. I welcome and thank you for making the time to give evidence. All witnesses will be sworn prior to giving evidence. Minister, I remind you that you do not need to be sworn as you have already sworn an oath to your office as a member of Parliament.

UNCORRECTED

Mr JOSH MURRAY, Secretary, Transport for NSW, affirmed and examined

Ms TRUDI MARES, Deputy Secretary, Planning, Integration and Passenger, Transport for NSW, sworn and examined

Ms RAQUEL RUBALCABA, Acting Deputy Secretary, Infrastructure, Projects and Engineering, Transport for NSW, sworn and examined

Ms BRENDA HOANG, Deputy Secretary, Finance, Technology and Commercial, Transport for NSW, affirmed and examined

Ms CAMILLA DROVER, Acting Chief Executive, NSW Motorways, Transport for NSW, affirmed and examined

Mr HOWARD COLLINS, Coordinator-General, Transport for NSW, sworn and examined

Mr HUGH LAWSON, Acting Chief Executive, Sydney Metro, affirmed and examined

Mr MATT LONGLAND, Chief Executive, Sydney Trains, affirmed and examined

Ms SALLY WEBB, Deputy Secretary, Safety, Policy, Environment and Regulation, Transport for NSW, affirmed and examined

Ms KATE TIMBS, Acting Commissioner, NSW Point to Point Transport Commission, affirmed and examined

Ms KATE BOYD, PSM, Secretary, the Cabinet Office, affirmed and examined

Ms MELANIE HAWYES, Secretary, Department of Creative Industries, Tourism, Hospitality and Sport, affirmed and examined

Mr TAREK BARAKAT, Deputy Secretary, Hospitality and Racing, Department of Creative Industries, Tourism, Hospitality and Sport, affirmed and examined

Mr MICHAEL RODRIGUES, Executive Director, 24-Hour and Sound, 24-Hour Economy Commissioner, Department of Creative Industries, Tourism, Hospitality and Sport, sworn and examined

Ms KERRI GLASSCOCK, Executive Director, Create NSW, Department of Creative Industries, Tourism, Hospitality and Sport, affirmed and examined

Ms MAUD PAGE, Director, Art Gallery of New South Wales, affirmed and examined

Ms ANNETTE PITMAN, Chief Executive Officer, Museums of History NSW, affirmed and examined

Ms EMILY COLLINS, Head of Sound NSW, affirmed and examined

The CHAIR: I remind witnesses in the overflow seating area to please bring your nameplate with you when you come forward to answer a question and place it in front of you on the table, which assists Hansard and everybody else. Today's hearing will be conducted from 9.15 a.m. to 5.30 p.m. We're joined by the Minister for the morning session from 9.15 a.m. to 1.00 p.m., with a 15-minute break at 11.00 a.m. In the afternoon we will hear from departmental witnesses from 2.00 p.m. to 5.30 p.m., with a 15-minute break at 3.30 p.m. During these sessions there will be questions from the Opposition and crossbench members only and then 15 minutes allocated for Government questions at 10.45 a.m., 12.45 p.m. and 5.15 p.m. We will begin with questions from the Opposition.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Minister, thank you and all your team for joining us today. When will the site to build the new Tangara fleet in the Hunter be selected?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Work is well underway. In fact, I'm meeting tomorrow with one of the councils that is quite keen to have it dragged to Lake Macquarie. We're expecting in October we'll be able to conclude that site selection process and be able to announce publicly shortly after that where we're heading.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: You're thinking that announcement will be shortly after October?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Correct.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: When will construction start on the build of that site?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: The next step for this process—probably the best way to answer your question—is really to do two things: to go out to tender for the fleet, for the rolling stock that will be involved, but also for the shed, which is the colloquial way to put it, that we'll build on this site. We've got to choose which

UNCORRECTED

site. We've got two very good sites to choose from. We'll choose one of those and then we'll rapidly go out to tender to establish the manufacturing facility. We're running a similar program to Queensland. The fact we establish that facility will enable us to keep control of the manufacturing process, given we're planning for three decades.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Do we really want to be talking about Queensland today?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I'm sure we'll get to them later.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: I understand the steps and thank you for setting those out, but when will construction start on the build of that site once chosen?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: The key next step that will inform this is going out to tender. Obviously, the construction start will be informed by the bids we get in through that process. Before we've gone out to the market to assess exactly how that will happen, it's a bit premature to announce a start to construction. They're really the two next steps. They'll be rapid. We're really keen to move this process.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: I understand that. Do you have an expectation about when construction might start on the build?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Not until we go out the market. Obviously, we'll look at the planning options we've got here. We are speeding up a number of projects in the Transport space. This would be one of the key categories that we'd look at to accelerate this procurement. But it doesn't make sense to announce a start to construction before we've even selected a site or gone out to the market to work out what the best way to do that is. We'll look for innovative ways to work with industry to do so.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: When are contracts expected to be awarded for the site?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: It's a similar answer. I'm happy to refer to the agency, perhaps—either to the secretary or to Raquel.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Only if there's a date; otherwise we have lots of lovely time this afternoon. If they do have a date, I'd welcome it.

RAQUEL RUBALCABA: For the construction of the facility, it depends on the site chosen. They both have very different challenges. Once we get to October, we finish the technical feasibility. That will determine what are the enabling and utilities that are required to be established. One site may be 2027 that construction would start. Another site may be 2028, just because it's a little more complex. Until we've done that final assessment I can't confirm a date for you, but we will be starting procurement of that shortly after the announcement.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Minister, when is construction of the facility expected to be finished?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Until we've got those bids in, we won't know the answer to that. I think one thing that is important for the site selection, just to be up-front about it—we've got two good sites. One is slower than the other. We own one site in Broadmeadow. One of the attractions of that is that we could get started more rapidly. The attraction of looking at the Lake Macquarie site is it's a bigger site. We'd have to acquire it off Glencore, but we'd have more flexibility both for Transport but also for whatever other things might sit alongside it. For example, depending on some of the Federal Government's decisions, they may also be interested in looking at sites in the Hunter. It would be the chance to establish much more of a manufacturing precinct. It would be slower, though, and that is one of the factors that we're weighing up in that site selection process.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: I understand. Do you anticipate construction would be finished by 2030, as a rough estimate?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I wouldn't feel confident putting a date on it. It's not the practice of this Government—or of the previous Government—to put dates, before you've commenced the procurement process, on when we're going to complete those. To give you some idea, though—noting where you're heading—the procurement for a train fleet can take five to seven years. These are not quick processes. Some have taken longer. Feel free to quiz the officials on this—I think the Mariyung took probably 10 years.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: I'm interested in the Tangara. I understand the context of what you're saying, but as you and your team sit here today, you don't have those dates to hand, or a construction date. What's your expectation about when the first Tangara fleet carriage would start construction?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Again, you're asking about a procurement process that hasn't started. The best answer I can give you is that expectation about how long other train fleets have taken to procure, and that's based on—

UNCORRECTED

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Is that what you're basing this plan on?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Yes, that's what we're looking at as we tip into this. Put it this way: That's the advice to Government. The Government doesn't necessarily accept that advice on the face of it. One of the things we are doing is working with the planning Minister in particular to shrink some of the planning times that apply to these processes. We've had some success in Transport, and we will be applying that to this project.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: I understand that's a factor involved, but I'm asking about Transport today, and Transport's expectations. Do you have an expectation of when the first passenger service for the new fleet will occur?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: That five- to seven-year train build from when construction starts gives you an idea of how long these processes generally take. That's the advice to me. I put that caveat because we will be looking at acceleration. The Government doesn't necessarily accept that timeline. But just to be up-front, that is the advice to me. I'm sure you'll quiz that in the afternoon and really test that process.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Acceleration within Transport?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Yes, because there's a number of major planning and approval processes. We have had some real success shrinking those. We can't do it for everything—

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Sorry, my question was about Transport, not about the planning acceleration—your control of Transport.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Well, they're related processes. For an endeavour this big, they're related processes. But to answer your question, it is both Transport processes and the planning processes which we've had some success speeding up.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: I understand that, clearly and obviously. Has Transport for NSW or Sydney Trains provided advice to the Government in relation to when that construction will begin?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: There have been some broad, indicative timelines, but these are pre-market testing. Again, I'm happy to refer to the officials and you can hear directly from them, or you could choose to do so in the afternoon.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Thank you. I'm pleased I've got that choice. What's the broad indication?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Sorry, you'll have to be more specific.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: You said there's a broad indication. I'm using your words. I'm just asking what that broad indication is of—the advice on when construction will start, just to be clear.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: From commencing construction of a train fleet, it will take five to seven years.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Sorry, I probably wasn't clear, to be fair. My question was has Transport or Sydney Trains provided advice on when construction will begin? You said there's a broad indication. I asked what that broad indication was.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: When construction will begin for the—

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Carriage.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Following the construction of the shed, but as I say, the next step is going out to EOI, to the market. That will inform how quickly we can begin, and that process should begin very rapidly.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Are you—or Transport for NSW or Sydney Trains—aware of when construction will begin, or when passenger services will commence?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: We've got those broad, indicative timelines.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: What are they?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I've just referred to some of them. You can feel free to ask the agencies in more detail. But we won't have those final dates until we've gone through these next two steps: calling for the shed expressions of interest and calling for the train fleet.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: I understand that. What are those broad, indicative timelines?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Stepping through those, we've got to select the site. One of these sites is quicker. One might be slower by a period of—it could be nine or 12 months. Secondly, we've then got to build

UNCORRECTED

the manufacturing facility. That is a relatively rapid process in the scheme of things. Then train construction starts after that. There's no quick way, of course, to build a whole new train fleet, and we'll not just be rebuilding the Tangara fleet; we'll move into the subsequent fleets as well—the Millenium, the Oscar and then eventually the Waratah. That's why we're planning over a 30-year time horizon. The reason we've adopted that Queensland-style model, though, is if you are looking at a 30-year horizon, making sure that you've got an ability to change the private sector partner you're working with if the price becomes uncompetitive over the course of a 30-year period is something that the Government wants to retain as an option.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: I'll get to that private sector component, but as we sit here today, do you as the Minister for Transport, or the entire department, have a plan for when the trains will begin service?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: We are obviously planning for that moment. That's why we've had to extend the life of the existing Tangara fleet—that life being extended 10 years or more, with the work that's underway at the moment. That work is happening in Auburn and Flemington, but it's also now happening in the Hunter. That's helping us build up the workforce and helping us extend the life of the Tangara so that it can operate. We came into office and there was simply no plan—not to buy another train or to do what we've done, which is a harder path but a better path in the long run, to manufacture those trains here in New South Wales.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Just to be fair to you, Minister, you said in answer to my question that you obviously do have a plan for when the trains will begin service. What is that plan for when they will begin service?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: We're expecting this to take place in the early 2030s. That's really the time period we're looking at here, but it's subject to those caveats I've put: acceleration, market testing on the facility and market testing on the rolling stock.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: You've said that. I understand. Your media release states, and you mentioned proactively, that a private company will help build the fleet. What contractual arrangement will that occur under? Will that be a public-private partnership?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I probably would want to refer you to the officials on the exact nature of the contract. We're going out to test the market before making those decisions. The goal here is to—we've got a number of good private sector partners already operating in New South Wales. They'll certainly be keen to be—but this is a major opportunity to also pitch to a broader market. We'll be going out quite broadly to look at what our options are before finalising those contract details.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: When you say "test the market", you're saying that you'll go out with—

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: An expression of interest to the—

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Not a specific tender.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Exactly. Before we go out with those final contract details.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Without the structure in there of how that partnership will occur?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: We'll have some structural details in the contract at that point. We'll be specifying it, but I can guarantee you we'll be open to shaping this as we get information, not just from our local manufacturers but also from some of the firms around the world that specialise in this work.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: It would be an open-style expression of interest without—I'm not having a go, but are you cooking without a recipe? You're just saying, "We're open to what might be out there."

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: No. It's the normal formal government process.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: But the structure within that is not specified. Do I understand that's your evidence?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I might refer to the agency on this, just to get the latest.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: We do have the afternoon, as you've repeatedly pointed out, so I would ask you to be brief for us.

RAQUEL RUBALCABA: I can answer now, if you want. It won't be privately financed, if that's what your question is. I think you asked is it private funding?

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: I understand. My question was about the contractual arrangement that it will occur under.

UNCORRECTED

RAQUEL RUBALCABA: We've done a lot of market interaction already. The EOI—the expression of interest—will go out with a form of contract, primarily based around design and construction. There may be elements of reimbursable costs in that, but until we've gone through that process—we'll refine that throughout the procurement process, as we work through the risks identified with the contract.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: We might come back to that this afternoon, but specifically I'm interested in whether that will be a public-private partnership.

RAQUEL RUBALCABA: I can answer that now. It will not be.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: It will not be?

RAQUEL RUBALCABA: No.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: You're ruling that out?

RAQUEL RUBALCABA: I believe the Government has been quite clear that this will be government funded.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: What will the arrangement be with the private company, then?

RAQUEL RUBALCABA: It will be a goods for services.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: A what, sorry?

RAQUEL RUBALCABA: It will be a design and construct.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: I understand that, but the structure with a private entity—what will the structure of that contract be? Will it be a public-private partnership? You've said no. I'm not trying to be tricky, but there would have to be necessarily a structure in place. What is that structure?

RAQUEL RUBALCABA: It will be a contracted service provided for the goods.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: How can you say it's not a public-private partnership?

RAQUEL RUBALCABA: Because it will be funded by government. Are you asking about the funding arrangement?

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: The structure of it, yes.

RAQUEL RUBALCABA: Yes, I can clarify that this afternoon for you, but—

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: The Government will fund it, but—we might come back to that this afternoon, but I'm struggling with how you can rule out a public-private partnership with a private entity.

RAQUEL RUBALCABA: Maybe I just need a little bit of clarity on the question, then.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Ms Ward, it's just a straight purchase of supply from the private sector. That's not unusual. That is different to a PPP structure, where both the private sector and the Government are either funding or accepting risk in a very structured way.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: So you're ruling that out entirely?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: It's not the intention of the Government to do that. This is a straight design and construct contract that we're going out to market for.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Just to be clear on that, then—

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: There are some caveats to that, including we will—I'm interacting with the other States who are engaged with their own programs, and we are keen to make sure this is as harmonised as possible with the other States as well, to get good value for taxpayer money.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: In the little time I have left, just to be clear, under that, will the construction workers employed to build the fleet itself be employed by the private company or with the Government? I'm not being tricky; it's a straight-up question about the arrangement of the contract.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I imagine they'd be employed by the private company. That's the usual arrangement in these sorts of procurements.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: I understand. Has the \$12 billion the Premier announced been formally allocated to the Government's capital budget forecasts?

UNCORRECTED

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: It has certainly been provisioned in the budget. It's an extensive period of time. We're planning over 30 years here, but that \$12 billion is in the budget. I've confirmed that in the Parliament.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: When you say "provisioned", Minister, can I just be clear and fair to you. Do you mean that it has been allocated?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: It is specifically allocated to this project.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Where is it allocated? There's a line item?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: It doesn't appear as a line item in the budget. That's not unusual.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: No, but in your forecasts.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: It's a matter for Treasury, but it's certainly in the budget. To give you some sense, over that time period—the 15 years for which that \$12 billion is procured—the Transport capital budget will be about \$220 billion. This is an important component of the Transport capital budget—

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: I understand.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: —but a relatively small part of it.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: You're comfortable confirming that has been allocated?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: It has been allocated in the budget.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Thank you, that's helpful. As we sit here today, how much does the Government expect to spend over the next four years of the \$12 billion?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I might refer you to officials this afternoon, just to give you that precise cash flow of the arrangement.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: All right. Between now and this afternoon, is someone able to get that number today? Ms Hoang? I'm getting a smile and a nod. Thank you. If we can get back to that, that would be very helpful. If possible, could we get the breakdown of each financial year for that, the allocation for financial year 2026, 2027, 2028 and so on—over the next four years? Of that \$12 billion announced by the Premier, is all of that for capital expenditure?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Of the \$12 billion, no. If you think about the components of this work, there will certainly be significant Transport work to supervise the early work. There'll be both operational and capital funding that will be required for this Future Fleet Program overall. By and large, the vast bulk of it will be capital funding, though, which will be required.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: But there is some opex component in there?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: There certainly will be, within Transport, to manage these contracts and to begin this procurement process.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Ms Hoang, is that correct? I'm not verballing you or eyeballing you, but you were nodding at the back there, I think, to say that it was, when I asked if it's all capex. Is that accurate to say it's some opex? If you can sprint up in 20 seconds. While you're coming forward, I might ask what the breakdown is of the \$12 billion, between the building of the facility and the associated works, and the cost to build the fleet.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Yes. We do have those figures. They're obviously commercially sensitive before we go out to the market. It wouldn't be a good—

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Why?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: This is the usual practice of government.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Before you tender. Yes, I understand.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: We wouldn't signal that ahead of accepting offers from the private sector, lest they inflate their ask.

BRENDA HOANG: The \$12 billion that's been reserved is predominantly at this point in time capital budget. As the Minister said, there will be opex as well, and we're working through the requirements of the opex, obviously, as we are still finalising the final business case.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: I might come back to the "predominantly".

UNCORRECTED

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: Minister, when did you first become aware of the governance and procurement matters now being investigated at the Powerhouse?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: These issues have been raised over quite some years.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: Was it in 2023, when I told you she'd turned it into a porn house?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: It was probably—

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: Or 2024, when I told you educational engagement had collapsed to an all-time record low? Or was it in 2025, when we had \$30,000 of taxpayers' funds being used for a tuna slicing demonstration?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I was about to say, Mr Banasiak, these issues, in a range of forms, have been raised even prior to that. There certainly have been questions raised, and there's been close focus on the—

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: Why has it taken so long to act, if it's been raised even before 2023? Why has it taken so long to act?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I don't accept that. This has been closely scrutinised. Each of the issues that has come forward is being examined on its merits. Some of those issues have been raised here at estimates; some of them have been raised publicly. Each of those has been dealt with appropriately. They've been investigated, referred to the appropriate authorities or have been the subject of much more detailed examination. More recently—and when I say "recently", this is still over an extended period of time—these matters have become more serious.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: Were you aware of these more recent matters when you issued the 23 August media release announcing the Parramatta exhibition program and you quoted Ms Havilah as the chief executive? Were you aware then?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I was aware of broad issues about the Powerhouse. These specific matters that are the subject of the more recent concerns were not front of mind at that point. I can indicate for you some of the specific timelines, if that's helpful, just to give you a quick sketch.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: That would be good. I'm interested as to what happened between 23 and 27 August, in terms of your change of position.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I will give you these bits of the timeline, and feel free to ask me. In March 2025 I approved and delegated authority to DCITHS to progress a fact-finding assessment. There was also at that time a referral to ICAC—we're quite cautious to make sure anything is referred on. That fact-finding report was finalised, and in late December 2025 I approved the agency conducting a formal misconduct investigation. We engaged a Sydney-based law firm in 2026; that was engaged by the agency. In April, July and August, a range of allegations were put to a number of Powerhouse executives. That misconduct investigation is ongoing. That is the matter that has led to the recent changes.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: Thank you for that. Did Ms Havilah stand aside by herself, or was she asked by you, your office or the department to stand aside, pending investigations?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I might refer that to the secretary for the reason that because I had delegated both the investigation and the employment functions—as I said, I believe that all happened in March 2025—that decision was a matter for the secretary. It would be appropriate for her to answer that.

MELANIE HAWYES: I might begin by, obviously, acknowledging this is a very challenging period, and there are things about an ongoing investigation that I can't discuss.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: That's fine.

MELANIE HAWYES: What I can say is that last Thursday Ms Havilah and I had a conversation about further allegations that had come to light. On that basis, we agreed that it would be appropriate for her to step aside. I then made arrangements to suspend her from duty and arrange for an interim chief executive to be brought in. What I will say is Ms Havilah's key concerns were the welfare of her team and the success of the launch. The team is very much focused on the launch, and we will pack in all support they need to make sure it's a raging success.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: Back to you, Minister. In that timeline description you gave us, you mentioned that several other complaints or investigations are being looked at of other Powerhouse executives. How many other Powerhouse executives are under investigation?

UNCORRECTED

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Certainly the COO is also providing significant information as a part of this process.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: Is that the only other executive when you referenced that?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I'll refer to the secretary.

MELANIE HAWYES: I'm not going to comment on the details of the investigation. One thing that I would add, though, is that the interim arrangements we've put in place should not be taken as any sort of sense of a sanction or a finding. These allegations that have come to light need to be tested, and that is what this investigation will do.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: I totally understand that. Are any of the board of trustees being investigated as part of these complaints? Can you tell us that?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: No, not to my knowledge.

MELANIE HAWYES: Board members are not subject of the allegations, no.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: But given the president of the trust co-signs the compliance components of the annual report, are you saying that the president has wilfully signed those without knowing that there are governance and procurement issues contained within those annual reports?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Over the course of both this investigation and previously, the Government has worked closely with the trust. In my view, they have fulfilled their obligations. Mr Banasiak, you know the background to this. There have been a series of suggestions and discussions about the Powerhouse—some accurate and of concern, which have been addressed along the way; some, while they're inaccurate, in my experience, are clearly of a more serious nature. That's why the Government has taken them very seriously. I'll just set out a couple of the key principles, from my end.

One, I'm not apologising for having high standards of governance applied here. There's probably an easier way to deal with this, a short time ahead of the opening, to let this slide but we need to maintain high standards of governance wherever they occur. I'm also making no apology for focusing on the opening of the first cultural institution for the west, the Powerhouse Parramatta. It's an important moment for Western Sydney, and that's really the key goal here. The idea that two of the senior executives were working through this detailed process and could also make sure that it went smoothly was really starting to become unsustainable. That's one of the reasons I support the decision the secretary has made. It's also why we've brought in a top-tier team to make sure that this institution opens.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: Just going back to the board, is it your evidence here that the board was totally unaware of the procurement and governance issues that were happening at the Powerhouse Museum?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: No, absolutely not. We've been closely liaising with the board. In fact, I set out my expectations to the board earlier in the year in a letter, making it very clear what their responsibilities are. In my view, though, the board has played a constructive role here.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: Constructive in identifying the concerns and reporting those concerns to you?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: The board itself and the audit committee of the board have been fulfilling their role and have been of assistance to the Government and the investigation.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: In terms of the interim CEO, what is the cost of appointing that interim leadership arrangement, including any other support staff that that interim CEO needs? Where is that coming from?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I might refer you to the secretary.

MELANIE HAWYES: Ms Galvin has been seconded in—she's currently already a public sector leader. I'm not anticipating that she'll be bringing additional staff with her. There is a team there—a very good team—who are laser-focused on the launch of the Parramatta museum. Ms Galvin is simply seconded in through GSE mobility arrangements.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: Based on my knowledge of working in the public service, when you get seconded somewhere, there is normally a backfilling arrangement in terms of their original position, and then there's loading on top of that in terms of replacing them.

MELANIE HAWYES: Sorry, I understand your question. I don't have that to hand. I can provide that on notice in terms of the salaries that people are paid in the backfill arrangements, if that's your question.

UNCORRECTED

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: Yes, that would be good.

MELANIE HAWYES: Not a problem.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: That's a reasonable question. Again, it's important we pay that—look, it will be a small amount, but it's important we pay it to make sure this goes smoothly. The Powerhouse Parramatta is opening on 7 November. That opening, we expect, will go well. Having Abbie Galvin in there, coming out of that role of the chief architect, and Louise Herron, the CEO of the Opera House for 14 years, is crucial. This is the Opera House of the west, and having—

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: Thanks, Minister Graham. If we could get that cost today, perhaps in the afternoon—

MELANIE HAWYES: I'll try and get it for you today—probably this afternoon. Just give us a chance to pull it together.

The CHAIR: Continuing that line of questioning in relation to the Powerhouse, I understand there was a protected whistleblower complaint within the Powerhouse Museum. It has been the subject of an ongoing inquiry by the department. I think it was going back to at least September 2025. Was the CEO named in that protected whistleblower complaint, and has that been completed in terms of that inquiry?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I'm going to just say two things, Ms Fachrmann. One is the dates I've given extend slightly earlier than that, so March 2025 was the fact-finding assessment. I'm going to refer to the secretary, if that's okay, given that she has been in charge of the investigation process. I'm just going to be quite careful about how those are answered.

The CHAIR: That's fine.

MELANIE HAWYES: Obviously I need to be careful about responding to that because there is an investigation underway. To answer your question, that investigation is ongoing. I commenced in the role, I think, in late February this year. I was briefed shortly after commencing that there was an investigation underway, and that remains the case. What has happened more recently is that further allegations have arisen, and that has resulted in the current arrangement to bring in an interim executive. That investigation now needs to be completed, including testing the new allegations that have been brought to light. That's probably the extent of what I'm able to say.

The CHAIR: That sounds like it has been 16 months or so since the whistleblower made that complaint, and it wasn't until fresh allegations, which I assume are outside that particular whistleblower's complaint, that it was deemed serious enough that Ms Havilah was stood down.

MELANIE HAWYES: There are multiple—

The CHAIR: Multiple complaints.

MELANIE HAWYES: Multiple concerns, and that necessarily means that it is a complex process to have those investigated in a manner that affords the subject of those allegations fair and due process and natural justice. That is what has occurred.

The CHAIR: Was there ever any thought given to reducing the delegated responsibility in terms of the ability to sign multimillion-dollar contracts over those 16 months while all of this was being investigated? Has there been any restrictions put in place as a result of the multiple complaints that have been received with concerns about the procurement practices at the Powerhouse Parramatta?

MELANIE HAWYES: I think I'd go back to my original point, which is that a complaint is not a finding or a fact. We are going through a process of investigating those complaints. The delegation for procurement—if that's your question, there's a delegation for procurement which rests with the CEO. Above a certain threshold, ministerial approval is required for procurement.

The CHAIR: What did the CEO have in terms of the expenditure that they could sign off on? What had to go to the Minister?

MELANIE HAWYES: The Minister's approval is required for any procurement above \$6 million. These are delegations that are broadly consistent across cultural institutions—broadly, not perfectly but broadly.

The CHAIR: Can I ask about the board again? Minister, you said you wrote to them—was it March or February this year?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I wrote to them in June this year.

UNCORRECTED

The CHAIR: Sorry, June this year. You said that they positively—I can't remember your exact words—responded to that. Was the board before then in any way informed of the whistleblower complaints? Had you spoken with them about any of this beforehand, or did the board really just get activated on this in June this year?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I'll just characterise the broad process, and then I'll ask the secretary to answer your specific question. The board has been of great assistance in dealing with some of these issues that have been raised and found not to be accurate but also in assisting with the concerns that are now being investigated. I do want to agree with the fact there's no finding here. I just want to place on the record from my point of view that's the current status.

The CHAIR: There's no finding, but the CEO of Powerhouse Parramatta—we have an opening coming on 7 November and fresh allegations—has been stood down. It all sounds rather serious, even though there have been no findings.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I can confirm this is a serious investigation. This is a serious process.

MELANIE HAWYES: I would echo that. They're not findings. We're in the process of an investigation, and protected interest disclosures are necessarily confidential.

The CHAIR: Who's undertaking the investigation? Is that internal, or have you outsourced it?

MELANIE HAWYES: We have engaged Lander and Rogers, a Sydney-based law firm, to conduct and supervise the investigation.

The CHAIR: I'll come back with more questions on that later. Minister, in relation to the Southwest Metro in terms of that opening date—we've had an opening date for Powerhouse Parramatta for a little bit of time—why can't the public get a firm date for the opening of the Southwest Metro?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: It's a very good question. They're both complex projects. However, opening and operating a metro railway on an old Sydney Trains rail line is a more complex project, if you can believe it.

The CHAIR: Yes, but we have heard that for many years. We understand. We're months away, surely.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Exactly. I can confirm we're still on track by the end of the year for the south-west rail. I've met with the rail regulator on Friday. The most recent advice to me on Friday from Sydney Metro is that by the end of September we should have much firmer information about trial running and be in a position to give an indication about the date that we'll open then, all going well. That gives you some sense of when we'll know. There are two hurdles to be jumped here. One is the operating, so that we're operating in a way that is reliable enough and safe enough, and, secondly, the rail regulator approvals. Those processes are both going well, but there are still clearly some issues to resolve before we can open.

The CHAIR: What are those issues?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I'm meeting with the rail regulator on Friday. I think the process is well understood; it's just complex, as we saw in the city—

The CHAIR: Yes, but this has been well known. It sounds like there are some issues that have come up as opposed to the standard meeting with the rail regulator, getting everything sorted and testing. It sounds like there's a little bit more going on in terms of delays.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I don't agree with that. Things are tracking well. The two issues that we have to clear, the two operational issues, are making sure that the intrusion detection system on the corridor works effectively and doesn't alert the team too often, and, secondly, that that process of doors opening and the gap fillers sliding out on these curved Sydney Trains platforms operates successfully and integrates well, so integrating all those systems. They're the two operational hurdles we have to clear.

The CHAIR: With the intrusion alert and testing intrusion sensing, I assume that has been tested quite a bit already?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Yes, exactly right. This has gone from being a train system operating to a metro line operating without a driver. We are tightening up the protections around the corridor. That has involved protections on all the bridges, fencing, but it also includes a sensing system that detects any corridor intrusion and then sends an alarm to the system. Making sure that's working effectively is one of the things we're working through.

The CHAIR: Is it sensitive to things like pigeons and stray cats or ibis?

UNCORRECTED

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Yes, certainly wildlife intrusion, including ibis, are one of the things that we're potentially dealing with here. The good news is the system is working well and providing alerts, erring on the side of too many rather than too few, which, if you have to choose, would be the side you'd choose.

