

TUESDAY, 15 JULY 2014

ESTIMATES—TRANSPORT, HOUSING AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT COMMITTEE—TRANSPORT AND MAIN ROADS

Estimates Committee Members

Mr HWT Hobbs (Chair)

Mr JB Grant

Mr DJ Grimwade

Mr CJ Judge

Mr A Shorten

Ms J Trad

Mr JR Woodforth

In Attendance

Hon. SA Emerson, Minister for Transport and Main Roads

Mr A Berkman, Chief of Staff

Department of Transport and Main Roads

Mr N Scales, Director-General

Port of Townsville Limited


Ms R Crosby, Chief Executive Officer

Queensland Rail Transit Authority

Ms H Gluer, Chief Executive Officer

Mr K Wright, General Manager, Rail Operations

Committee met at 9.00 am

 **CHAIR:** I declare this estimates hearing of the Transport, Housing and Local Government Committee now open. I am Howard Hobbs, member for Warrego and chair of the committee. Other committee members are: Mr John Grant, member for Springwood; Mr Darren Grimwade, member for Morayfield; Mr Carl Judge, member for Yeerongpilly; Mr Anthony Shorten, member for Algester; and Mr Jason Woodforth, member for Nudgee. Desley Scott, member for Woodridge and deputy chair, will not be attending the hearing today. She is replaced by Ms Jackie Trad, member for South Brisbane.

We are holding these hearings to examine the proposed expenditure contained in the Appropriation Bill 2014 for the portfolios of the Minister for Transport and Main Roads, the Minister for Housing and Public Works, and the Minister for Local Government, Community Recovery and Resilience. Today we will consider the estimates for the Minister for Transport and Main Roads. The committee will suspend proceedings for breaks at 10.45 am, 1 pm and 3.30 pm. The proceedings today are lawful proceedings subject to the standing rules and orders of the Queensland parliament. As such, I remind all visitors that any person admitted to this hearing may be excluded by order of the committee in accordance with standing order 208.

In relation to media coverage of today's hearing, the committee has resolved to allow television film coverage and photography at all times during the hearing and in accordance with the media broadcasting guidelines. Today's hearing is also being broadcast live on the parliamentary website, with archived video footage available on the parliament's website after each session. I offer a warm welcome to all those tuning in.

Committee members may put questions to the minister, director-general and specified executive officers. The minister, director-general or CEO may refer questions to advisers. We expect all departmental officers appearing today to provide full and honest answers to our questions. Anyone who is unable or unwilling to provide an answer should be prepared to state the reason. I remind members, however, that the departmental officials are not here today to give opinions on the merit or otherwise of the policies of the government. That is the role of the minister. It is also important that questions and answers remain relevant and succinct. Where necessary, I will remind ministers, directors-general, CEOs and their advisers that their answers to questions should be finalised so that other issues can be examined. For the benefit of Hansard, I ask advisers, if you are called to give an answer, to please state your name and position before speaking. Before we begin, I ask that all mobile phones now be switched off.

On behalf of the committee, I welcome to the hearing Minister Emerson, officers of the department and entities, and members of the public. We will examine the estimates of your portfolio today. I now declare the proposed expenditure for the Minister for Transport and Main Roads open for examination. The question before the committee is—

That the proposed expenditure be agreed to.

Minister, would you like to make a brief opening statement?

Mr EMERSON: Thank you, Mr Chair. I do thank the committee upfront. I would also like to thank you and the committee for your hard work this year across the Transport and Main Roads portfolio. Your efforts, including travelling across the state to investigate a number of key transport areas such as cycling and the importance of rail freight, have provided the basis for important reforms for Queenslanders.

Transport and Main Roads is committed to delivering a world-class transport system that connects Queensland and meets Queenslanders' needs. We have a strong plan, taking real action in delivering a brighter future that involves revitalising front-line services to meet customer needs and getting more people on to public transport and delivering better infrastructure and better planning through investment in roads and transport infrastructure.

The total budget expenditure for 2014-15 is \$9.3 billion. That is made up of \$3.9 billion in the capital budget and an operating budget of \$5.4 billion. This budget provides almost \$770 million towards the Bruce Highway and \$179 million to the Warrego Highway—two of the state's most vital economic routes. TMR demonstrated its commitment to make the road network more reliable and safer in 2013-14. Some of the major road projects that were completed during this time included the southern approach to Cairns, improvements at the Mains and Kessels roads intersection, the deviation at Cardwell Range north and a new interchange of the Bruce and Dawson highways at Calliope Crossroads.

The department also delivered \$2 billion of reconstruction works under the Transport Network Reconstruction Program, repairing flood damaged roads across our vast state. This government has also been delivering on its election promise to improve safety around two notorious level crossings. The rail crossing at Robinson Road, Geebung, is nearing completion, with a final touches underway, and the crossing at Telegraph Road, Bracken Ridge, is on track to open to traffic in late 2014, improving safety for motorists and pedestrians.

Our rail stocks will be boosted with the awarding of the new generation rolling stock contract. This 32-year contract is for the design, construction and maintenance of 75 six-car trains for South-East Queensland, helping to ease congestion on our busy roads. It is also creating employment opportunities with the construction of a new purpose-built maintenance centre near Ipswich. The opening of two new stations at Springfield and Springfield Central has also had a significant impact on road use and boosted patronage numbers since December last year. Under the LNP, this project has now delivered value for money on the previous government's design, with 400 extra car parks and double the capacity of the highway. The concept design and business case for the once in a generation bus and train project are well underway, with the project's final references and EIS also being finalised. This city-defining, five-kilometre BaT project combines a railway and busway in a single, double-decked, 15-metre wide tunnel beneath the Brisbane River and Brisbane CBD, linking the northern and southern suburbs of Brisbane.

Mr Chairman, when we came to office we promised to improve reliability, frequency and affordability of the public transport network. More passengers are getting to their destination on time and spending more time at home with their families since we improved train reliability, from a three-year low of 86 per cent to an all-time high of 96 per cent across four quarters. We have also added more than 3,000 additional weekly train and bus services since 2012. We put an end to Labor's 15 per cent fare hike legacy and kept to our election promise to lower the cost of living in 2013-14. I am pleased that we have found the savings to do even more, by capping fares at 2.5 per cent for the next three years. Under our policies, a regular weekday two-zone passenger will be saving \$440 per year compared to go card prices under Labor. A passenger from the Gold Coast or the Sunshine Coast will also be better off by \$1,595. This promise follows on from our successful free travel after nine weekly go card journeys, benefiting 80,000 regular weekday passengers.

As well as the focus on passengers, the Moving Freight strategy we released in 2013-14 aims to improve the efficiency of our network. The 10-year plan will support growth in produce and commodity movements, boosting our resources, agriculture, construction and tourism sectors. Our \$350 million two-year Road Safety Action Plan sets out a blueprint for safety on our state's roads. The major focus of this is our 'Join the drive to save lives' campaign, which we have rolled out over the past year. This campaign is a social change strategy, aimed at a greater community ownership of road safety and at addressing the issues at the heart of our road toll. This goes hand in hand with our \$10 million flashing school light program at 300 schools, helping to protect our schoolchildren. Parents and motorists are spending less time lining up, as we have halved waiting times at many of our customer service centres and improved online services.

I am excited to advise the committee that the light rail service will begin next week, with the opening of stage 1 of the Gold Coast Rapid Transit project on 20 July. Passengers on the Gold Coast will have access to 16 light rail stations, with trams leaving every 7½ minutes during peak and operating 24 hours during weekends. We are also working on additional public transport infrastructure including the Moreton Bay Rail Link, the Browns Plains bus station, the Victoria Point jetty bus station, Warrigal Road Greenlink, the Kawana bus station and the Nambour park and ride. Mr Chairman, these are just some of the strong plans and real actions we are taking to deliver a brighter future for all Queenslanders. Thank you and thanks to the committee.

CHAIR: Thank you, Minister, for that summary. I now call the member for South Brisbane.

Ms TRAD: Thank you very much, Mr Chair. Good morning, Minister, and good morning departmental representatives. I was very interested in your opening remarks in relation to the increase in patronage, Minister. I turn your attention to page 15 of the SDS where there has been actually an inability to meet the targeted estimate for patronage on rail, particularly over the past financial year—almost three million fewer trips taken than what was estimated last financial year. Can you explain that?

Mr EMERSON: Thank you, member for South Brisbane. As you know—and let me go back to the history of this—patronage has been declining since 2009-10, when Labor began its significant fare hikes. If you recall, there was a 20 per cent fare hike initially and then a series of 15 per cent fare hikes.

Ms TRAD: What happened over the last financial year, Minister. That is my question.

Mr EMERSON: Mr Chair?

CHAIR: The minister will answer the question.

Mr EMERSON: Thank you. As I said, Mr Chair, the patronage has been declining since 2009-10, when Labor began its 15 per cent fare hike strategy. That continued under my predecessor, the then transport minister, the now Leader of the Opposition, Annastacia Palaszczuk, with her plans to increase fares by 15 per cent annually. If you look at the budget papers, what you will see is that compared to the budget target for patronage it shows that overall we are up by 320,000 trips. That is what it is compared to the budget target for patronage—so we are up 320,000. Compared to last year, what the budget papers show is that patronage overall is up 1.02 million. That figure will be finalised later this year. That is the estimate actual at the moment. So we have been increasing patronage, as I said. If have a look at the figures, member for South Brisbane, you will see the budget target for patronage shows overall that we are up 320,000 journeys or trips. So that is a significant increase.

Again, I make the point that it had been in decline under Labor because of Labor's policy. I must point out that when they introduced it in 2009 they had said previously before that election—they misled Queenslanders because they said that fares would only go up by CPI. I make the point that

after that election they came out with a policy to increase fares by 15 per cent every year. So before the election they said it would go up by CPI and after the election we had 15 per cent fare increases every year.

Ms TRAD: Chair, I will ask you to rule on repetition. I think the minister is being quite—

CHAIR: No. Let the minister finish and you will have a second question.

Ms TRAD: I think he has made the point.

Mr EMERSON: I make the point again that we saw that decline begin under Labor because of Labor's policy—and this continues to be their policy—15 per cent annual fare increases. That was the policy of the Leader of the Opposition when she was transport minister. It continues to be their policy.

Ms TRAD: Minister, in relation to the figures, I draw your attention to the light rail entry where in your opening remarks you stated that you are opening the light rail this weekend—a great Labor initiative, conceived, funded and built by Labor. Now are you telling Queenslanders, are you telling the committee, that 300,000 trips have already been made on light rail and it has not even opened yet?

Mr EMERSON: As you would be aware, member for South Brisbane—let's go back to the light rail. I am glad you are excited about the opening. I think people on the Gold Coast are very excited about the opening.

Ms TRAD: Very excited about Labor infrastructure, Minister.

Mr EMERSON: I have always conceded this plan was begun under the previous government. But of course, like many other issues we have had to deal with, we have had to clean up the mess left to us by Labor. As you would be aware, member for South Brisbane, Labor bungled the business case for the light rail. They used out of date projections for patronage—again, another example of the bungling by Labor. It was endemic during the previous government. We have had to come in and deal with it. But it is opening now on Sunday. There will be free travel on that Sunday, with regular services beginning on Monday, 21 July.

The budget is prepared much earlier than obviously this week or last week. Under the contract signed under the previous government, certain requirements needed to be met by GoldLinQ. That included ensuring that they had the tick off from utility providers and then that was agreed to by the independent verifier. There were quite strict and clear requirements for GoldLinQ. What we have said from day one is that we expected the opening midyear. Obviously it is in July; that is midyear. As soon as GoldLinQ finalised its contractual obligations and got the tick off by the utilities and the independent verifier, they could begin. The hope was that GoldLinQ would meet its contractual requirements earlier. So, in fact, what the budget shows was an expectation that light rail may have been running slightly earlier. What it means is that that migration potentially from people travelling from bus and using light rail did not occur, so those figures will be updated to reflect that the light rail began in July rather than earlier than that. Again, the most important thing was to ensure that GoldLinQ met its contractual obligations—that it had got the tick off from the independent verifier and met all of its contractual obligations. I am pleased to say that it has done that and we will see it begin on 20 July, but that is what those figures reflect.