The CHAIR: Firming to an announcement date by the end of September, it sounds like mid-October is a little bit too ambitious for those poor commuters who are still getting onto buses. Can you commit to the people of New South Wales that it will be open before Christmas?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: We can. What you're underlining there is certainly the reason why we haven't named a specific opening date till we have one. As soon as we do, I'll be very keen to tell the public. But it's really out of respect for the fact they've been very patient. What they don't want is a false start where we say we can hit a particular date and then don't. As soon as we have one, we'll be—

The CHAIR: Total cost? Have you got that yet?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: The total cost for the Southwest Metro is more than \$22 billion—for the City and Southwest.

The CHAIR: For the Metro City as well?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Yes.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Minister, what's the status of the e-bike age limit review that Transport conducted?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I'll shortly be discussing it formally with my colleagues. The Government has received that review. It provides very helpful guidance. The next steps are that I'll be formally discussing it with my colleagues—

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Are you taking it to Cabinet?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: —and then I anticipate releasing it publicly to make sure that people can see that expert advice.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: When will that happen?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Shortly. I wouldn't comment on the specific timing, out of respect to my colleagues.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: In February 2026 you said the Government would have a report back by June 2026.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: And we did.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Today is the last day of August. What is the age limit that you've promised?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: We'll be releasing that expert advice very shortly. You won't have to wait long, Ms Ward.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: You'll release the expert advice that's been provided to Government?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Yes. I anticipate we'll certainly release it. We haven't settled the precise form, but I want this—

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: You'll release the advice, just to be clear?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Yes, exactly right—not just a Government decision. We'll really inform the community discussion. I think it's important to get the age limit right. I note where Queensland's headed. My concern would be setting the age limit too high might impact, particularly in regional communities, in a way that disadvantages people without transport options. We do really want to make sure this is aligned with community expectations, and we'll be also open to the views of the Opposition on this one, Ms Ward, as usual.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: I think my views have been made very clear in this space. I don't think I've been quiet. But I welcome that and welcome our suggestions. But my question is—

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Yes. Not specifically on the specific age, though, not that I recall. But I welcome you correcting the record.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: My proposal is very simple. I've been saying it loud and clear: registration plates. How do you intend to enforce the proposed age limit?

UNCORRECTED

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: That is a really important question. It is one of the things that we're discussing with colleagues. Other States have managed to have an age limit and have an enforceable age limit. For me, the most important part of having an age limit, though, is the signal it sends. I think it's common sense that we don't have primary school kids hiking these heavy e-bikes around. But, at the moment, there's no restriction, there's no message the Government is sending, and this would be an important message, to say there is an age which is too young to be able to have someone on these heavy bikes. Regardless of whether they're legal and going the right speed, it's just not safe at a young age, where you don't have peripheral vision, in particular.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: I understand that. We can get to that and the concerns, but I think they're well agitated in the community. I'm interested in the enforcement of the age limit. Will a person above the age limit have to carry ID to prove their age?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: We're working through those enforcement issues. As you say, they are complicated. We'll be doing some more work on those as we release the expert advice. The expert advice will reflect on that in some ways, but there's certainly more work to do on enforcement. I do assure you, though, it has been manageable in other jurisdictions.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: I understand that. I'm interested in this jurisdiction, as we sit here today, and the promise that you made, that the report be back by June. We're now at the end of August, almost September. It's spring tomorrow. There will be more kids on bikes out there riding, more pedestrians at risk and more people presenting in our trauma and emergency departments. I'm interested in how this will be enforced on the ground, and people would like to understand, behind the big announcement, what is actually going to happen with the implementation. What form of ID could be required and who would issue it?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: These are probably matters that you need to—we need to release the expert advice to inform the discussion. I'm due to discuss that with my colleagues shortly. It will be—

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Have you formed a view on that?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I really need to take that next step, Ms Ward, before I can spell out the approach the Government might take on enforcement.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: You've formed a view on an age, surely.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: We've got the expert advice, which will provide a specific recommendation about an age to the Government. I can confirm that. We'll release it shortly.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: As we sit here today, you have an age in mind. Do you have a manner in which that age is required to be specified or proven?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: What we will have—without jumping ahead of my colleagues—is expert advice about what that age should be, and it's slightly more complex than that because it's about what particular activities might be restricted at which ages. Yes, there will need to be enforcement. That work is, obviously, a matter for a range of agencies, and we're working through that. As I said, other jurisdictions have been successful in doing so. That includes WA and Queensland.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: I understand that, Minister. But my concern is that you—do I understand your evidence to be there will be different activities for different age cohorts?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: We may choose—the expert advice may recommend not just simply guidance about when one should be on a bike but also about what activities might be performed while on an e-bike. That's certainly something we're open to.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: So no wheelies, no playing chicken, hanging out at the skate park?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Any other suggestions welcome, Ms Ward.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: I've made my suggestions very clear and on the record, including this morning.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I understand.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: In terms of the dyno test, what will be the penalty for an individual who doesn't stop for a dyno test?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I might refer to the agency on the penalties question. There are significant penalties in place, of course, in the e-bike space. I think, Sally Webb.

UNCORRECTED

SALLY WEBB: We'll work with police in terms of the operationalisation of the powers that have been approved in the legislation. They will apply their powers in the same way as they have existing powers regarding bicycles on the street. They have some enhanced powers that they've been given in the new legislation.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Thank you, Ms Webb, but I'm not asking about the powers or the enhanced powers. We've moved that legislation. We've had that debate. I'm asking about the penalty for failing to stop for a dyno test. Minister, is there a penalty? Do you know what it is?

SALLY WEBB: Just to be clear, the dyno is not required as part of the enforcement framework. The dynos—we have them on trial. They are to assist us with operations involving stopping bicycles.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Sure. But for those where you have said—big announcement—"We're crushing bikes." There was a crushed bike at the press conference. You're talking about the dynos—"We're rolling them out." What will be the penalty for someone who does not stop for that dyno test?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: There's not a specific penalty relating to a dyno test. One of the issues here is the—

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: So there isn't one.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: No, that's not true, Ms Ward.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: What is the penalty?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: If you let me answer, I'm happy to answer for you.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Please do.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: One of the issues with this debate is that the Opposition has brought together the idea of these dyno tests, which are—trial technology will be used some of the time, with the seizing and crushing—

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: The Opposition hasn't brought them together. That's your proposal, Minister.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: No, that's not accurate. If you let me finish my point.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Are you saying the Opposition introduced the dyno machine test at your own press conference? Seriously?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: No. That's a deliberate misstatement, Ms Ward.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: I'm just asking a very simple question, which, I think, is getting quite complicated. It's actually not difficult. Your Government said that you will empower police and that you would test these bikes with the dyno test machines to be rolled out across the State. I'm just asking simply, if someone does not turn up for one of those tests when the police call them over and say, "We're going to test you", what is the penalty? Either there is one or there isn't.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: The penalties that apply, as I was answering, are the same, whether there's a dyno unit present or not. Police will rely on the same powers, the same penalties.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: What is the penalty?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Some of those penalties under the Act that may apply in these situations are quite significant. If people are found, for example, riding an unregistered bike or a motorbike unlicensed, the penalty could be \$1,079, rising to \$5,500 as a maximum.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: I understand that, Minister. But my question, with respect, in the limited time I have—and I'm happy for you and I to chat about all the other surrounding penalties. My question is specifically to the testing by the dyno machine, which great attention was given to by your Government, saying, "We're going to be testing these bikes." Let me ask you this, then, if there's no penalty that you can identify. Where have any dyno tests been deployed since they arrived in New South Wales?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Ms Ward, it's a misunderstanding. I worry it's a deliberate misunderstanding in this case. The penalties that apply are about seizing, and ultimately that could lead to crushing of these vehicles. That applies, whether there's a dyno unit present or not. The police challenge or the Transport officer challenge—because Transport will be assisting—is the same. They're the powers that we debated and relied on. The dyno units we're hopeful of trialling and seeing if they assist. They're not required to be able to seize and crush a bike. That's the persistent issue which, I'm concerned, the Opposition has verged on misrepresenting—is the politest way I can put that.

UNCORRECTED

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: It is your legislation. It is your press conference. It is your announcement. It is your big news. I don't recall being present at your announcement or your press conference or consulted—

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: You should've come along.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: —despite my knocking on your door about the very simple licence plates, which could be in place right now.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I thought I saw you riding past.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: I'm very happy to discuss them, but there was great aplomb given to the dyno tests, but now it seems there is no penalty for it, but I'll move on.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: That is incorrect—and possibly deliberately incorrect.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: No, you have said that three times.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: These penalties apply when a dyno unit is present or when a dyno unit is not present.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: You've made that clear.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: We debated this extensively in the Chamber.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: That still doesn't deal with the penalties, but let's move on. How many e-bikes have been crushed using the powers under the Government's crushing legislation this year?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: As a result of you slowing it down in the Chamber, when it was there in March to pass—you slowed it down for months—

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: I didn't slow it down. You didn't move it. You didn't put it on the business list.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: It took some time to get in place.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: You're the Government. You decide the business list. You decide what the Parliament deals with each day, Minister. That is a nice diversion, but how many bikes have been crushed?

The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE: Point of order: The member is fully entitled to ask questions. The Minister is equally entitled to answer them without talking over the top of each other.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Chair, I do believe there was a bit of incitement there.

The CHAIR: I won't uphold it, but I remind the member. She is well aware of letting the witness respond first before jumping in.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: I was ready, willing and able. How many e-bikes have been crushed using the powers under the Government's crushing legislation, which we supported and passed this year? How many?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: The process of enforcement is beginning as a result of these powers being in place. They have been turned on despite the delays inflicted by the Parliament that I was most upset by. I can confirm the power is now in place. It is now a police enforcement matter for scheduling those operations. I understand it is the plan to schedule some of those operations shortly. Of course, there is a 14-day period from when a bike is seized where the person has a chance to have some interaction with authorities before a bike is crushed. You can expect to see bikes crushed soon in New South Wales.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: As we sit here today, your answer surely has to be zero, doesn't it? Not a single bike has been crushed as we sit here today.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: My answer is you slowed me down. This could've been done and dusted if you hadn't slowed us down by 2½ months.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: So if your legislation had come in sooner, you would've crushed bikes by now?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: It was in March.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: So three months after the Parliament passed—

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I promised to introduce it in August—

UNCORRECTED

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Can I ask my question?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: —and it was introduced to the Parliament in March. Then you slowed me down. I expected you to back us in on this one.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Chair, I would like to ask a question. I have got seven minutes left.

The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM: Point of order: The member had asked a question. The Minister was in the middle of answering that question.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: I'll move on.

The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM: He has to be afforded the opportunity to answer the question.

The CHAIR: I won't uphold it. There also is a point at when members need to ask questions and the witnesses—even you, Minister—need to allow that.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Minister, I put it to you, to be fair, that it is three months after the Parliament passed this. It is six months after your big announcement. Not a single bike has been crushed. That's a fact, isn't it?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: It is not unrelated to the fact that, despite us introducing the legislation in March, the upper House—this is public—with a range of bills, meant that progressed slowly. I was hopeful that the Opposition might give us urgency on this matter. Ultimately, that was something you chose to vote against.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: You determine the Parliament's business list on Government days. That's correct, isn't it?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: You voted against urgency for this precise bill. Now you're complaining that it is operating too slowly. We were looking for support on this, Ms Ward.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: You can't slow down something that never got going. That's a fact. You have not crushed a single bike. You put other bills before this bill—this so-called urgent bill—over weeks and weeks. Clearly, it is in your hands. The fact remains that not a single bike has been crushed. That is correct.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: These laws are now in place. I know you missed the last press conference. I invite you along for this next one. It is going to be a cracker.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: The only crushed bike that I've seen, Minister, is the one that you produced for the press conference. It is all about the announcement, isn't it? It is not about the enforcement on the ground at all.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I will answer that very seriously. We're not going to crush every bike here, but we really need to send a message to the community, where there has been very bad behaviour. This is really about sending a very strong signal. I do think it is required. I do thank the Parliament for passing these laws. We will be using them. I guarantee that.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: You can speak to those at your leisure. Queensland seems to have gotten it together pretty quickly, while we've been doing a lot of talking. As at today, we would like to see more enforcement.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I will point out they don't have an upper House.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: I will move on. It is apparent that the toll announcement, as we sit here today—is that toll deal announced by the Government legally binding?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: It has certainly been the subject of formal agreement by both sides. We're working through the process of documenting and finalising those contracts. That is a very complex process. There are further formal steps to complete. But it is certainly a very formal agreement on both sides.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Is it a signed, sealed and delivered deal with no carve-outs or caveats?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: As the Government said publicly, this is a toll reform deal. We don't expect there to be an issue with holding the private companies to this deal. They have dealt with the process very fairly, while insisting on driving value for their shareholders. I can assure you they have acted to defend their own interests very strongly, but we struck a good deal for drivers.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Is it a signed, sealed and delivered deal?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I'm not sure what you're asking precisely, Ms Ward. It is a formal—

UNCORRECTED

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: It is not a trick. Is it signed and sealed?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: It is a formal deal.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Is it formalised?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: It is a formal deal between the parties.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: So the documents have been signed. Is that correct?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: The final contracts—there is still more work to do to be able to do that. Some of those will obviously need to be signed by both parties. But this is a formal deal. It is in place. We're now documenting that deal. That is a complex process because of the contracts that apply.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: I understand that; you have said that. I have two minutes, so I'll move on, but when you say it is delivered, it can't be delivered if it is not signed and formalised.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I don't agree with that. That is just categorically untrue.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: What part don't you agree with, if you say there are parts to be formalised but you equally say that it is delivered. It cannot have been delivered if it is not signed, sealed and executed with no carve-outs.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I don't agree with your categorisation. It is not unusual to have to document a deal of this nature. That process is relatively routine. That is unfolding at the moment. We don't anticipate—

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: As we sit here today, it is not signed?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: This was a formal decision of the Government's Cabinet processes. This was formally signed off by the boards of the private companies involved. Let me assure you this has been a very formal process to get to this point.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Formal but not signed. When is the business case for the M2 and M7 widening expected to be completed?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: We can get you that detail. I don't have it immediately to hand, but we're working through that process at the moment. It is a relatively simple project when you compare it to, say, the Southwest metro.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: I'll have a look at that. I'm just interested in the one minute I have left.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: We'll get you that detail.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: I believe, from media reports, the cost is expected to be \$850 million. Is that correct?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: It is of that order, correct.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: So that is correct?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Correct. That is obviously an early price. That is pre-business case.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: When is construction anticipated to start for that widening?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Again, it is a relatively simple process. That'll be determined by the business case. But this is not a complex project. It would be relatively rapid. I say that because, under the former Government, a similar widening process took place.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Is the start of construction or the contract award for a constructor contingent on changes to the tolls?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I'll take that on notice. There is an interaction there. What we expect is to widen the M2 and M7 and complete the final road. That's very important. We also will then drop the toll cap on the M7.

The CHAIR: Minister, what was your rationale for reducing the toll that motorcyclists pay by 50 per cent?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: It's, number one, the advocacy from those motorcycle groups; number two, we're seeing a rise in the number of motorcycles on our network; and, number three, one of the principles

UNCORRECTED

that applies is that vehicles of greater weight that cause more road damage are treated differently and motorcycles did not receive what would in this case be a benefit given their light touch on the road surface.

The CHAIR: The advice for cars using motorway tunnels, I understand, is to wind up your windows and set your air conditioning to recirculate. What advice is provided to motorcyclists?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Regarding just air emissions as they travel through those tunnels?

The CHAIR: If motorists are being advised, "Wind your windows up and set your air conditioning to recirculate," that's because of air quality issues, ideally. Motorcyclists—are they advised of anything?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I might refer that to the agency. We're going to have to call up Camilla to see—

The CHAIR: They're not, Minister. I'll just tell you that they're not.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I'm not aware of any.

The CHAIR: I have been looking at some Reddit forums and some discussion groups from motorcyclists that say particularly in the M5 tunnel and the M5 East, it's quite horrendous, apparently. They're saying things like:

On a 35 degree day you'll really hurt - I try and avoid the tunnels in the high heat as it seems to make the exhaust smell even worse.

M5 east from kingsgrove to Rockdale is an absolute shocker in the afternoons - exhaust fumes so thick you can't see 100m ahead.

Another one was:

... the M5 tunnel heading to Liverpool is BY FAR the worst in Sydney. In hot weather is flipping HORRIBLE. You absolutely need to filter through, get stuck and its stomach, turning.

The last one was:

... M5 ... Went through one day, probs high 20s temp outside and but in the tunnel my bike was showing high 30s and it felt like i was in a vacuum.....there was no air flow at all and it was getting very hot. Bike temp really spiked and i was worried about overheating when all of a sudden fresh air hit me like a tonne of bricks and near enough knocked me off the bike. It was bloody weird.

Your Government has offered a 50 per cent reduction in tolls to encourage more motorcyclists to go through these tunnels without thinking about their overall health and safety.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: No, I don't accept that. Can I just make a couple of responses and then happy to continue. Firstly, I want to recognise this is an important issue. I think we've learnt a lot about air quality emissions over recent years, so I recognise this is an important issue. I encourage people to make their own decisions about that. That'll impact on different people differently. One of the issues for the toll reform is these are long-term contracts, so we're setting the decisions now for what will unfold. Air emissions will improve in these tunnels over the life of those contracts as vehicles go electric. The sorts of issues you're identifying are issues both in tunnels and on the road network generally. Particularly next to buses, particularly in congested areas, those are impacts that will be—

The CHAIR: Yes, Minister. We started this with saying that there's advice to motorists. In fact, I was an adviser back in 2003 for Greens MP Lee Rhiannon. We literally campaigned on this and stood at the M5 entrance with a sign—I remember it very clearly—to "wind up your windows". It's happening now: Motorists are being formally advised to do that. But motorcyclists aren't, so I'm asking you what you will do. You've just encouraged more motorcyclists to use tunnels. I think many of them would be oblivious to the risk, particularly in the M5 East—so cleaning up the tunnels, filtrating it, make the air quality better or perhaps be honest with motorcyclists in terms of what that tunnel can do.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I recognise the serious issue that you're raising. I think it's a good point. I don't accept there's no warning. NSW Health does provide a range of warnings about emissions.

The CHAIR: They can't wind up their windows.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I accept the point you're making. It does apply across the road network, but it is something we'd be happy to work with you on. I'd be interested in your views—

The CHAIR: I've brought to your attention.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: —and the views of Lee Rhiannon.

The CHAIR: I was quite surprised, frankly, when I saw the reduction in tolls.

UNCORRECTED

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: The motorcycle groups themselves have campaigned for this reduction. I think there's some common sense to that. I recognised, though, the seriousness of the issue you're raising.

The CHAIR: I wanted to turn now to user-pays fees for music festivals. There are some examples that it sounds like the police are still doing what the police do best, and that is to charge eye-watering music festival fees or user-pays fees to essentially put music festivals out of business. The latest one is Dragon Dreaming, which is held in the Yass Valley. The council fully supports it. It's fantastic for the local economy. This year the police are charging \$154,118. This is a not-for-profit festival. They've tried to appeal it. The police have come back and have, I understand, maybe reduced the fee by \$20,000, which is still absolutely ridiculous. Are you aware of this situation, firstly?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I'm not. I don't believe I'm aware of that specific festival example. I'm aware of the general issues and of some other specific festivals.

The CHAIR: What's happening with the Music Festivals Appeal Panel? When I went online to have a look at that music festival panel page, it looked as though the only thing that they had considered was the Dragon Dreaming Festival. I think it said rejected or something. To me, that legislation that was passed—which we reluctantly supported, to be honest, because we should have just got rid of the whole Act entirely—it sounds as though it hasn't done a thing.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I don't agree with that. I think your characterisation of the music panel is accurate; that's the advice to me. It has only been convened once. That was a rejection. I would like to see it convened more often. Those appeal processes, though, as you'll recall, operate inside the agencies as well, and—

The CHAIR: This festival was deemed low risk by NSW Health. So it's deemed low risk, \$154,000 by the police—that is a big deal for a smaller, independent festival. The police drop it down, say, 20 grand. They're trying to appeal via the channels that you created in the bill and then it's rejected as well. Why on earth would it be rejected, do you think?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I think without that approach that we passed together, that idea that you could appeal and have your charges dropped at all was not really a feature of—

The CHAIR: But it's useless. It's just time consuming, Minister, if they can't actually get any traction. It's there to potentially make you look as though you're listening but, ultimately, when it comes to acting, that's not really happening. Music festivals are still being absolutely hammered with high police user-pays costs.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I'll make a couple of quick points. One is, I acknowledge on the face of it, without knowing more of the details, that does seem high. I'm happy to examine the details. Secondly, that ability to drop by \$20,000 simply wasn't available before—it didn't happen—so that is a positive benefit of the change. The third change which you've drawn attention to is the drop in regulatory burden on festivals. To give you certain specifics on that, from the previous financial year, what we've seen is 43 per cent of festivals designated as subject under the previous regulatory framework—that's dropped now just down to 29 per cent providing an agreed health and medical plan. That's had no adverse impact on festival safety. So we are seeing the impact drop. I acknowledge we're still seeing some charges that seem high from government agencies, and I encourage people to appeal.

The CHAIR: Thank you, Minister. I'll come back for more detail in the afternoon. Can you provide details on the support that you've provided to Heaps Gay since the eviction of Divine Playhouse from Kent Street?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Yes. Since the eviction—principally two measures. One is storage.

The CHAIR: Is that happening now, the storage?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I believe so.

The CHAIR: Yes, and Ms Hawyes is nodding.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: So storage and then—

The CHAIR: At no cost?

MELANIE HAWYES: That's right. We've stored their equipment and we are supporting them to and find an alternative venue.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: At Canal Road. Secondly, they're currently looking for another venue, and we're open to assisting as they find it. That is an ongoing discussion.

UNCORRECTED

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: Sticking with the Powerhouse on some other issues, what modelling supports the Powerhouse Parramatta's claim that it can attract approximately two million visitors annually? Are you able to table that modelling?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: It's a good question and we're certainly happy to provide some more information and detail.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: Was there modelling done to justify that figure?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: There certainly would have been as part of the original business case, but I might refer to the secretary.

MELANIE HAWYES: Yes, I will necessarily have to take that on notice and talk with the Powerhouse executive team. There has been extensive preparation over a period of many years to ensure that the programming does attract domestic and international visitors. I don't have the detail with me about past modelling and some of it would have been done before I commenced in the role.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: But I've got to say, looking at the other cultural institutions, it's probably not wildly off the mark. The Art Gallery, for instance, has 2½ million visitors. Particularly, the free programming and the kids programming will drive visitation.

MELANIE HAWYES: In fact it would be worth having a look at the visitation across the CIs. The Australian Museum, the Art Gallery—they all have had exceptionally high visitation in more recent times.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: Has Transport for NSW undertaken any specific capacity assessment of the Parramatta station for the opening and ongoing operation of Powerhouse Parramatta given that that will probably be one of the main modes of people getting there, since there's no parking onsite?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: That happens routinely, but I might refer to the secretary for any specific details.

JOSH MURRAY: We work very closely with the Powerhouse on the modelling for public transport. It is a public-transport-first venue, as you have pointed out. Not only do we feel that there is the capacity there on the main western lines, but also we have added Parramatta light rail and also the Parramatta station for Metro West, which will further augment that direct precinct, which is in fact just over the road. We are working on all of those elements from a precinct basis.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: And you've modelled a scenario perhaps where Powerhouse Parramatta is operating at near capacity and then you've got CommBank Stadium hosting a major event and Riverside Theatre also operating, all at the same time? Have you modelled a scenario where that might be happening?

JOSH MURRAY: I don't have that directly in front of me, but I know that our operational readiness teams do model all of those outcomes.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: Are you able to take that on notice and provide some more information in the afternoon around that?

JOSH MURRAY: We'll take that on notice.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: Minister, can I just go to e-bikes? Do you believe a person or a pedestrian who is injured through no fault of their own by an illegal e-bike should have access to compensation?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I'd encourage members to read the report from the productivity commission, which has examined this issue in detail.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: I've read it; that's why I'm asking.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: It's an excellent piece of work. What it says is there are some gaps in the insurance space. Insurance covers a range of e-bike activity. For example, we've just required it for share bikes. There are some gaps, but the cost to fill those gaps—potentially a billion dollars—would outweigh the benefits. It's quite detailed advice.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: I'll put it to you this way: You've got two 14-year-olds. One steals an unregistered, uninsured petrol motorcycle, rides into a pedestrian and causes them serious bodily harm. That pedestrian is covered—lifetime care. The same thing happens with a 14-year-old who steals an electric bike. Functionally it's the same: It's uninsured and unregistered. They get nothing. Is it a fair situation for pedestrians in New South Wales that if they're going to be hit by a bike they're going to hope they get hit by a stolen, unregistered, uninsured motorcycle rather than an e-bike?

UNCORRECTED

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Citizens do have court rights. CTP applies if there's a car involved or—

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: Only if it's a motor vehicle.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Yes, in some of these instances. Share bikes are now required, just in the last two weeks—compulsory insurance is a requirement that we've stepped up, thanks to the legislation we passed together. We're tightening this area, but the productivity commissioner's report does show the first priority here should be education. I'm not ruling anything out, Mr Banasiak. I want to be clear. Over time, as more e-bike use rises, we may look to close these gaps, but the first step should be education and enforcement and that's what we're working on.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: You accept the productivity commission's recommendation to prioritise education and enforcement over mandatory insurance, even though he or she identified a huge gap?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: We've accepted for now—and, by the way, that's the recommendation, to come back and look at this in three years. But the first steps—we're going to get much greater benefit from actually cracking down on some enforcement and education, including with schools.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: How many pedestrians are going to get hit in three years and not be covered?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I'd refer you to the work. It's quite an extensive and very helpful report.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: When did you receive the report?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: In the last weeks. I've obviously released it and publicly commented on it in the last week, but it's relatively recent.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: Do you have a specific date as to when you received it?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: No. The office would have received it some time before I reviewed it and released it.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: When did you decide to accept its central recommendation if it's only been received in the last couple of weeks?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Over the course of that time. I was briefed on it. I received a brief, I was briefed on it, I received the report and we released the report publicly to inform the discussion. I do want to make it clear, though, to your questions, this is a setting for now. We're really going to closely monitor this and I'm not ruling out change in this down the track.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: What was the time frame between when you received the report or received the briefing and when you accepted its central recommendation that we don't worry about insurance for the moment?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: It was a short period of time, but I can take that on notice and I can give you some details about the timing.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: If you could, that would be great. Are you able to tell us as to what other recommendations you have accepted or rejected?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: In principle, we've accepted the report. We'll guide where government goes. For people who are interested, I encourage them to read it. But, as the report itself says, this should be reviewed in three years time.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: If your preferred solution is education and enforcement, what extra funding in this budget is going to deliver that? How many extra enforcement officers are we going to see out on the streets providing either education or enforcement?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: A couple of things—we're certainly stepping up enforcement. Police won't be doing this alone—Transport officials alongside police for some of those joint operations. That is opex funded by Transport. Secondly, we're shortly to go out with a bid to support further education measures. The agency can give you some details about that. I've met with some of the education providers. I do think we've got more to do here. Transport is developing its own material as well to educate. We've got a lot of work to do in this education space.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: But how many extra enforcement officers are going to be put out on the streets?

UNCORRECTED

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I can refer to the agency now or in the afternoon for you. I don't have those specific numbers. But we're certainly budgeting for an increase in this activity. It's based on that parliamentary feedback that the police can't do this by themselves. It'll be Transport officials in joint operations assisting as well, in that transit officer style way of thinking.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: Are we pulling transit officers off trains to do this or are we giving them that additional role to move from trains to the streets, or are we setting up a specific e-bike enforcement team?

JOSH MURRAY: Mr Banasiak, this doesn't relate to the enforcement officers that currently are seen on trains and other public transport. What we'll be looking at is augmenting the powers that run through our Coordinator-General's division through the transport commanders so that there will be the right resourcing and powers through that group.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: Do you have an idea as to how many additional enforcement hours?

JOSH MURRAY: No. We're doing that work at the moment.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: Any idea as to when you'll finish that work?

JOSH MURRAY: I'd have to take that on notice, but we're making sure that the blend of powers and resources fits with the police so that it can all be used in a complementary manner in operations.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: And Parliament specifically empowered those Transport officials in the laws that we passed together.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: Do you have a goal in mind in terms of any reduction in crashes or reduction in negative interactions between pedestrians and riders or other vehicle users? Do you have any goals? How are you going to measure whether this crack-force enforcement team is having an impact?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: We'll be closely monitoring their work, including the individual operations. That work is reported through to me and we'd have some detail.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: But no metrics?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: The most important details are the road safety data about fatalities. That, of course, is the top concern of any transport or roads Minister.

The CHAIR: We are at Government question time.

The Hon. CAMERON MURPHY: Government members have no questions.

(Short adjournment)

The CHAIR: Welcome back. We'll go to questions from the Opposition.

The Hon. CHRIS RATH: Thank you, Minister and officials, for being here today. I also had some questions on Powerhouse Museum. While the Opposition does have some grave concerns, we also make the offer to the Government to work with you to make it a success. The budget for Powerhouse Parramatta—my understanding is that it's currently within the budget envelope and there haven't been cost blowouts. Is that correct?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Yes. Firstly, let me welcome your offer. Obviously, this is a project commenced by the former Government. It does really matter to Western Sydney. That's the key goal of the Government. This is the first cultural institution for the west. I really welcome that offer, Mr Rath. Secondly, in relation to the budget, yes—it's within the \$915 million original budget.

The Hon. CHRIS RATH: If it's within the original budget, what was the need for the Treasury intervention? Was that all relating to concerns around procurement?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: No. I wouldn't even characterise it that way, because we've run a similar process with the Art Gallery of NSW, then with Museums of History. They've really been about getting the operational model right as institutions are either expanding, in the case of the Art Gallery and obviously the Powerhouse or, in the case of Museums of History, really grappling with their fundamental operating role. I see it as a helpful engagement, but it's really about getting that future financial model right for these institutions.