Ms TRAD: I will now direct my question to Mr Neil Scales. Mr Scales, when was the material for the SDS finalised and presented to Treasury? What was the date?

Mr Scales: Thank you for the question, honourable member. I do not have that exact date, but I will certainly get it through my officials at the back. I would not want to guess at this point, so I will get you that date before the end of the session.

Ms TRAD: Okay. When was it known to the department, Mr Scales, that light rail was not going to be actually carrying passengers last financial year?

Mr Scales: Thank you for that question. The budget is obviously prepared about a year out. We were anticipating, as the minister said, services on the light rail probably in June, so we were expecting probably June to the end of June. In terms of patronage on light rail, we estimated at that point 300,000 trips would be taken. So it was estimated probably about a year ago, member for South Brisbane.

Ms TRAD: Yes, but the material for the SDS is not presented to Treasury a year out, Mr Scales.

Mr Scales: I will get you the date when we find it out.

Ms TRAD: I would like two dates, Mr Scales. I would like the date on which it was known by the department that light rail was not actually going to be carrying passengers last financial year and the date which the SDS material was prepared and finalised for Treasury to produce the SDS document.

Mr Scales: I am happy to do that, but it was a bit of a moving feast with utilities being involved with problems that we had not anticipated coming up like stray currents. We had, as the minister said, to get the tick off from the utility providers, so I will get a date and provide it by the end of the session.

Ms TRAD: Mr Scales, referring to the figures as they are in the document, the 300,000 additional trips that the minister was talking about earlier are in fact nonexistent because the 300,000 trips that are in the budget papers for light rail did not occur.

Mr Scales: That is true but the bus network would still be operating, so it is too early to say whether anybody would have transferred by bus and some of their trips would have also been generated trips and new trips.

Ms TRAD: But, Mr Scales, the bus figures are there already. They are accounted for. I am talking about additional trips on an additional service that was estimated to be opened already and actually clocking up 300,000 trips which do not exist. I am putting it to you, Minister, that these figures are not to be trusted. There were not 300,000 trips taken on light rail and therefore your suggestion that there has been an increase is actually incorrect. I would like you to correct the record.

Mr EMERSON: Mr Chair, I will take that question.

CHAIR: I will call the minister. I think that we need to move on, but perhaps the minister could summarise.

Mr EMERSON: I reject that finding from the member for South Brisbane. As I said before, Mr Chair, there was an anticipation that light rail would begin earlier than it did but clearly GoldLinQ had to meet its contractual obligations, and that was appropriate. The budget is prepared early. As I said earlier, it was not prepared last week. It is not prepared in terms of those numbers just before the budget is delivered. What has happened is the department has quite rightly anticipated there will be movement from bus to light rail, so they have anticipated trips on light rail and then fewer trips being taken on the bus. In this case these figures reflect that expectation. The reality is that with light rail beginning—

Ms TRAD: But they do not reflect actual trips and that is the column you have them in, Minister.

CHAIR: You have made that point before, member for South Brisbane. The minister has the floor.

Mr EMERSON: I know that the member for South Brisbane does not like the fact that the reality is we are seeing an increase in patronage compared to her leader's efforts when she was transport minister. The only policy Labor had when it was in office was to increase fares by 15 per cent every year. That was the only policy they had. What they achieved was three-year lows in terms of rail reliability, infrequent services and declining patronage. The reality is the budget is prepared some time before. There was an anticipation—an expectation—that light rail would begin sometime in June. GoldLinQ had to meet its contractual obligations, including ensuring that the utilities—Energen, Telstra, Gold Coast water—gave the tick off. They have now achieved that. It will begin this Sunday. But the budget demonstrates an expectation of what trips would have been taken on light rail and a migration of existing bus services onto light rail. Those figures will be updated, but of course these figures are prepared well before the budget is delivered.

CHAIR: Thank you, Minister.

Ms TRAD: I will make the point that it is not an estimate.

CHAIR: Member for South Brisbane—

Ms TRAD: It is actually in the actual column—

CHAIR: Member for South Brisbane, you have already made that point. The minister—

Ms TRAD: Thank you, and I will reinforce it thank you, Chair.

CHAIR: I ask you to move on to the next question.

Ms TRAD: Okay; let us talk about patronage figures. You are actually estimating a decrease, Minister, in patronage over the coming year and you are blaming it on the G20, according to your footnotes—footnote 16 on page 17. Seriously, Minister, when will you actually accept that declining patronage is occurring under your watch and when will you do something about it?

Mr EMERSON: Once again I think the member for South Brisbane is misreading the budget papers. As you will see, we are actually forecasting an increase in patronage over the next year. Anyone who has actually followed the budget papers would know that we are forecasting an increase. What the budget papers do reflect, as it does in every other case—and, unfortunately, if the opposition did pay attention to this they would know—is that when you have a public holiday there tends to be a decline in public transport because people are not going to work. As the member for South Brisbane would very much be aware because she is a member in inner Brisbane, there is a public holiday associated now with the G20 and therefore we would expect a decline in public transport associated with that public holiday. It happens on every public holiday throughout the year. You will see variations between months in terms of public transport in a particular month on the basis of when Easter falls, for instance. It happens every year. This is no great revelation at all. It is just the practicalities of running a public transport system.

So, yes, because of the G20 and because there is an associated public holiday, we expect fewer people travelling on public transport that day. It happens on every public holiday. Anyone who takes public transport on a regular basis, as I do, would know that that is the case. Again, I make the point that in our budget paper we are forecasting an increase in public transport patronage over the next year. Patronage is forecast to increase to 180.48 million. That is up 3.76 million. So once again, unfortunately, Labor have got it wrong. They may be interpreting their own performance in office under the Leader of the Opposition as the then transport minister, Annastacia Palaszczuk, where we saw consistent falls in public transport on the back of their 15 per cent annual fare increase policy. However, our budget is forecasting an increase of 3.7 million trips. Again I make the point that, yes, at the G20 we will see a decline on that weekend and that period because of the public holiday.

CHAIR: I have a question in the same vein. Can you please detail how the government is lowering the cost of living for South-East Queensland commuters through delivering public transport fare initiatives and savings?

Mr EMERSON: Thank you, Mr Chair, and I know that the transport committee itself is very interested in this issue, particularly for those who live in South-East Queensland who have seen the benefits of where we have gone. Lowering the cost of living for South-East Queensland commuters is a key priority for the Queensland government and has been addressed through targeted, fair affordability measures. Under the previous Labor government, as I have indicated already, we saw ongoing 15 per cent annual fare hikes implemented across the public transport network. The LNP government has refused to accept Labor's fare increases, halving the planned 15 per cent January 2013 increase and the planned 2014 fare increase. We have halved them to 7½ per cent and of course provided free travel after nine weekly journeys. These promises are anticipated to save passengers almost \$200 million over four years. Furthermore, I recently announced that fare increases will be capped at 2.5 per cent for the next three years commencing in January 2015, commencing early next year. That is below the inflation rate and will increase affordability of public transport fares for South-East Queensland commuters and positively impact on public transport patronage.

In addition, the Queensland government has also included a number of additional initiatives for South-East Queensland commuters, including moving the 20 per cent off-peak discount from 9 am to start at 8.30 am. Through this initiative, the LNP government has provided cheaper public transport, providing real cost-of-living relief of over \$732,000 for passengers travelling in the 8.30 am to 9 am period. In addition, on 1 July 2013 the Southern Moreton Bay Island Ferry services were also integrated into the TransLink system. This has allowed island commuters to enjoy the benefits of go card, including the nine and free initiative. Inter-island travel was made free of charge to residents. As of June 2014, customers have saved a total of \$319,000 across 140,000 free inter-island trips. So, Mr Chairman, in terms of your question regarding lowering the cost of living for South-East Queensland commuters through delivering public transport fare initiatives and savings, there is a whole series of initiatives and savings that we have implemented since coming to office. This budget this year continues that policy and it is in stark contrast to Labor's policy in office of annual 15 per cent fare increases.

CHAIR: Thank you, Minister, and I want to drill down a bit more. I know we have talked about patronage and everything else, but can you outline the impact fare policy is actually having on patronage? I think that is a pretty important aspect of it as well.

Mr EMERSON: I think it is important. Under the previous Labor government successive fare increases of 20 per cent, 15 per cent and 15 per cent were implemented across the public transport network, and I think everyone who takes public transport will remember those days. I have made a

very strong commitment that we will not be returning to the bad old days of Labor and their 15 per cent fare increase policy of Labor and the then transport minister, Annastacia Palaszczuk. Modelling suggests that during the period of Labor's fare hikes—2010 to 2014—public transport patronage would decrease by 3.4 per cent. The current Queensland government has halved the planned 15 per cent fare increases for those planned by Labor for January 2013 and also for 2014. We have halved those to 7½ per cent. We have also delivered on that promised free travel after nine weekly journeys, delivering further savings for up to 80,000 passengers a week, and that number has increased as we have gone along. Furthermore, as I mentioned earlier, in this budget we recently announced that fare increases will be further reduced. Specifically, fares will be capped at 2.5 per cent for the next three years, commencing January 2015, and that is in stark contrast again. I would urge the committee to compare and contrast capping fares at 2.5 per cent for the next three years as opposed to Labor's policy—the policy of Annastacia Palaszczuk—of annual 15 per cent fare increases. It is a marked contrast, and that 2.5 per cent will commence with the next period from January 2015. That 2.5 per cent is below the forecast inflation rate and that will increase affordability of public transport fares for South-East Queensland commuters and positively impact on public transport patronage.

As previously mentioned, the Queensland government has also implemented a number of additional initiatives for South-East Queensland commuters including moving the 20 per cent off-peak discount period forward from 9 am to 8.30 am.

As I said, the budget shows that patronage has increased to 176.72 million trips—up 1.02 million in 2013-14. This is the first increase since the first of Labor's 15 per cent fare hikes. There is a very stark contrast between Labor's legacy of 15 per cent fare increases and falling patronage and our performance. As the budget numbers show, there is increased patronage and a capping of 2.5 per cent.

Mr GRIMWADE: Minister, just talking about fare increases and patronage numbers, can you give us today an outline of the difference between the current government's fare policy and the fare policy pre March 2012—maybe, for example, how much commuters would be saving due to your fare policy as opposed to the policy that was in place before March 2012?

Mr EMERSON: I thank the member for Morayfield for that question. I know that this is an issue that is very important to his constituents. I have been at train stations with constituents from his electorate, talking to them about fares—before and after. They were very aware of the challenges that public transport users were facing under the previous Labor government. It was an issue we came into. I can remember, in fact, being at Morayfield explaining to people who are now his constituents about the stark contrast between Labor's policy and what we were going to do. It is good to see, member for Morayfield, that we have kept to our commitment in terms of what we promised them, including free trips after nine journeys, which I know makes a big difference to the hardworking people of Morayfield in terms of being able to get home free on a Friday.

In terms of the LNP's free travel after nine journeys and halving Labor's ongoing 15 per cent fare hikes, we are saving families who travel two zones \$446 every year on their public transport bill. In fact, those travelling longer journeys—say, from the Sunshine Coast or the Gold Coast; 16-zone trips—are saving \$1,595 on their annual public transport bill compared to what they would be paying if Labor were still in office. That is what they would have been paying extra each year if Labor were still in office. That makes a difference to people's home budgets. They would have been paying \$1,595 a year more to get to work under Labor's public transport policy—under Annastacia Palaszczuk's public transport policy. For people travelling from the Sunshine Coast or the Gold Coast there are very large savings. But even those travelling two zones make a saving of almost \$500 a year compared to what they would be paying under Labor.

A regular weekly passenger from, say, Springwood is currently saving \$750. I know that the member for Springwood would appreciate that. From South Brisbane people are currently saving \$380 a year compared to what they would be paying under Labor's policies, if Labor was in power. People travelling from the Gold Coast University to Broadbeach on light rail would save \$440. That is a two-zone trip. I am very keen to look at some of these figures that have been kindly provided to me here.

It is interesting for me that the policy of the Leader of the Opposition was for 15 per cent fare increases. Interestingly, commuters coming from her electorate into the city from Monday to Friday would be saving between \$500 and \$700 a year. I do not know if she goes out and tells commuters from her electorate that if she were still in power, if her policies were implemented, locals would be paying between \$500 and \$700 a year more to catch public transport. That is the very stark contrast, as I said.

In terms of Morayfield, coming back to the member's question—as I said, I do remember talking to commuters at the train station that time—Monday-Friday commuters are saving more than \$800 a year under our policies compared to what they would be paying if Labor were still in office. I am sure many families out there in the member's area—mums and dads who I know are very careful with the money they spend because budgets are tight—would be concerned if they were paying \$800 a year more for public transport under Labor. But they were Labor's policies.

Mr GRIMWADE: Page 9 of the SDS refers to ticketing equipment. Can you please outline what progress is being made to deliver new ticketing equipment?

Mr EMERSON: Thank you, member for Morayfield. Through better planning we are able to deliver better infrastructure. I can announce today that we will begin a two-year program to procure the next generation of ticketing equipment. The current contract with Cubic Transportation Systems does expire in late 2016. From tomorrow, the request for information for the Next Generation Ticketing Project will be released to the market through the Queensland government eTender website. The government will be looking to ensure the market can achieve value for money and innovation for the next generation of smart ticketing.

In August 2013 the government engaged Deloitte and Alco, who are advisers to Transport for London and the Oyster card, to undertake a review of the existing contract and develop a procurement strategy and time line for the procurement and implementation of next-generation smart ticketing. Given the complexity of the system—South-East Queensland is one of the largest integrated ticketing networks in the world—and the significant revenue it collects on behalf of the state, the mobilisation of the project through to delivery needs to be carefully procured and delivered to mitigate failure of any new ticketing options, particularly one of this magnitude. In the meantime, we will continue to work closely with Cubic to ensure the current system is maintained at a high level and continues to meet the needs of passengers.

The RFI is seeking information and does not bind the government in any way. Industry respondents will be given six weeks to respond. An initial review of potential respondents has identified approximately 30 potential respondents. Potentially we will see a whole new generation. As you would be aware, member for Morayfield, technology does move very quickly. The last contract, with Cubic, was signed midway through the 2000s—in 2006, from memory. The contract was a 10-year contract and is due to expire in late 2016. Obviously technology does move on and there are lots of exciting options out there to see where it goes. I think anyone involved in technology cannot fail to see how smart phones changed rapidly over those 10 years, if we think back to where we were 10 years ago. I am very keen to see what the respondents may come up with in terms of new ticketing approaches, new ways of dealing with ticketing, and we begin this process from today.

Mr SHORTEN: My question is directed to the minister. Can the minister detail the benefits to commuters of the trial to bring forward the peak-hour end time to 8.30?

Mr EMERSON: Thank you, member for Algester. I do appreciate that greatly. As I said, this is something we began at the beginning of the year. I reiterate what we have done. Our broader policy of lowering the cost of living for families is a key priority of the LNP government. Again, I have addressed some of those issues in terms of the stark contrast between our policy and the policies of the former Labor government when it was in office. We have been addressing that through a number of measures.

I have already mentioned the 'nine and free' initiative, benefiting up to 80,000 passengers every week; halving fare increases to 7.5 per cent, compared to that ongoing annual 15 per cent fare increase; and also in this budget capping for the next three years fare increases at 2.5 per cent, which is below the rate of CPI.

As the member for Algester said, another initiative brought in at the beginning of the year was moving the 20 per cent off-peak discount from 9 am forward to 8.30 am. Through this initiative we have provided cheaper public transport that has amounted to over \$732,000 in real savings for passengers travelling in the 8.30 to 9 am period. We will review this later this year to see whether this initiative has encouraged more people to delay their travel outside of the core peak period.

The government will continue to work to improve reliability, frequency and affordability of the network to get more people on to public transport. This is just one of those initiatives. A whole suite of initiatives has been put in place, in stark contrast to the previous government's policy—their only policy—to increase fares by 15 per cent every year. Again, I pledge that we are not going back to the bad old days of Labor and 15 per cent annual fare increases.

Ms TRAD: Minister, the patronage figures you inherited when you became minister of the portfolio—these are from the 2011-12 SDS—were 178.3 million trips annually on the SEQ public transport network. There were 176.7 million trips last year. That is a reduction of 1.5 million trips—despite population growth over the last two years, despite the opening of the Northern Busway and the Springfield line, both of which were conceived, funded and initiated by Labor. You have actually presided over a decrease in patronage; isn't that correct?

Mr EMERSON: I thank the member for South Brisbane for the question. The reality is that the legacy of 15 per cent fare increases goes on. It was like a blunt instrument to our public transport users. The fact is that if you bring in a 20 per cent increase and then 15 per cent increases year after year, it will have a massive impact on public transport. It takes a long time to win back the confidence, faith and trust of public transport users. When you go to an election, as Labor did in 2009, promising that you would increase public transport fares only by CPI—they got up and said in their budget that increases would only be in line with CPI—and then straight after an election you tell them, 'We have changed our minds. We will now put up fares 20 per cent and on ongoing by 15 per cent for the years ahead,' that is a massive whack to public transport. The reality is that it is very hard for us to clean up Labor's mess straight away. It takes a while, especially when it has been such a huge disaster by Labor in terms of public transport.

A policy that increases fares every year by 15 per cent has a massive impact on public transport users. That is why we said that when we came into office we would work to halve Labor's fare increases. That was our election promise. Labor's election promise was to increase fares only by CPI in 2009. They broke that election promise. Instead of CPI fare increases they increased fares by 15 per cent every year. That was their policy. Our promise was to halve Labor's fare increases. We kept our promise. Then we brought in as well—another election promise—free trips after nine journeys. That is an election promise we delivered on.

It will take some time to deal with the legacy of Labor, to deal with the legacy of Annastacia Palaszczuk's policy of 15 per cent fare increases every year. It does take time, but I look at the contrast. I compare and contrast Labor's policy of 15 per cent fare increases every year with our policy. We have capped fare increases over the next three years at 2.5 per cent, which is below CPI. I can tell you that CPI was never anywhere near 15 per cent when Labor was in office. Labor's fare increases would have been many multiples of CPI.

I do draw the contrast, because you are talking about my time coming into office. I remember very clearly when the now Leader of the Opposition became transport minister and she was asked about those 15 per cent increases. She said that she would fix it. What happened? The only fix was that she kept implementing 15 per cent fare increases. That is all she did. The policy never changed. In fact, in her time she put the fares up once again by 15 per cent. That was Labor's policy ongoing. That is a reality.

Member for South Brisbane, it does take time to fix Labor's mess on public transport. On a whole series of issues we have worked hard to improve things. Again, I am always pleased when the member for South Brisbane wants to mention the cost of public transport because there is a very clear contrast between Labor's policies and the LNP's policies.

Ms TRAD: So your answer is, 'It is somebody else's mess, it is Labor's mess that I am sorting out.' Minister, I recall that the Premier gave you a grace period of two years to sort out the mess and after that ministers would be on the chopping block. Minister, how many more years will it take you to fix what you deem a crisis on the public transport system when every single initiative that has occurred under your watch has failed to lift patronage? How many more years, and have you negotiated with the Premier over an extension in your time frame?

CHAIR: I do not think that is—the member should speak to the matter of the budget estimates and not the other hypotheticals.

Mr EMERSON: Thank you, Mr Chair, but I would like to see—

Ms TRAD: The reference is his answer, Chair, with all due respect.

Mr EMERSON: I do hope that the committee noted the concession by the member for South Brisbane that it was a mess under Labor.

Ms TRAD: What you deemed.

Mr EMERSON: They were not the words—

Ms TRAD: You deemed, yes, it was.

Mr EMERSON: As the member for South Brisbane said, I blame the mess of Labor, Labor's mess. She can see that there was a mess under Labor.

Ms TRAD: Queenslanders will blame you, Minister.

Mr EMERSON: I accept that, finally, the member for South Brisbane has conceded that it was a mess under Labor because it was. It was a mess.

Ms TRAD: What you deemed.

Mr EMERSON: Mr Chairman, I have been asked the question. I would ask that I get the chance to respond.

CHAIR: Yes.

Mr EMERSON: As I said, it is good to see the member for South Brisbane has conceded that under her leader, the then transport minister, there was a mess under Labor.

Ms TRAD: I rise to a point of order.

Mr EMERSON: I am sure that in today's hearing—

Ms TRAD: The minister is not representing my statements faithfully and I ask him to represent my statements faithfully.

CHAIR: Minister, continue.

Mr EMERSON: Thank you, Mr Chair. There was a mess under Labor, as many people have conceded. I think everyone who uses public transport has conceded there was a mess under Labor. I do hope that over the course of these hearings we will get a chance to further discuss the challenges faced by public transport users because of Labor's incompetence and disregard for public transport users. Can I talk about a number of topics, and I am sure we will get a chance to revisit them over the course of these hearings?

Ms TRAD: Chair, I would like him to answer my question actually.

Mr EMERSON: Let's look at some of these things that we have done.

Ms TRAD: How many more years, Minister?

Mr EMERSON: As I said, let's have a look at some of these things. Say, for instance, the reliability of the public transport system. When we came in, it was at a three-year low in terms of rail reliability. What does reliability really mean? That means that people can get to work on time. That means parents can get their kids to school on time. People can rely on the public transport, particularly the train system, to get them from where they are to where they want to go. It turns up and it is reliable. When we came to office the then transport minister and now Leader of the Opposition delivered a three-year low in terms of rail reliability. I am pleased to say that in our time we have delivered a 10-year high in terms of rail reliability. Hopefully, through these hearings I will get a chance to further discuss that.

In terms of frequency of services, since coming to office we have delivered more than 3,000 additional weekly bus and train services. Again, we have delivered and kept our election promise, unlike Labor who has a habit of breaking their election promises on public transport—remember their promise, 'We will do it according to CPI.' Straight after they won the election they put it up by 15 per cent and planned to keep doing that. We have kept our election promise and have done more than that now. We have capped public transport fares at 2.5 per cent, below CPI. There is a whole series of issues in terms of reliability, frequency and affordability. I am happy to look at our record compared to Labor's. The reality is that, under the now Leader of the Opposition, then transport minister, we saw a situation where trains were unreliable, they were less frequent and there was a massive increase in fares under Labor. So I am very happy to see my record against the former transport minister, now Leader of the Opposition, who only presided over those infrequent, unreliable and massive fare increases.

Ms TRAD: I take it that you cannot represent figures accurately in your SDS just as you cannot reflect statements made by members of this committee accurately, Minister. Let me draw your attention to question on notice No. 355 of 2014. In your answer to that question on notice you advised that many of the trips undertaken under your 'nine trips and free' policy would not have happened if the policy had not been in effect. Is that your position, Minister?

Mr EMERSON: I take the question from the member for South Brisbane. I am very pleased to talk about my policy of free trips after nine journeys. This has been a policy that has been an overwhelming success. As I have indicated already, we are seeing up to 80,000 passengers a week

benefitting from this policy. Why did we bring in this policy? Because we wanted to have an incentive for people to take additional trips on public transport. That has been our goal. The reality is we do believe that, without this incentive, many of these trips would not be taken. People can choose other modes of transport. They may be more likely to not take trips at all or take them in the car. By having an incentive of offering free trips after nine journeys, people who are Monday to Friday commuters are getting home free on the Friday but then can take additional trips on the weekend. Students, who often will use public transport more, may get those trips earlier. Then they can take public transport for free on the weekend. This has been a strong and successful policy. As I said, I think that this policy has been a great success. I know that the member for South Brisbane does not like this policy and has indicated publicly that she will scrap it.

Ms TRAD: I rise to a point of order. That is actually untrue and I ask the minister to withdraw that or else actually materialise where that has been said.

Mr EMERSON: I am happy to withdraw.

CHAIR: Could you clarify or withdraw, Minister? Thank you.