The Hon. CHRIS RATH: So it's separate to Lisa Haviilah standing aside as the CEO? The Treasury intervention is an entirely separate matter?

UNCORRECTED

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Yes, I would say that. I'm going to defer to the secretary, but yes, I would say that is accurate.

MELANIE HAWYES: I wouldn't characterise it as an intervention. In the course of the most recent budget, there was a recognition that we're moving from construction to ongoing operation. It's entirely timely to assess what the ongoing operational funding requirements will be for that brand-new cultural institution. It has absolutely nothing to do with the allegations that are under investigation right now. They are separate matters, and the Treasury process is something that you would expect to occur at this point in time as we finish completion of the new museum.

The Hon. CHRIS RATH: And the new Treasury executive will be putting together an operating budget for the first—well, I think we've got one for the first seven months, but for '26-27? I assume that work is in progress?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Yes, that work is in train. It will be the whole team who does that. I do want to emphasise that point: I don't see that Treasury engagement as hostile. It's actually been very helpful. These are complex institutions financially, as we've all found as we've looked at the budget. But the whole team will work on that model, going forward.

The Hon. CHRIS RATH: When will we get the first full year's operating budget, the '26-27 operating budget for Powerhouse Parramatta?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: They're obviously working to an operating budget for '26-27. That's been set by the budget process. This work is then asking the obvious question as the doors swing open. It's more focused on the long term, I guess, is the right way to answer your question.

The Hon. CHRIS RATH: How much has the fit-out and opening cost, and how much was budgeted or hypothecated for that?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: We will have some of those details for you. The operating budget is \$145 million this year. The total budget for '26-27 is \$256 million. We'll see what details we can get about some of the specifics you're asking, though.

The Hon. CHRIS RATH: Do you have specifics on fit-out and opening costs?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: We'll have some of those details for you either this morning or this afternoon.

The Hon. CHRIS RATH: I know that you're within the overall budget, but has there been specific cost blowouts in the fit-out and opening component of that budget?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: There's certainly been choices that have had to be made, and things will have differed from the original business case. A lot has happened since then, but this is overall operating within that budget. We don't have significant budget blowouts in relation to the opening, but there is a question about the future model, as you'd expect and as the Opposition has called for. While this is a big expansion of the Powerhouse campuses, what does that mean for what funding will be required in the longer term? That is a question that the Government is taking seriously.

The Hon. CHRIS RATH: Is the concern also about the appropriateness of the spending regarding the fit-out and opening—things like the documentary costing over \$1.7 million? These are things that have been reported that you would have read—\$5 million for marketing, \$2 million of which has gone to a former board trustee; examples of \$333,000 for an interior designer et cetera. Is this also what the investigation is looking at, the appropriateness of the procurement regarding the fit-out and opening?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I'm going to be careful how I answer that, but yes, some of the matters you've just touched on are subject to close examination as a part of this process. There's a specific investigation into procurement issues that have been raised. There's also just the commonsense questions about cultural institutions staying in contact with the mood in the community. They're two separate issues, but some of the items you've just touched on are the subject of these investigations.

The Hon. CHRIS RATH: What guidelines or mechanisms did you put in place to ensure that the fit-out and opening was on budget and that all the expenses were appropriate? I mean you, the secretary and the department.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I've touched on some of those. There's two separate questions. There's issues about routine budget management, and we've dealt with those in the usual way. That has tracked well for Parramatta. There's then the issue of questions that are raised about procurement. They're necessarily dealt with

UNCORRECTED

in an ad hoc way as they arise. As I've run through earlier, they've been dealt with very seriously. They've been dealt with over my time in the role from early on, because those issues were long-running. But the current matters, I think it's fair to say, first kicked off in March 2025 when we initiated that fact-finding investigation. That's when I authorised that fact-finding investigation and a parallel referral to external agencies.

The Hon. CHRIS RATH: What about the president and the board of trustees? Did they have a framework, guidelines or certain mechanisms in place to ensure that the amount of spending for the opening, as well as the appropriateness of that funding, was actually monitored? Was there an element of project control by the board of trustees?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: They certainly have a role in the formal delegations that sit within the Powerhouse. Above a certain level—as the secretary has indicated, it's above \$6 million—that comes to the Minister. That's usual for these sorts of institutions, to have something around that level. Between \$5 million and \$6 million, the specific procurements have to be signed off by the trust itself. Below that, it's approval by the chief executive. They've actually got a formal role. Also, informally, I've observed they have played an important role in keeping me informed and in dealing with these in the way you'd expect, through their own board and audit committee processes. I'm aware that they have been active in that space.

The Hon. CHRIS RATH: Minister, are you still committed to opening Powerhouse Ultimo as a fully functional and operational museum by 2027?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: We will be opening it—I think the timeline was three years after construction commenced. That's the advice to me. That timeline is broadly on track. That is a delay from that 2027 date that you've just referred to, but that work in Ultimo is well underway.

The Hon. CHRIS RATH: In 2024, you issued a media release saying it would be complete by 2027. Are you now saying we can expect it to open in, say, 2028?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Three years from the commencement of that construction, so yes, it won't be 2027. NSW is leading that process.

The Hon. CHRIS RATH: Construction commencement was listed for March 2026. Is the project still on that schedule?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: That will be an accurate date, correct.

The Hon. CHRIS RATH: March '26? Construction started in March 2026?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I'm not second-guessing your—why don't we take that on notice for you, if you're asking for a confirmation.

The Hon. CHRIS RATH: Thank you. What everyone wants to know, back to Powerhouse Parramatta—you've had a CEO there for seven years; she's been stood aside 70 days before its opening. What assurances can you give the public that you still have confidence in Powerhouse Parramatta?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I believe it was 72 days, but that is front of mind from a Government point of view. The most important thing to me, separate to any of the individuals involved—they've got a right to work through the process—the key thing from my point of view is this is the Opera House of the west. We want it to open on 7 November. I'm confident that will be the case, partly because of the team we've brought in to do that, including Louise Herron, freed from the Opera House, and including Abbie Galvin.

The Hon. SUSAN CARTER: Minister, Create NSW recommends grants to you and then you're the final decision-maker—that's correct?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: It depends on the nature of the grant. But I believe you're asking about funding coming through the ACFP funding, in which case I receive a recommendation from the Artform Board, and then I'm the final decision-maker. I might let you ask your next question.

The Hon. SUSAN CARTER: The feedback provided by Create NSW through the Artform Board assessors is that for grant recipients to be successful they must be "specific and provide details of the activities that they will be undertaking". For the Divine Playhouse to be successful in winning a grant of \$100,000, specific details of activities must have been provided. Is that correct?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: To the Artform Board, correct.

The Hon. SUSAN CARTER: What questions did you ask about the activities which were to be funded by the Divine Playhouse before you decided to approve that grant?

UNCORRECTED

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I will indicate, Ms Carter, that my practice as arts Minister—and this is very different to some of my predecessors—is generally to sign these off without variation. Of course, if I do—I reserve the right to disagree with the agency's advice, and I'd provide my reasons in writing. I really haven't done that in the—this is the small-to-medium sector. I've generally been happy to accept the Artform Board recommendations rather than get hands-on as Minister.

The Hon. SUSAN CARTER: In this case, did you ask any questions?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: No. In this case, as is usually the case, I signed through the recommendations, knowing that the Artform Board had been through these in detail.

The Hon. SUSAN CARTER: Before you accepted the invitation to attend opening night, what questions did you ask about the entertainment you could expect to participate in?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I did not ask specific—I'm aware of the operator who's got a long track record in Sydney of really playing a key role, so I attended the opening with that knowledge in mind. I didn't make specific inquiries about the activities on the evening.

The Hon. SUSAN CARTER: After your Premier condemned as "horrid rhetoric and distressing" a performance at the taxpayer-funded Biennale, which also caused significant community concern, and after the Premier also condemned as a "head scratcher" a session at the Newcastle Writers Festival, which also caused a lot of community distress and concern, you were on notice, weren't you, of the issue of taxpayer funds being used to support socially divisive works and performers? You still, in that climate, didn't see any need to review your practice and consider carefully some of the recommendations being made to you.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I don't accept the way you're characterising this. The Premier and I have often agreed on some matters, and I've sometimes, as arts Minister, spoken out about comments that have been made in the cultural sector, sometimes by specific artists—

The Hon. SUSAN CARTER: So you agree with him about the Biennale?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: —which have contributed to a feeling of social unease, given the difficult time we're in at the moment. I think that is part of my role. We generally haven't cut funding or cancelled programs. I am concerned about that in the cultural space because it bounces back on a range of artists, including, frankly, on Jewish creatives. That's an active discussion, of course, that I'm having with the Jewish community.

The Hon. SUSAN CARTER: But you're on notice that there is significant community concern—indeed, in your own Cabinet with the Premier—about taxpayer funds being used to fund performances and other arts activities which cause considerable distress—is an understatement—in the community. Given that the Divine Playhouse event, of which details must have been provided for them to receive funding, reportedly featured drag queens dressed as nuns, an attender wearing a corpus from a crucifix on a leather choker and a performer in a pig costume offering French fries as holy communion—all, at the very least, deeply disrespectful of Christianity—why did you approve taxpayer funding for an event which featured religious mockery?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Ms Carter, look, I do want to say I think it's really important that people of faith are respected. I say that, as I've said in the Chamber, as an altar boy of very long standing. Perhaps I've served too long. Dad studied to be a priest, by the way. Look, I'm not really in favour of mocking people of faith—I think that's important—but that is different to cutting or cancelling cultural programs. I think it's the wrong move where government is involved in determining exactly what's performed on the stage. That almost always goes wrong. That was the principle that you yourself defended as you came into this Chamber.

The Hon. SUSAN CARTER: You're supporting taxpayer funds being used for performances the hallmark of which is religious mockery?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: One of the things that I think you should take into account, Ms Carter, is, having spoken to the organisers, I know they had taken steps to, for example, change the name of the institution to make some accommodations to make sure, as they said, everyone felt welcome in this place. There have been changes made, but I don't support cancelling performances. I think that inevitably backfires, as we've seen.

The Hon. SUSAN CARTER: The question isn't cancellation, Minister. The question is the wisdom and the exercise of your responsibilities, your role, to choose to fund these performances in the first place. You've told *The Sydney Morning Herald* that the Divine Playhouse closing its doors is a step backwards for Sydney. How much more taxpayer funds will you spend to reopen those doors?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: It is a step backwards. I say that as someone who's campaigned to open venues in Sydney. Losing venues, including losing gay and lesbian venues, is an issue in Sydney. It is a step backwards. That's something we've worked on together. But, also, of course, I've been quite open in my advice to

UNCORRECTED

some bits of the cultural sector where I do feel they've overstepped the mark, but I do think there is a free speech element here. That's something you've generally supported—

The Hon. SUSAN CARTER: With respect, Minister, the question was how much money will you spend to reopen those doors?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: —including in your inaugural speech, and subsequently.

The Hon. SUSAN CARTER: Thank you. I remember what I said. How much money will you spend to reopen those doors?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I remember what you said, too, and it's the opposite of the line you're pursuing at the moment.

The Hon. SUSAN CARTER: Perhaps if you're uncomfortable answering that question, we can move on to something else.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I'm happy to answer it. We haven't spent money at the moment, but we are open to assisting these organisers to make sure they do have a place in Sydney.

The Hon. SUSAN CARTER: Your Government's social media policy has led Health to stand down a neurosurgeon who made mildly critical comments on a private LinkedIn account. In April last year, you approved four-year funding for NAVA and, in October of that year, senior NAVA officials celebrated on their Instagram accounts the brutal rapes and murders of October 7. What action did you take under the social media policy against those officials of NAVA?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I was upset to see some of the reporting of the comments recently. I don't believe I was aware of those specifics prior to that, but I'm happy to check the record. Celebrating October 7 is wildly out of step with the public mood or with any sense of humanity. That's my reaction as the arts Minister. Again, I refer you, though, to—we won't be going through to change people's funding arrangements routinely.

The Hon. SUSAN CARTER: It isn't an issue with respect to the funding arrangements. The social media policy, certainly as applied by Health, has action taken against particular individuals. What action has been taken against the senior officials of NAVA who celebrated these events on their Instagram accounts?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I'm happy to take that on notice. One of the obvious distinctions here is the Health employees, I expect, would have been engaged by the Government. NAVA is certainly not. These will not be employees of the Government.

The Hon. SUSAN CARTER: But funded by the Government. With respect, it's good to know that you're upset, Minister. But that is not a substitute for action which promotes social cohesion, is it, Minister?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I will take that as a comment, and I will take it as a comment which is very different to the premise on which you entered this Chamber—a supporter of free speech at any price. You've now reversed that position, Ms Carter.

The Hon. SUSAN CARTER: I'm pleased to know I live rent free in your head, as does my inaugural speech.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Only when you're asking questions.

The CHAIR: Minister, back to the Powerhouse. Have you made inquiries as to the people on the board of trustees and, basically, their involvement with Ki Community, the advertising agency that was reported on in today's *The Sydney Morning Herald*? Have you yourself made any inquiries as to relationships at a board level?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Have I made any inquiries? I have been briefed on it, and it is a matter that's being closely examined.

The CHAIR: Was this recently that you were briefed, like the last week?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I wouldn't say the last week. I'd refer to the secretary for the timing. It's recent. It's longer than the last week, though. I haven't gone out and separately made my own inquiries. As I said, I've delegated these investigation functions to the agency.

MELANIE HAWYES: They're the subject of inquiries at the moment, and I can't comment beyond that.

The CHAIR: Minister, were you aware of David Borger's relationship with Mark Hassell, who is one of the people behind the company Ki Community? He was given a tour, by David Borger, of the Parramatta Powerhouse in the first half of 2025, with Ki Community's Janis Tebecis. Are you aware of that?

UNCORRECTED

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: No, I'm not aware of that specific tour.

The CHAIR: Ms Hawyes, has that come out in your investigations?

MELANIE HAWYES: I can't comment on the investigations themselves. I'm not aware of that tour. I wouldn't be expected to be. The Powerhouse is in progress for opening. They would have multiple tours of different personnel at different times. Was the date October '25? Is that the date you just provided?

The CHAIR: First half.

MELANIE HAWYES: I started in the role in February '26.

The CHAIR: Is there any inquiring happening in relation to meetings that took place with the Powerhouse executive and Mark Hassell this year? Is that being examined as well?

MELANIE HAWYES: I'm not going to comment on the Ki Community procurement. There's a process under foot.

The CHAIR: Minister, given the reports in today's Sydney Morning Herald—no doubt you're aware of things beyond media reporting, you'd hope—do you have full confidence in the chair of the trustee board at this point in time?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Yes, I do. I have confidence in the board as well. I do believe they performed their functions appropriately.

The CHAIR: So any reporting that suggests that there may have been—any reporting does not concern you?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: No, I'm concerned by reporting about issues about the Powerhouse, absolutely. These matters are under investigation, so I won't add to the—those matters are being closely looked at by the agency. Just a couple of bits of guidance here: This particular procurement was within the CEO's financial delegation. That gives you some sense of the scale of it, and the engagement commenced in May '25.

The CHAIR: Minister, I want to turn to something that has come out in the SO 52 where I gained access to expense reports for the 24-Hour Economy Commissioner. This is in relation to international flights and accommodation since 2024, not since his appointment in 2021. Over that period, by my calculations, there have more than \$80,000 worth of international flights and accommodation. Along with what has been happening at the Powerhouse, do you think that type of largesse is appropriate when we have arts organisations that are shutting down because your Government has given them no funding?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I don't accept that final point. Arts funding is up in New South Wales. By the way, it's also up federally. But I acknowledge that arts organisations—

The CHAIR: The Australian Design Centre comes to mind.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Yes, who were granted funding. I'm making the point that arts and cultural funding is up in New South Wales, including this year up again in the budget. I accept that that is not keeping up with the pressures on the sector, as they're facing rising touring costs and rising costs. That's one of the reasons we—

The CHAIR: What about \$80,307.83 in international flights and accommodation for the night-time economy commissioner since 2024?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: It is quite an international agenda. It is something where we are learning from other cities. Certainly I support that international engagement on behalf of the 24-Hour team. I think that's an important part of learning from what we can do better. We've also welcomed some of those officials from around the world here, which has been an important part of actually speeding up this change, which is very important to the city and the State.

The CHAIR: Have you attended any of those, in terms of what the outcomes have been for New South Wales?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: What do you mean "of those"?

The CHAIR: Any of the trips.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I have not travelled with the commissioner, no.

UNCORRECTED

The CHAIR: Do you think it's appropriate for, firstly—I think it was the UK three times, and China, Hong Kong and Spain three times. Who oversees these expenses and signs off on them? Is it you or is it the secretary?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I'm happy to take it on notice, if you provide us the specifics in each instance. Generally, I would sign off on international travel by officials.

The CHAIR: I will come back to that later today. Minister, have you sought any advice from Treasury or Revenue NSW regarding land tax concessions for creative space providers in an effort to free up creative space, make it less expensive and ideally cheap? Have you sought advice in terms of how to provide that?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Absolutely. In fact, one of the reasons it came into focus was we conducted the Art of Tax Reform Summit. It was certainly one of the ideas and inputs, and it was certainly one of the things examined. I will say in the top five or six issues that we, along with each of the other States, would then recommend to the Commonwealth—it's not in that package of reform, but it was certainly one of the things discussed at the summit.

The CHAIR: If it's not in the package of reform and you have sought advice on it, why is it something that the Government isn't actively considering, then, if not implementing?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: One of the issues as I've had discussions on this is that as an intervention to support the creative sector, this tends to be a less efficient way—that is, we tend to lose more revenue for the assistance that we provide than some other measures. That's one of the factors, I guess, in my thinking. We're not ruling anything out. The State is advocating for tax reform changes. That doesn't replace grant funding, but it does mean it's for the long term. It's more long lasting.

The CHAIR: You do talk about quite a bit and tallying up the live music venues and how many venues you say that your Government has saved. However, in terms of creative spaces, I don't think you can boast about that figure. Is that correct? I've got a figure here that 488 creative spaces have been lost over the past decade. Do you know what has happened in that space since you've come to power?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: The information on licensed venues and licensed venues playing music is more precise than it is for creative spaces. As you'd be aware, they're often informal spaces. They're often not tracked as closely. Many of them would not be licensed, for example, so the information is less reliable. I certainly acknowledge there's a creative space crisis. It's one of the things we're working with the City of Sydney and with the creative sector to address in a range of ways.

The CHAIR: As well as other councils, though?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Yes, absolutely.

Ms SUE HIGGINSON: I just have one matter to raise with you in your capacity as Special Minister of State. The Law Enforcement Conduct Commission's Chief Commissioner has described the New South Wales police approach to oversight requests as difficult, overly defensive and erroneous on a range of issues. The current law allows police to withhold information using legal technicalities, to de-identify officers accused of serious misconduct and to delay the sharing of evidence with investigators. The LECC have called for legislative reform to ensure they have total access to police records and documents, including clear time frames and types of information. The requests, Minister, are so reasonable and very, very necessary. Your Government has so far refused to act on this recommendation of the Ombudsman and LECC committee. Why?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I direct you to the most recent correspondence on this, which is the Government response to the Parliament. I direct you to that where you can find some of the—

Ms SUE HIGGINSON: I have that here.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: —details from the Government.

Ms SUE HIGGINSON: You've noted it.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Correct. I've met with LECC on a number of occasions to hear their views on it. I think you've characterised the Government's position accurately, which is we have not brought a package to the Parliament. But I direct yourself and other members back to that Government response for some more details. Certainly I'm happy to continue the discussion.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: Minister, would you agree that high-density residential developments should generally be supported by adequate public transport infrastructure as a planning principle?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Yes, I believe that transport and housing should be considered together.

UNCORRECTED

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: Are you aware that Homes NSW is proposing approximately 95 social and affordable dwellings at Menangle Road, Camden?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I wasn't aware of the specific proposal, but I know they're quite active at the moment.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: Has Transport for NSW provided to Homes NSW or the department of planning any advice regarding the existing public transport network that Camden has and whether it can actually support that development?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: There certainly would've been engagement over the housing issues, particularly in the south-west where we've recently published a forward look at exactly how Transport is taking into account this and other developments. But I might refer the specifics onto the agency just to see if we can get you some details.

TRUDI MARES: I'm not sure about that particular development, but I could bring that back this afternoon for you. We definitely are in discussions with a range of developers and looking at their traffic assessments on Menangle Road.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: Minister, does Camden have a railway station?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: No.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: Does Camden have direct access to rapid public transport, in your view?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: The best view of the transport arrangements in the south-west and the future plans are really in this transport-forward look. It has been closely worked on with the developers who are keen to act, with those councils and with the communities, and it really talks about some of the future, but this is—

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: Is this another 20-year plan that turns into a 40-year plan?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: No, it's much more active consideration than that in the south-west because we're doing this joint work with the Commonwealth to consider what the future rail needs are in the south-west.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: Does your Government consider a bus connection to Campbelltown or Macarthur as an adequate substitute for direct access?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I'd really acknowledge the pressures on housing and on the transport system in this area of the city. People are forced into their car, and that's not ideally what we want. It is why we're doing this joint work with the Commonwealth. Of course, there's no quick way to fix that, but we're looking at the supply of transport, but we're also trying to shift some of the demand, as you saw, to the east of Sydney by actually developing more in the east. That's where the planning system is now tipping the future growth.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: Just picking up on your mention of private vehicles, why is your Government proposing a development that has 95 dwellings but only half of them are being provided with adequate parking? Isn't this just going to force more private vehicles onto side streets and increase more congestion? You're not solving the issue of Camden being highly dependent on private vehicles. You're just actually placing more pressure on those private vehicles and those streets, aren't you?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I don't know the specifics of this development, so I'd be hesitant to comment, but we're happy to get you what information we can this afternoon.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: I'm putting it to you that is the development—95 dwellings and over half of those dwellings will not have a single car parking space provided as part of that development. That means a car-dependent community is going to have more cars on streets. Meanwhile, this development is being proposed right next to Camden Hospital, so that's another layer of complexity to the traffic management. You are effectively placing more pressure on that community in terms of becoming more car dependent and causing more traffic management issues, aren't you?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I'm happy to take it on notice and I will come back to you on the issues you're raising because I'm happy to provide some commentary on that. We need to build social housing right across the State. That is an important step. Yes, I'm happy to get the details of your transport concerns, but I will indicate that the Government is trying to bring social housing and all forms of housing out at a greater level.

UNCORRECTED

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: Is it your Government's assumption that because it's social housing they can't afford a car or they won't rely on a private vehicle?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: No, I don't believe—I don't know the specifics.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: That's what the development suggests.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I don't know the specifics, but that wouldn't be an accurate assumption.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: That's what the development suggests. Only half those residents will have space for a private vehicle in a private vehicle-dependent community.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I really acknowledge your point about this being a car-dependent community. Not everyone has the choice to jump on the train or sometimes on the bus. We're improving that, including with bus services across west and south-west Sydney. But, for many people, they don't have a choice.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: Can you point to any specific improvements, whether in funding or extra services, that have actually gone to the Camden community in terms of public transport under your Government?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Let's take that on notice for you. We'll give you both any details around Camden and the details of the new bus routes on 5 July that extend right across south-west and Western Sydney.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: Can I just go to a question around the Uptown grants from a few years ago. Spirit of Camden is an organisation that only became active on 13 September 2024 and, after only seven months of being in operation, was successful in a \$200,000 Uptown grant, which was approved in April 2025. Were you aware of that grant? Was that a grant that you personally signed off on?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I'd have to take that on notice. I think the arrangements for those grants I'm informed of, but I may not be the decision-maker for them. But I'll take that on notice just to be really clear.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: If you weren't the decision-maker, who would be the decision-maker?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: It would've been at an agency level, but let me take that on notice. I don't want to get that wrong for you.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: Which agency would've been responsible for the Uptown grants?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: It would've come through DCITHS via the 24-Hour team. We will have had a specific governance path on it. I'm not surprised by your second point, though. Let me just briefly explain why. The Uptown program is really about getting the small businesses in the area to band together and then promote their community, so it wouldn't be unusual for an organisation to form in order to get access to this program, which is often about getting organised with small businesses to really promote and improve your local area.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: Were you aware that after they received that \$200,000 they then received another \$120,000 in additional funding shortly after that?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I don't know the specifics of that. I can assure you the group does exist. I've met with them probably a couple of—

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: I know the group exists. They've run a couple of events. It's questionable whether they were successful or not, but they've run a few events.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: That's interesting. I've met them. They seemed really genuine. I thought the approach they're taking is a little bit different to some of the other Uptown grant recipients, but that's exactly what we're looking for—things that are in the spirit of the community they come from.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: Sure. In terms of the initial grant, given the short time frame that they were operating, do you know whether they, as part of that grant, had any letters of endorsement or support from local government or the local member as part of that application?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: No, I don't. I'm happy to take that on notice, and let's get you the details about who the decision-maker is, what the nature of the application was.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: And if you take on notice as to whether the application had letters of endorsement from either council and/or the local State member.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Okay.

UNCORRECTED

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: Minister, what prompted the change of name for the New South Wales Premier's Literary Awards? It's no longer the Premier's award night? The Premier's been dumped from this event?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I'll have to refer that to the Premier.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: It's your awards. The Premier's name has been taken off it. It's not as prestigious now because the Premier's name is not on it. What was the rationale behind that?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I'd refer that to the Premier. These are significant awards I routinely attend as arts Minister. We're working closely with the literature community. I want to thank the library in particular, who does a lot of work to make sure they're a success each year.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: But you're the Minister that attends. It's under your responsibility. Did you have a hand in the decision to take the Premier's name off the awards?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I would refer that to the Premier. But I have happily attended. These are important awards.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: I heard you skipped out on it early last time. You didn't even stay for the photos with the award winners.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I happily attend a lot of events, including a lot of arts events. I don't stay the whole time for all of them, as, I think, you'd understand.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: You could've at least stayed for the photos.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Minister, what's the current budget for Metro West?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: The budget—

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Just while you're answering, I'll give you a moment. I may need Mr Lawson, please. You can keep going now, Minister.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: The budget for Metro West is \$27 billion to \$29 billion. Noting that it's not due to open till 2032, we have issued a range for that budget.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Is it unusual to issue a range in your budget?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: The background is this: When we came to government, we discovered that the three metro lines had been announced as \$30 billion. Then it was discovered—the former Government confessed actually it was \$40 billion. We discovered the true cost was actually \$60 billion. Having been burnt by that experience, we're doing two things. We're working closely with the agencies to keep a grip on the costs, and they are doing some excellent work to do that, but we're also being cautious about accurately updating about the scale of these projects, but there is a range.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: You're keeping a grip by having a \$2 billion contingency?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: As a percentage, it's a much smaller percentage than you make it sound, Ms Ward, perhaps deliberately.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Maybe taxpayers might disagree, but it's a matter for you to manage. When will the final contracts—

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Well, \$2 billion is much smaller than the \$30 billion blowout that I have just described. I'd just put it in that context.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: When will the final contracts for Parramatta station, Sydney Olympic Park station and Pyrmont station be awarded?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I'm going to refer to Hugh just to get you the most recent information.

HUGH LAWSON: Those contracts are currently in the final stages of procurement. Sydney Olympic Park, Parramatta and then Pyrmont—they'll be awarded imminently.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Will they be awarded this year?

HUGH LAWSON: We'd expect to award them later this year. The evaluations for those contracts are still in the final stages, and then we'll be seeking approval to award them.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Is Metro West still forecast to open in 2032?

HUGH LAWSON: Yes, Metro West is still forecast to open—

UNCORRECTED

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Minister, how much local content will there be in metro trains being built in China?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: There is planning involving engaging with local industry. I'll refer to Mr Lawson for some of those specifics, just to give you a real sense of what's going on.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: I can get a real sense this afternoon, but thank you for the invitation. But I'm interested in your view as the Minister heading this up. How many Australian jobs will be created via the construction of the trains used for Metro West?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: In the construction of these lines, we're going to see significant industry engagement. We hope to have industry engagement locally wherever we can. This is distinct from the commitment we made, for example, on the replacement for the Tangara, where we've committed to making sure that is built here. We haven't done that with the Metro West trains, just to be up-front, and that is part of a plan to really scale up train building in New South Wales.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Just to clarify, you don't have a target of local content, like you've done with others?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: We're not adopting the same approach of the Tangara replacement here.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Fifty per cent target?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: This won't be part of the Future Fleet Program. That wasn't sensible, given where we'd got to, where we do have metro lines running in Sydney, and we've got particular rolling stock in place.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: This is different because it's a metro. It's not Tangara.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Precisely right. Precisely my point.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: So you wouldn't do the same thing. You can't say, as at today, how much local content there will be in those metro trains being built in China?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I'm happy to refer you to the agency to give you some details about the significant discussions—

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Do you have an expectation of your agency of how much local content there should be in these metro trains being built in China?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: We're not applying the same approach on the Tangara.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: What's the approach you are applying?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: We will be looking, as we build the Metro West, to engage with local industry. By the way, that will be significantly improved over the approach the former Coalition Government took, when it comes to either metros or trains on the heavy-rail system.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: But, Minister, you are the Minister. As you sit here today, having announced that you want local manufacturing, Australian-built, all the commitments that you've made, you can't tell this Committee today how much local content there will be in those metro trains for Metro West?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Ms Ward, we're starting where we started from, which is almost zero, after you procured trains from South Korea, China, Spain.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: You've been here for 3½ years.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: That's where we were getting our rolling stock from. We're going to build this up very deliberately in a major way, but we've got to start from where we're starting from. We're building up the workforce. We're building a manufacturing shed. We will go out to EOI shortly.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: We've chatted about that. What I'm interested in is the trains.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: We'll be building rolling stock here in New South Wales for the first time in a long time. It's a serious plan. It's already underway, but I'd welcome your support for it, even though it's the opposite—

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: My question to you is this. I am interested in it, and I'm keen to hear how serious you are and what your commitment is, given that you've said there will be local content. These are metro trains being built in China, which you've been highly publicly critical of. I'm asking you as you sit here

UNCORRECTED

today, after 3½ years in government, with a clear mandate and a clear decision that you want them built locally, how much local content will there be on metro trains built in China?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I've been up-front about the fact it wouldn't have made sense to try and build a metro train from scratch when it came to getting the Metro West running by 2032.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Why not?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: That wouldn't have made sense. By the way, it wasn't what we committed to. The Premier was really clear. It was the Tangara replacement that we were targeting in opposition. That's what we committed to doing, and that is what we are delivering.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: You're content for local content when it comes to the Tangara but not content for local content when it comes to metro trains. You're happy for those to be built in China.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: We're building back from almost zero. The path to do that is to really build through into the Tangara replacements. I've set out the 30-year plan for you very, very briefly. I didn't take up your time.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: We're not talking about Tangara, Minister, with respect. I said we're talking about Metro West.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: But I reject the assertion you are making.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: You may well do so, but it's your announcement, your press conference, your headline, your press release that talks about locally built and local manufactured jobs. I would have thought, other than hope and engagement, there would have been a more substantive answer. But I might take that with Mr Lawson this afternoon.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Feel free to.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Let's talk about the Sydney Metro Western Sydney Airport. What's the status of the business cases for the northern and the southern extension of Sydney Metro Western Sydney Airport?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Great. That is cooperative Commonwealth and State work. It's been important work. It's yet to be formally considered by government. The work is largely complete, but yet to be formally considered by government. That's true for both the north-west and the south-west.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Thank you. That's helpful. They're being delivered to the Government?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I would take that on notice just so I capture that precisely, but the work is largely complete but yet to be formally considered by government. We're yet to take what you would understand is the next step.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: I understand the formal consideration. That is a separate proposition. The proposition I'm putting is, to understand the status of them, have you received them? Have they been delivered to government?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: That work is complete. I want to take the question of exactly who has received them on notice.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Have you seen them?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I haven't seen the complete business cases, no.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Have you been briefed on them?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: If your question is precisely where it is up to, I have described it as best I can. I want to take on notice precisely—

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: I understand that. While we're being precise, it is not a trick question. It is not difficult. It is not talking about your policy or anything Cabinet in confidence. I just want to know if they have been received by you. Have you been briefed on them?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I have not received the four business cases. They're subject to formal government decision-making shortly. I have taken on notice precisely the best way to describe where they are in government for you.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Do those projects have a positive BCR?

UNCORRECTED

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I won't be providing commentary on the business cases prior to formal government consideration, which is the usual practice.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Do they include options for shorter extensions?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: It is a similar answer, Ms Ward. You're really asking about something that hasn't been formally considered by government. It wouldn't be unusual for the Government to say what—

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: I'm not asking for Government policy. I'm not asking you to announce anything. I'm simply asking about the business cases that taxpayers have paid for. They're asking me to ask where it is up to and what the options potentially are. That is not a decision.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I have informed you where they are up to. Once government has formally considered them, we'll be able to answer some of your questions in detail.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: When will government formally consider them?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: That's a matter for my colleagues and the Premier.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Will that be this year?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I expect it would be, yes.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Before the end of this year?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Yes, I think that is a reasonable expectation given that the work is largely complete.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Thank you for that. Can we go to Sydney Metro Southwest. Will Sydney Metro Southwest open this year?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Yes.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Will it be open on the weekend of 17 and 18 October?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I've outlined, in relation to Ms Faehrmann's questions, the dynamic—those two operational hurdles and also those rail regulator hurdles. It is tracking well. I can confirm that from my most recent briefings, including on Friday. But we can't confirm an opening date, including confirming that weekend.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Should we be keeping 17 and 18 October free?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: As a train enthusiast and a metro train enthusiast, I know you'll want to be along. Keep weekends free around that time.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Is that a date?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I can't confirm that specific weekend for you.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Commuters might like to keep that date open also. You wanted to talk about the former Government previously. In August 2023 your Government attacked its predecessor, which put the five metros in place—might I add, planned, funded and delivered—for failing to disclose time frame advice on this conversion. Your Government committed, in its own release, to "being transparent with the public about risks to these time frames". Does that commitment stand today?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Firstly, I don't accept your characterisation of having five metros in place. In fact, the answer was one. But I do acknowledge the role your Government played in initiating the metro projects. Secondly, they certainly weren't my comments. Thirdly, I have been transparent about some of the pressures here. I am happy to go into a lot more detail about exactly what those dynamics are—the rail regulator details and what they're looking at—and the key risks, which are essentially an order of the level we are concerned about them as we head towards the Southwest opening. That has been the subject of briefing. We are available to update the Committee—either myself or officials—today. I can indicate it is tracking well, but not well enough to say with certainty that it will open on the dates you provided, or another date, at this moment.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: My question is this, though: There was a clear, on-the-record, public statement criticising the previous alleged lack of commitment to time frames. Your Government promised to "get it done in up to 12 months". I accept that these are not your quotes, but it is your Government. You are in the big chair. You promised to "get it done in up to 12 months, instead of the original timeline of 15 to 18 months promised by the former Coalition Government". The line closed on 30 September 2024. It has now been closed for 23 months. How is that an improvement on 15 to 18 months?

UNCORRECTED

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: It is not. Frankly, the former Government would've struggled to deliver it in 15 to 18 months. It just wasn't possible given the complexity of the project. I want to indicate two positive bits of news. One is that the advice to me is that, as we get towards the end of September, we should be able to confirm that here is what the date is starting to look like. Secondly, the big disruptions which have gone on—basically, the whole M1 metro line was shut down over most of the July weekends. Those double-day weekend closures are over. The community and businesses have been very patient. There will be some additional closures, but we have broken the back of the closures as part of the testing process, including the trial running process.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: So it will be October?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: The Government's position hasn't changed. We're confirming it will be open in the second half of this year. As soon as I can give you a date, Ms Ward, I will be keen to.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Does any document before you or your office since 1 June name a target opening month for the Southwest metro? If so, which month does it name?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: There has been public speculation based on government documents that the Government has released to the public, including to the Parliament. That has pointed towards a particular date. That is a point-in-time assessment. I can't confirm that date. If I could, I certainly would. The advice to me is we can't confirm that date at the moment.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: I might move on. On Sydney Metro Western Sydney Airport, what is the current forecast opening date?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: We're currently in dispute in relation to Western Sydney airport. That dispute relates to the cost of the project, the time of completion and the probity arrangements in place as it is completed.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: I am aware. I understand and accept the contingencies of that dispute. There is a current forecast date, subject to those contingencies, surely.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Because they're related, if we specify a time that we think this will finish, we're going to pay more for the cost. I'm not prepared to do that. In fact, we'd compromise taxpayers' interests. I understand where you might be coming from on it, but it would be unreasonable. If I name a date, that'll be used against taxpayers when it comes to that commercial negotiation.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: I understand. Leaked documents show a date of 31 December 2027 as the opening date. Is that still the current forecast?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I'm not confirming a date for the reason I have outlined.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Your own documents show it though.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: What we can do is take on notice whether those are official government documents.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: They are.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: It will be the same dynamic, where it will be a point-in-time assessment.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Mr Lawson, to the best of your knowledge, will Sydney Metro Western Sydney Airport open in 2027?

HUGH LAWSON: As the Minister has mentioned, it is subject to the outcome of the ongoing negotiations with our contractor. Until those have concluded, it would be premature to nominate a specific date.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Ms Ward, can I be more detailed? This will help you with—

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Provided that you're quick. I have three minutes.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: This will be one of two parts. Either those negotiations will be successful over the coming months, in which case we'll really be able to say, "This is on track for resolution; here is the opening date," or they will be unsuccessful and we'll really tip into a court-mediated arbitration of some of these costs. We'll get a better deal by doing that, but it will be slower. But it's over the next couple of months that we'll have that sense with this project. We'll be happy to update as soon as we've got there. We can't update before that because it'd compromise the negotiations.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: I appreciate that. When are all the trains—noting that some are currently in Germany—expected to arrive in Australia?

UNCORRECTED

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: The trains have arrived in Australia.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: All of them?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: The initial trains have arrived in Australia.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: How many is the "initial trains"?

HUGH LAWSON: Just the first train has arrived at our stabling facility.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: One. So the initial train. Singular.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: It has been very well received. It looks fantastic.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: All by itself.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: It was on the news.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: One train is in Australia. When are the rest of the trains expected to arrive in Australia?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Ahead of the opening of the line.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: It would be nice to have trains there ahead of the opening, in addition to the opening. When are they expected to arrive in Australia, Minister? Do you have a date?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Ahead of the opening of the line is the answer. I'm happy for you to quiz the—

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Any time in 2027?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Do you want to use your three minutes on this? I can refer to Mr Lawson.

HUGH LAWSON: There are 11 further trains that are due to arrive over the coming months. I can take on notice the overall program.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Thank you. We'll have a chat. What is the status of the negotiations with Parklife Metro? How many outstanding claims are there with the consortium?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: There are ongoing intense negotiations. From a government point of view I'd just briefly put two things. We've been very clear about the probity expectations of government that will apply in this instance and also broadly across construction after some concerns were raised. Secondly, the commercial matters in dispute—we were well apart on the initial ask as a result of this PPP arrangement. They have been difficult to—they're the two key matters under discussion.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: I'm just going to pivot back to tolls. We were having a nice chat about that. What was the final cost of the direct deal in total to taxpayers of your toll reform?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: The final cost of the direct deal to taxpayers was \$143 million over five years.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Ms Drover might come forward; there may not be a lot of time. What is the anticipated revenue increase, as government understands it, for the two-way tolling of the Eastern Distributor?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I'd have to take that on notice, but I'm happy to do so.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Ms Drover, do you have that number to hand?

CAMILLA DROVER: Could you repeat the question?

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: What's the anticipated revenue increase, as the government understands it, for the two-way tolling of the Eastern Distributor—the new toll?

CAMILLA DROVER: The budget impact that the Minister mentioned was the outcome of the whole direct deal. We haven't broken it down into the ins and outs of all the various components of the direct deal.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: The Eastern Distributor currently generates about \$41 million a quarter. How much more is the road expected to generate?

CAMILLA DROVER: I don't have that in front of me. Obviously, at 53 per cent two-way, we're expecting some incremental increase in revenue. But the direct deal was assessed across the whole network.

UNCORRECTED

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Obviously there are some very complex accounting as these changes are rolled through.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: It's complex to taxpayers. On the toll deal, now that it's done and it's announced, what was the total amount paid to Allan Fels and David Cousins for their review?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: The total cost for consultants overall was \$17 million. That's much lower than the discounts over decades.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: What was the amount paid to Allan Fels and David Cousins, though?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I'll refer that to Ms Drover. We can certainly give you that number.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: All right, and can you let me know when you last met them in person in Sydney?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: It would have been post the toll deal landing, but I'm happy to take on notice the specific date.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: No need to meet with them before the toll deal—just after the fact, done deal?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Certainly I was in regular discussion with both Allan and David.

Ms SUE HIGGINSON: I want to briefly go back to the LECC. I don't really understand your answer. You've referred me to the Government's response. As far as I can read, that response is suggesting that the commissioner already has strong information-gathering powers and that you're not going to do anything. Tell me I'm reading it wrongly and I'm happy to walk away.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I was referring you to the most recent information from the Government. You've characterised it in a particular way; I wouldn't use those words. But you're correct that there's no proposal that the Government's bringing forward to change the LECC's powers.

Ms SUE HIGGINSON: You're joking. That is shocking. The Law Enforcement Conduct Commission, the only police oversight body in the entire New South Wales, has asked you to make the powers available to it that it's telling you it needs. For example, I watched a video yesterday that literally has police officers walking down the street expressing with glee these words on his body-worn camera footage: "I fucking pumped that cunt." A female officer says, "So funny." The male officer then says, "Then I punched him in the head when he was down." The female officer laughs, saying, "I saw that." This is the police in New South Wales right now.

The only oversight body is asking you for some powers so that it can investigate these complaints properly, in real time, without having to race to the Supreme Court to access this information. Are you aware that in 2024 the Law Enforcement Conduct Commission had to take the New South Wales police to the Supreme Court to access documents about the horrific police killing of Krista Kach—a woman that the police literally shot a bean-bag round into her heart, killed her, after the police had told her children they'll take care of things and they've got it under control. These are the powers that the Law Enforcement Conduct Commission is asking you for. You've literally just provided evidence saying you're not going to give them. That is absolutely shocking. Minister, will you change your mind?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Firstly, I want to place on record they are concerning comments that you've just referred to in the video.

Ms SUE HIGGINSON: They're shocking.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: They're the sorts of issues that should be investigated, but I'll leave that to the relevant authorities, including the police and the LECC. It is an ongoing discussion with the LECC, including about what support they need, including on the budget side, where there has been active—

Ms SUE HIGGINSON: They just want the powers, Minister. They want the powers that we know the clauses of the law—

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I don't agree with that characterisation, Ms Higginson.

Ms SUE HIGGINSON: But that's what the commissioner has asked. I happen to be on the Law Enforcement Conduct Commission oversight committee. It's an incredible privilege and an absolute honour to watch and understand the work they do. They are asking for these powers. It's really back and white, Minister. Your Government is saying no, and I really can't understand why.

UNCORRECTED

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I'm making this point. They've asked for a range of support, including through the budget, including through enhanced powers—powers that, by the way, there's a range of views in government about. I've met with them. I understand the request they're making. I understand the position you're putting.

Ms SUE HIGGINSON: You're the Special Minister of State. You're meant to go into bat for our oversight bodies, for our accountability bodies. This is the police oversight body. You are meant to go into bat for them, and I'm asking you to.

The CHAIR: Minister, recently I was in Lismore for a forum with arts organisations. I heard there about the closure of the venue Blah Bar, which is very concerning. The reason they said they've closed—and other people were saying that they've experienced similar issues in Lismore—was because of the difficulties of planning- and council-related barriers and compliance costs. They were saying they were hit with \$100,000 essentially, ultimately—one of the businesses that closed. These are independent, grassroots performance spaces. Why can't your Government assist groups or people like those behind Blah Bar in Lismore when you, again, champion all that you've done to try and help small venues stay afloat? What more do you need to do?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Let me start by acknowledging there is more to do in this area. There are real pressures on venues or creative spaces—absolutely. The way we're tackling it is by using the traditional tools in the arts and culture space: grant funding. We're also changing the rules that apply to many of these organisations, one, to make spaces more flexible but, two, to cut costs. There's particularly more work to do that in that latter category where, by cutting out some of the planning and regulatory arrangements that apply to these what are really low-impact activities, often, we should be able to cut costs for these organisations more. There are real pressures. We're supporting where we can. I'll take on notice the specifics in relation to this Lismore-based space.

The CHAIR: Do you know whether you have been approached for assistance in terms of that venue? The most recent one is Blah Bar, but there has been a couple of others.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: We're providing a lot of advice and assistance behind the scenes—really the team. I'm doing what I can, but often the team's engaging. I'd have to take on notice exactly what we know about this space.

The CHAIR: I did get people saying to me that they saw recently the \$3.8 million funding boost to venues across the State and were wondering where support was for the launch of new venues in addition to supporting existing ones. I heard about a number of situations in the Northern Rivers where the spaces just aren't there and they need to be created from scratch. Existing buildings need to be turned into different spaces. They were suggesting that there's not the support there for that to happen.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: We're certainly struggling to keep up with the pressure, as every Government has. The arrangements for new venues that apply, particularly those planning and liquor licence discounts, are really encouraging new venues. That specific funding that you've referred to is in relation to core music venues. We've got to back the music venues doing most of the programming as new venues open up, otherwise we'll lose those original ones. The Hospitality Concierge is doing remarkable work and is a good place for a lot of those businesses to reach out to in the first instance to get guidance about what other help might be available.

The CHAIR: When I was up there, I was very shocked to hear that the Lismore Lantern Parade, which is one of the region's most significant community cultural events, has had to crowd-fund to secure its future and was suggesting that their attempts to get State Government support have fallen flat. Is there a reason? Don't you think something like the Lismore Lantern Parade is something that the Government would throw its financial support behind?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I'm happy to have your advocacy for this venue and this particular parade. We'll look at the specifics of those. The fact that you're advocating for it does mean it's one of the ones where we'll of course look at the circumstances. Without knowing the details, I can't comment further about what form of support there is, but we'll take that on notice and provide any details we can.

The CHAIR: Going back to the Powerhouse, I understand it's been reported that Cassandra Wilkinson has been appointed from Treasury. In terms of Ms Havilah, has she been stood down on full pay?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I'm just going to refer these to the secretary, for the reason you'd understand.

MELANIE HAWYES: I think I have answered that, in that Ms Havilah has been stood down from duty at this point in time pending an investigation.

UNCORRECTED

The CHAIR: She's on full pay?

MELANIE HAWYES: There hasn't been a finding, so, yes, it's being investigated.

The CHAIR: When is the chief operating officer, Mark Wilsdon, expected to return? I understand he's on leave.

MELANIE HAWYES: He's also not currently in his role, and I can't make a firm response as to when he might return.

The CHAIR: Is he on full pay as well?

MELANIE HAWYES: Correct.

The CHAIR: How long will Cassandra Wilkinson be seconded to the Powerhouse for, do you know?

MELANIE HAWYES: Yes, I made arrangements to second Ms Wilkinson, again using GSE mobility provisions.

The CHAIR: What date did that happen, in terms of her going there?

MELANIE HAWYES: Bear with me—I don't want to get the date wrong—and I'll have a look. End of July, but I'll give you a proper date. She is seconded at an at-level transfer basically because of her significant expertise and experience in public sector leadership, procurement, governance and financial management. It made her a good person to put into that role, particularly in order to interface with the Treasury review.

The CHAIR: It's open-ended at this point?

MELANIE HAWYES: Her secondment is for a period of six months at this point—up to six months.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: Minister, can I also go back to the Powerhouse? Perhaps you'll have to take some of these on notice, but during the period from 2019 to now how many exemptions from competitive tendering were granted?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: We'll certainly need to take that on notice, as you'd understand, but we'll do so.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: Who would have approved those exemptions? Would those exemptions have come to you or would they have been handled by Ms Havilah?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: It would be unusual that they'd come to me—it would be very unusual to come to the Minister—but we'll take that on notice.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: Out of that time period, how many suppliers received multiple contracts, how many contracts were subsequently varied upwards and what would the total value of that uplift have been?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Acknowledging these are very detailed questions, Mr Banasiak, we will take them on notice and we'll do our best to provide what information we can. They're reasonable questions to ask.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: Ms Hawyes, noting the sensitivity around the current investigation, are you able to tell us how many transactions are presently being reviewed as part of that investigation and what the combined value might be?

MELANIE HAWYES: No, unfortunately I'm not. I can respond to the question you raised about the date Ms Wilkinson started. It was 22 July.

The CHAIR: Thank you.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: Minister, are you considering reviewing the discretionary spending ability of the CEOs of your cultural institutions, given this pending investigation? Six million dollars seems like a lot of discretionary spending for a CEO. Are you perhaps considering re-evaluating that?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: It isn't an issue that's really been caused to be raised up until this most recent moment, so I wouldn't want to rush into it, but it's an obvious question to reflect on as we're working through both this investigation but also the Treasury work that's going on.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: Can I jump back to e-bikes and the productivity commissioner's report and your review. Do you agree that the review accepts illegal devices create greater risk than legal ones?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Yes.

UNCORRECTED

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: Do you also agree that the report accepts some innocent victims will fall through the compensation gap?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Yes. There's more coverage than I think most people would understand, in between CTP, the new schemes to regulate share schemes, but the report is clear—

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: But there are gaps.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: There are gaps, no question, absolutely.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: You also accept that it says identifying private riders and devices is difficult?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I agree with that.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: And that better data is still needed?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Yes.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: Still your preferred answer is education and enforcement without registration and without a visible identifier?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: No, I don't agree with—I think that's an overstatement. I accept the report. It really says that the cost of operating is a lot higher than the benefit that would be introduced at this moment; here are some other things to focus on. We are introducing things like identifiers on share bikes as a result of the regulation and we're working with school communities, we're open to—we're definitely regulating in this area, so I don't quite accept the characterisation you've just used.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: But the report is quite clear that guaranteed compensation for every innocent third-party victim isn't available. Isn't that correct?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Correct, yes, and it makes the point it would be very expensive.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: You're asking pedestrians to trust a system that doesn't identify every vehicle, doesn't identify every rider and doesn't guarantee compensation when your enforcement and education fails?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: It's one of the reasons we'll be heavily enforcing the very bad behaviour that we've seen on our streets and we'll be enforcing it very strongly.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: Can I go to the road safety action plan. The 2026 Road Safety Action Plan set a target of no more than 164 deaths and 7,796 serious injuries by 2030. The State is currently running at 350 deaths and 12,157 serious injuries—both worse than your 2018-20 baseline in terms of targets being set. Why have you moved to a 2031 Road Safety Action Plan without actually accounting for the 2026 plan's failings?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: These are probably questions best directed to the roads Minister who really takes the lead in this area. Of course, it's one of the things we talk about regularly because I'm watching carefully, for example, pedestrian or bike incidents and fatalities. The road toll at the moment is of concern. That is a very active discussion in New South Wales, but between other jurisdictions as well that are seeing similar pressures. It's of real concern.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: Can I quickly jump back to the Powerhouse—not to do with the investigation. Your Government states that the Powerhouse Parramatta will operate on 100 per cent renewable electricity. Does that mean the museum is going to physically generate 100 per cent of the electricity it consumes onsite or is it going to be purchased from the grid and matched through renewable energy procurement arrangements?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: We would have to take that question—

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: Why? Surely you should know that, Minister Graham.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I don't know that, but I'll be intrigued to find out. We'll take that on notice for you and get you an answer to that question.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: Thank you. That's probably the end of my questions to Minister Graham.

The CHAIR: I'll jump in because it's crossbench time. Minister, what about the tender for stage 2a of the second stage of the Parramatta light rail project? I think it was out for tender at the beginning of the year. What is the update on when it will be awarded?

UNCORRECTED

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Yes. Progress on Parramatta Light Rail Stage 2a—one of the good things I can update is that the bridge over the river is progressing well. You can literally see it coming out of the river at the moment.

The CHAIR: Is there a completion date for the bridge?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I'm going to refer to the secretary just to get you some real specifics on the program.

JOSH MURRAY: Thank you, Minister. The contracts for Stage 2a are currently under assessment and will come to Government in the coming months. We are making good progress on the works that form the first part of that, as the Minister has referenced. I was able to go out and see the construction crews last week, and over the next year that bridge will take form. That really is the underpinning of the rest of the project, and we will move now into the assessment of the Hill Road section, which will be the next to come on line once these contracts are let. In regards to your direct question of when will they be let, that is still a process for Government decision, but it is nearing that level with the work being done on the tenders that we received.

The CHAIR: Has there been a stated completion date yet for this stage?

JOSH MURRAY: I'd just need to check what the stated completion date of Stage 2a is, but I will come back to you on that.

The CHAIR: We can talk more about that later. Minister, the other day in police estimates I was talking to the police Minister about the early drug diversion initiative and the outcomes of the drug summit, one of which was to potentially reform that program so that more people would be referred to health services as opposed to court. She seemed to imply that there was going to be no legislation and no move to reform that program. My question to you as the Minister for the Arts, and Minister for Music and the Night-time Economy—we've had many discussions in this place over the years about the heavy-handed nature of police at venues, and of course that's happened recently and it came up a lot during the live music inquiry. Are you still pushing for a different approach when it comes to police and their interaction with punters and with people who are going out? Are you still pushing for police to have a different approach and a less heavy-handed approach? Because it certainly doesn't look like that's happening even now, more than 3½ years in.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: You've covered a little bit of ground. Touching on those briefly, I'm not responsible for that scheme, but I note the concerns that have been raised are how many people are being referred, and the fact that this plays out differently in different areas—just acknowledging those concerns. I want to recognise the statements and the engagement from the police commissioner. That's making a big difference engaging with the teams, including the senior commands. Across government, I'm seeing a real difference in the police engagement. It is still variable, as people experience this on the ground. Thirdly, I'll indicate that the Government intends to hold and participate in a round table, particularly focused on gay and lesbian venues, given some of the specific issues that have been raised recently at a range of forums, including by yourself in the Chamber.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: A Special Minister of State question just to change it up a bit: In relation to the proposed bill from Dr McGirr to seek advance funding for Independent members of Parliament, have you sought advice from the Electoral Commission about that?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I would have to take that on notice, because I tend to work through the Cabinet Office. I just want to check with the Cabinet Office what advice we've sought and received on that.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: So, you're not sure if you have—you, personally?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I just want to check with the—

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: I'm not trying to corner you.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: We routinely would do that. I just have to check. There's a lot going on in the electoral space. I just want to double-check to make sure we accurately inform you.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Taking that on notice, then, could you advise, if you did, when you did that and what the Electoral Commission's advice was to you?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Yes, I will take that on notice. Happy to do that.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Has the Government formed a position on whether it will be supporting Dr McGirr's bill?

UNCORRECTED

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: At this stage, it's yet to come up for LA debate. At this stage, we're open to supporting it. We've been urged by some parties to do so—

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Or lack of parties.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: —such as your own, with a policy rationale, I hasten to add. There's been some direct discussions between advocates of the bill, the Opposition and the Government.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: In relation to buses and the region 6 extension, you announced that you would be extending the region 6 bus contract for two years—that was from 1 July 2026. Do you support the decision to extend the region 6 contract for two additional years?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Yes, I'm supportive of the Government's own decision, if that's the question.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Yes, it is. In fairness, you had three years to decide what to do with the contract. Why did you decide to enter into a new contract for a privatised bus service?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: The bus space is one of the areas where there's a lot of work to do, to be up-front. We're adding services. We're dealing with the enterprise agreement negotiations between private employers and the unions, with bus drivers underpaid. We're dealing with bus shelters. We're dealing with the provision of buses. There's a lot going on in this space.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: I accept there's a lot of issues. I understand that.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: We're sorting through those issues as we go.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: But why did you decide to enter into a new contract for a privatised bus service when you had 3½ years to sort this and you were openly very critical of privatising bus services?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I might refer to the secretary.

JOSH MURRAY: When we assessed that region 6 contract, and the timing versus the fact that the bulk of the bus contracts come up in mid-2028, an industry assessment showed that we would get suboptimal results by putting that out to market by itself, rather than holding it for when the bulk of the industry could compete or look at contracts on a more like-for-like basis, and that government would then have a broader decision to make.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: So aligning those contracts was important.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: So private services can provide good public transport on some occasions.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: To get the best deal for taxpayers, aligning the contracts as we take any next steps.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: I appreciate it's Government time. I was just going to invite them to provide a couple of answers that they said they might be able to get during that time.

The CHAIR: In Government time?

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Yes.

The CHAIR: It's three minutes now for me. Minister, the budget had \$6½ billion over 10 years for the new electric bus program. Is any of that going to Newcastle, or anywhere outside of Sydney—the \$6½ billion over 10 years for the new electric bus program?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: We've inherited the former Government's targets about the way to roll that out. The targets apply first in Greater Sydney, then to the regions and then to the rest of New South Wales extending to 2047. We haven't changed those targets. That's the rollout as it stands. We are looking at is there a way to speed up—

The CHAIR: Was that 2047 or 2037?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: It's 2047.

The CHAIR: So 20 years, not 10.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Yes.

The CHAIR: Is that \$6½ billion over 10 years or 20 years?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Recalling that former transport Minister Constance was going to do this very rapidly—I think it was supposed to be done by now. Then it turned out it was actually—

UNCORRECTED

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Oh my God, that's like nine Ministers ago.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I know, but it turned out it was actually 2047.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: You're still blaming other people.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: To answer your question, they're the current targets, that's the current plan. We are just investigating is there a way to speed any of this up, but you couldn't—it would impact both on those targets and the rollout plan.

The CHAIR: The question was around outside of Greater Sydney.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Correct.

The CHAIR: Particularly, I've had people talk to me about Newcastle. Are you saying that the \$6½ billion spend is for Greater Sydney?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: It would be focused first on—the current plan, the current targets—work through Greater Sydney, then the regions, then all of regional New South Wales. That's the plan as we've inherited it. We haven't changed that. What we are investigating is if there is a more rapid way. If, say, Newcastle's more ready to go, we can get a better and faster rollout, but it would be different to the plan we had inherited.

The CHAIR: In a very short amount of time, why is it taking so long for Transport for NSW to deliver a permanent lighting solution for the Erskineville Road footbridge? I understand they've had temporary solar string lights after a long campaign—this is December last year. I remember hearing this story and thought, "What does it take?" Is there a reason for the delay? Is it going to happen?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I strongly disagree with your description. I quite like the twinkle of the fairy lights which are now assembled on the Erskineville bridge. This issue was—

The CHAIR: I've heard that the lights are increasingly failing.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Stuck? It was raised with me, and I did ask the agency to look at the claim that it might cause some safety issues with trains to install those fairy lights. I was then advised that was not the case, and they are in place. I want to thank the agency for working through it.

The CHAIR: Is that it? Is that the permanent solution?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I understand there is more work to do here, and I'll refer to the secretary. I want to vigorously dispute your description, though.

The CHAIR: Let's go with it this afternoon. Let's work through it in a lot of detail this afternoon, Mr Murray.

JOSH MURRAY: I might bring some in.

The CHAIR: You can do your homework over the break. You want some answers maybe?