Mr EMERSON: I have seen the constant criticism from the member for South Brisbane about policy. So I assume that is her policy. I am happy to stand corrected that she will keep that policy when she is in office. I assume that is the tenor of her comments and that she will maintain this policy, and so she should because it has been an overwhelming success. I think that is important. I do thank my staff for that. I do take on board what the member for South Brisbane just said and I do make an interesting point here. The My Sunshine Coast website quotes the member for South Brisbane and shadow transport minister, Jackie Trad, as saying, referring to me—

He knows that the LNP's nine trips and free policy is costing more than was promised and is facilitating roting but he makes every effort to hide the true cost of his bungled policy.

I can only view that as a statement that she will scrap the policy—

Ms TRAD: Where does it say that?

Mr EMERSON:—but I stand to be corrected on that.

Ms TRAD: Minister, where does it say that in the article?

Mr EMERSON: Again, I make the point—

Ms TRAD: Just because you get it wrong does not mean that it is going to be withdrawn.

Mr EMERSON: I take on board the fact then that Labor plans to keep the policy—

Ms TRAD: That is not what I said.

Mr EMERSON:—and I applaud them for that. Sorry, Mr Chairman, I am hearing now that that is not what she is saying; she is not going to keep the policy. A moment ago I think the member for South Brisbane said she was going to keep the policy; now she says she is going to scrap the policy. Maybe she does not know what she is going to be doing; that could be the case. We saw that when Labor was last in office. They had no idea how to run public transport. What we have seen today is the member for South Brisbane again, on one hand, saying that she is not going to scrap the policy and now she is saying she will scrap the policy or she might scrap the policy.

The reality is that the policy has been a great success. As I mentioned to the member for Algester a short time ago, it has been part of our broad policy to provide more incentives to encourage people to take public transport. The bottom line is that, without this policy in place, many of these trips would not be taken. It is an incentive, it is a reward for people and an encouragement for people to take more transport, to choose to take public transport because those trips will be free. Otherwise they will be in their cars adding to congestion. It is an encouragement and it has been, as I point out, an overwhelming success.

CHAIR: I call the member for Algester.

Mr SHORTEN: Minister, I direct a question to you in relation to railways. Can you detail what changes have occurred on the railway network to improve and boost its services?

Mr EMERSON: I thank the member for Algester for that question. As I said, I have already detailed some of this, but I am very happy to talk at length as these are significant improvements and significant additional services we are seeing. As I said, South-East Queensland is a vast network. We undertook a network review, with service changes taking place in January 2014. We added 1,000 additional weekly services to the network. From 20 January 2014 passengers benefited from simpler and easier timetables on the airport, Beenleigh, Cleveland, Doomben, Ferny Grove, Gold Coast and

Shorncliffe lines with minor changes for the Caboolture and Sunshine Coast lines, providing more frequent and consistent services. Fifteen-minute daytime off-peak services now operate on the Beenleigh, Cleveland, Caboolture and Shorncliffe lines in addition to our promise to deliver 15-minute daytime off-peak services on the Ferny Grove line in 2012. There are over 30 per cent more peak services on the Gold Coast and Beenleigh lines and 30 per cent more services on the Cleveland line.

With better planning, we are able to deliver better front-line services. Passengers are taking advantage of more frequent and consistent services as we continue our effort to improve front-line services for Queenslanders. According to the budget, one million extra trips were taken in 2013-14 compared with the previous year. As a result of the timetable changes, opportunities now exist to improve performance further in the future as a result of a consistent service pattern and frequency. Detailed monitoring for future performance improvement is conducted through minor signalling alterations, path refinements and station staffing priorities. For the customers, a new timetable also means simple, uniform stopping patterns, easy to understand timetables, maximisation of capacity, vision for future paths and high frequency 15-minute services between the peaks from Monday to Friday for the majority of the inner suburban network.

This is a big win for public transport users with improved connections between modes, better reliability and more frequent services where passengers need them the most. When I look at those 1,000 additional weekly services, I think about places like the Gold Coast. When we came into office I remember this was an issue for many of the Gold Coast MPs, particularly the member for Coomera. When in opposition I travelled on the Gold Coast line with him when I was the shadow transport spokesperson looking at the frequency of services, particularly in the peak periods. Since we came in, we have increased the morning peak services on Gold Coast to Brisbane services by 30 per cent—a 30 per cent increase in morning peak services—and there has been a 40 per cent increase in the afternoon peak services. That is a great improvement for those passengers. Across the network there have been substantial increases and, again, in January this year 1,000 additional weekly services were brought on to the system.

Mr GRANT: I have a question once again for the minister with respect to funding. Could the minister please detail funding associated with the Springfield-Richlands line and the community benefits associated?

Mr EMERSON: Let me thank the member for Springwood for his question. This has been a very successful project. It was a project that we inherited, but it was a flawed project before we came in. You raise a very important issue here in terms of the delivery of projects and ensuring we are delivering value for money for public transport users and taxpayers. When we came in—and I have been to Springfield just recently, in the last week or so, to finalise the last part of this overall project, which was the duplication of the Centenary Motorway there and, as part of that, the additional car park spaces as well.

The overall project was about \$475 million. That included not just the rail line but also the duplication of the Centenary Motorway and providing a park 'n' ride solution as well. That rail project included a 9.5 kilometre dual track and two new rail stations at Springfield and Springfield Central near the Orion shopping centre. The rail journey from Springfield Central into Brisbane city is approximately 40 minutes. I know when I was out there talking to locals they were very excited by that. Since opening in early December last year, more than 450,000 passengers have used the new Springfield and Springfield Central train stations. They are using the two new train stations but, importantly, they are using the car park spaces.

It is important to remember where we were when we came into office, because this had been planned by the previous government but it had planned to fail. They put in far too few car park spaces. It was quite amazing to me as the shadow minister for transport to be lobbied by the Labor member for Bundamba to try to correct it if we won office. It was an extraordinary situation to have the member for Bundamba concede that the then transport minister, her now leader Anastacia Palaszczuk, had rebuffed her moves to get additional car park spaces into Springfield Central Station. Repeatedly she said to me that it is crazy; it is madness. They are just planning to fail. There will not be enough car park spaces. When we came into office we looked at this bungled project in terms of the inadequate car park spaces and we worked to deliver 400 additional car park spaces. When I visited the other day I was told that with those additional 400 car park spaces the car park is 90 per cent full on most days. Imagine what it would have been like if we had kept to Labor's plan—the plan that Labor's own local member said was a plan to fail and needed additional car park spaces.

We put those additional car park spaces in. As I mentioned, what we also did was put in additional duplication at the Centenary Motorway. Again, while we want more and more people to take public transport, we cannot ignore the reality that many people will choose, for a variety of reasons, to use their car. We also did the duplication of the Centenary Motorway. The important thing here is we inherited a project that was going to cost \$475 million. We put in those extra car parks, we put in the duplication of the Centenary Motorway and we delivered it for \$475 million by better planning, ensuring we were not wasting taxpayers' money. We delivered extra lanes on the motorway and extra car park spaces at the same cost as Labor was going to deliver the railway station. We did not have those kinds of problems that the Labor member for Bundamba had urged the previous government to fix and had urged the previous transport minister to fix but had been ignored. We have come in, looked at the problem and delivered a solution.

Mr GRANT: The next question I have relates to new generation rolling stock. Minister, can you please provide detail of any savings related to the new generation rolling stock project?

Mr EMERSON: Thank you, member for Springwood. This is an exciting project. It is a \$4.4 billion project which delivers 75 new six-car trains to South-East Queensland. We expect those first trains to be delivered by late 2015 and operational in 2016. We expect that we will retire some of our older rolling stock and we will see an expansion of our existing fleet by about 30 per cent. As I said, these are six-car trains. The important thing you ask, member for Springwood, is about savings. Compare and contrast again with what Labor delivered. We are delivering these trains at almost half the cost of what Labor paid. That means that roughly we are saving as part of this contract close to \$1 billion. That is a marked contrast between Labor's plan—a plan, again, of the former transport minister and now Leader of the Opposition. We are delivering a project that saves almost a billion dollars. We are delivering these trains at almost half the cost of what Labor was planning to do.

The new generation rolling stock project involves a number of components—as I said, construction and delivery of 75 new six-car trains. As I said, delivery will occur in late 2015 and we expect the first ones to be on the network in 2016 in service. There is the construction of a new purpose-built maintenance centre at Ipswich, at Wulkuraka. I have visited that centre—it is well underway—with the member for Ipswich West, Sean Choat. That maintenance facility will be set up in time for the first delivery of the new trains. Again, it will provide maintenance for those trains over the next 30 years. There is also associated integration works and local upgrades.

The project will see the creation of 500 full-time jobs for Ipswich and Brisbane during the construction and delivery, with 150 ongoing full-time jobs at the Wulkuraka maintenance centre. It is estimated there will be 1,500 indirect jobs created as a result of the project. The successful consortium comprises Bombardier Transportation, John Laing, ITOCHU Corporation and UBERIOR. As I said, I have already been to Wulkuraka but clearing works have begun. They were undertaken from late January to March this year. When I visited the site it was well and truly underway. We are delivering a project that will see a 30 per cent expansion of the fleet and delivering trains at almost half the cost of what Labor planned to do. It shows the kind of waste that we saw under Labor and the mismanagement we saw under Labor. We are delivering a project that delivers new generation rolling stock at a fair price for Queenslanders.

Ms TRAD: Minister, I know it is very hard for this government to accept questions. You are an incredibly arrogant government, but I am entitled to ask questions about the nine trips and free program and you have a responsibility to answer it. After all, you did get an \$80,000 pay increase in order to do it.

Mr SHORTEN: Chair, I object to the preamble here.

CHAIR: Yes, I think we need to be able to ask a civil question and hopefully you will get a civil answer. Can we start again, member for South Brisbane?

Ms TRAD: Thank you. I refer to the nine trips and then free program which the Labor opposition is entitled to ask questions about and you have a responsibility to answer, Minister. After all, you did give yourself a huge pay rise—

CHAIR: Member for South Brisbane, where is that in the SDS?

Ms TRAD: I am referring to question on notice 355—

CHAIR: Ask the question on the SDS.

Ms TRAD: Thank you, Mr Chair, I shall. Minister, I refer you again to question 355 of 2014 which was asked in exactly the same terms as question 211 of 2013. In your answer to question 211 you provided foregone revenue figures but in your answer to question 355 you claim that foregone

revenue figures cannot be provided. Minister, isn't it true that you have doctored the answer to the question on notice because it would not have revealed the fact that the LNP policy of nine trips and then free was underfunded and has gone massively over budget?

Mr EMERSON: Thank you, Mr Chair, and I will try to be civil rather than the responses that we see from the member for South Brisbane.

Ms TRAD: Well you have not done a good job so far.

Mr EMERSON: But, as you know, the member for South Brisbane has a tendency in these things to smear and smear rather than actually ask a question. That is her stock-in-trade. In terms of the question she is asking, again the member for South Brisbane refers to foregone revenue. Clearly the member for South Brisbane was not listening to my earlier response to members of the committee regarding the great success of the free trips after nine journeys policy. The reality is if you have a policy in place that encourages people to take public transport, if you have a policy in place, member for South Brisbane, that is an incentive for them to take public transport and then without that incentive those trips would not be taken—people would choose to drive their cars adding to congestion—there is no foregone revenue on that basis because the revenue from those trips would not be gained. In the absence of the policy, as I have indicated earlier in my answer, people would not be taking those trips because there would not be the incentive.

That is the great thing about this policy, Mr Chairman. It is an encouragement and an incentive for people. In one sense it is a reward. But without the policy in place those trips would not be taken. So the basis of the question is in error. To argue that it is foregone revenue does not understand that without the policy the trips would not be taken. The revenue would not be gained because the trips would not be taken. People would be choosing to use their cars. So there is no foregone revenue, member for South Brisbane. It is a policy as an incentive to encourage people to take more public transport.

We have done many things, as I have already indicated, Mr Chairman. We have halved Labor's annual fare increases and now we are capping them at 2.5 per cent, below CPI. We have put on a thousand additional weekly train services and 2,000 additional weekly bus services. We have brought forward the 20 per cent off-peak period in the morning and we brought in this policy of free trips after nine journeys. It is an encouragement for more people to take public transport, and this I think is what Labor does not understand. It is an encouragement, an incentive, a reward. To argue that somehow these trips would still be taken without the policy ignores the reality of what the policy is there for—to encourage people to take public transport—to take free trips rather than choose to take another form of transport. That is why the question is wrong and erroneous because there is no foregone revenue. These trips would not be taken.

Ms TRAD: Mr Chair, I refer again to my question because the minister has not answered it. Question 211 asked for foregone revenue which the minister provided in 2013—foregone revenue associated with the nine trips and then free program. That was provided by you, Minister, in 2013. The same question was asked a year later and you refuse to provide those figures, saying that you could not get the figures. Minister, why are you trying to hide the costs associated with this program? What is the difference between 2013 and 2014 that you cannot provide the figures as requested by the opposition?

Mr EMERSON: I will quote from my answer to the question on notice—

As advised the reference to foregone revenue associated is not able to be calculated given many of these trips would not have been taken without this beneficial policy.

I think I answered it fully. Given that the member has asked it again, I am happy to go through it again and explain again why foregone revenue does not exist in this case. Again—

Ms TRAD: Well then I will ask, Minister—

Mr EMERSON: Mr Chairman, if I could just answer the question.

Ms TRAD: He is not answering it. He is just repeating himself, Chair.

CHAIR: You are repeating the question.

Ms TRAD: Because he has not answered it.

CHAIR: Well, we are going to be here all day doing this. We are going to move on in a minute.

Ms TRAD: This is a parliamentary estimates committee.

CHAIR: This is estimates; it is not the parliament. It is estimates. The rules are different. You can ask a question. The minister can respond to that question, but if you keep asking the same question you are going to get the same answer.

Mr EMERSON: Mr Chairman, I am very happy to talk about it because, as I said, it is a great policy—

Ms TRAD: Talk about it, not answer the question.

Mr EMERSON: Mr Chairman, I am very happy to talk about it because as I said, it is a great policy. Imagine it in terms of when you are travelling on public transport. I am a regular public transport user. Many of the people who travel with me on public transport are Monday-to-Friday commuters who will benefit from this policy. Many members here would be seeing the benefits. The fact is that Monday-to-Friday commuters are seeing the benefits of that policy in terms of that free trip home on Friday, which encourages them to take more trips because it is free after that. Common-sense will tell you that without the incentive of free public transport they would probably choose to get into their cars, but the fact is that the policy has been put in place as an incentive.

To argue that it is foregone revenue ignores common-sense and ignores the reality of the situation. The reality is that this is an incentive, a reward and an encouragement. There is no foregone revenue, Mr Chairman. It is a policy that we put in place as an incentive to encourage people to take public transport. Those trips would not be taken without it.

CHAIR: Member for South Brisbane, I hope you have a new question.

Ms TRAD: Yes, I do. And common-sense tells me the minister is hiding. I refer you—

CHAIR: Member for South Brisbane, do not be hypothetical. Ask the question.

Ms TRAD: I think I have established it.

CHAIR: Ask a new question.

Ms TRAD: Chair, I refer you to question on notice No. 355 and I also refer you to question on notice No. 211. Minister, in terms of the nine free journeys taken for the period 25/06/12 to 01/07/12, the figure in the question on notice No. 355 is some 60,823 free trips; in your question on notice No. 211 it is 141,461. How do you account for this 80,000 journey increase between 2013 and the revision down to 2014?

Mr EMERSON: Just give me a moment. I will have a look at that question, please, Mr Chair. Thank you, Mr Chair. I thank my staff for their assistance with this question. In terms of this the member for South Brisbane is comparing apples and oranges. In one case it is the total free trips, and the other one is free tenth trips. Again I would encourage the member for South Brisbane to look very carefully at the policy to understand what it is. As I said, she has been all over the shop today in terms of her view about this policy. I am still not clear and I do not know if other members of the committee are clear in terms of where she stands on this policy. I have heard today that she does not intend to scrap it. I have heard that she does not like the policy and may scrap it. I am not sure where she stands. But the reality is overwhelmingly that this is a great success because it does encourage people to take public transport.

In terms of the numbers that we detailed in the questions on notice, they are the kinds of numbers that have been taken by people on public transport and getting those free trips because it is an encouragement for them to take public transport. As I said earlier, up to roughly 80,000 people a week are making use of it and getting free trips as part of an encouragement to take more public transport. What I do not understand is why anyone would be against encouraging people to take public transport. But I guess if you put up a policy of 15 per cent fare increases every year as your only public transport policy, you are not particularly in favour of public transport and that is why you might want to attack a policy that is an incentive for people to take more and more public transport. That is what we are doing. It is a great policy. It is a great incentive to people.

As I have said, the member for Morayfield should be out there in his electorate on a Friday morning telling commuters who are heading into the city that, 'Your trip home today is free, and every trip on the weekend is free.' If you are a Monday-to-Friday commuter, I can tell you that they are very keen on that. The member for Yeerongpilly would be the same. Member for Algester and member for Springwood, if you go out to your stations and tell them that coming home is free and that on the weekend they can travel free on public transport, they would do it. Member for Nudgee, if you head out to Geebung—especially with the new level crossing there—and tell people out at the RSL that they can travel back home free on the weekend as long as they are a Monday-to-Friday commuter, I

know they will see it as an incentive. I know they would take advantage of it because they see it as a benefit. I cannot understand for the life of me why someone would be anti a scheme that is an incentive for people to take public transport.

Mr JUDGE: Minister, one of the concerns that regularly comes up in my electorate is the issue of full access to public transport rail stations. I have heard before that the allocation for full access relates to patronage. But in reality, what demographic studies have been undertaken by the department to make decisions around which stations will receive full access? I am talking about disability access, senior citizens access and parents with prams. Stations like Fairfield, for example, which have a library, a shopping centre and access to medical facilities, seem to be ignored. I am just curious as to whether you rely on patronage alone, or whether you are looking at a more sophisticated demographic analysis?

Mr EMERSON: Thank you, member for Yeerongpilly. I do appreciate that question, Mr Chair, because it is an important issue in terms of our system. Just going back a few years, member and Mr Chair, unfortunately what we inherited was a system where far too few of our public transport systems, our train stations, had universal access, and that is a real problem. Not just for people with permanent disabilities and people with temporary disabilities, but also parents—mums and dads with prams. I understand that it is a challenge. When I look at the whole network, we have more than 140 stations across our network and I think, from memory, about 68 of them have what is defined as independent access, but far too few have the kind of access we would all like for everyone in our community. We have to make access to train stations easy. Under the previous government we saw a policy of investing money into train stations, but basically the view was 'make them prettier'. That is fine, but if you have a mobility challenge it does not help you to have a pretty station if you cannot get to it. It does not help you if you have the challenge of trying to negotiate a series of stairs down to a station rather than having a lift.

One of the first things I did when I came into office was start to look for a policy of how we could start to address this. It is not about making stations pretty—we obviously want to maintain our stations—but to actually start to look at making stations more accessible. We have done that. We have announced the first raft of those increases in terms of making stations universally accessible. The stations that we have announced now that will have that access include Dinmore, Alderley, Newmarket and Graceville.

You asked the question of how we analyse that and how we determine it. Obviously I particularly rely on Queensland Rail for this in terms of looking at what stations. The challenge that we face, because we have so many stations across our network that do not have that universal access, is we do have cases, for instance, where we have station after station without universal access. I am sure that all local members here who have train stations in their electorates would love to have those stations universally accessible if they are not already. I can understand that frustration completely. But when we started looking at the policy, what was important was when we saw a series of stations in a row that were not universally accessible. If you are more than a station away from a station that did have universal access—for instance, stations that are three in a row—part of the plan was to put universal access into stations in between so that people will only be one station away. Now, that is not a perfect solution, I concede that, but it is a question of having the dollars available. From memory, it would cost somewhere between \$1 billion and \$2 billion to upgrade all of our stations to be universally accessible, and because of the debt and deficit we inherited from the previous government we do not have that kind of money readily available. There are always, of course, competing priorities, no matter what community I go to, in terms of what they would like to see their money spent on. So that is why we have chosen them on that basis. It is not purely on patronage; it is about making sure that they are only maybe one station away from a station with universal accessibility.

Mr WOODFORTH: Just listening to all of those answers, I just wonder where patronage would be if you did not implement all of the policies you have, so congratulations on what you have done.

Mr EMERSON: Thank you, member for Nudgee.

Mr WOODFORTH: My question is in regards to the benefits of improved on-time running performance for SEQ commuters and a comparison of Queensland's performance as against the other states.

Mr EMERSON: Thank you, member for Nudgee. As I said a bit earlier, it has been great to be out there with you, especially with the Robinson Road overpass. I can still remember particularly going out to the Geebung RSL with you in the election campaign. I know that the then member was

there, and he had been lobbying year after year after year about getting that overpass in place. Along with the Telegraph Road crossing at Bracken Ridge, the RACQ had indicated that it was one of the most notorious level crossings. We said that if we were elected we would build it in our first term in office, and we are delivering on that. It is great to see that that work is almost completed ahead of schedule, because it does make a big difference in terms of safety and vehicle movements. The member for Nudgee will probably correct me on this, but how many minutes was it that people were waiting at level crossings to get through in cars?

Mr WOODFORTH: A maximum of 16 minutes.

Mr EMERSON: Sixteen minutes; a very long time. But we are doing it. Coming back to your question in terms of on-time running, when we came into office, member for Nudgee, we had a situation where we inherited a three-year low in terms of on-time running. On-time running basically means trains turning up on time and getting away on time, and that is the kind of thing that is important to people who are catching public transport: its reliability. We inherited a three-year low from the previous Labor government under the now Leader of the Opposition, the former transport minister. That was good enough for Labor, apparently. But we came in and we started a policy to see if we could improve that.

I am very pleased to say that, going from an on-time running of 86 per cent, we have now gone up to more than 96 per cent. That is a great result. I think I checked just this morning to see what the on-time running was last night in the peak hour, and it was 100 per cent. There are people here today from Queensland Rail, and they need to be congratulated for taking up the challenge that I gave them to make our system more reliable: they did it. But in terms of the figures themselves, member for Nudgee, as I said, Queensland Rail's on-time running is now at an all-time high. It is the best we have seen in a decade and it is the best on-time running in Australia.

I will contrast that with some of the other states as you asked. As I said, Queensland has gone from being among the worst in Australia to being the best in the country for train on-time running. The benchmark for 24/7 customer impact for the year to date result is at 95.23 per cent—just under 96 per cent. Sydney's most recent was just over 94 per cent and Melbourne's most recent annual report showed on-time running of 92 per cent. We have gone from amongst the worst of Australian metro systems to the best in Australia. That is a big turnaround and that is an important turnaround. As I said, it is the best we have seen in a decade.

When we released these initial figures showing that there was an improvement in on-time running, what was interesting for me was that some people were out there saying that it was only for the peak period. 'What about the off-peak period?' 'What are you hiding?' 'What are you trying to disguise?' Anyone who understands public transport knows that it is much more of a challenge to achieve on-time running in peak periods when it is busiest. What we did is—and no government has ever done this before—we released the off-peak on-time running performance and we saw similar improvements as well. It is great to see that we have gone from amongst the worst, in terms of reliability and on-time running, to being the best in Australia and that is a great result for public transport users, commuters and all others who use the public transport system.

It is encouraging people to take public transport. If they have a bad experience—and the reality is that when you have a network that is as complex and as large as our network you can always have a bad day, a challenging day, but it is important to look at the trend to look across-the-board and the reality is that we have now achieved the best on-time running in Australia. Thank you.

Mr WOODFORTH: Minister, you mentioned the bus network briefly in one of your earlier answers. Can you detail the changes that have occurred on the bus network to improve and boost bus services?