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: I was just going to suggest potentially whether we invite any of the officials to provide that information that they said they might be able to get. I can name it if—

JOSH MURRAY: I may have one to Ms Faehrmann's question about Parramatta Light Rail Stage 2. No operating date has been given for the completion for Stage 2a to be in service. That will be largely determined once we receive and sign off on the bids that are currently being assessed. They will, of course, put forward operational plans. The work that's currently being done is due to go through until 2029, which is the enabling works, including the bridge, which will be the main unlocking part of that next part of the corridor. Once we assess those contracts and award, we'll have a further update on dates.

MELANIE HAWYES: Chair, I have one as well. Mr Banasiak asked about the cost of backfilling Ms Galvin. I'm not going to be in a position to provide that today, because the backfill arrangements rest with my colleague, Kiersten Fishburn, the secretary of that department. I need a bit of time.

The CHAIR: Government questions?

The Hon. CAMERON MURPHY: We have no questions.

The CHAIR: We will be back at two o'clock. Minister, thank you very much for appearing.

(The Minister withdrew.)

(Luncheon adjournment)

UNCORRECTED

The CHAIR: Welcome back. We'll begin with questions from the Opposition.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Thank you all for coming back this afternoon. Can we go back to Tangara fleet, Mr Longland? Did you manage to get those numbers over the break, about the \$12 billion break-up?

JOSH MURRAY: For Future Fleet, Ms Ward?

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Yes.

JOSH MURRAY: I might take that question in the first instance, and I'm sure my colleagues can assist me as we go. If we have a look at the current funding decisions around the Future Fleet program, there is \$36.7 million in the current budget, and there is \$151.5 million over the next four-year budget.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Sorry, could you say that again—\$36.7 million in the current?

JOSH MURRAY: That's correct.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Can I just break that down? Allocated?

JOSH MURRAY: Allocated in the budget, and \$151.6 million over the four years 2026-27 to 2029-30. That is to fully fund the development of the full business case, the commencement of the long lead time procurement activities and some design and planning work. In regard, then, to the \$12 billion—

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Just a moment. I'm sorry to interrupt you there. If I may, just for clarity—is that design and planning for the construction of the site, or the facility, or for the fleet?

JOSH MURRAY: It's to set up the future procurement of all of those initiatives. It's Transport design of the structure of the deal.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Is that capex?

JOSH MURRAY: That is mostly capex that is in the budget. Then the \$12 billion that is referenced is currently a capex funding provision that has been made by government, and, on the completion of the full business case, Transport will then work to cash-flow that \$12 billion throughout the portfolio budget to deliver the program. Without the full business case and without that work being done on the contracts that will be worked up over coming months, we don't yet have that profile of the \$12 billion. We will work to do that once we have the FBC.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: The FBC is the final—

JOSH MURRAY: The full business case.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Final?

JOSH MURRAY: The final business case.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: That, in a sense, is very helpful, but I guess it doesn't answer the question of the \$12 billion. How much does the Government expect to spend over the next four years? Is the answer to that none of the \$12 billion, given you've allocated other funding?

JOSH MURRAY: No, we will begin spending that 12 billion, in addition to the money that's already declared in the current budget and the forwards. We will begin spending into that profile, but I can't yet give you the shape of that funding until we have accepted the final business case and moved into procurement.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: When do you expect to have the final business case?

JOSH MURRAY: That will be before the end of this year.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: So that's '26. What is the breakdown of the \$12 billion—what is the assumption? I understand you can't put a final number until you have the final business case. I get that; that's logical. As we sit here today, what's your expectation or what is the allocation—sorry, what is the forecast for the spend of the \$12 billion over the next four—

JOSH MURRAY: I couldn't give any more of that today because government has provisioned for this major investment, but we still have to put that structure to the market and then obviously receive competitive bids back. We haven't yet set out, to the point of your question, the elements that I'd be able to give you today, which gives the shape of that spending profile. But we have the money that we need now to get into procurement, which then gives us the time to cash-flow. Transport would cash-flow this amount over that then extended delivery period.

UNCORRECTED

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Separating out what the Government has put up separate from the \$12 billion, then, have you allocated broadly—for \$12 billion, you must have allocated broadly what the spend might be. Or is it just a pot sitting there that you have and Treasury accepts that you're not going to forecast provision to spend?

JOSH MURRAY: That's essentially correct. On Transport's advice and with the work done to date, set to be finalised in the final business case, Treasury has worked with us to put a funding envelope into the forward budgets of \$12 billion, which will enable the delivery of the Future Fleet investment. Transport's work is yet to fully account for that \$12 billion on a year-by-year, project-by-project basis, bearing in mind there will be property acquisition, development of the construction facility, provision of the train contract itself and ancillary costs that will come along as well for Sydney Trains and for Transport.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: I understand. That's helpful. Are you able to provide on notice the breakdown, even if it's percentages—I understand you said some is opex and some is capex—of what the current anticipation is? That is to say that of the \$12 billion announced, that's not all for capex. Is that a fair—

JOSH MURRAY: The \$12 billion that has been put aside is, or will be over those years, predominantly capex. However, we will work with Treasury and with government where there may need to be drawing forward of some of those funds, a reprofiling from capex to opex or additional opex needs. As I said, there'll be other costs that come along, we would anticipate, during the life of that first phase of Future Fleet that don't relate to the factory or building the trains themselves but relate to other changes in the Sydney Trains fleet that then have to be funded. They, over the course of a timeline like that, will have to be funded as well. We will either reprioritise within Transport, or we'll seek additional funding for Sydney Trains.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: I understand. Are you able to provide a breakdown as anticipated or forecast at this time of the \$12 billion, between the facility and associated works—and I accept that is changeable—and the cost to build the fleet itself?

JOSH MURRAY: No, I can't give that at this time because that will be subject to the contracting that we get into with interested parties around the provision of a facility and what the construction of a fleet would look like. That would be very much part of the next stage of contracting.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: I might come back to that. I won't pre-empt your answer, but the current Tangara fleet—actually, I'll move on from that. That's fine. Just to be clear, as we sit here today, the Government doesn't have an expectation of its spend over the next four years, specifically. Would you say that it's subject to the contract allocation, essentially?

JOSH MURRAY: To clarify, there is a guaranteed spend over the next four years of the \$151 million, which—

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: But that's not of the \$12 billion?

JOSH MURRAY: No. That's right.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Of the \$12 billion, how much—

JOSH MURRAY: I can't profile that for you except to say that it will begin during that time period, and we have access to it because government has provisioned the investment, and we just need to structure that once we formalise the procurement stages, which are coming shortly.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: I might come back to that, then. Can I go back to Metro? I might need Mr Lawson again. Through you, Mr Murray or Mr Lawson, if you like—or someone else, if that's more appropriate—I want to ask about the capacity in relation to the Southwest Metro. The agency's own data records a 90 per cent loading at Crows Nest in the morning peak. You're nodding. So that's correct?

HUGH LAWSON: Yes.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: That's before a single Bankstown passenger joins the line. Can I ask how many additional metro trains have been ordered since that data was produced to this Committee?

HUGH LAWSON: The loading busiest point on the line is currently from Crows Nest heading in towards the city between eight o'clock and nine o'clock in the morning. We see passengers starting to exit the trains from Victoria Cross, Barangaroo, Martin Place and the like. That's definitely the peak period for us. The fleet size was procured for both City and Southwest in one go as an extension of the fleet that was originally purchased for the North West, so we already have all of the trains to operate the four-minute peak frequency once the line is extended to Bankstown.

UNCORRECTED

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: So you have all the trains that you need presently and no additional—it's just a fact. Numbers. I'm not judging it. It's a matter for your assessment of the data. The short version is you have all the trains you need.

HUGH LAWSON: Yes, the fleet to deliver the four-minute peak frequency all the way from Tallawong to Bankstown. The additional trains on top of the North West fleet were procured in one go as part of City and Southwest, so actually all of the trains have been available to support the testing that's going on, and then they'll go into service when we open to Bankstown.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: My understanding is that the April uplift was withdrawn because there was no spare fleet. Is that making sense to you?

HUGH LAWSON: I think what you're referring to is that when the fuel crisis was happening, because we were at an earlier stage of testing on Southwest, all of the trains that had been procured for Southwest were not actually required for Southwest testing on a day-to-day basis. That has been ramping up since that period. We did actually have some spare trains that we were able to reallocate and operate on the line between Tallawong and Sydenham, and that enabled us to run some additional trains during the morning peak just to take some pressure off people using the metro and public transport generally more intensely. But once those trains were required for the testing on Southwest, as part of the program we heard about this morning, obviously we prioritised that and withdrew them from operational service.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: My question is this then, and it's quite straightforward. I'm just trying to understand it. On opening day, the same 45 trains will serve an additional 10 stations—in lay speak. How many trains an hour will run through the core in the morning peak on opening day?

HUGH LAWSON: Fifteen trains an hour all the way from Tallawong to Bankstown in both directions. Fifteen trains an hour is that four-minute frequency.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: How many ran in April during the uplift?

HUGH LAWSON: I don't have those figures in front of me. I'd have to take that on notice.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Are you able to find out or take that on notice?

HUGH LAWSON: Yes, I can find out the exact details of how many extra trains ran.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Can I just ask, for theory's sake then, what's the delivery lead time, say, in months between an order for additional metro rolling stock and the first train entering service? How long would that take?

HUGH LAWSON: I think it varies depending on what you're purchasing, but generally at least something like three years based on the sort of procurement timelines from our recent Metro West procurement. It's a number of years from placing an order to having a new train arrive and be ready for service at least.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: What's the latest order date that you would need, assuming three years to add capacity before 2029? That would have to be—

HUGH LAWSON: I'm not sure quite what the aim of the question is.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: If you wanted to, say, add more capacity by 2029, what would be the drop dead date for ordering, assuming the three years?

HUGH LAWSON: At the moment, passenger numbers on the metro are rising aligned to our forecasts, so we're not anticipating to need to purchase additional trains at this time.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: But assuming that some intel came in that people really like metro, there's a lot more people hopping on it, it's more reliable and we're going to need more trains, surely with that approximate three years, you would need to start ordering some pretty soon.

HUGH LAWSON: I think, as I say, the passenger numbers are actually rising aligned with forecasts, so we're tracking that pretty well. We only see some trains at or close to capacity in that kind of peak hour in the morning coming into the city at the moment. If there was a decision to purchase additional trains or increase frequency, that would obviously be an investment decision for government.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Yes, that's what I'm wondering. That's helpful. I may come back to that. Can I come back to the buses and the \$200 million bus driver announcement. In July the Government announced to be investing \$200 million more in to more than 8,000 bus drivers—much needed. Over what period is that \$200 million in funding?

UNCORRECTED

JOSH MURRAY: I'll just double-check exactly the timing of that. It is, of course, contingent on the enterprise agreements that are being conducted at present by the private bus companies, and the Government has offered that money as an incentive to lift the driver pay rates, I believe, over a three-year period so that drivers can get to some of the benchmarks that have been talked about in the earlier bus taskforce work. Government has offered that alongside a number of other conditions that would like to be seen out of the negotiations with the bus companies, and that's now under consideration between the companies and the unions as they go through their negotiations, which are ongoing at this time.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: What's the status of the funding then?

JOSH MURRAY: The funding has been offered that if, for example, the private bus companies who are negotiating through Bus and Coach NSW in the main come back and say that they've achieved the aims for both sides through those negotiations—new conditions for drivers, new productivity incentives for the companies—they would then come back to Transport and, as a process of embedding those new enterprise agreements, we would assess those and then that would make them available for the funding. That is my understanding. Mr Collins may be able to expand on that.

HOWARD COLLINS: That's correct. Certainly, the intention is to look to make bus driver wage rates—hourly rates—more competitive. As we know, we've battled to get additional bus drivers, with some success, but we think this will secure the long-term future for bus driver employees, particularly in some of those areas where housing and other areas are very unaffordable for bus drivers.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Who would receive that funding then? Does it go to the operator?

HOWARD COLLINS: Yes.

JOSH MURRAY: Yes. It would go via the operator to be paid to the workforce through the enterprise agreement, but it would be formally costed, validated and then authorised through Transport, who administers the contract.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: You mentioned conditions, which pre-empted my next question. What conditions are attached to the funding?

JOSH MURRAY: The Government has asked through that process that we look at elements like—and one of them I'll name, which has been the subject of some of this debate so far—the flexibility of hours. Currently, there are provisions in most of the enterprise agreements that dictate the style of hours worked, split shifts and the amount of part-time workers that can be part of a workforce. As Mr Collins has just referenced, increasing driver numbers and ensuring a sustainable and rewarding career for our bus drivers is one of our primary concerns. We've asked, through these negotiations, that those restrictions on flexibility be explored so that we could get a better on-the-road result for the travelling public.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Does that have to be agreed as an EBA across all drivers? For example, you talked about different areas having different needs. Is there flexibility in those conditions to say in some areas obviously longer distance and travel times; others have different dynamics.

JOSH MURRAY: Yes, that can come through, but the provision where it is currently contained in the existing EBA, that condition carries on unless it is renegotiated.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: What's that condition? That it's the same across—

JOSH MURRAY: That there are restrictions in flexibility.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Is there an audit function built into that funding?

JOSH MURRAY: Yes, Transport, through the contract, will validate—the negotiations are for the companies through their representative and the unions through their representative. They will continue that process, and then they will bring a draft EBA back to Transport to have it assessed in line with the contract.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: From the taxpayers' perspective, in terms of them knowing where the money will be going, Transport will manage that and manage the audit.

JOSH MURRAY: That's correct.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Given that not all bus drivers are represented by the TWU and RTBU, are drivers that are not a member of the union eligible for this funding?

JOSH MURRAY: Yes, it will be for the entire workforce under the EBA. It's just that those are negotiated by the companies, the unions and their industry association representatives.

UNCORRECTED

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Is it available to all contracted regions of Greater Sydney and the outer metro contracts?

JOSH MURRAY: Yes, it is. It's in the greater metropolitan contracts.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Just greater, and outer metro as well.

JOSH MURRAY: Greater.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: What's the difference?

JOSH MURRAY: This is not extending to the outer metropolitan contracts.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: So it's not outer metro.

JOSH MURRAY: That's right.

The CHAIR: Mr Barakat, I might just go back to the music festival panel. Is it correct that the music festival panel has met to consider just one appeal by a music festival organiser?

TAREK BARAKAT: It's correct to say that the one appeal to the panel has been made, so the panel's only got to consider that application.

The CHAIR: Could you talk us through why that was rejected?

TAREK BARAKAT: I'm not actually a member of the panel, just to be clear. Hospitality and Racing doesn't have a role on the independent panel. It's a cross-government panel that has representatives from Sound NSW—

The CHAIR: Can I just check if Ms Collins was on it? Maybe I should be directing the question—thank you, Mr Barakat. Sorry to interrupt. I might just direct to Ms Collins. I'm just keen to get a bit more of an understanding of what happened in terms of why it was rejected, in terms of the—I assume what they were appealing was to have the user-pays policing costs at least drastically reduced. Is that correct?

EMILY COLLINS: Yes. I don't have the specific application in front of me. It was for last year's festival—just to be clear—not for this year's festival, and they were seeking a reduction in costs. The panel convenes to consider applications that are undergoing extraordinary circumstances. It's not for general review of costs. We just instruct applicants to go directly to the agencies for that. But if there are exceptional circumstances like weather events or something else that would be considered exceptional, they can come to the panel to review those costs.

The CHAIR: Was that the situation then, that you basically agreed that it wasn't exceptional circumstances and they were advised to go back to the police?

EMILY COLLINS: That was my understanding for last year's application. We have not received an application for this year.

TAREK BARAKAT: I think, too, Ms Faehrmann, if I can add, last year I don't think the festival had engaged with those internal review mechanisms prior to going to the panel. My understanding of the panel's deliberations is there's an expectation that they exhaust those internal police and Health avenues first. That has obviously happened, based on what you said this morning, this year, but my understanding was that last year that hadn't occurred.

The CHAIR: If they've exhausted the avenue of appealing to the police, are you saying they can then go to the panel?

TAREK BARAKAT: Yes, so my understanding—

The CHAIR: That's an extraordinary circumstance, as well as extreme weather events?

TAREK BARAKAT: No, that's not an extraordinary circumstance. That's just something the panel expects to have occurred, that they would have tried the relevant agencies first. If they have no luck there or they don't have the luck they want, then they can come to the panel. My understanding, based on the information I've got during the break, is that they're still in discussions with the police regarding this year's festival. Those consultations are ongoing around those costs.

The CHAIR: Ms Collins, while you're there I might just ask you about the Venue Upgrade Grants. There's been three rounds. Is that correct?

EMILY COLLINS: Yes. The program has run for the last three financial years. It's got several streams within the program. But, yes, there's been three years of the program.

UNCORRECTED

The CHAIR: Is there some way for Sound NSW people to go and inspect the final work? If the business is being given \$200,000 to install X, do you close things off by having somebody going to inspect that work?

EMILY COLLINS: All funding recipients are expected to acquit the grant. For those infrastructure grants, there's milestone payments. Seventy per cent is paid up-front and then 30 per cent on completion and evidence of delivery of the works.

The CHAIR: The venue upgrade grants, the three rounds—are they able to go to the same business twice?

EMILY COLLINS: Not for the same work. You might have one venue come through, one year, that would apply for solar upgrades or certain soundproofing and then the next year be able to apply again for something different.

The CHAIR: What metrics does Sound NSW use to evaluate the program, particularly in terms of whether the upgrades have assisted with the business's bottom line, more audience numbers, all of that? How are you monitoring that or evaluating?

EMILY COLLINS: The program is designed to, I guess, tackle sustainability in two ways: one, reducing operational costs and also increasing income opportunities through infrastructure upgrades. When applicants apply, they talk about the frequency of events and what they're seeking to solve and what their intended impact will be, whether it's a better audience experience or more attendees, open more nights, open later. There's a whole range of things, and we're evaluating that program. Now that it's had three years of running, we're evaluating the program to look at what is the long-term impact of investing in infrastructure, and we've had really strong feedback from applicants that this helps their businesses in a multitude of ways: one, improving their relationships with their stakeholders and their neighbours by having better soundproofing. The artists talk about the experience at those venues being a better experience for artists and the venues being able to have a more viable business.

The CHAIR: With the potential grants for smaller music festivals, I think we got some reassuring responses to that for the last budget estimates. But has anything happened since, in terms of rolling those out or approving those grants?

EMILY COLLINS: Yes. In 2025-26 we funded 16 smaller festivals through the Local Audience Development Grants. We've just announced the new round of that program, which is funding for festivals of all sizes, at \$100,000 for festivals under 12,000 capacity, and \$250,000 for festivals over 12,000 capacity. The focus on that is really about building new audiences and strengthening the relationship between local artists and their local communities and their local venues and festivals.

The CHAIR: Has that just been announced?

EMILY COLLINS: Yes, I believe—last week.

The CHAIR: Thank you. Who will I direct this to? Maybe you, Ms Hawyes, in relation to when all the brouhaha happened about Divine Playhouse in the media. The Premier was very quick off the mark to say that government officials are investigating whether organisers promised different material to that being delivered when they applied for the grant, and he said:

When people apply for government grants ... you need to be consistent with what's in the application form.

What instruction had the Premier given the department to investigate whether the organisers promised different material to that being delivered?

MELANIE HAWYES: Thanks, Ms Faehrmann. It might be a combination of myself with Ms Glasscock if we get into the details of this. I think that situation was really more of a factor of—the issue was, as you describe, a bit of a brouhaha and starting to emerge and be discussed in the media, and so, at that point in time, we were trying to brief the Premier, the Premier's office, the Minister. We weren't given a direction about the grant. We were just being asked for information about what the grant was about, and there had been a variation in terms of location, and I believe the name of the proposed festival had changed, too. It was, essentially, a moment in time when we were trying to get the information clear about the facts of the grant, the facts around the grant, and I think that point was raised around the fact that there had been a variation, which was endorsed by Create. But, beyond that, we weren't provided with any direction.

The CHAIR: So when the Premier told *The Daily Telegraph* on 14 July this year that government officials are investigating, they weren't. He didn't—

UNCORRECTED

MELANIE HAWYES: I can't account for the way the media reports. We were gathering information and answering questions. If you can conceptualise that as an investigation, so be it. Those aren't my words. We were—

The CHAIR: I wasn't conceptualising it as that, no.

MELANIE HAWYES: But I can't account for the way the media put it. But, at that point in time, we were basically getting the facts together to brief people.

The CHAIR: In terms of communication between the Premier or his office and the department, your department, there wasn't a formal request to investigate this matter.

MELANIE HAWYES: I would characterise it as requests for information more than anything else.

The CHAIR: Which is very different.

MELANIE HAWYES: Very different, yes. The way it was reported is a different matter.

KERRI GLASSCOCK: I would agree with that. We did review the process. There were two occasions with this one where reviews took place when the original variation was provided. It was submitted and it was assessed against the criteria of the original application and the outcomes that were committed to. It was deemed acceptable and that it met those. Then we reviewed that process again, after the instance that you were just speaking about, and we have not identified any deficiencies in that process.

The CHAIR: That wasn't the intent of my question to find out about that.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: I might just go to you, Ms Hawyes, if you can answer these. The reporting on the Powerhouse Museum issue states that Louise Herron will be appointed as the strategic adviser. What exactly is the strategic adviser's remit? Who would she report to?

MELANIE HAWYES: She is being commissioned as a small to medium business. She has now retired from her role at the Opera House. We have engaged her through New South Wales procurement practice to provide advice, strategic insights and guidance as to the ongoing operation of the new cultural institution once launched. She is there in a support role to provide advice given her wealth of experience in running cultural institutions at scale.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: At what rate is she being paid? Is there a set wage?

MELANIE HAWYES: It is not a full-time role. It is a couple of days a week. I'll provide on notice what that detailed breakdown might be.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: Did you have an expected duration in terms of her appointment or is it just ongoing?

MELANIE HAWYES: Not ongoing. Initially, it is for an interim period. I don't know exactly how long, but up to about three to six months initially. I can provide you with her daily rate, on notice.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: Anything like that would be great. I understand the need for the interim CEO. The CEO has stood down. Why is the institution in such a position that it needs a strategic adviser shortly before it is due to open?

MELANIE HAWYES: This is obviously a very unusual set of circumstances. We are bringing in additional support, advice and insights to ensure that we're well placed to assist the executive to navigate this transitional period and to provide Government with independent advice as to the ongoing operation of this brand-new cultural institution once launched.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: Are there concerns that the institution won't be ready by 7 November because of these matters that have occurred?

MELANIE HAWYES: No. The team is very focused on the lead-up to launch the program and working incredibly hard to ensure that it is delivered.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: More in terms of costs—I appreciate you might have to take this on notice because it might not necessarily be your remit—what is Powerhouse Parramatta going to cost taxpayers annually to operate once it is operational?

MELANIE HAWYES: We talked about this a little this morning in terms of we're at a point of completing construction of the new—

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: I might've missed that.

UNCORRECTED

MELANIE HAWYES: As part of the most recent budget process, Treasury commenced a review of the ongoing operational funding requirements for the Parramatta museum. I can't answer that question yet. It is the subject of a review with Treasury. We're working closely with Treasury.

The Hon. CHRIS RATH: There is no operating budget yet.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: No worries. As part of that review with Treasury, are you considering how much will be recovered through commercial revenue versus other revenue?

MELANIE HAWYES: We're looking at all revenue streams. I think it is probably helpful to put on record that a philanthropic target of \$75 million was set for the Parramatta Powerhouse, and they have exceeded that target. Their ongoing revenue-generating capacity is also a part of that Treasury review.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: I might put the rest on notice around that information. I might jump to you, Mr Murray, if you can help me on the e-bike productivity commissioner's report. Did you brief the Minister on that?

JOSH MURRAY: No, I didn't personally.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: But someone from your department did the briefing?

JOSH MURRAY: Our safety division and regulation division deals with the Minister mostly on e-bikes. The report, given its origination from the productivity commission, would've gone direct to the Minister is my understanding.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: Who will be best placed to answer questions on the report?

JOSH MURRAY: Ms Webb may be able to, or we may need to take those on notice depending on the type of question.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: It talks about enhanced education and enforcement reducing crash and injured party rates by 5 per cent. Where did that 5 per cent modelling come from? Was it observed somewhere? Was it drawn from another jurisdiction?

SALLY WEBB: I'm aware that the team within Transport safety, within my division, provided serious injury and fatality data to the productivity commissioner to enable him to write the report. I'm not aware of the source of that 5 per cent target that he refers to.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: Are you able to take on notice where that may have come from and get back to us? If you can't find the source, you can report back and say you don't know where it came from.

JOSH MURRAY: We'll take that on notice because there'll be a level of analysis that the commission did on the advice we provided, but that other agencies also provided, as part of that consultation process.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: It also talks about a \$55.7 million benefit from this preferred education and enforcement option. Once again, can you tell me where that was derived from?

SALLY WEBB: I understand that would've been derived from the productivity commission's own modelling. Again, we can see if we have any information regarding that.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: Just whether that was assumed on the 5 per cent crash reduction. Did they intersect or play with each other? On notice, how much of it depends on the actual behavioural compliance of the user, if possible?

JOSH MURRAY: We'll take that on notice.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: The 20 per cent illegal device assumption—was that drawn from your data, Ms Webb, or the department's data?

SALLY WEBB: Again, we'll need to take that on notice.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: There is an assumption that 20 per cent of devices will be noncompliant in 2027. I was wondering whether that was drawn from your evidence that you provided or not. If it was, how did you come to that modelling? How many devices did you physically inspect in terms of testing their motor outputs and testing whether they have cut-out speed assistance et cetera, if you could elaborate as to how you came to that 20 per cent illegal device assumption?

JOSH MURRAY: We're happy to provide our inputs into the productivity commission's analysis for all of those questions.

UNCORRECTED

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: Before the Minister commissioned this review, did anyone from the department advise him of the 2020 working group that looked at this issue—the Electric Scooter Advisory Working Group—and the report that they produced?

SALLY WEBB: We have been giving the Minister advice over the last few years regarding the work of the interagency working group, which has a broad range of members from across government. We set up that working group. We participated in the parliamentary inquiry et cetera. There has been a wide range of advice. We had SIRA, who is represented—I should check that. I'm pretty sure SIRA is represented. We certainly engage with SIRA regarding insurance questions and CTP questions, which are their remit. Fire and Rescue, the police and a whole range of other agencies are on that committee.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: I'm just assuming all that was communicated to the Minister before he commissioned a report that might've duplicated a lot of the work that you had potentially already done with that working group and with other bits and pieces you have been doing.

SALLY WEBB: The plan of that working group is public. It is on our website.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: I have got a copy of the report. I'm assuming that was all shown to the Minister before he commissioned a productivity commissioner review into exactly the same issues.

SALLY WEBB: The Minister is aware of the work of the e-micromobility interagency working group.

The CHAIR: We'll go to questions from the Opposition now.

JOSH MURRAY: Ms Ward, I was just going to clarify that last question you asked me about greater metropolitan versus outer metropolitan. I should say that the package is available across the greater and outer metropolitan bus operating regions. However, a number of outer metropolitan regions are no longer in the process because they are negotiating outside of that process. The most obvious of those is in Newcastle where it's a process before the Fair Work Commission. It is primarily greater and outer metropolitan, but there are some caveats.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Other than being in Fair Work, why would they not participate in this if there's funding available?

JOSH MURRAY: Because they're in intractable bargaining at the moment—intractable dispute—and so those matters will be taken into account during that hearing.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Are they able, during that hearing—should they reach agreement or have a decision made—to access those funds on the basis that decision—

JOSH MURRAY: I'm happy to check this. My understanding would be that, because that announcement has come subsequently, it will be taken into account in the evidence before the FWC, but it is not currently part of the negotiations, which have been separately led by the bus and coach association.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: But, ostensibly, they could participate in that funding?

JOSH MURRAY: I'm sure that they will be looking at the movements in wage rates. I'm not quite sure how the timing will correspond with the other negotiations.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: I'm not sure I follow what that means.

JOSH MURRAY: They are in front of this hearing. If it extends for a long period of time, it will see the result that the other companies get to through their negotiations. If it is to wrap up now, for example, before any of the other companies finish their enterprise agreements, it will make a different determination on wage rates.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Taking that into account, it may be better or it might be worse.

JOSH MURRAY: That's right. We will also look at any judgement by the Fair Work Commission.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: I understand. That's helpful. We were talking about non-unionised bus drivers. You said that the whole workforce will be covered by the EBA. Did I understand that correctly?

JOSH MURRAY: That's correct.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: My understanding is that some employers are not part of the multiple-industry agreement currently being negotiated. Will they be required to join that multiple-industry agreement—have I got that terminology right?—in order to receive the funding?

JOSH MURRAY: No. It would perhaps be better to focus on any individual operators or regions, and we could look into that for you. The single interest agreement that many of the companies have now aligned with formally puts them into bargaining together. Separately, companies have also been engaged with their industry

UNCORRECTED

association, if they are the TWU-linked companies, to negotiate as one, which has now been formalised by the SIEA being approved.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Sorry, what's that? I don't follow the lingo.

JOSH MURRAY: The single interest employer agreement. On the other side of the coin, the RTBU bus companies in the former STA regions are negotiating together, ostensibly. Any one in Newcastle, though, is one of those which sits separate again in the Fair Work Commission.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: I want to get an understanding of who the funding will apply to. Is it all metro and outer metro bus drivers? Are they all eligible and part of this, or are there parts?

JOSH MURRAY: If successful in the way that we would like, then all greater and outer metropolitan bus companies would be able to access this \$200 million uplift as part of their next round enterprise agreements, which, as we've just discussed, are all in various different stages. But the aim is that this would then become the augmentation of the wage rate available to greater and outer metropolitan bus drivers, and would see them lift towards a \$40 an hour pay rate by 2028.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Does that include rural bus drivers?

JOSH MURRAY: No. They are individual contracts, which are part of a separate process in our regional areas. That is because of the great disparity between the size and scale of their operations and their employees.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Yes, massively different. Mr Collins is nodding. Did you want to add something, Mr Collins?

HOWARD COLLINS: In the regional parts of New South Wales, there are over 600 contracts, 480 operators, all with different—maybe one coach doing one journey in the afternoon.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Sorry, Mr Collins. Just so I understand it correctly, in what area is that?

HOWARD COLLINS: The regional rural areas. Imagine, it's a bit like an onion. In the middle you've got Sydney. The middle layer is outer metropolitan. Newcastle is sort of a thing on its own. Then in the rural areas—and we mean regional and rural—there are these separate contracts, which have all recently been renegotiated with about 480 operators—600-plus contracts.

JOSH MURRAY: That process is largely complete.

HOWARD COLLINS: Yes.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: I think I'm across that. I might come back to it if I need clarification.

The Hon. CHRIS RATH: I might go back to the Powerhouse. The Minister said that there's essentially been ongoing investigations since March 2025. You also mentioned there was a referral to ICAC. What's that in relation to?

MELANIE HAWYES: I have referrals to integrity agencies as required. I'm not really going to go into it beyond that.

The Hon. CHRIS RATH: Are you able to confirm whether they are investigating?

MELANIE HAWYES: I'm not able to confirm that. We notify integrity agencies whenever we have a reason.

The Hon. CHRIS RATH: You can't say whether it was procurement related?

MELANIE HAWYES: I'm not going to comment, no.

The Hon. CHRIS RATH: What are the opening hours of operation for the museum going to be?

MELANIE HAWYES: I will need to take that on notice. I don't have that to hand.

The Hon. CHRIS RATH: Do you know if it's 9.00 a.m. to 9.00 p.m., which is what was originally proposed?

MELANIE HAWYES: Let me take it on notice. I'll try to bring it back to the session today.

The Hon. CHRIS RATH: In terms of ticketing, do you have information on hand in terms of any fees or costs that patrons will have to pay for certain exhibits et cetera?

UNCORRECTED

MELANIE HAWYES: Again, I'll take the question on notice to provide more detail, but the bulk of the programming is free. I do know that the opening program has many elements to it, a sort of festival-event type programming. Ongoing, most of the exhibits are free. I'll take it on notice and come back to you with more detail.

The Hon. CHRIS RATH: For the first seven months of operation, the target is \$50 million. Is that right? Is the budget \$50 million for the Powerhouse Parramatta from November to 30 June?

MELANIE HAWYES: Sorry, what do you mean by target?

The Hon. CHRIS RATH: The target budget for the first seven months of operation.

MELANIE HAWYES: Of revenue or total budget?

The Hon. CHRIS RATH: Of the operating expenses.

MELANIE HAWYES: I'll probably need to take that notice. I don't quite know exactly what you're referring to in that, but I'll have a look at the budget and come back.

The Hon. CHRIS RATH: Has there been spending of public funds without the operating budget being released? Is that essentially what's currently happening at the Powerhouse?

MELANIE HAWYES: No. The Powerhouse is within its allocation. What's happening with the Treasury review is that it's the appropriate time to look at what are the ongoing operating requirements, including funding, for the museum once launched and up and running.

The Hon. CHRIS RATH: This financial year's \$138 million allocation includes \$89 million of unidentified grants. What does that \$89 million cover?

MELANIE HAWYES: I'll need to take that on notice.

The Hon. CHRIS RATH: This might be more of a question for Infrastructure NSW, but are you aware of the Government using guaranteed fixed-price contracts for the construction of Powerhouse Parramatta?

MELANIE HAWYES: No, and that may very well be more of a question for Infrastructure NSW, which led the construction project.

The Hon. CHRIS RATH: Yes, it might be more for them and anything regarding Lendlease, costs incurred there, is probably more for them.

MELANIE HAWYES: Yes.

The Hon. CHRIS RATH: Do you know how much the Castle Hill digitisation costs?

MELANIE HAWYES: I can get that for you. I do know that the total envelope for Parramatta included the Castle Hill storage and also digitisation work, but I can get that breakdown for you.

The Hon. CHRIS RATH: You might need to take this on notice as well: Do you know the total cost of the move from Ultimo to Parramatta—the move cost as a separated item of expenditure?

MELANIE HAWYES: I don't have that to hand. Again, I can get that for you.

The Hon. CHRIS RATH: I might just go to Ultimo now, if that's okay. There's a budget envelope of \$300 million of which \$250 million is essentially government funds and then there's \$50 million philanthropy. Is that essentially how it's being funded?

MELANIE HAWYES: That's correct.

The Hon. CHRIS RATH: Was it originally \$500 million at one point?

MELANIE HAWYES: I can't comment on the past issues around that. The current funding is similar to the Parramatta program, which is a component of government funding and a component of philanthropic investment.

The Hon. CHRIS RATH: My understanding was that a couple of years ago it was \$500 million of funding?

MELANIE HAWYES: I can take that on notice, but I'm working with the current budget allocation.

The Hon. CHRIS RATH: Can you give any more detail about when we can expect it to come online, when it will be open?

MELANIE HAWYES: Not beyond the Minister's evidence this morning, no.

UNCORRECTED

The Hon. CHRIS RATH: So three years from commencement of construction is what we're working towards.

MELANIE HAWYES: As the Minister outlined this morning.

The Hon. CHRIS RATH: And construction basically has started?

MELANIE HAWYES: Construction is well underway.

The Hon. CHRIS RATH: But it started at some point this year?

MELANIE HAWYES: I think the Minister covered that this morning also, but construction is very much underway. They've got significant works on foot at the moment.

The Hon. CHRIS RATH: I think you've taken this on notice but, slightly separately, on the Castle Hill discovery centre in the budget papers, what the breakdown is for the Castle Hill component versus the Parramatta component—if you can provide that on notice it might be helpful.

MELANIE HAWYES: Yes.

The Hon. CHRIS RATH: And the digitisation part is separate again, if I can put it that way.

MELANIE HAWYES: Yes.

The Hon. CHRIS RATH: I might move to a different issue now. I asked Treasury this, but they said it's probably more of a question for you or for the library—I know we don't have the library people here—and you might need to take it on notice. Are you able to provide any information on the Mitchell rooftop development and what that's referring to in the budget papers? It says \$22½ million for the Mitchell Library rooftop development.

MELANIE HAWYES: I may need to get some further information from the library, but it's essentially in part to be raised with Heritage Floor Space. I'd probably need to get a bit of information pulled together on notice to be able to answer that for you in more depth.

The Hon. CHRIS RATH: It says in the budget papers that it's also to be funded from non-government sources. Is that philanthropy?

MELANIE HAWYES: Let me answer that on notice so that I get you the detail you need.

The Hon. CHRIS RATH: And if there's any government component of it or whether it's just entirely philanthropy or corporate sponsorship, or whatever that \$22½ million may include.

MELANIE HAWYES: I'll get some information for you—if not for this session, for the following session.

The Hon. CHRIS RATH: How much money has the New South Wales Government given to the MCA? Do you have that on hand?

MELANIE HAWYES: We do. Kerri, do you have that to hand?

KERRI GLASSCOCK: Yes. If you just give me a moment, I'll find that.

MELANIE HAWYES: Give us a moment to just find the number, if you would.

The Hon. CHRIS RATH: While you're looking for that, have any conversations been had with the MCA about how they may be able to remove the introduced ticket price once their finance has improved? A couple of years ago there was no ticket price. They have now imposed a \$25 fee per adult. Have there been any conversations between your department and MCA about what would need to be done to get that back to a free gallery?

MELANIE HAWYES: I haven't had a conversation with the MCA. Kerri, you may have.

KERRI GLASSCOCK: Sorry, I was just trying to find this. No, I haven't had any conversations with them about that yet. Sorry, give me one moment and I'll find this for you. For FY26, the Museum of Contemporary Art is receiving \$4.446504 million.

The Hon. CHRIS RATH: Do you know what it was last year?

KERRI GLASSCOCK: It will be the same because they're on a multi-year agreement.

The Hon. CHRIS RATH: How many years is that? Is that a four-year agreement?

UNCORRECTED

KERRI GLASSCOCK: When we reformed the ACFP, we created new categories. The MCA was originally in what was called a State significant organisation, which was a negotiated funding round. They will move into the 4+4 round, but they're being rolled over until that program reopens again. So it'll be another year.

The Hon. CHRIS RATH: How much is spent through the ACFP this year? How much is allocated?

KERRI GLASSCOCK: In 2026-27?

The Hon. CHRIS RATH: Yes.

KERRI GLASSCOCK: We've had an increase in an uplift this year and we will be spending \$78 million.

The Hon. CHRIS RATH: Do you have a breakdown between cultural institutions versus the independent arts organisations? I don't know if you've got that.

KERRI GLASSCOCK: We don't look after the cultural institutions—the six CIs. I think you might be referring to the multi-year versus project, perhaps, or are you after the cultural institution funding?

The Hon. CHRIS RATH: I suppose the multi-year, yes. The CIs are coming from a different—

KERRI GLASSCOCK: Create NSW doesn't look after the CIs. They're not under the ACFP. The ACFP is our ongoing program for our multi-year arts organisations and some of them may have cultural infrastructure, like the MCA, but most of them are producing or presenting organisations. Then the ACFP is broken up through our three multi-year categories—4+4, 4-Year and 2-Year—and then the remainder is utilised for project funding.

The Hon. CHRIS RATH: The ACFP has gone up since last year as well.

KERRI GLASSCOCK: That's correct.

The Hon. CHRIS RATH: Do you have last year's figure and do you have any forward estimates years or it stays the same?

KERRI GLASSCOCK: Last year was \$73.2 million and we've had an uplift for this financial year taking it to \$78 million.

MELANIE HAWYES: Mr Rath, the CIs get their own funding allocation distinct from the funding that Create administers.

The Hon. CHRIS RATH: Some grants are one-off grants as well. Is that right? They're separate to the multi-year?

KERRI GLASSCOCK: Yes.

The Hon. CHRIS RATH: And that's still through Create?

KERRI GLASSCOCK: Yes. We have a number of different packages. The ACFP is our ongoing funding which we divide up through the multi-year funding, and then project funding and regional touring, things like that, go through there. Then we've got our annual funding Creative Communities package, which is attached to our plans and strategies, but that's only secured for a year at a time. Those are one-off grants as well for various different things. They might range from larger scale strategic partnership programs like we're running in regional New South Wales and Western Sydney all the way down to quick response grants for artists, such as the fashion quick response grants for microbusiness development or the Western Sydney quick response grants, which might be only up to \$5,000 or \$10,000.

The Hon. CHRIS RATH: I think it was a one-off grant—I'm not sure if you're across this—that was given to the MoshPit bar, that then ended up closing recently. I'm not sure if you saw that reporting.

KERRI GLASSCOCK: That might be through Sound NSW.

The Hon. CHRIS RATH: Potentially. What was the original intention of the \$87,560 grant in '24-25 for the MoshPit bar?

EMILY COLLINS: I don't have the detail in here, but generally they're infrastructure-based grants—so accessibility, soundproofing. I can take that on notice and come back to you.

MELANIE HAWYES: Would you like me to answer the question about Powerhouse ticketing?

The Hon. CHRIS RATH: Yes, please.

UNCORRECTED

MELANIE HAWYES: Everything is free for children. Two of the program exhibitions will be paid. One is Task Eternal and one is Es Devlin. The actual ticketing price is still being finalised, and obviously that will need to be verified by the incoming chief executive. We can provide the price amounts on notice.

The CHAIR: Ms Collins, I might just follow on from that line of questioning. Is there a policy for when organisations or businesses get grants and then fail at some point reasonably soonish? Again, is there a policy? It's questionable as to whether the money was actually spent the way it was intended. It's happened a bit, and it's not surprising. I just wondered if there's an official policy about whether you seek reimbursement or just go, "It is what it is"?

EMILY COLLINS: It depends on where they're up to in the delivery of the grant. If the grant has been acquitted, we would consider that they did the work that they were funded to and we wouldn't seek funding returned, but if they're yet to acquit the grant and deliver on that, yes, we would try to seek that money back.

The CHAIR: In terms of the evaluation of the money that's being spent propping up businesses—in good ways, I hasten to add. But just knowing whether, despite the Government's assistance certain businesses fail. Are you compiling reports like that for the expenditure?

EMILY COLLINS: The thing about the venue upgrade grants is we've funded 69 venues over the past three years of the program, and we've seen a few of those close, which obviously is terrible, and they're often on the smaller scale, the smaller-sized venues. We are looking at the ways we can support venues outside of grant funding to improve audience development and recognise these venues as the important cultural institutions that they are. There's a lot more work to be done in this space, particularly for the small to medium venues, who I think are at greater risk of challenges at the moment.

The CHAIR: Mr Rodrigues, you heard me ask the Minister earlier today about the expenses, the international trips for different conferences and summits and what have you in your position. How many trips have you undertaken overseas as part of your position?

MICHAEL RODRIGUES: If you just give me a moment—

The CHAIR: You might need to calculate that. Why don't we come back to that figure? Or do you know it?

MICHAEL RODRIGUES: I think for the period, referencing your time frame—

The CHAIR: From 2024 is what I'm referencing.

MICHAEL RODRIGUES: From 2024 through to today, I understand that I've taken nine trips.

The CHAIR: Three trips to Spain—what's the Spanish interest?

MICHAEL RODRIGUES: I'm not sure that I've taken three trips to Spain.

The CHAIR: Is it two?

MICHAEL RODRIGUES: I've taken two trips to Spain. One was to Barcelona, and then the second one was to Madrid. I guess for some context around this, and if we go back a step, international travel has only really been in the past two or three years, mainly because in the first few years of the office, while part of the office's formation was really about telling a new story for Sydney, we need to do a fair bit of work on the product, here. There were no international trips at that time, although I did do a fair bit of international engagement, remotely. When international travel began, I was invited to speak in the UK, and I took that opportunity to go to Barcelona, partly because it's one of the comparable cities that the Committee for Sydney had identified that we should look at—temperate environment, coastal, as opposed to other international cities that we sometimes draw comparison to. The Madrid trip was an express invitation from the Aspen Institute as part of Bloomberg Cities to speak, for which they covered the bulk of the costs.

The CHAIR: Has the Minister accompanied you on any of these, or gone to any of the events?

MICHAEL RODRIGUES: No.

The CHAIR: What happened at Barcelona City Hall on 31 January 2025? Because he's here with you.

MICHAEL RODRIGUES: Yes. I think the Minister attended in his own capacity, not as part of the same trip.

The CHAIR: I just asked you whether he attended any of the events, as well. I said, "Did he accompany you or attend any of the events?" You're saying he didn't attend any of the events? He just hooked up?

UNCORRECTED

MICHAEL RODRIGUES: I was invited to speak in the UK, and the Minister, I understand, travelled at his own expense, and to Barcelona.

The CHAIR: Yes, but he's still in here. He's in the report. Pictures of him. "Night-time governance in Sydney and Barcelona." You've prepared the report. The question was whether he attended, and he did. What's the difference?

MICHAEL RODRIGUES: I guess I was travelling as a part of an official itinerary, and I understand the Minister attended at his own expense.

The CHAIR: No, I wasn't asking about his expense. I've got expenses for you here. There's quite a few. You guys are visiting the ice bar in Barcelona. He was a core part of that summit. Is this a summit that was organised with Barcelona and you?

MICHAEL RODRIGUES: No. If I can go back, that trip was an invitation to speak at the Night Time Industries Association in the UK. I believe I also spoke at a REMIX Summit in London. In between, I visited Amsterdam and Barcelona as part of a study mission and the Minister joined—came to Barcelona.

The CHAIR: And what's this report? The peer-to-peer learning?

MICHAEL RODRIGUES: I imagine that's the report for the component of the trip—is it the Amsterdam component you're looking at, or Barcelona?

The CHAIR: Barcelona. So even though he appeared, he caught up. He was over there. He caught up, but it's kind of being pitched as though he was part of it, including being in here with the Barcelona Night Commissioner—you and the Minister in the official table.

MICHAEL RODRIGUES: If I can clarify—and apologies, I'm trying to be clear—I'd been invited to speak at two conferences. I arranged a trip, which included visitation to Barcelona and Amsterdam to make the best use of time, and the Minister joined that component of the trip.

The CHAIR: There's a flight here for almost \$14,500 return to Spain for four to five days in April to May this year. What was that for?

MICHAEL RODRIGUES: That was to attend the Aspen Institute's Bloomberg CityLab. If I'm correct in saying, the New South Wales Government did not pay for that flight. That was covered by the conference organiser.

The CHAIR: Was it? I'll come back to you. Are you sure?

MICHAEL RODRIGUES: Is the trip to—

The CHAIR: It's just that it's appeared in the documents. I'll have a look and come back after tea.

MICHAEL RODRIGUES: Is it the trip to Madrid, though, that you're referring to? If it is the trip to Madrid, I'm relatively sure that it was paid for by the conference organiser. It may be appearing there because it has a value and then that value will be disclosed as part of the gifts and benefits policy.

The CHAIR: We'll have a look at that, because it was a more-expensive-than-usual airfare for a public official to book, hence the question.

MELANIE HAWYES: If it's okay, let's check that. It's not unusual for some of the international engagements, particularly across the cultural institutions—they're often paid for by the host organisation. Let's just check that to make sure it's correct.

MICHAEL RODRIGUES: And I do recall at that time it was the Middle East fuel crisis, et cetera.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: Mr Rodrigues, you might want to stay there. I just want to follow up on some more questions around the Uptown grants to the Spirit of Camden, if possible. Have we got an answer back yet as to whether either of those two grants, the first \$200,000 or the other \$120,000, came with an endorsement from the local member or the council at all?

MICHAEL RODRIGUES: If I can just explain. The two rounds of grant funding to the Spirit of Camden—the program is Uptown, the team have been through the accelerator. There were letters of support, multiple letters of support, one of which included a letter of support from the local member, yes. That's correct.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: Was that a letter of support for both applications? There were two. There was \$200,000, I think in 2024, and then they received another \$120,000 in 2026.

MICHAEL RODRIGUES: If you give me a moment, I can check. I think it's only for one of the rounds.

UNCORRECTED

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: While you're checking for that, in the initial round, did they provide any financial evidence to show that they had capacity to deliver what they were saying they were going to deliver?

MICHAEL RODRIGUES: I'll do my best to—

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: And if they did, what did it look like?

MICHAEL RODRIGUES: I'll do my best to explain. If needed we can provide it on notice. Uptown was about getting local businesses to come together and then be supported by the grant program. In the first instance, the Spirit of Camden team went through the accelerator and then applied for the grant funding.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: What do you mean by they went through the accelerator?

MICHAEL RODRIGUES: The Uptown Accelerator was an initiative of the office that is a capability-building program that asks businesses to come with an idea about the story of their local area, asks them to work together and then, through a series of, I guess, training sessions, they're given background on governance, on the ability to tell a united story, the ability to build partnerships and sponsorship. Then there's a separate application under the grant program for funding ultimately to help coordinate and, I guess, build the district. All the funding is done, all the grants are done in accordance with the grant administration guidelines. There would have been a governance risk and probity plan, including eligibility requirements and guidelines, and it was a competitive assessment process. I guess the point I'm making is that it was a relatively new organisation, which is, I think, the point that you're expressing.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: Yes.

MICHAEL RODRIGUES: But that's part of the design of the program.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: I'm just trying to visualise it. The Spirit of Camden is supposed to be a conduit of all the local businesses.

MICHAEL RODRIGUES: Yes, that's right.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: Like the chamber of commerce but not.

MICHAEL RODRIGUES: Oftentimes we've encouraged chambers of commerce to apply or partner with these districts. Then over a time you see the maturity of the district as it grows. While it may become quite a small group to begin with, I think they're now approaching 90 members in that area.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: You said the Uptown grants were in keeping with the small grants—

MICHAEL RODRIGUES: The grants administration guidelines.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: The grants administration guidelines. There would have been checks around conflicts of interest, et cetera?

MICHAEL RODRIGUES: Yes, that would be the case.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: In terms of that initial \$200,000, do you have any details as to how much of that \$200,000 went to salaries or consultancy fees, marketing. Do you have a breakdown of how that \$200,000 was acquitted?

MICHAEL RODRIGUES: I don't have it at hand, but I'll be able to take that on notice.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: You'll be able to take it on notice and give us a detailed acquittal? Thank you. Just whether any of the money was proposed to be paid to members or office holders of the Spirit of Camden as well.

MICHAEL RODRIGUES: I'll take that on notice, yes.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: Are you able to do the same for the \$120,000?

MICHAEL RODRIGUES: Yes. It's just that that grant probably is not yet complete, but to the extent that it is complete, or they have presented a budget, we will be able to provide that on notice.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: Thank you. Has the \$200,000 been fully acquitted?

MICHAEL RODRIGUES: The \$200,000, I believe, would be acquitted.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: You believe, or do you want to check?

MICHAEL RODRIGUES: I might just check that.

UNCORRECTED

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: If it hasn't been fully acquitted, any detail as to why they were given another \$120,000 if they hadn't fully acquitted the \$200,000, whether it was for a new project or something different, if you could give us some details on that, and any evidence of what the \$200,000 has delivered in terms of increased visitation and business activity turnover. Do you ask that of these Uptown grants, to produce evidence of impact?

MICHAEL RODRIGUES: Yes, I guess as part of—

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: Or do you do your own internal assessment?

MICHAEL RODRIGUES: A bit of both. I think, Mr Banasiak, you've asked questions about precinct performance in the past, which is a good line of questioning and something that we have been looking at to see, over a period of time, whether the theory of bringing business together to encourage participation occurs. We do both of those things. If it's helpful—what we're seeing is that district interventions take some time to get going, but as more businesses get involved, as partners come in and as people start working with councils, as was the case in the Spirit of Camden, where the SPINOUT festival was able to work with council to take use of the arts centre, to shut the street, you can tend to see the benefits of that flow through to the economy and in visitation.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: At what point do you normally traditionally see these having an impact? Is it one year, two years? In the case of this we're probably up to its third year of implementation.

MICHAEL RODRIGUES: It does vary based on a number of factors. I think three years is a reasonable period to look at. Obviously the district interventions include the special entertainment precincts and the Purple Flag intervention as well. As you look at districts across Greater Sydney and New South Wales, we're trying to establish what maturity actually looks like. But, yes, I think three years is a reasonable time.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: Just picking up on the Chair's questions around your trips overseas, for every one of them have you had to produce a report like Ms Faehrmann showed, in terms of what your learnings were?

MELANIE HAWYES: Yes, they come to the secretary.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: Of those nine trips that you've taken, how many of the learnings have been pursued to implementation in terms of, "Barcelona is doing this, we should transfer that over." How many of those learnings have come to fruition, would you say?

MICHAEL RODRIGUES: I'll give you some of the things that we've learned from the international community that have been applied—things like Purple Flag from the UK; special entertainment precincts have been shaped by the experience of the UK and US; the data and measurement platform Data After Dark has been shaped by the UK; the night worker action strategy has been shaped by work done in the UK. Some of the venue preservation work that Barcelona has done has helped shape policy around the venue accreditation scheme that's being looked at here. For example, some of the sexual violence in licensed premises settings have been shaped by experiences from Vancouver in Canada.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: How many of those did you pick up from trips overseas versus your early work, where you said you were doing it mostly online via videoconference, I'm assuming?

MICHAEL RODRIGUES: I don't know that there's necessarily a one for one. If I'm being honest, there's no one-for-one correlation.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: You can't give us a proportion in terms of how many of those things you just rattled off were picked up from—

MICHAEL RODRIGUES: Maybe I can take that on notice.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: I'm happy for you to take it on notice, if you want to go and have more of a think or a better crack at it. That's fine.

MELANIE HAWYES: Chair, if I may, can I confirm that the flights to Spain were covered by the host entity, which was the Aspen Institute of Washington, DC.

The CHAIR: Thank you. With what you've just taken on notice, Mr Rodrigues, have you had anybody accompanying you on those trips from the department in a professional capacity?

MICHAEL RODRIGUES: There was one trip that I undertook in the capacity as acting deputy secretary for 24-hour screen and sound, which was the trip to Hong Kong, Beijing and Shenzhen, in which case I was accompanied by a staff member from Screen NSW and also met with the trade team in China.

UNCORRECTED

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Can I follow up on this? This is quite intriguing, and I'm pleased that you're doing great work. But could I ask you to also take on notice a breakdown of each of those trips—where they were to, who accompanied you, the dates and who paid for what, if you could provide that breakdown? That was a very quick reel-off of some of the things that you dealt with. Could you outline those learnings—Purple Flag from London, preservation from Barcelona and those sorts of things—that were achieved in each of those trips and, as our Chair said, who accompanied you and, obviously, who paid? That would be useful.

MICHAEL RODRIGUES: I'm happy to take that on notice.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Can we go back to Tangara? I just want to be absolutely clear so I'm not misunderstanding the position, Mr Murray or Ms Hoang. You talked about the New South Wales allocation, and I'm not interested in exploring that in this session. Of the \$12 billion, do I understand correctly that, as you said, it's on completion of the business case but that will all be capex?

JOSH MURRAY: Yes, that's correct.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Can you talk me through, then—just so I'm very clear on your answer—your expectation or the Government's expectation of spend over the next four years?

JOSH MURRAY: I'll refer you back to the figures that I gave for both the current financial year and the \$151.6 million for forwards.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: I'm just going to interrupt you there, respectfully. I thought that you had said that was not part of the \$12 billion.

JOSH MURRAY: No. But, in essence of your question just then, which was what is the spend over the next four years, I just want to start with that figure because that is money that has been assigned over the next four years to take us into procurement. Once we get into the procurement, we will access within the next four years the \$12 billion investment that Treasury has profiled into the State budget.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Two things on that, then. As I said originally in the question, parking that expenditure prior, once you get into procurement, what is the Government's expectation, as we sit here today, of the spend over the next four years of the \$12 billion?

JOSH MURRAY: I don't have that for you to hand. We will be profiling that as part of this procurement work at the moment, because timing of exactly when we'll need those dollars and the peaks of that spend in those early years is yet to be worked through, because we don't yet have a provider and we are doing the work now on the site, which will be one of the first expenses that will be accessed through that fund.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: I just want to be fair to you, though, just to understand. Given that work, either the answer is you don't have a number today for those reasons, or you have a forecast but it will depend on the outcomes, the site location and the procurement.

JOSH MURRAY: That's right. We have draft forecasts for—

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Yes, you must.

JOSH MURRAY: We do.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: It's crazy to say you wouldn't.

JOSH MURRAY: But they relate to the site that's chosen, which will influence the spend. One site is our site; one site would need to be purchased.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: What are the draft forecasts?

JOSH MURRAY: I'm not going to provide those because they are part of the funding required to get into procurement. For those who'll be bidding to construct the facility and to provide the trains, we are not at a position yet of having a number that's firm enough that we'll be putting into the market. That will come through this next phase of procurement, and the first part of that will be live in coming weeks.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: I'll come back to that.

The CHAIR: I just wanted to ask about the pink replacement buses for the Southwest Metro. Is there a cost so far and a potential cost? We're not sure of the exact opening date of the Southwest Metro, but the cost of operating and maintaining the buses since the train line is closed—I'm not sure who to direct that to.

JOSH MURRAY: I'll get Mr Collins to approach that one.

UNCORRECTED

HOWARD COLLINS: I can provide the detailed costs. I haven't got them directly now for the operation. Obviously we'll retain the pink buses until the successful opening of the Southwest Metro. We're obviously looking to whether we can repurpose those vehicles after that time.

The CHAIR: Repurpose them? Is it because of the pink paint on the outside, or is there something special about them that they can't just become normal buses again?

HOWARD COLLINS: They could become normal buses, and that's one of the options we're considering.

The CHAIR: I'd certainly hope so. Have there been many accidents involving the pink buses? If you could maybe also, when you find out about the costs—

HOWARD COLLINS: We produce a daily report of every wing mirror lost or every item which is involved—

The CHAIR: Is there a summary?

HOWARD COLLINS: We'll trawl through that and try to find the summary for those pink buses.

The CHAIR: That would be excellent, including the most common locations of the accidents, as well as the cost of those accidents.

HOWARD COLLINS: We'll take that on notice.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: This morning me and the Minister were having a bit of a banter about the Premier's Literary Awards, but it is a serious question and the Minister is responsible for those awards, not the Premier. I'm just wondering why the Premier's name was dropped from those Literary Awards. There would have been a cost in terms of branding and marketing et cetera, so I'm just wondering why the decision was made to drop the Premier off the Literary Awards.

MELANIE HAWYES: I can't answer beyond the Minister's response this morning, and that occurred before my time.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: But these are administered by Create NSW and the State Library. Is there no-one here that can explain why the decision was made?

MELANIE HAWYES: I can explain that we currently have the Literary Awards and they go on as a regular event. I can't answer beyond the Minister's answer this morning as to why there was a change of name.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: Are you able to take on notice as to why there was a change in name and what the—

MELANIE HAWYES: I think the Minister took that on notice this morning.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: No, he said, "Go ask the Premier."

MELANIE HAWYES: I will also endeavour to do that.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: And just in terms of what the cost was to rebrand et cetera.

MELANIE HAWYES: I don't think there were costs, but I will confirm on notice.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Mr Murray, to be fair to you, there must be a breakdown or there must be a number, as we sit here today, of the Government's expectation of spend over the next four years of the 12 billion. I get there are contingencies, but it's a super big fund of money. I just want to be fair to you and your evidence that there must be a breakdown of the expectation unrelated to contract award procurement and other contingencies that the Government must be, or Treasury must be, insisting on for allocation over the next four years. I get you can change that. But, as we sit here today, are you telling me there is no number?