Mr EMERSON: Thank you, member for Nudgee. In terms of the bus network, as I have indicated earlier, since coming to office we have increased the number of weekly services on our bus network by more than 2,000—a 2,000 increase in weekly bus services. With the South-East Queensland network, a review was conducted with service changes taking place in January 2014. As I said, across buses and trains we have seen more than 3,000 weekly additional services and the government is improving reliability and frequency of the bus network and reducing duplication by delivering 268 bus route changes, 10 new bus routes, 322 new bus stops and an additional 1,600 weekly bus and rail services in that period, providing additional capacity as well for 778,000 passenger trips every week. Since we have come in we have seen patronage rise on several routes. Sections of the Gold Coast bus network, when we did this review, had not been reviewed for almost two decades as we started to roll it out in January.

In addition, passengers will receive a boost to public transport frequency when the Queensland government adds three more high-frequency routes to the Gold Coast. That will happen when the light rail begins on Monday next week—on 21 July. Passengers travelling on the Gold Coast will experience improved connections also between trains, buses and trams from the beginning of the light rail rolling out. These changes, as I said, are all part of our promise to revitalise front-line services and improve frequency, reliability and affordability.

Trains and buses: more than 3,000 additional weekly services since coming to office. We are working hard to improve the system. It was important that, since we had not had a review for more than two decades, to have a look at those bus services but to have additional services, particularly, say, on the Gold Coast linking up with light rail, because the light rail would deliver a north-south access. We want to make sure that we have those connections as well going east-west to service that. It has been a significant improvement to the bus network, a significant improvement to the rail network across public transport that we have been delivering since coming to office.

CHAIR: Minister, I would like to ask a question—moving on to a different subject—about the effect that the government's registration freeze has had on the hip pockets of Queensland families. Minister, what was the impact, the way you have seen it, after the introduction of the freeze?

Mr EMERSON: Thank you, Mr Chair. I know that it is particularly important to those areas, vast electorates like your own, that rely heavily on motor vehicles and vehicle transport to get around. Let us go back to where we were and what the situation was that we inherited in government. Under the previous Labor government, we saw the RACQ declare that Queensland was the most expensive place to own and run a motor vehicle. Under Labor's policies, we saw, in terms of registration for vehicles, light vehicles, a 30 per cent increase over just four years—well above CPI, member for Warrego. We made an election promise—I think I made it almost a year out from the election—that we would freeze family car registration for our first term in office. We kept to that election promise. This most recent budget, again, delivers on that promise.

So it is very much a stark contrast: a 30 per cent increase for registration under Labor over just four years. Our election promise that we have kept, a freeze on family car registration since we have come to office, and this budget delivers. Let us have a look at the numbers. If you are running a four-cylinder car, we would have saved almost \$50 compared to what it would have been under the previous government—just going up to the normal increases of CPI. It is \$72 for a six-cylinder and \$98 for an eight-cylinder car. So they are significant differences. But what is important in terms of these numbers is also very much the contrast. I have mentioned the compare and contrast for public transport users: where we were and what we have delivered. Fifteen per cent fare increases every year under Labor, capping it at 2.5 per cent below CPI under us. For motorists, a 30 per cent increase over four years; a freeze of the family car registration under us: very much a compare and contrast. Labor's transport minister, now Leader of the Opposition, was part of a government that delivers 30 per cent increases over just four years. The LNP is delivering a freeze on family car registration and this budget delivers again on that promise this year, with real savings compared to what would have been the case under Labor. Obviously, a freeze means well below CPI.

Ms TRAD: My question is directed to Mr Scales. Mr Scales, can you please advise the committee how much the department of transport has received in revenue from the credit card surcharge on registration?

Mr Scales: Thank you for the question. There are two surcharges. One is 0.4 per cent. The other is 1.4 per cent if you use an Amex credit card. Clearly, I will not have those figures to hand. Rather than just estimate them, would it be okay if I answer that before the end of the session?

Ms TRAD: Yes, okay. That would be great.

Mr Scales: There are just two levels.

Ms TRAD: Can I please have them, Mr Scales, for the total for each level?

Mr Scales: Yes.

Ms TRAD: Okay. Minister, going back to the discrepancy between your response to exactly the same question asked in 2013 and in 2014 about the nine trips and free program, will you please advise the committee if you would be prepared to supply a response to question on notice No. 355 in exactly the same manner as your response to question on notice No. 222 in relation to the number of free journeys?

Mr EMERSON: Thank you, member for South Brisbane. I have been asked this a third time but, for the third time, I will respond again. The member keeps asking about forgone revenue. While it is a bit tedious, I have to admit, to explain it again I am more than happy to and to do it again and

make the point again. When you are talking about forgone revenue, you are talking about something that would have happened no matter what. Again, the aim of the policy is to encourage people to take public transport. It is an incentive. We are keen to get more people to take public transport. That is why we scrapped—killed off—Labor's policy of 15 per cent fare increases. We got rid of it. Again, I pledge that we will not be going back to the bad old days of Labor and 15 per cent fare increases. That was Labor's policy—a secret policy before the 2009 election. Read their budget papers. They promised in their budget that fares would only go up by CPI. That is what they promised before an election and, after the election, 15 per cent fare increases. Before an election, a promise of CPI; after an election, 15 per cent fare increases every year. That is why you cannot believe them in terms of those things. There is a whole series—and this is not the place to go into them—but, as we know there was a whole series of election promises. They denied before an election and then came out.

We made a very clear promise before the election that we would put in a policy of free trips after nine journeys. We kept to our election promise. It has been a very successful policy. It is interesting, because while some in Labor clearly are very much against this policy—very much against this policy—some in Labor are actually very positive about this policy, very keen on it, very keen to see it and understand the value of this policy, understand that it is an incentive to get people to take public transport. As I have said, for weeks we have seen the numbers of increasing. We are getting about 80,000 people a week who are currently getting free trips.

I make the point, as I said, that there are some in Labor who are anti this policy. Some clearly are not clear of what their stand is about this policy and we have seen that again today. But it is interesting for me that, after we introduced this policy, we did have one person in Labor who acknowledged that it was a good policy—someone in Labor who saw the value of it, who saw that was an incentive for people to take public transport, saw that it was an encouragement to get more people to take public transport, to get them out of their cars, to ease congestion. That person said, in terms of this policy, in terms of what we were doing—and I quote from ABC Radio of 2 July 2012, four months after we came in and obviously just straight after we introduced the policy coming in place—they said that our record, what we were doing, they have done nine trips and free, 'I think that will be welcomed with commuters as well.'

I am quoting from an interview with Rebecca Levingstone on ABC, 2 July, by the then and now Leader of the Opposition, Annastacia Palaszczuk—'I think that will be welcomed with commuters as well.' That is the view of the now Leader of the Opposition acknowledging that, as a policy, it works and it works well. It is a policy that is an incentive for people to take public transport, that encourages people to take public transport. If even the Leader of the Opposition understands the value of encouraging incentives to get people to take public transport, understands the value that, if they were not taking public transport, they may be in their cars and causing and adding to congestion. I find it extraordinary that anyone could be against this policy. I do not understand why people can be so anti such a great policy as our free trips after nine journeys policy.

CHAIR: Thank you. Member for Yeerongpilly?

Mr JUDGE: Minister, with the fare increases, the 2.5 per cent you have spoken about earlier, the average wage increase across the Public Service is about 2.2 per cent. There is no doubt that public servants use the rail network quite frequently in the mornings. So it seems to be that public transport costs are going up for those people. We accept the reality of the cost of running the public transport network. Brisbane has one of the most expensive public transport systems in Australia. So, no doubt, it is a challenge into the future. One of the issues that came up recently was when I was contacted by a number of students about the tertiary transport concession cards. There seems to be a delay in the rollout of the cards. Can you explain how you have managed that for those particular students? They are very vulnerable. There is an argument that there needs to be a greater grace period allowed to enable students to access public transport.

Mr EMERSON: Thank you, member for Yeerongpilly. I appreciate the question. In terms of the tertiary concession card, let me just go back to where we were and why we made this decision. If I go back to my days when I was at university at UQ, universities used to issue student cards every year. In fact, my daughter takes great mirth in looking at how I look from year to year in my student cards from my times at university. Nowadays, they get issued one card for the term of their course. So if you enrol in, say, 2012 or 2014 for a five-year course—one of the longer courses—but you drop out after one year, you still have that card that shows that you are a full-time student for five years.

The challenge was that we had people who had started working full-time and were no longer full-time students jumping on our public transport system as students. We estimated those eligible to be about 85,000 full-time students. What we were seeing was about 150,000 on the system.

Passengers were describing students in suits. They would see them get off the bus in the morning and touch off. The yellow light would come on indicating they were getting a concession and clearly they were heading off to work. We had to deal with this issue. They were no longer students. It did not show that they were still full-time students that year because they were being issued cards for a lengthy period of time.

To deal with the problem we decided to bring in a tertiary transport concession card. This system was already being used in other parts of Queensland, but not in South-East Queensland. We announced it in February but said we would have a grace period until 1 July. We started to work on that and started rolling out the system.

There has not been any backlog. I have seen those comments being made by people on Facebook and Twitter. I am sure members know that what happens on Facebook, Twitter and social networking does not necessarily always equate to the reality of the situation. Some 64,000 cards have been issued. By the time we got to the 1 July deadline roughly about 60,000 cards had been issued.

When I saw the concerns raised about a backlog, I checked it out. We said on the website that the turnaround time would be 15 working days. When I checked we were actually delivering them in about 10 days. There was no backlog as such.

I understand completely that students have busy lives. While 60,000 had put their applications in some may have put them in at the last moment. I easily understand that. I was like that when I was a student. That is not surprising. The most recent figures I have is that about 62,000 applications have been processed and we are going through more than 60,000. So we are waiting to see where we go with that.

In terms of the issue raised by the member for Yeerongpilly in relation to concerns, I understand that there have been very few complaints. We have more than 60,000 cards already issued. Interestingly, since that grace period ended on 1 July we have had a total of 73 fines. Maybe that is good because people may have decided not to ignore the system.

I will give you an example of someone who was fined. I asked the department to look at some examples of people who had been fined. Two senior officers were travelling outbound on the Springfield line when they intercepted a 31-year-old male travelling on a concession card. He had an expired student ID card and admitted to not studying anymore. When asked if he knew he was committing an offence he answered yes. He also advised that he had asked his friend to buy him a concession go card because he did not study anymore.

About 150,000 people were claiming it and probably about 85,000 were entitled to it. As I said the time, the misuse and rorting that we are aiming to eliminate we estimate was probably costing taxpayers about \$8 million a year. These are people who are claiming concessions that they were no longer entitled to.

There was an issue that came up earlier about the definition of full-time student. The definition had been in place for some time. It was about contact hours. This definition was put in place by the Labor government. I looked at it and what courses were. I said that I did not think that contact hours was the best definition for full-time student so I changed it. If a university deems someone a full-time student, irrespective of their contact hours, we class them as a full-time student. Obviously some courses have more contact hours than others.

CHAIR: The committee will adjourn for 30 minutes and we will resume the examination of the estimates of the Minister for Transport after the break.

Proceedings suspended from 10.49 to 11.19am



CHAIR: The estimates hearing of the Transport, Housing and Local Government Committee is now resumed. We will continue with the examination of the estimates for the Minister for Transport and Main Roads. I call the member for Yeerongpilly.

Mr JUDGE: Minister, coal dust management is a big issue in the Yeerongpilly electorate and, no doubt, through the broader network that carries coal fleets. Regarding the veneering system that has been implemented since the Newman government came into place, and we thank you for that, the Australian Senate committee report recommended fully covering coal wagons. I wanted to get an answer from you in relation to the government's commitment to achieving that objective, and further the veneering from pit to port and the likelihood of veneering occurring from port back to pit, because

so-called empty coal wagons are not really empty; they do carry remnants of coal and electors are rightly concerned about the health implications of that. That has been dealt with quite conclusively in the Senate report. Could you provide some information about the future direction by the transport department in relation to that?

Mr EMERSON: I thank the member for Yeerongpilly for his question. I know it is an issue that is being raised by yourself and others. I do thank you for the acknowledgement that rather than ignoring the issue we have worked with the industry and community to look for solutions. The veneering is obviously part of that solution. Let me go back and talk through a few things, if I can, Mr Chair. I did see air quality monitoring for March to May 2013. The final air quality report was independently peer reviewed. It found that no data reviewed had been above the relevant ambient air quality objectives. That is the broader thing. The South West System User's Group developed and publicly launched a coal dust management plan for the West Moreton rail network in November 2013. The Department of Science, Information Technology, Innovation and the Arts undertook air quality monitoring between March and May 2013 to assess the health and the nuisance impacts at seven sites along the rail corridor. Monitoring occurred to assess the effectiveness of the commencement of veneering. DSITIA's final air quality report was independently, as I said, peer reviewed by Dr Neville Bofinger, confirming the study used appropriate methodology, experimental design and data analysis.

As I said, veneering began and commenced at New Acland Mine in May 2013, with all other mines commencing veneering by the end of December 2013. A 12-month program of additional air quality monitoring commenced in March 2014 at Cannon Hill, at Fairfield and at Toowoomba. We have seen continuous monitoring occurring at Cannon Hill with near-real-time data published to the Department of Environment and Heritage Protection's live air data web page. Data is updated hourly and can be accessed by members of the public. None of the data reviewed has been above the relevant ambient air quality objectives. To date, no coal dust monitoring carried out on the West Moreton rail system has produced any results above EPP air quality objectives. The industry continues to collaborate and consult with government on the management of coal dust matters. We have shown our good faith in this already as a government and I think we will continue to do that.

Member for Yeerongpilly, you mentioned the federal government. In August 2013, the Australian Senate Community Affairs References Committee report made a recommendation to the Australian government in its standing committee on environment and water that industry be required to implement covers on all coal wagon fleets. Such recommendations are for consideration by the Australian government and state jurisdictions through the Council of Australian Governments process, but COAG has yet to consider those matters. It is still something to be considered. Again, I think as a government we have demonstrated that, rather than just ignoring the issue, we have come in and we have started to work with industry. I think the veneering is a good example of us working with the industry.

In terms of the issue you asked about veneering, and I have inspected the ports at both ends at various times, I do know that there are certain procedures obviously after the coal is emptied in terms of clearing out the wagons. As I said, we continue to work with industry, we continue to work with communities and we will work with the federal government as we go forward. I think we have already demonstrated a willingness to listen to the community, to acknowledge a problem and look for a sensible, sound solution and the veneering is a perfect example of that. Thank you, Mr Chair.

CHAIR: Thank you, Minister. I want to cover the issue of registration and put two things together: the registration costs in Queensland compared to other Australian states and also, I understand, you are doing a lot to reduce red tape on things like registration to help out families. Can you outline what is happening there and the very latest numbers?

Mr EMERSON: Thank you, Mr Chair. As I have indicated already in terms of where we came from and where we are going, under the previous government we saw a remarkable situation where registration fees went up by 30 per cent in just four years. That was a massive jump of 30 per cent in four years. When we came in, we made an election promise and we delivered on that election promise to freeze family car registration for the term of this government. Again, this budget delivers on that. As I said, in 2012 Queensland was the most expensive place in Australia to own a car. It is interesting to see how far we have come from where we were.

An interstate comparison, as you have asked, Mr Chairman, shows that the total registration bill for a four-cylinder family car in Queensland is now the third lowest in the nation, behind New South Wales, Victoria, the Northern Territory, South Australia and the Australian Capital Territory. What we had before was the RACQ declaring that Queensland was the most expensive place to own and run a

motor vehicle. We made an election promise and we have ended those massive increases by Labor. We have frozen family car registration. The comparison now shows that the total registration bill for a four-cylinder family car in Queensland is now the third lowest in the nation, behind New South Wales, Victoria, the Northern Territory, South Australia and the Australian Capital Territory. Six-cylinder private vehicles are now the sixth lowest in Australia, with only Tasmania cheaper. Of course, the family car registration is in place in this budget from 1 July 2012 until 30 June 2015. From 1 July 2012, the registration freeze applied to light vehicles used for private purposes, so family vehicles, basically. Over the three years of the freeze period, registration operators will save \$48 or almost \$50 for a four-cylinder car, more than \$70 for a six-cylinder car and more than almost \$100 for an eight-cylinder vehicle per year. When you consider that the total number of vehicles registered in Queensland, as of the end of last financial year, was almost 4.8 million, that means there is a lot of savings out there for a lot of people, particularly when you compare and contrast to what Labor was doing.

In terms of the second part of your question about reducing red tape to help out with registration, the Department of Transport and Main Roads has implemented a number of initiatives to reduce red tape and benefit families in relation to vehicle registration. We have an online tool to check the registration status of a vehicle—and that has been delivered from January 2014—to easily check the registration expiry date of vehicles anywhere, any time. Further initiatives have been delivered to benefit families, industry and the broader community. They include the removal of registration labels from light vehicles, benefitting 4.4 million vehicle owners a year, many of which are obviously families. This is not something that is new in Australia. If you travel around Australia, many of the states have already got rid of their rego stickers. Many people come to me and say one of the great frustrations is trying to get rid of the old rego sticker and putting on the new one. Other states have got rid of them and we are just bringing Queensland into the 21st century with this as well.

Introducing a direct debit payment scheme in 2015 will provide new payment options and reduce the financial burden for customers. TMR, as I said, is removing the requirement for registration labels for light, conditionally registered and special purpose vehicles and dealer plates from 1 October this year. By modernising the registration renewal process, TMR could achieve savings of approximately \$3.5 million each year in postage and printing costs. Heavy vehicles and recreational vehicles will continue to use registration labels as per the existing process. As I said, these measures will benefit about 4.4 million vehicle owners, many of them families. Both in terms of costs but also in terms of convenience and red tape, we are working very much to help Queensland motorists. Again, it is another example of compare and contrast between what the previous government did and what we have been achieving.

CHAIR: Thank you, Minister. I call the member for Morayfield.

Mr GRIMWADE: My question is in regard to the new Queensland driver's licence regime. Minister, can you advise what sensible decisions the government has made to make the new Queensland driver's licence more customer focused in Queensland?

Mr EMERSON: Thank you, member for Morayfield, and thank you, Mr Chair. In the broadest sense, as you remember, we have worked to again clean up the mess. I think many of you here would be aware of the Auditor-General's report into the new Queensland driver's licence. It was very damning of that project undertaken by the previous government in terms of the complete lack of a sensible business case. It was something that we have had to clean up and deal with. I might ask the director-general if he could deal with that?

Mr Scales: Thank you, Chair, thank you for the question. What we have done on that, Chair, is we have reduced the capability for the chip that is buried in the driver's licence because there is a lot of functionality that was not required. The move to a less expensive chip from late 2013 allowed us to achieve an estimated \$2.4 million savings per year. In January 2014 we introduced a streamlined progression from P1 to P2 so licence holders didn't have to come back to the customer service centres, they could do the test online. Those individuals do not have to physically go into one of our 59 customer service centres. We anticipate that more than 37,000 P1 licence holders will directly benefit from that change each year. To complement the automatic P1 progression changes we did an online licence renewal service so provisional and probationary licence holders can renew their licence online, too. The implementation of new generation signature capture devices, that is a small plate, so the signature actually looks like your signature rather than a sort of jagged signature, we have started doing that and that will occur through 2014 and 2015. We are reducing wait times in our customer

centres, doing precision scanning and, as I say, we have reduced the functionality of the chip. It is still a functional chip, it still has all of the requisite safety features, but we have managed to save \$2.4 million in savings each year.

CHAIR: Member for Morayfield?

Mr GRIMWADE: Thank you, Chair and Minister. This is a supplementary. My young fellow has just got his driver's licence for the first time, being 17, and my next question relates to that. How has your department ensured that restrictions for young drivers are sensible and practical?

Mr EMERSON: Thank you, Mr Chair, thank you, member for Morayfield. I notice you have got a few more grey hairs. We have all gone through that experience. Many of us have got children. I am dealing with that experience myself. We are working to update and make sure that our driver's licence test, especially for younger people and new drivers, does meet our needs to make sure our roads are as safe as possible. I know as a parent you want to not only ensure that your kids are driving safely but also that other people on the roads are safe as well. That is an important thing. At the moment we have restrictions that prohibit young novice drivers from driving vehicles with qualities rendering them high powered or high performing. This is one of the things we have looked at in terms of the practicalities. Cars manufactured from 1 January 2010 are defined as high powered if they have a power to weight ratio of more than 130 kilowatts per tonne or an engine modification requiring approval. Vehicles manufactured before 1 January 2010 remain under the previous high powered vehicle definition. The new definition cannot be applied to vehicles manufactured prior to 1 January 2010 as power to weight information is not reliably available from manufacturers before this date. Limited exemptions for high powered vehicle restrictions are available in specific circumstances, however strict criteria is applied. These changes have meant that TMR now has a sensible way of applying these restrictions. For example, vehicles that were previously prohibited because they had turbo or superchargers for fuel efficiency rather than their performance are to be driven by younger people without an exemption. Further, the Toyota Landcruiser has also been exempted from the high powered vehicle restrictions in recognition of the fact that these vehicles are often used in the agricultural industry and having to continually apply for exemptions places burdens on customers and industry. I am sure that the member for Warrego would very much be aware of this issue. I know that a number of people from particularly outside the south-east corner in the regional areas were very much aware of this as an issue and we have worked to bring up, again, sensible decisions and worked with the department to do that.

High powered vehicle restrictions apply to P1 and P2 provisional, probationary or restricted licence holders who are under 25. Our aim has been to look for safety all the way, member for Morayfield, but also to achieve a sensible outcome. Where we think we can make sensible outcomes we have done that and I think in this decision, particularly in terms of those high powered vehicles, we have made sensible decisions based on the feedback from the community but also working very closely in terms of the department and those experts in safety.

CHAIR: I call the member for Algester.

Mr SHORTEN: Minister, I know that road safety is a huge focus of yourself and your department. Can you update the committee on what actions have been taken to make our roads safer and reduce the number of deaths of Queenslanders on our roads?

Mr EMERSON: Member for Algester, this is something that I am particularly passionate about, as you would be aware, so I do thank you very much for that question, through you, Mr Chair. We have worked to make our roads safer and reduce the number of deaths on our Queensland roads. In fact, I think at the beginning of this week sadly we did have 110 deaths on our roads so far this year. That is a tragedy. One death on our roads is one death too many. But in terms of comparisons, we are 50 below what we were the same time last year—50 below. From memory, we are about 16 or 17 below the same time in 2010 which was a record low year. So actually at the moment we have a record low road toll. That is something that is a credit to the department in terms of their efforts but particularly a credit to Queensland motorists who are really striving to do well. The director-general has just confirmed to me that it is 17 fatalities fewer than in that record year of 2010—17 below the lowest on record at the moment. We have a long way to go in this year. Road safety never ends. But we have to remember where we came from. In last year's budget we announced a record \$350 million Road Safety Action Plan. That covered a whole raft of issues in terms of grants, education, safety treatments and advertising campaigns. We have worked on that.

That program, that 2013-15 \$350 million Road Safety Action Plan, had 56 priority actions covering safe roads and roadsides, safe speeds, safe vehicles, safe road users and partnerships. One year into that plan all actions have commenced and eight are already highlighted. The highlights include, and I might touch on these, Mr Chair, by the end of 2013-14, 450 kilometres of wide centre line treatments expected to be completed on the Bruce Highway. Those who have travelled on that, it is actually quite an interesting area. If you go up to, say, the Cooroy-Curra stretch of the road you will be aware of this in terms of the quite innovative approach that uses taxpayers' dollars wisely but gets a good outcome. You will see that we have actually got those wider tactile strips now on those roads. Previously everyone would be aware of the tactile markings. The challenge with those, they did wake people up and alert them to the fact that they were crossing the lane, but often that was too late to avoid an accident and sometimes too late to avoid a fatality. By having just two strips of those coming down it is not a large additional expense but it actually gives an extra fraction of time to be alert and that has actually been a significant improvement in safety. Again it is not necessarily about throwing a lot of money at it. There are lots of people with very bright ideas out there, very clever ideas to actually make things much safer.