JOSH MURRAY: No. I'll go back to my earlier answer, which is we have draft envelopes within that future expenditure. But the key point right now, Ms Ward, is we have enough money to spend on the critical path initiatives that are already underway, that are progressing really well with industry and that we look forward to getting into procurement, and that is when that 12 billion will need to be accessed. It is not an urgent funding requirement out of that fund because we already have some, or close to, \$200 million that is, in effect, being spent right now in developing the scheme.

The CHAIR: It's 3.30. We'll break for 15 minutes, and we will be back at 3.45.

(Short adjournment)

UNCORRECTED

The CHAIR: We will resume. Just before we formally kick off, we no longer require Ms Pitman and Ms Page—I'm sorry to both that we didn't get to ask you questions today—and also Ms Glasscock as well. Thank you.

(Ms Annette Pitman, Ms Maud Page and Ms Kerri Glasscock withdrew.)

The CHAIR: We'll go to questions from the Opposition.

The Hon. CHRIS RATH: Thank you. I think you had an update on Mitchell Library.

MELANIE HAWYES: Thank you. As you know, the State Library is running the Library Bar. They have submitted or are preparing to submit a heritage floor space application for the building rooftop to undertake works. You questioned whether there was philanthropic or corporate partnership funding for this. There is not. We are progressing it through the heritage floor space scheme, which is administered by City of Sydney.

The Hon. CHRIS RATH: So non-government sources as in non-New South Wales Government.

MELANIE HAWYES: That's right. Through the heritage floor space—

The Hon. CHRIS RATH: But it could be through City of Sydney to pay to cover the cost. Thank you. I might have a couple more I'll put on notice. That way, the library people can come back to us with some information.

MELANIE HAWYES: Great. I also do need to correct—*Es Devlin* is actually going to be free rather than a paid exhibition at the Powerhouse. I had incorrect advice. Apologies for that.

The Hon. CHRIS RATH: All good. Thank you. The next set of questions I have might overlap with Create as well.

MELANIE HAWYES: Kerri's just gone.

The Hon. CHRIS RATH: Okay. Just through you, then—it probably isn't Create, actually. Have you done any work with or looking at Marian Street Theatre in Ku-ring-gai?

MELANIE HAWYES: I'm not familiar with that one. No.

The Hon. CHRIS RATH: I might put a couple of questions on notice on that one. It's been disused for 13 years now, and they want to try and get it back up and running. Also two other theatre spaces, the Roxy in Parramatta—do you have any update on that? I know there was at one point a proposal for the New South Wales Government to acquire it or reopen it. I don't know if you've got any update on that.

MELANIE HAWYES: I probably need to take both of those on notice if that's okay.

The Hon. CHRIS RATH: Yes. The only other one as well, maybe on notice, which is even more—I think it's probably just as much in Planning, with my shadow planning hat on, but I'll ask you as well on notice. Is the Metro-Minerva at Potts Point, which is another theatre that's been disused for many years, that is—I think it's subject to a DA, so it might be a Planning question, but it is, basically, what interaction your department's had with getting that theatre back up and running, potentially.

MELANIE HAWYES: I don't have an update beyond what you've just said in your question, which is that there is a DA in train for that site. So anything further to that, I'll have to take on notice.

The Hon. CHRIS RATH: Great. The other set of questions is what work have you done on or conversations did you have with the organisers of *Back to the Future*, *Waitress* and *Beetlejuice* in the lead-up to their cancellation.

MELANIE HAWYES: I will need to take that on notice because I don't have that information to hand, and I'll need to consult with Ms Glasscock, who's just been released.

The Hon. CHRIS RATH: That's fine. We probably shouldn't have sent her.

The CHAIR: She's well and truly out the door.

MELANIE HAWYES: Do you want me to try and get her back?

The Hon. CHRIS RATH: No. It's fine. These are not so important that they can't be supplementary questions on notice. I will hand over to Natalie.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Mr Longland, in relation to the Tangara fleet, are you aware of any allocation of the \$12 billion in the next four years?

UNCORRECTED

MATT LONGLAND: Thank you for the question. In relation to Tangara, the funding that we are managing at the moment is in relation to the life extension works. I think it's about \$450 million in the forward estimate period.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: No. My question is about the new fleet, the \$12 billion allocation.

MATT LONGLAND: The Future Fleet? The new fleet?

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: I don't want to talk about anything other than the \$12 billion, just to be clear. We've explored that. Are you aware of the \$12 billion—any allocation over the next four years?

MATT LONGLAND: Not in the Sydney Trains budget. We do have a number of people in the project team, but they sit in the Transport budget as part of the integrated project team.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: As part of the project team, is there any allocation, Mr Murray, over the next four years of the \$12 billion?

JOSH MURRAY: Ms Ward, perhaps just further to your questions, while I can't give anything around the percentages for the different parts of the project, if we look at the different scenarios that might emerge over the forwards, we could spend between 1.5 to 2.2 billion from the \$12 billion fund in the forwards, if that assists your inquiries.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: So it's only in the forwards. There's no allocation in the next four years, though.

JOSH MURRAY: The money is available to us in the forwards. It hasn't been profiled yet. It's yet to go through final business case, and then it would go back to ERC, in terms of future procurements. But, in terms of profiling and the potential to spend once we're underway, that would be the window that I could give you for spend in the four years.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: As we sit here today, there is no breakdown of the \$12 billion between the facility and associated works and the cost to build the fleet. That's correct?

JOSH MURRAY: That's being developed at the moment so that it forms part of all of our next steps around this project.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Understanding that, but has it been allocated in the next four years between either of those?

JOSH MURRAY: No. Transport will profile the funding when we are through the next stage, which is the final business case, and that goes to Government.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Will it be announced in the midyear review?

JOSH MURRAY: I wouldn't be able to confirm that at this stage, until we complete and announce the final business case.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: So when will a passenger be on a new Tangara train?

JOSH MURRAY: I'd refer you back to the Minister's answers from this morning, where he gave the anticipated time frames that we'd be looking at. But, in effect, it is the early 2030s when we would be starting with the first of the Tangara replacement fleets, bearing in mind that this project will continue for multiple fleets after that.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: What confidence does Transport have that it can deliver the fleet for \$5 billion, as the Premier had said?

JOSH MURRAY: We are doing the work on the final business case, which will set out Transport's approach and confidence to deliver this project within the resources the Government has given us.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: What is the structure proposed for the new Tangara fleet? Is it one whole contract of \$12 billion? Or is there a breakdown proposed?

JOSH MURRAY: I indicated earlier that that \$12 billion will cover a number of elements of this procurement, but that will be detailed in the final business case, which is yet to go to Government.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: To be fair, *Browne v Dunn*, Mr Murray—the \$12 billion is just a pipedream, isn't it? This is a ghost train. There is no allocation. There is no plan. It's just \$12 billion sitting out there somewhere of a ghost train that's going to turn up to platform 9¾ in Harry Potter, isn't it?

UNCORRECTED

JOSH MURRAY: I reject that, Ms Ward. This has been a signature Government commitment, and we have dedicated significant resources towards it. We've engaged with industry. We have site selection down to the two final sites from a much wider longlist that was available. We have mobilised across all areas of Transport, and we are entering into the procurement on target for this project, as was set out earlier.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: What you've done is—you've got less than \$200 million. You've done a big announcement, but there is no allocation. There is no plan. There is no procurement plan. There's no contract specificity. The contract is not specific. As I understand it, there is not a train or a timeline for a train to turn up for a passenger to be on.

JOSH MURRAY: No, that is incorrect. We have money now that we are spending on actual activities that bring us closer to procurement. We have the funding put aside by Treasury to spend once those activities begin, within this current budget period.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: You say the money has been put aside by Treasury. How much money could they get out the door tomorrow?

JOSH MURRAY: How much could we spend of the \$12 billion tomorrow? We don't have a final business case approved, and we don't have procurement approved. We're spending the money that we do have, which is almost \$200 million.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: That is not part of the \$12 billion that was announced. There was an announcement of \$12 billion available for new fleet trains, none of which is available right now. That's correct, isn't it?

JOSH MURRAY: It is available within the four-year forwards. Transport will re-profile and cashflow as it needs to, once we are underway with the procurement.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Let's say the whole project is ready tomorrow—the business case is done, allocation is done, you have decided on a site, designed the train, got a contract and you're good to go—could you spend all of the \$12 billion?

JOSH MURRAY: Well, no. That is a hypothetical, for starters. In general, provision of a contract to deliver a product like a train would be done on a packaging strategy, where we would pay for the product over time. We wouldn't spend it all in the first time. It would also depend on the production rate of those trains, which will be part of the scenarios that go into the procurement. Then we would pay alongside an availability regime for the provider producing the trains.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Assuming there's a business case, and assuming that you don't have a design for the train and you don't have money allocated other than the separate fund, there is no \$12 billion to spend. That is right, isn't it?

JOSH MURRAY: I have already said that we would anticipate, from the \$12 billion, in the four-year forwards, spending between 1.5 and 2.2, depending on the scale of the scenario that we go into for that procurement. But all of those measures are yet to go to market and yet to be considered. We are yet to receive bids from the industries that are going to be part of this program. We are yet to purchase, or convert the land that we already have. We are underway with the program with the money that has been available over recent years and in the current budget to develop the procurement and to get to market and to assign a provider.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: So we're sitting on a big cruise ship; we just don't know where we're going?

JOSH MURRAY: The Government has been very clear in its investment and has put aside this unprecedented level of funding for Transport to mobilise. That is what we are responding with.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: That is my concern. It is an unprecedented amount for building trains, without any plan and without anything specific to say what kind of train, where the breakdown is, what is allocated and who will be doing what and when. We're going to leave it to the market, see how it goes and see what people feel like spending. We don't have a date for a passenger to be on any of these trains. It is just a big, empty announcement, isn't it?

JOSH MURRAY: That is not the case. The plan, as has been detailed to industry—

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Break it down for me. Tell me how the \$12 billion is being spent.

JOSH MURRAY: The program will involve either land acquisition or land conversion, the construction of a specialist manufacturing facility, the alignment of sub-trades and a corresponding supply chain that can

UNCORRECTED

provide all of the inputs, the training that is currently underway of a workforce through the Tangara Life Extension Program, many of whom will be available in time—

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: I'm not talking about the life extension. I'm talking about the new fleet.

JOSH MURRAY: They are related to the Future Fleet Program, because the reason for that Hunter Valley investment is to ensure the growth of traineeships, skills and train building resources in the Hunter Valley in time for the completion of the factory, by which time rolling stock manufacturers will have been able to provide a design, a timeline and a production rate for the new trains, which will be on the tracks, as was said earlier, in the early 2030s.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: The rebranding of the old trains is changing the door colour from yellow to orange and putting a new brain in it, some more cameras and other bits and pieces.

JOSH MURRAY: That is a significant \$440 million upgrade. Replacing the central nervous system of the Tangara is incredibly fundamental to safety and reliability.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: That is not a brand-new train delivered.

JOSH MURRAY: No, but it is the work that the workforce is training on in the Hunter Valley so that they are available to be employed in the new factory.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Which is lovely for the workforce but not for a passenger trying to get a brand-new train, as promised by the Premier. That is the case, isn't it?

JOSH MURRAY: Trains are not available to purchase for tomorrow. You have heard that from Sydney Metro earlier today. We have decided to put together a plan to build trains here. This is what this investment is going towards.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Will the shells of the trains be manufactured in New South Wales or shipped in from overseas?

JOSH MURRAY: I can't give you details. The design of the train has not been done and the proponents who will be part of that supply chain have not been identified. All of those elements are being worked through as part of the procurement.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Would the contract envisage the ability for a supplier to manufacture internationally and then ship in components?

JOSH MURRAY: The Government has been clear that the minimum standard for the train is 50 per cent local manufacture. We are working from that initial commitment basis, and we will go to market to determine the viability of all levels of local content.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Is that 50 per cent a target or is it a minimum mandatory requirement?

JOSH MURRAY: I'd refer you back to the commitment at the time, but I believe it is a minimum 50 per cent local content.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Can I ask you to take that on notice and check it?

JOSH MURRAY: Yes. We'll check it against the commitment. I'll clarify: It is not a target; it is minimum 50 per cent local content.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: So then the shell can't be shipped in from overseas?

JOSH MURRAY: Again, I'm not going to pre-determine the design of the train at this stage. They are elements that will be part of the procurement.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Given that raw materials could be shipped in—so the shell, the seats and metal poles—could the contract include the ability for a supplier to manufacture internationally and then ship in components that are then put together here?

JOSH MURRAY: I'll go back to my earlier answer. We will go to the market. We will assess local content as a significant priority of this project—as the underwriting priority of this project—and we will be able to assess responses from industry based around that. We have had significant dealings with interstate jurisdictions and with the Federal Government around their manufacturing incentives. All of these we'd be looking to bring to bear on the next round of procurement.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Does local manufacturing in this project include manufacturing or input from Queensland, Victoria or New Zealand?

UNCORRECTED

JOSH MURRAY: Again, I don't have any bids in front of me to assess. We will work with the supply chain to determine what is available. We will look to—at this early stage—incentivise all levels of local content, based on the experience of Queensland through the QTMP program, and Victoria's train build. They have already provided us with significant examples of local content and local industry incentives that have worked as part of those programs. We would want to be part of those. We will be able to assess those as part of the program.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Can I go back to the Zero Emission Buses program? There is \$6.5 billion in zero-emissions buses over, I think you said, now 20 years. The Minister confirmed—

JOSH MURRAY: Mr Collins will be able to assist.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Can I just get, for the 6.5 over—

HOWARD COLLINS: Ten years.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: It is 10?

HOWARD COLLINS: Correct.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: My understanding is that the Minister said 20 this morning.

JOSH MURRAY: He was referring to the net-zero commitments about having all buses converted to electric in New South Wales, which is the 2047 number.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: That is quite a different program to the Zero Emissions Buses program?

HOWARD COLLINS: The first phase that was announced was a \$6.5 billion investment over 10 years for Greater Sydney. Obviously there is a proposal and a target to achieve further investment in outer metropolitan and regional New South Wales.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: What is the breakdown of that \$6.5 billion over 10 years? What is the breakdown of funding between bus investment and depot investment?

HOWARD COLLINS: The plan is to convert 17 existing depots and five new sites, which often requires procurement of land. This includes Macquarie Park, which is being constructed now. Buses cost roughly between \$600,000 and \$900,000 each. We're trying to achieve a total number of 1,700.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Of the 6.5, what is the breakdown of the funding between bus investment and depot investment?

HOWARD COLLINS: I can provide some information on that in general terms. Obviously, when you're forward thinking about future funds of this nature over 10 years—but a significant proportion of that is land procurement, depot conversion and then bus.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: I understand there are different components but, as we sit here today, what is your understanding of the breakdown of the funding of the 6.5 between buses and depots?

HOWARD COLLINS: I'll take the details on notice, to be accurately factual. I'm sure with a calculator you can work out what 1,700 buses costing about 750 are. Bus depot land varies, but we're certainly talking of hundreds of millions of dollars needed.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: I think you overrate my calculator abilities, Mr Collins, but thank you. I think that Treasury and Transport are much better placed to do it. If you would take that on notice, I would be appreciative.

HOWARD COLLINS: We will take the detail on notice.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: How many buses are required to be purchased? You said 1,700.

HOWARD COLLINS: Approximately 1,700 vehicles for this first phase. Then in Greater Sydney, I believe it's 3,500 in total.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Of those, will all buses have 50 per cent local content?

HOWARD COLLINS: The objective is to again attain at least 50 per cent local content, some of which are vehicles. The majority of vehicles we purchase do have that already in terms of 50 per cent local content, but what this does is gives the industry greater certainty. With a target of approximately 300 buses a year, you can see how industry—which are considering this—would then consider establishing local content manufacturing.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: How many bus depots are there in Greater Sydney that would require upgrading for electric buses?

UNCORRECTED

HOWARD COLLINS: We've said the total is 17, two of which have been fully converted already and one of which is locally to yourselves at Brookvale.

Ms ABIGAIL BOYD: Good afternoon to all of you. I've got some questions for Sydney Trains. I'm interested in the trend of engaging external contractors to carry out infrastructure and maintenance work, and what the expenses are looking like over time. Are we using external contractors for that kind of work more or less, at the moment?

MATT LONGLAND: Thank you for the question and good afternoon. We have grown our annual works program, so the significant investment we're putting into asset reliability is flowing through to the works being delivered on track. I will, if you're comfortable, take that on notice in terms of the breakdown year on year around contractor usage. Our preference is to use our own staff. We've committed to that, and that's what we do. This is about peaks and troughs, particularly in the major works we deliver on weekends. We often have more than 200 project sites on one weekend, so lots and lots of activity in a very compressed period of time. That tends to be the period that we use contract labour for a number of the specialist skills, supplemented by our own teams.

Ms ABIGAIL BOYD: In getting more of our own capacity, there's been a lot of work done in terms of new apprentices. I understand that the 1,000 additional public sector apprentices and trainees target was hit earlier this year. My understanding is that the current funding and the budget is only covering the costs of those ongoing apprentices. Is there any incentives or additional funding in the budget for additional apprentices, particularly within the Sydney Trains side of things?

MATT LONGLAND: Absolutely. We've drawn down, I think, for two years on the government program for the 1,000 additional apprentices, and that's been most welcome. This year we had 96 new apprentices, our largest ever intake of apprentices across a number of different trades. I think 260 apprentices are currently at various stages of their trade training in Sydney Trains. Our intention is to continue the growth of apprentices. That's the pipeline that will really support our future needs across our rail industry. The mix of what we're funding internally and what we can draw down from other government programs—we're keen to offset our investment across government if we're able to. My understanding is that's happened for the last two years. I'm not sure about any future programs around investment. That would probably be something that would sit in the portfolio around training rather than in Transport.

Ms ABIGAIL BOYD: The intention, though, is to keep growing. Hopefully there'll be funding in the budget to help with that.

MATT LONGLAND: Absolutely. It's a critical investment to grow the capability and the capacity of our own team.

Ms ABIGAIL BOYD: If I could come to you, Secretary, I'm interested in facial recognition and access to CCTV footage. The police told me in the estimates session the other day that they do have access to live CCTV feeds from Transport on occasion. Do you know when they have access to that live footage whether they've also got access to facial recognition technology and other types of technologies that are attached to that for Transport?

JOSH MURRAY: I'd have to take the exact detail of the facial recognition side on notice. We have around 13,000 cameras on the Sydney Trains network. All of our buses through our private operators are also equipped with CCTV. We have the Transport Management Centre, which runs the road network, which is also equipped with hundreds of cameras that monitor the network in real time. We don't run facial recognition over those feeds as part of our Transport requirements, but we do have interfaces with the police where they do have access to some of those camera feeds depending on operational requirements. I'll take on notice the exact question about whether those cameras are appropriate or able to be used in that way and if that has been done.

Ms ABIGAIL BOYD: I'll ask some more on supplementary questions as well. There was a tender posted—and you may not have this to hand—WS4878301930, in relation to facial recognition. I think that was put out for tender in September 2025. Can you tell me who won that tender?

JOSH MURRAY: I'd have to take that on notice.

Ms ABIGAIL BOYD: That'd be useful. The rest of those I can ask on supplementary. One of the issues I ask about at every estimates is in relation to the accessibility of the transport system. Last time I asked, it was looking like we were getting two fully accessible stations a year, so I calculated it would be another 46 years until all New South Wales train stations were fully accessible. Have we made any more progress since I last asked these questions?

JOSH MURRAY: We have been anticipating that you would be here. Ms Rubalcaba would have been disappointed if she didn't get the opportunity to discuss the latest.

UNCORRECTED

RAQUEL RUBALCABA: I'll give you the latest stats, and I'll give you the visibility of what we're also developing so you can see where we're heading. Since we were last here, we have 257 stations that are independently accessible out of 354. You're correct; there are another two. We currently have another station that is largely complete that will be open in the next week or two, so I'm not going to anticipate that.

Ms ABIGAIL BOYD: Because the number of stations has gone up from last time from 353 to 354. Presumably that new station was fully accessible, so we've got one new one and one old one that's been upgraded?

RAQUEL RUBALCABA: No. The stations that have been completed in this period are Chester Hill and Macquarie Fields stations.

Ms ABIGAIL BOYD: I don't know what that discrepancy is then between the 353 and the 354.

RAQUEL RUBALCABA: We also are constructing Lewisham. We have three other stations that are currently in procurement that will be in construction by the end of the year: Cockle Creek, Carramar and Yennora.

Ms ABIGAIL BOYD: We're still going two a year, which is better than nothing, but it still means that we're going to be another 46 years.

RAQUEL RUBALCABA: What I can tell you, though, is we have 19 stations in design and development. That means that we're trying to become shovel ready. As soon as the funding is available, we will get going.

Ms ABIGAIL BOYD: Was there anything in this year's budget to hasten the development of that timeline, to make it so that we don't have to wait 46 years?

JOSH MURRAY: Not in the budget. Transport has a significant program underway, which does impact the Safe and Accessible Transport locations, which is about speeding up the path to both procurement and delivery by shortening a number of periods, or running them at the same time as each other, so that we do not have a very linear delivery and we have a more concentrated delivery. Ms Rubalcaba's team is leading on that initiative.

Ms ABIGAIL BOYD: Ms Timbs, can I ask you a couple of things on rideshare? Firstly, another one of the things that I keep going on about is disability discrimination in the rideshare space. Has there been anything additional—I'm just looking at last month. Uber was accused of imposing a discriminatory disability tax, hiking up the price of its ride option designed for people with disability by an additional \$5. That sounds pretty discriminatory as well. What is the latest? What are you doing to crack down on this?

KATE TIMBS: Thank you for the question. Our focus on vulnerable passengers is one of our key priorities in the point to point commission. I am aware of that charge that Uber had gone out and communicated. I understand that they're no longer putting that in place.

Ms ABIGAIL BOYD: Good. I can't believe they ever thought that was a good idea.

KATE TIMBS: There was some strong advocate representation to them and that was not proceeded with.

Ms ABIGAIL BOYD: Has the point to point commission ever commenced proceedings against a rideshare company for something disability related?

KATE TIMBS: I'd have to take the question on notice if it was specific to disability related, but we often issue penalties for assistance animal refusals as well as starting the meter if a wheelchair has not been secured. Some of those are taxi related, but I'd have to take on notice the specifics for rideshare breakdowns for those penalties.

Ms ABIGAIL BOYD: More than one in four women have experienced inappropriate conduct by rideshare and taxi drivers, including being asked sexual questions. In response to a bit of media around that, earlier this year the Government announced new guidelines to be developed. Have they been developed and are they sufficient to address this issue?

KATE TIMBS: I'm quite proud of the work that the commission has been doing in relation to women's safety. In March this year, the previous commissioner did launch the women's safety guidelines and these apply to the whole of point to point industry, not just rideshare. These actually set really clear guidance on driver behaviour, investigation processes and complaint handling, and we feel that having those as part of their safety management system really lets them know that this is our regulatory expectation for what is required for how to treat women during a point to point transport trip.

UNCORRECTED

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: Ms Timbs, I've got a couple of questions around taxis as well. Has the commission become aware of concerns around smaller networks using unlocked tablets as part of their operation and, if you have become aware of those concerns, what steps have you taken around that?

KATE TIMBS: Thank you for the question, firstly. Fare-related compliance is again one of our focus areas. We are seeing reports of soft meters being introduced. We have received representation from the NSW Taxi Council and others in the industry around meter standards. Since the receipt of that, we have commenced a research piece to have a look at what that technology can do, and the proposals from the taxi industry did look to introduce a consistent standard. It actually only focused on Sydney Metro. Our research piece will look statewide to make sure that whatever standard we introduce can apply consistently to the whole industry.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: When do you think that review would be completed?

KATE TIMBS: I don't have an end date for that. We're just going through the procurement process now for awarding a provider to undertake the research.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: Mr Murray, the enterprise security, crisis and emergency management function—it's a mouthful—may be going through a restructure or a review, I have been informed. Have I been informed correctly?

JOSH MURRAY: No, that is some errant misreporting and some confusion perhaps within the branch that we have sought to address over the last week. It was in fact raised by Ms Ward at the previous estimates hearing and has also been put on the *Notice Paper*. We are looking to make sure that all the roles in the ESCEM branch are correctly lined up in the new structure with a whole of Transport, whole of New South Wales approach. But there were some communications that Mr Collins has, in fact, clarified over the last week just to assure staff that there is not a broader restructure.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: I'll leave that one there if it's been dealt with.

JOSH MURRAY: I could come back to your earlier question just quickly on the Powerhouse traffic modelling and transport modelling that you asked about. As part of the State significant development, Infrastructure NSW conducted the transport options modelling for the Powerhouse and the future of that precinct. They did a sensitivity analysis based on exactly what you asked, which was what if all of these venues emptied out or took in their crowds all at the same time, and they found that the capacity in the area, as well as the growth plans for Parramatta, were more than enough to satisfy that demand. In fact, Parramatta itself has access to the T1, T2, T5, Blue Mountains line, the TrainLink western line, ferry, bus, T-Way and light rail, so the capacity for Parramatta is many and varied and we believe we have more than enough for the Powerhouse.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: Did any of that work look at school group buses, et cetera? Obviously, this is a venue that would attract those—buses often, when on excursions, hang around and wait. Given that there are no real parking facilities at this venue—

JOSH MURRAY: My understanding is that the most sensitive of the modelling was targeted at weekends because that would be where the largest patronage of all of those venues that you referenced earlier would likely be and even on that capacity, with 18 trains an hour going through Parramatta station, that is less transport optionality than would happen on a normal weekday. If school groups were going through on a weekday, they would actually have more capacity.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: Is there going to be a specific place for buses to pull up and wait while these excursions go on?

HOWARD COLLINS: Thanks for the question, Mr Banasiak. Prior to the opening of any big venue, like the fish markets and the Powerhouse Museum, our operational planning team sits down and we have identified locations and areas where, as you say, school buses often have to wait to pick up their school trips. We've looked at a number of locations. It is pretty tight in Parramatta, as you know. It's quite a congested area. But we believe most of these school groups will be arriving after the venue opens—around about nine, 10 o'clock—and we're working with Powerhouse Museum in terms of staggering those times. We also would encourage groups to use other forms of public transport—for example, tram and trains as well as dedicated school buses—but that's not always possible, as we know.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: I don't know whether you've ever tried to wrangle 30 kids on a train. I have.

HOWARD COLLINS: Being an ex-school teacher, you'd know better than most.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: That's why I may have grey hair.

UNCORRECTED

JOSH MURRAY: In answer to your question, we have worked closely with the Powerhouse on their visit schedules and how they will manage road traffic, like bus and point to point.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: Going back to a question I asked you, Ms Hawyes, in the March estimates, it was around the \$630,000 public library/safe transport initiative. I think it was initially in the budget as a writing and literature strategy, but then you came back and said, "No, it's more about safe infrastructure for women and girls around libraries."

MELANIE HAWYES: Yes, I recall.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: What has that actually gone towards? Have you got a breakdown of what that has delivered?

MELANIE HAWYES: Not with me. I can endeavour to take that on notice. I don't have that with me. But I do remember our discussion.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: Just a breakdown in terms of works it may have gone towards. When we've travelled around going to school groups and stuff with the Legislative Council, it's been a big feature that the kids have wanted more access to libraries later at night as a productive place to hang out rather than the skate park.

MELANIE HAWYES: Yes, and I'm aware, and you probably are as well, that the library's been opening later for HSC-aged kids to go in and study after hours. That is part of what they've been doing.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: This feedback has come from a lot of regional kids about their own local libraries as well. Was that program designed to go across the regions?

MELANIE HAWYES: I'd prefer to answer that one on notice so that I get the info from the library and can give that in writing to you.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: No dramas. Maybe to you, Mr Collins—but, Mr Murray, you might have a better idea—just around this announcement around the bus boom for Western Sydney, particularly around Camden, Narellan, Oran Park. Can you give us any indication about how many additional bus services have been provided to the Camden LGA since—

HOWARD COLLINS: Thank you for the question. For the area, obviously we have been doing a number of uplifts or new services in the Macarthur region and also Penrith. I haven't got any details of Camden itself. I think Ms Trudi Mares may have some further information. But obviously we are aware of trying to connect new and existing communities with, for example, rail services. We started that process in July, and more to come.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: Ms Mares?

TRUDI MARES: Thank you—yes, a couple of updates. You mentioned a new service from Menangle to Macarthur. That's correct. That was put in place in July along with the new Western Sydney bus services for the new airport. They go through Oran Park. So it's a brand new service for Oran Park that has not previously had a bus service. There are two additional services coming to outer south-west in the next month, but probably one in particular for the Camden LGA is Wilton to Campbelltown via the Hume. It'll be an express service straight up the Hume. While it's not directly through Camden or Menangle city centres, they will have access to that express up to Campbelltown.

The CHAIR: I understand that the department is investigating Walsh Bay as a potential ferry stop, following a parliamentary petition for that. I'm just wondering whether that investigation is complete and if there's any findings as to the potential.

HOWARD COLLINS: Thank you for the question. Yes, Maritime are working on a plan to put in the facilities. It won't be fully disability compliant initially, but we believe that we can do some work now which will allow for the future public use of Walsh Bay, which obviously was withdrawn many years ago, but we have been doing some planning work on request from the Government to reinstate that wharf.

The CHAIR: Any time frame, Mr Collins?

HOWARD COLLINS: I'm hoping by the end of the year we'll have the work completed.

The CHAIR: Good. Thank you.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Ms Drover, I think that before the lunch break we were talking about toll reform. I'm just wondering if you or the department had an opportunity to get a response on the M2/M7 widening and the confirmation that the cost is around \$850 million.

UNCORRECTED

CAMILLA DROVER: Yes, at the moment \$850 million is the figure that we've been working on, but we are doing the final business case for that project, so that final business case will confirm that estimate. So it's an early estimate at this stage.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Thank you. I was going to ask that about the business case. When is that expected to be completed?

CAMILLA DROVER: We're on track to present that to government later this year.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: We have previously discussed Transport providing electorate mapping using postcode data for toll reform options. Does Transport have in its possession modelling via postcode for the anticipated benefits or worse-off drivers under the new toll deal?

CAMILLA DROVER: No. What we do provide on a regular basis is toll relief by postcode and by suburb. That is reported weekly. But, no, the direct deal is not shown by LGA, electorate et cetera.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: There was a request, as I understand it, for modelling to be done by electorate that the Minister did not deny. Are you saying that that does not exist?

CAMILLA DROVER: I'm only aware of the toll relief that's reported on a regular basis by postcode and LGA.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: And LGA? So that was never—despite the request from the Minister's office, which has been document in that document produced to the House—that wasn't provided. Is that what you're saying—or Mr Murray?

CAMILLA DROVER: Not in my experience, but I'm happy to take that on notice.

JOSH MURRAY: From memory, from the discussions last time, that was a request that was done. As we noted in here, we have available data and we can cut that data in many ways, which was a request that we complied with at the time.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: There was a request for electric mapping, because we've seen that document. That was provided to the Minister. That's correct, isn't it?

JOSH MURRAY: I believe that's what was contained in that recent SO 52.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: So Transport would have that on file. Can you provide those figures to the Committee?

JOSH MURRAY: Could you just repeat the figures that you would like?

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Yes, that is the anticipated benefits—drivers who are better or worse off. That was the modelling that was done, which the SO 52 documents show. Can you produce that to the Committee?

JOSH MURRAY: I think, as Ms Drover has just said, since the direct deal has been completed, those more geographic benefits are not done as part of the process, but I'd refer to Ms Drover.

CAMILLA DROVER: In recent times, I'm not aware of that type of analysis being requested or produced. The only information I'm across is that we do, weekly, report the toll relief—the weekly toll cap—and what has been paid out, by suburb and LGA.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: I understand that, but a document was produced, Mr Murray, under the Standing Order 52, which shows a request from the Minister's office to model traffic impacts of the toll deal, the direct deal, by electorate. Are you able to produce to this Committee that advice provided by the department to the Minister on notice? And, Ms Boyd, it can't be commercial in confidence, because the deal is done.

JOSH MURRAY: I'd take it on notice, Ms Boyd, because the documents that were provided at the time were tabled in the House, relating to that request to cut data in a specific way. I'm not aware of any other related data points that were provided.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: I'm not asking for other data points, and I'm not asking about what was produced in the House. I'm asking about budget estimates and this Committee. Will you produce that document to this Committee? The deal is done. There's nothing to hide.

JOSH MURRAY: Which document do you want us to produce?

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: The electorate-based modelling of what motorists will be better and worse off, by electorate, that was requested by the Minister's office and produced.

UNCORRECTED

JOSH MURRAY: I'll take it on notice. If it's already been produced, I would refer back to that return.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Will you produce it to this Committee, now the deal is done?

JOSH MURRAY: Again I'd have to seek advice on what it's up to.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: What would you have to seek advice on?

JOSH MURRAY: I'm not sure under which return it was provided in the earlier Standing Order 52. It may have been privileged. I'd have to take advice on that. I'm happy to take it on notice. The document was discussed at the time, but I'll take it on notice as to what the current status is.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Given that, to be fair, the Government shouldn't have anything to hide on this. Some motorists are going to be worse off, some are going to be better off under this direct deal. That's just a fact.

CAMILLA DROVER: It is appropriate we take that on notice. Because I'm not across it, it suggests that it may have been a little while ago. It may actually not reflect the direct deal that has ultimately been agreed, and therefore it may have been iterative and no longer current, so I think that is appropriate that we take that on notice.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: I understand that. It might have been part of the process of the direct deal—help us understand by postcode who's going to be worse and better off under this. But can I ask, for this Committee's sake, in relation to budget expenditure, what I'm after is how much each person is expected to pay, by postcode. More or less?

JOSH MURRAY: Again, Ms Ward, happy to take that on notice and respond, officially noting that those documents were already provided to the House.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: I understand that, but that's entirely separate from this Committee. I'm asking if Transport will produce it to this Committee.

JOSH MURRAY: I'll take that on notice.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Thank you. What modelling is being conducted on the final toll reform deal and its impact on overall traffic volumes?

CAMILLA DROVER: What we've done is look at the impact per asset and traffic volumes on each individual asset. Therefore, across—

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Each motorway, do you mean?

CAMILLA DROVER: Each toll motorway asset. That informed, obviously, the commercial arrangements and the compensation et cetera.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Are you able to produce that modelling?

CAMILLA DROVER: No, that's commercial in confidence.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Where is more traffic anticipated to occur?

CAMILLA DROVER: It depends which asset. Obviously, if there's a significant price reduction, we're expecting that more traffic would be attracted to that route.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: It follows. That's reasonable, if it's cheaper and reduced on that one.

CAMILLA DROVER: On the Cross City Tunnel, for example—particularly for a motorcycle who's getting a 20 per cent reduction and also a half-price trip—we'd expect to see more motorcycles on that route.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Are you able to produce that to the Committee? That's a good story and a good thing.

CAMILLA DROVER: I'll need to take that on notice, what can be provided.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Is Transport for NSW aware of where motorists could face more traffic as a result of the deal?

CAMILLA DROVER: Sorry, can you repeat that?

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Is Transport aware of where their motorists could face more traffic? The deal has been done. Some motorways are cheaper; some have no change. Has there been modelling done to indicate what areas could face more traffic as a result?

UNCORRECTED

CAMILLA DROVER: There's always underlying population growth, and we expect that the overall volumes of traffic across the motorway will increase year on year, subject to events like pandemics et cetera. The direct deal is based on forecasting.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Is Transport for NSW aware, as a result of the deal, of where motorists could face more traffic?

CAMILLA DROVER: Yes, that was part of the consideration of the direct deal. For example, one of the rationales for the M7 and M2 further widening is that's the last part of what is a very busy corridor in Sydney that hasn't been widened. With the expected price reduction, it makes sense to complete that widening and deliver that additional capacity for Western Sydney.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Of course. More people are going to use it. What's the anticipated impact of Victoria Road traffic volumes as a result of the introduction of two-way tolling on the Harbour Bridge?

CAMILLA DROVER: When the business case and the development of Western Harbour Tunnel was done, and also Beaches Link and the Warringah Freeway Upgrade, that was definitely looked at because—

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: May it rest in peace, beaches harbour tunnel.

CAMILLA DROVER: The EIS for the Western Harbour Tunnel did assume two-way tolling on that corridor.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: As one of the options?

CAMILLA DROVER: We would expect that there may be some diversion away from the crossings. That, of course, depends on the level of tolling on opening and the escalation rate applied et cetera. Through the toll reform, we have lowered the escalation rate on the Sydney Harbour crossings—all of them.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: In relation to the anticipated impact to Victoria Road, does Transport expect more traffic or less traffic?

CAMILLA DROVER: On Victoria Road? We have looked at that. There's always a period of time after you open a motorway or where you change tolling arrangements at the motorway that traffic needs to settle and reach a steady state. We'll be monitoring that very closely with the Traffic Management Centre. That corridor is also currently the subject of review arising from the final stage of WestConnex opening, the Rozelle interchange. That will definitely be a consideration as we head towards the opening of Western Harbour Tunnel, which is the catalyst for the other changes across the other Sydney Harbour crossings, the Sydney Harbour Bridge and the Sydney Harbour Tunnel.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Is it anticipated that there'll be more traffic on Victoria Road as a result of the introduction of the two-way tolling on the Harbour Bridge?

CAMILLA DROVER: We are expecting some diversion, particularly in the early years, but we'll be monitoring that closely—just remembering that we are dealing with a dynamic network, and the analysis is a forecast based on assumptions that have been adopted today.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Could you stay for the moment? I might come back to you with some more questions. Mr Murray, Ms Drover is presently the acting CEO of NSW Motorways. Is that correct?

JOSH MURRAY: That's correct.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: How long will she be the acting CEO? I don't mean any pejorative term at all; in fact, it's a compliment. But how long is it anticipated she will be the acting CEO?

JOSH MURRAY: Again, with all respect to Ms Drover in the room, at the end of the table, we haven't conducted or begun any recruitment activity yet because the focus has been on the direct deal, and we remain in that focus at the moment.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: When will a full-time CEO for NSW Motorways be appointed? Given the direct deal has been delivered, and understanding there is further work to be done on that, when do you anticipate a full-time CEO will be appointed? That may well include Ms Drover.

JOSH MURRAY: Ms Drover and I will continue to discuss that based on the current workload and demands of the organisation, bearing in mind it's a fledgling organisation and has just hit the milestone that it was set up to first achieve. But there are still other elements in play around customer advocacy and the like which are in full focus.

UNCORRECTED

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: I'll get to that in a moment. You're anticipating my next question. Is your answer, to be fair, that as we sit here today there isn't an anticipated timeline for a full-time CEO to be appointed?

JOSH MURRAY: That's correct. There is no activity in the recruitment space. Transport, to be fair, is also recruiting in a couple of other key roles. At the moment that's under focus, and then we will move to a discussion around the appropriate timing for NSW Motorways.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: So just save the recruitment money and get on with focusing on the deal. I mean that as a compliment. What's the total headcount of NSW Motorways at the moment?

JOSH MURRAY: Ms Drover?

CAMILLA DROVER: As at 30 June this year we had 71.5 FTE.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Let's get to the Customer Advocate then. Since being appointed to that position in January 2026, what has the toll Customer Advocate achieved?

CAMILLA DROVER: There's a whole raft of activities they have done. We have a Customer Advocate and a very small team that supports the Customer Advocate. They have established two reference groups. One is with the community and the other is an industry reference group. There have been many meetings of those customer reference groups. They have heard from those customer groups. That has informed some of the policy that we have developed and delivered—for example, the changes to the toll compliance processes that we went live with at the end of July. We've also looked at the customer complaints processes. They are multi and varied and through many different channels. She has done a review of that, looking to streamline and optimise those. Certainly, all of our communication activities, the Customer Advocate reviews that from a customer perspective. The other thing she has done is some research, particularly in two fields. One is tolled motorways more generally and the other was targeted focus on toll relief.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Thank you. If there's anything you want to add on notice on that role, please feel free to do so.

CAMILLA DROVER: Yes, we can provide a comprehensive summary of that.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: What SES band is the Customer Advocate?

CAMILLA DROVER: It's a band 1 position—senior service band 1.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Can I ask, if you want to take it on notice, how much money in dollar terms the Customer Advocate has saved motorists.

CAMILLA DROVER: I'm happy to take that on notice and see how we would characterise those savings. She certainly has informed the removal of admin fees, which came off in July this year.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: I understand.

CAMILLA DROVER: So that's providing benefits.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: If you could take that on notice, that would be great.

CAMILLA DROVER: Yes.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: I'm trying to fly through these questions. On how many occasions has the Customer Advocate met with the Minister for Roads or the Minister for Transport? You can take that on notice as well, if you'd like.

CAMILLA DROVER: I think she has met with the Minister on at least one occasion.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Roads or Transport?

CAMILLA DROVER: It was the transport Minister. Tolling comes under the Minister for Transport.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Yes, I'm aware. So just the once?

CAMILLA DROVER: I will confirm that, but my understanding is that it's just the once.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Did the Customer Advocate have access to the direct deal process?

CAMILLA DROVER: No. Given the confidentiality requirements, it was a direct deal. The Customer Advocate sat outside that and wasn't bound by those confidentiality provisions.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Could you take on notice how many customers, apart from the reference group, have provided feedback to the Customer Advocate since January 2026?

UNCORRECTED

CAMILLA DROVER: I'm happy to take that on notice. I don't have that at hand.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: I'm also grateful if you could take on notice how many pieces of correspondence the Customer Advocate has responded to since her appointment.

CAMILLA DROVER: Yes, I'm happy to do that.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Can I ask about Woollahra train station? Is that you, Mr Longland?

JOSH MURRAY: I'm happy to take that, Ms Ward.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: It has been over a year since the Government announced the Woollahra station project. Is the business case complete for that?

JOSH MURRAY: The business case is ongoing alongside the process of an early contractor engagement procurement, and we are happy with the progress on that project.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: When will the business case be released for the project?

RAQUEL RUBALCABA: The business case will be presented to Government by the end of the year.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Do you have an anticipated month?

RAQUEL RUBALCABA: We are targeting November.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: How much does Transport estimate the project will cost?

JOSH MURRAY: The current publicly announced cost for the station has been at \$150 million to \$200 million, but that is pre business case and pre the geotechnical and other reports that have been done over the recent six months, so I can't comment further on those numbers just at this stage.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Have those geotech reports been done?

JOSH MURRAY: Yes, they have.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Are there more geotech reports to be carried out?

JOSH MURRAY: There will be when the ECI process goes into its next phase, but Transport conducted the initial stage of assessment of the site quality and rock formations et cetera, which were very positive.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: And they were full geotech reports?

JOSH MURRAY: They were geotech enough to inform the next stage of procurement to put it into ECI, so they were the draft, if you like, to go and get site condition and inform the next steps, but obviously a winning contractor would then need to take on their own level of due diligence around geotech as they go into design and construct.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: In the budget, \$30 million has been allocated. I get that it's an estimated cost at this point. You've been clear about that, so I appreciate that. What will the \$30 million be spent on? Is that the preliminary works?

JOSH MURRAY: Yes, that's the requirement that we have in Transport to both do that early testing and move it into the ECI project, which involves us doing a large amount of work alongside industry specialists, and then move it into the first round of procurement that gives us the money for this financial year.

The CHAIR: Mr Barakat, I just wanted to ask you some questions about the list of approved live music and performance venues to benefit from the reduced licensing fees and extra trading hours and just ask about the application of that incentive to big clubs like Canterbury League Club, for example. This is an incentive where if they schedule or program live music beyond a particular time, they get the 80 per cent reduction in their liquor license and another application fee.

TAREK BARAKAT: They get an 80 per cent reduction in annual liquor license fees, which includes the base fees and trading hours risk loading, and an 80 per cent reduction in permanent extended trading application fees if they meet the criteria required.

The CHAIR: Does that apply for clubs that were already meeting the criteria, like Canterbury League Club, who, by the way, made \$84 million in pokies revenue and made a profit at the end of last financial year of \$5.5 million? Wouldn't they have had some music anyway?

TAREK BARAKAT: Quite possibly. I don't know if Canterbury has applied. The list of live music venues claiming the incentives is published on our website.

UNCORRECTED

The CHAIR: They're on the list.

TAREK BARAKAT: If they're on the list, then, yes, they would be accessing the incentive.

The CHAIR: Was there any assessment done to make sure that was then used to genuinely incentivise live music? For example, Campbelltown Catholic Club is an absolutely major pokies venue. These venues have live music anyway and, of course, they keep operating their poker machines regardless. They were open anyway. Canterbury League Club was open anyway until 4.00 a.m. It had live music anyway and there were multiple stages and poker machines et cetera. But the Labor Government has just come out and said, "Here you go. Have an 80 per cent reduction on your licence fees and other fees." Why on earth did they need that?

TAREK BARAKAT: That's the legislation Parliament passed and established. There are certain criteria that the venues would have to meet. In the metropolitan areas, they can't just be having bits and pieces of live music. They have to have 10 live music performances per month. They have to go for at least 45 minutes. On weekdays they have to be from 6.00 p.m. onwards. On weekends it could be from 12.00 p.m. I take your point. Some of these venues probably were offering live music, whether they were offering it to the extent they have to offer it now to access the incentive, I couldn't say.

The CHAIR: Has the department done anything like an analysis of these venues to work out whether in fact it has allowed them to stay open longer than they ordinarily would have and indeed to have live music more than they would have? Is there going to be any analysis like that?

TAREK BARAKAT: All of these will be evaluated. All the vibrancy reforms will be evaluated to see if they're having their intended impact. To this point, we haven't undertaken that analysis. What we have done is undertaken 451 inspections at these live music venues, specifically to determine whether or not they are meeting the eligibility criteria under the legislation. That's 451 inspections just for this. We've also obviously got our general inspections that we would do for Liquor and Gaming related legislation, and we would incorporate this into those as well. Our focus currently, since October 2024, when the reforms came into place, is making sure that if a venue is claiming the incentives as published on our list, they are actually meeting the criteria required.

The CHAIR: How much has the Government spent so far on the licence fee reductions or forgone?

TAREK BARAKAT: In terms of the 80 per cent reduction? I could take that on notice. We can get that breakdown for you.

The CHAIR: Thank you. When did it start?

TAREK BARAKAT: I think they came into effect at the end of 2024. Our inspections commenced in October 2024, which I think coincided with the passing of the legislation. But I can get you the exact date on notice.

The CHAIR: Thank you. Would there also be a breakdown in terms of the venues with poker machines? I can remember when this legislation was being passed and thought there was something in the legislation that they weren't able to operate poker machines in that extended time. But I believe now looking at it, what that meant is potentially extending their poker machine operating hours if they weren't already operating their poker machines, for example until 2.00 a.m. or 4.00 a.m. Is that your interpretation of the bill that was passed?

TAREK BARAKAT: Under the legislation the Parliament passed, venues who are accessing the two-hour incentive can operate poker machines during that time. That is my understanding of the legislation, yes. Again, part of our inspection process is asking, are they doing this legitimately? Are they actually meeting the criteria of what constitutes live music for the right amount of time or are they skirting around the edges so they can operate poker machines during that period? That's something we're looking at closely as well.

The CHAIR: With that list, if it's possible to have a poker machine operations breakdown as well—

TAREK BARAKAT: Just so I'm clear, the venues that are accessing the incentive—what portion of them have increased the hours of operation of the poker machines?

The CHAIR: It's complicated, actually, isn't it?

TAREK BARAKAT: I'm happy to try and see what we can provide.

The CHAIR: Maybe just which ones have gaming machines. Let's just stick to that because I think, other than that—

TAREK BARAKAT: Of the venues on the list, which have pokies.

The CHAIR: I might put something more complicated in terms of supplementary questions.

UNCORRECTED

TAREK BARAKAT: I can't wait, Ms Faehrmann. Thank you.

The CHAIR: We'll move on. Can I get an update about the MetroWay that was promised a couple of months ago? There was media about that, but no budget line item that I can—this is the MetroWay, in terms of the cycling—

JOSH MURRAY: Mr Lawson will start with that.

The CHAIR: Is there a budget for it?

HUGH LAWSON: Yes. The MetroWay is included in the City and Southwest project budget, and it's one of the planning conditions related to the work on the Southwest section. The update I can give you is that procurement is underway for that, and we're currently shortlisting from the expression of interest and would expect to release the tender imminently.

The CHAIR: Was the idea to wait until the Metro West was almost done or finished and then start the MetroWay?

HUGH LAWSON: Yes. Actually, some of the future MetroWay is in land that used to be part of the rail corridor. We've undertaken extensive fencing works in some locations. That's moved the fence line in a bit, and that's created a corridor alongside the rail alignment. The planning consent requires us to complete that work within 24 months of opening the railway.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: Mr Rodrigues, can I just clarify just one thing about your evidence before. I asked you about the learnings that you've taken from your overseas trips, and you mentioned about the special entertainment precincts. Was that a learning you got from the UK? Or was that something you took to the UK? My understanding is special entertainment precincts first became a thing in Australia in 2004 or '05, in Queensland, and then we first started talking about it in 2018, and then it was legislated in 2020. Did I mishear something in terms of what you said about special entertainment precincts?

MICHAEL RODRIGUES: The concept—you're correct—is also in Queensland, in Fortitude Valley. The UK had a version, which is the night-time economy zones. Like many of these things that have been shaped, it's not like it's happening in isolation. They're being, I guess, done contemporaneously, and they're called different things in different places. In the UK they have a night-time economy zone. The US has, probably, a different name for a similar concept.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: So you didn't take the concept from there. You just looked at what they were doing and what could be improved.

MICHAEL RODRIGUES: Yes, and continue to do that. For example, in Nashville, Lower Broadway is a dedicated zone. We would identify that as a special entertainment precinct. They probably call it something else, but it has the characteristics of what we would describe as special entertainment precinct.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: If you could replicate Nashville here, I'd be really happy. That helps clarify.

The CHAIR: Did the department ever get any of the money back from Bluesfest, in terms of the grants provided to Bluesfest? Did that happen ultimately?

MELANIE HAWYES: I probably have to take that on notice, I'm afraid. But, to my understanding, no, but I'd prefer to take it on notice.

The CHAIR: I understand. Thank you.

JOSH MURRAY: Chair, could I come back to one of your earlier questions? In my excitement of standing on the bridge at PLR 2, I probably wasn't as clear as I could have been in timings. Probably the best way to answer your question about next steps is we would hope to announce a short—

The CHAIR: Which bridge was this?

JOSH MURRAY: For Parramatta Light Rail 2.

The CHAIR: I was thinking of the fairy lights on Erskineville Bridge.

JOSH MURRAY: No. We haven't come back to the fairy lights yet, but the best way to answer your question about next steps for PLR 2 is that we would hope to be in a position to announce a shortlist for that process in the next couple of months.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: On PLR 2, you said "a shortlist in the next couple of months". Is that correct?

UNCORRECTED

JOSH MURRAY: Yes.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: So before the end of the year?

JOSH MURRAY: Yes.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: That is a shortlist of providers. What's the current budget for PLR 2?

JOSH MURRAY: I can get that for you.

RAQUEL RUBALCABA: PLR 2, without the enabling works—so 2a is \$2.4 billion.

JOSH MURRAY: Yes, \$2.4 billion.

RAQUEL RUBALCABA: The enabling works is \$600 million. I think there's just over \$3 billion shown in the budget for PLR 2. It's a combination of them.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: So \$2.4 billion plus enabling works of \$600 million?

JOSH MURRAY: That's correct.

RAQUEL RUBALCABA: That's correct.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: When is construction expected to begin under the main works contract once it's awarded?

JOSH MURRAY: That will be next year.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Do you anticipate a quarter? Obviously, not the first quarter.

JOSH MURRAY: We should probably say around the middle of the year, but bearing in mind we're yet to go through procurement.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Understood. Can I ask—on notice, perhaps, unless you have it to hand—in relation to Mr Fels and Mr Cousins, how many meetings they attended this year with the tolling companies?

CAMILLA DROVER: To the best of my knowledge, they did not meet with the tolling companies this year. I'm happy to confirm that on notice, but that's the best of my knowledge.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Ms Drover, as the lead negotiator in toll reform and the acting CEO of NSW Motorways, how many times have you spoken with them this year?

CAMILLA DROVER: Who, the concessionaires?

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: No, Mr Fels and Mr Cousins.

CAMILLA DROVER: I would have to take that on notice. This calendar year, very few, because their engagement with us finished in December 2025.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Yes. Would you like to take it on notice? I think I may know the answer, so I want to be fair to you.

CAMILLA DROVER: I can't recollect even whether I have met them this year, but I'll take that on notice.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: I think it might not be very much. Could you take on notice, or let me know, the total amount paid in expenses for Mr Fels and Mr Cousins to carry out their review, including all flights, accommodation, IT and other support? Can we get a breakdown of their expenses?

CAMILLA DROVER: Yes. I've got the value of their engagement for the ITR, the independent tolling review, but I haven't got the breakdown of what was hours versus expenses. Professor Fels—the value of his engagement was \$950,000, and that was for the period from 1 July 2023 to 31 July 2024.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Do you have Mr Cousins', or will you take that on notice?

CAMILLA DROVER: I do. For the independent tolling review?

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Yes, the total amount paid to them for their review.

CAMILLA DROVER: Again, this is the value of the engagement and it is including GST. Dr David Cousins, for the ITR—and he was engaged by NSW Treasury—the value of the engagement was \$770,000. I'd have to check how much was actually paid, but that was the value of his contract. Again, it was for the same period.

UNCORRECTED

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: On notice, could we get a breakdown of their expenses?

CAMILLA DROVER: Yes.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: I'll try to fly through Sydney Trains maintenance. Mr Longland, I know it's been a big year for that. I understand the dynamics. I'll put most of this in supplementary questions for you, but I want to understand the works schedule for Sydney Trains asset management and maintenance. Is that being delivered according to the work schedule?

MATT LONGLAND: Yes. The asset renewal program is a multi-year program, and it's broken down year by year into our annual works. It tends to be that the majority of that work happens on weekends when we have track possessions. Yes, it's absolutely being delivered. In fact, July was delivered ahead of schedule. We've invested—

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: That's in accordance with the required work schedule, and ahead of it?

MATT LONGLAND: Yes.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Obviously, that's being done on time. Are there any maintenance interventions that are overdue?

MATT LONGLAND: I think we've got seven outstanding inspections. That has come down from about 50 this time last year. They are the sort of regular inspections that our crews do of assets in the field. We are well on top of that process. The asset renewal program is ramping up, with the electrical inspections, trackwork, signalling and also our civil structures. So a lot of work is happening. It is actually getting bigger again next year. It is growing year on year.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Thank you. I'll put the rest of that in supplementaries. Can I ask about Bradfield Park South? I'm not sure who deals with that. Mr Murray, are you aware of the issues about Bradfield Park South—

JOSH MURRAY: Yes, I am.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: —for the local community? That was a park that had been used and maybe owned by Transport for NSW—

JOSH MURRAY: At least partially, yes.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: —or claimed partially for the Sydney Harbour Tunnel works. Given that they concluded in June 2023, why has Bradfield Park South not yet been returned to North Sydney Council?

JOSH MURRAY: We're having a look at the community concerns at the moment. We're certainly aware of the large community campaign about the park. It has not just been the staging point for the work around the major infrastructure on the north side of the bridge but also the cycleway project and a number of other operational elements that relate to almost a semi-depot there under the northern pylons of the bridge. As I say, I think the best answer at this stage is we're looking at the community concerns and we aim to respond to that group as quickly as we can and in a fulsome manner to show what we're doing in the area.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Can I invite you to provide it in a fulsome manner that might provide some understanding of why this site hasn't been handed back, given the community's understanding is that the tunnel arrangements concluded in June 2023 and they feel that should have been handed back? Perhaps the other works being undertaken there might influence that. If they could perhaps get a timeline—

JOSH MURRAY: That's right. We do acknowledge that for the community, but also that it is a significant staging point for Transport for other works. We will aim to continue to do that in a complementary manner.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: The community would like to understand, if you could take it on notice, what alternative arrangements Transport has considered for the Sydney Harbour Bridge maintenance activities. I invite you to include any of those other activities that are required for it.

JOSH MURRAY: The Sydney Harbour Bridge maintenance is under particular focus. We have an expanded program of maintenance. Unfortunately for the community group, we do need some of that staging area, both underneath Milsons Point and closer to the bridge. I am happy to answer that in more detail with the community correspondence.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: I thank the Minister for responding to my correspondence prior to today outlining that. I asked last year in budget estimates—this is buses, Mr Collins—in relation to the Redbank Estate and whether the department would follow up representations about a loop through the Redbank Estate on the

UNCORRECTED

existing bus route 680 from Richmond to Bowen Mountain. Has that progressed—that plan for inclusion of a loop through Redbank on the 680 route?

HOWARD COLLINS: We'll have to take that on notice and refresh my memory of whether we responded on that. I'll take that away and take it on notice.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: I think that was where we were last year, so it would be appreciated if we could understand that. I don't expect you to respond on every single bus. On wheelchair accessible taxis—Ms Webb? Who is that?

JOSH MURRAY: Ms Timbs should be able to help, but also perhaps Ms Webb, depending on the policy angle.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Thank you, both, and you can take it on notice. The recent budget committed, as I understand it, an additional \$15 million to extend the emergency wheelchair accessible taxi package. Is that correct?

SALLY WEBB: That's correct.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: I'm informed that that saw a 13 per cent increase in trip completion rates between April and July 2025.

KATE TIMBS: I'd have to take trip completion rates on notice.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Are there any plans for legislation for long-term reforms to wheelchair accessible taxi services?

SALLY WEBB: I think that would be a matter for Government, but I am aware that Government has announced a \$2.3 million relief package recognising the financial challenges that wheelchair accessible taxi services are facing. I'm also aware that there is an announcement due relating to the distribution of the \$15 million and the componentry of that, which I expect will be similar to the \$15 million that was provided in the budget last year.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Could you take on notice—I understand that the paper dockets are sometimes an issue, with the cards that are used. Then paper dockets have to be used, and some drivers won't accept the paper dockets. Could I ask you to take on notice or provide your understanding of that situation, whether you've received complaints and what might be done to address that concern?

SALLY WEBB: I might see if the acting commissioner can provide any response on that.

KATE TIMBS: We are aware that disability groups have raised concerns in relation to that. In March 2026 the Government announced that they are introducing a \$3,000 fine for the refusal of TTSS payments, and we expect that to be introduced later this year.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: I may invoke the mercy rule, Chair, and leave it at that.

The CHAIR: Peter, it's all yours.

The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE: We've got four minutes before I'm allowed to ask questions, but if I could just ask one—are there any matters that you would like to raise or provide additional information on?

MELANIE HAWYES: If I could, I will augment my response to the Bluesfest question that you raised. In 2026 we didn't provide funding for the festival. The previous year they received one instalment but not the second instalment because, by that point in time, their ticket sales were above the threshold.

The CHAIR: The instalment—remind me what that was.

MELANIE HAWYES: It was \$250,000 in 2025.

JOSH MURRAY: Nothing further from Transport.

The CHAIR: Thank you, everybody. It's been great. That might be the last we see of each other for some time, hopefully, unless something scandalous happens. Thank you, as usual, for appearing. The Committee secretariat will be in touch if we've got any questions.

(The witnesses withdrew.)

The Committee proceeded to deliberate.