We have progressively installed flashing lights at over 300 school zones as part of that policy. I was just out at Stafford yesterday announcing the fifth one in that electorate. We have implemented the Join the Drive campaign many of you would have seen over the Christmas holidays particularly which embraced Queenslanders out there, got them to star in the ads themselves. This was a really innovative campaign. It was the first time in Australia this has ever been tried. I go back to where we were as we started this process, particularly that campaign. In fact, the road toll at that point as we started that campaign—and we launched that midyear, that \$350 million Road Safety Action Plan, and we started obviously gearing up for that—when we started all those things like the advertising campaign we were above the road toll for the same time the previous year. By the time we got to 1 January we were below. Obviously I stated those figures below. We are now 50 below the same time last year and a record low road toll. We have done a whole series of things.

And, of course, the other thing, member for Morayfield, is that your son will potentially face the new Q-Safe driving test as well. We have been piloting this new test at seven centres across the network. We have tried to make it a greater focus on those higher risk manoeuvres. They still have those things in the test such as reverse parking—reverse parking is still there—but we have put a greater emphasis on things we think are the risky manoeuvres such as merging into traffic or crossing across a lane of traffic because the reality is they are the kinds of things that get people injured, potentially killed. Reverse parking is important but no-one has really died from doing a bad reverse park. It is still there in the test, but we have looked to try to make it a safer test. I have spoken to parents and students about this and they are all for it. I haven't had any complaints about it. But I can tell you, as a parent I am sure you would want to have your kids as safe as possible and others as well. Thank you, Mr Chair.

Mr SHORTEN: Minister, unfortunately we are all aware that speeding contributes quite a lot to the fatalities on our roads. Can you update the committee on what the government moves are towards making our road rules safe and sensible in regard to speeding?

Mr EMERSON: Thank you, member for Algeester. I do appreciate that. Speed is a major cause of road crashes. It is one of the Fatal Five, as you would be aware. It is critical that Transport and Main Roads and the Queensland Police Service continue all possible initiatives to decrease the potential for crashes, including speed management initiatives. We have been looking at speed management initiatives such as in Queensland encompassing the three Es. You have heard of the Fatal Five, these are the three Es: engineering, education and enforcement. These all work together. As you know, we launched a state-wide speed limit review project. I initiated that. We hadn't had really that kind of review for almost a couple of decades in terms of a state-wide formal review process. We had a very, very strong response to that from the community. People raised issues about speeds being too low, too high or an inconsistency or variation in speeds—too many changes in too short a period of time—and insufficient signage as well. As I said, we asked the community to nominate roads for review. I know talking to MPs they had a lot of feedback coming through. We took that. We ran that consultation period from July until September last year. We had 3,300 submissions. It was very popular. People were very keen to have their say on this. We had, as I said, almost 3,400 submissions. In terms of roads nominated, 1,120 roads were nominated as part of those more than 3,000 submissions. We prioritised that down to 100 roads to look for review. As I said at the time when I announced that, this is something now for the safety engineers to go away and have a look at and see what people were talking about with that road and what we could do. Those 100 roads were chosen based on frequency of nomination, road crash data and local engineering knowledge as well.

I have recently announced, as you would be aware, member for Algester, the outcomes of the first round of the review. There will be further announcements shortly. The first 20 roads we announced out of the 100 and the remaining 80 will be released over the next months. We will see what happens with those. Many of the reviews have found changes to the existing speed limit are appropriate for the road function and the environment. Speed limits will be reduced or increased where the road environment does not match the current speed limit. Information about reviews and the reasons for decisions are released. We do it so that the public can gain a greater understanding of why the speed limit setting process works and what the policies were and the risks associated with varying or exceeding the speed limit.

On 17 April this year over the Easter period we also launched our new \$1.39 million No Time For Speeding campaign. We ran that also over the June long weekend. I talked with some pride of Queensland motorists achieving a record low road toll, but the work never ends. We have just had the finish of the school holiday period, but no matter whether it is school holidays or throughout the year, I do urge motorists to be safe on our roads.

CHAIR: I call the member for South Brisbane.

Ms TRAD: Minister, I refer to page 15 of the SDS in relation to South-East Queensland bus services. I also acknowledge that some 20 bus routes were cut by your government and 45 routes in terms of frequency and hours of operation also faced cuts. My question to you is: do you acknowledge that, as a result of these significant bus cuts, there are some people, particularly in the Logan, Gold Coast and Sunshine Coast areas, for whom you have made it more difficult or impossible to access a bus service?

Mr EMERSON: I do thank the member. We go back to why we do reviews. It is because travel patterns and population patterns always change. A significant review of our bus service had not occurred for many years in many cases. In some cases the same bus service was there for almost 20 years. The reality is that services do change over time. What we have tried to do is make sure we are putting services in place where they are required, and we have done that. As I have mentioned already, since coming to office we have put on more than 2,000 additional weekly bus services as part of more than 3,000 additional weekly train and bus services. As I said, that initial review added many additional weekly services and with extra capacity for over 700,000 passenger trips each week—so it is much more.

Why did we do it? As I said, we wanted to improve the reliability and frequency of the TransLink network—and we have already talked about reliability and how important it is to public transport users. We also wanted to remove duplication, simplify the network, improve underutilised bus services and deliver more services to where they are needed. With a limited budget we want to make sure that we can deliver as much as we can. We have worked hard, as I said, to end Labor's 15 per cent fare increases. We have tried to make our services more reliable and we have put on more frequent services as well. We have worked it out.

In terms of the changes to services across the south-east network, we have rolled them out in a staged implementation. We saw 268 bus service changes, we saw 10 new bus routes, we saw 24 removed bus routes, and we saw 322 new bus stops and 243 bus stops removed. An additional 1,600 weekly bus and rail services were provided as part of the initial review. As I said, overall, more than 2,000 weekly bus services and more than 3,000 additional weekly train and bus services were put on.

The challenge always is to make sure we are putting buses where people need them. A community's patterns change. There will be places where we have very few people using a service and other parts where they do not have a service but there is strong demand. I think most people would appreciate that if you do not review services on a regular basis—and the fact is that some of these services had not been reviewed for 20 years—you will see the patterns change, you will see underutilisation of services and some places that do not have buses that deserve them because they have strong demand. That is what we tried to achieve. The bottom line is that there have been 3,000 additional weekly train and bus services since we came to office.

Ms TRAD: Sorry, was that 3,000 or 2,000? You have interchanged 3,000 and 2,000 throughout.

Mr EMERSON: The figure of 3,000 is for weekly bus and train services.

Ms TRAD: Of those 3,000 additional weekly train and bus services, how many are additional bus services?

Mr EMERSON: The figure I have is 2,000.

Ms TRAD: How many of them are in the Logan, Gold Coast and Sunshine Coast regions?

Mr EMERSON: I am happy to get those figures for you. Let me see if I have some details here. If not, I will get them by the end of the session.

Ms TRAD: Thank you, Minister. Have you had representations made to you in relation to the loss of bus route services in Logan, Gold Coast and Sunshine Coast?

CHAIR: Of course—

Mr EMERSON: Thank you, Mr Chair, I will take that question. Of course I have people approach me all the time as the transport minister about wanting additional services where they had none and as we make changes—

Ms TRAD: About loss of services?

Mr EMERSON: As we have made changes we have had feedback from the community. That was part of the process—going back and doing community consultation. As I have said, when you have not had reviews, in some cases for almost 20 years, by definition you need to look at where the need is for services. In some cases there is underutilisation of services and there are other cases where communities have grown up but there are not public transport facilities for them. So we review the system, we look at it and we look at putting services where they are needed. If there is a case where it is underutilised but there is a massive demand somewhere else—that may actually not be too far away—we will look at that and take that on board. That is what we have tried to do as part of the review.

We have had feedback. Whenever we do these we get substantial feedback from the community about our plans. When we go out and put forward our suggestions—of course we do. The reality is that what we try to do is put in additional services—and, again, that is what we have done—and also put services where they are needed. There is no point ignoring the reality that there are many communities out there who have had strong growth in the last couple of years that are keen to get services. That is something a government does.

Ms TRAD: Minister, I have had very strong representation from the local Logan area, as you would have, in relation to bus route cuts. I know that a lot of commuters down there are actually seeking a commitment from your government to reinstate all of those bus route services that were cut by your government. Are you prepared to give that commitment?

Mr EMERSON: I thank the member for South Brisbane. As I have said before, we have gone and done a review based on the fact that in some cases we have not seen changes for over 20 years. What is important for us is to make sure we are putting services where they are needed, where there is strong demand. In some cases there were bus services that had very few people on them, very few people using those bus services. But there are other areas where there are not bus services and they have strong demand. The bottom line is, again, since coming to office we have put in 2,000 additional weekly bus services across the network and we have been delivering more frequent services across the network. That is what we have achieved compared to what was under the previous government, under the previous transport minister and now Leader of the Opposition. We have tried to increase both rail and bus services across the network—more frequent services. We have tried to make services more reliable. I have already demonstrated that in terms of some of the figures we have put in place already in terms of reliability, particularly our train services, and of course affordability. I do point out that people from Logan travelling Monday to Friday who work, say, in Brisbane would be saving substantial amounts of money. I am happy to get that figure for the committee in terms of how much they would be saving compared to what they would be paying if Labor was in office—

Ms TRAD: I thought you said you could not.

Mr EMERSON:—in terms of the affordability. That is a comparison of what they would be paying if Labor was still in office, if Labor still had its 15 per cent fare increases in place. That is what we have tried to do. They would be paying a lot more—

Ms TRAD: The answer is no, Minister?

Mr EMERSON: The answer is that people in Logan would be paying a heck of a lot more money—

Ms TRAD: No, the answer to my question.

Mr EMERSON:—for their fares if Labor was in power.

Ms TRAD: You will not reinstate those bus route cuts?

CHAIR: I call the member for Yeerongpilly.

Mr JUDGE: My question relates to freight and the movement of freight around the state via road, rail, shipping and even air in some cases and also the inquiries that are currently being undertaken—rail freight inquiries and coastal shipping inquiries. There are widely held concerns about the monopolisation of freight services. Can you articulate to the committee what price control mechanisms the government might consider and also how to prevent monopolies through those types of services?

Mr EMERSON: I thank the member for Yeerongpilly. I do want to thank the committee itself for its recent report on freight particularly in terms of rail. We are going through that report at the moment and obviously we will be responding to the recommendations this year. Let's just go back to what we faced. I released my Moving Freight strategy earlier this year. It detailed that over the next decade we will see a 70 per cent increase in the amount of freight movements around Queensland. That means we need to have policies and plans in place to deal with that. I am sure that the committee, through its deliberations, public inquiries and taking on information, is very much aware of these issues.

As I have indicated many times, I am very keen to see more and more freight being moved on rail. That does not mean that other sectors are not going to see growth as well. Obviously we are very proud of our trucking industry and road movements there. As a minister, I do want to see more freight on rail, and we are working to achieve that. Obviously, as I said, the transport committee itself has delivered a report and I am very much looking forward to responding to that report this year.

If you look at what we have already done—and I work very closely with my parliamentary colleague the Minister for Agriculture, John McVeigh. Already I have announced \$50 million for additional passing loops at Toowoomba and \$17 million for the deepening of those historic tunnels on the network that cannot really cope with the high cube containers. I can tell you that it is easier to dig down rather than to raise the tunnel. That is what we are looking to do. That is why I asked the committee itself to undertake that review of freight movements with a particular emphasis on rail. I think there are opportunities for us in terms of getting more and more onto rail. Obviously, we are very keen to ensure that we can deal with some of the issues and the concerns raised—and I am sure the committee has received those—from across Queensland about how the current system works and how we can make the system work better. I am very determined to make it work. Again, I do want to thank the committee. I know that it was a very big commitment from the committee to undertake that review. They travelled widely across the state, as they should, and they got great insight into what the challenges are now and also what the challenges will be in the future. I look forward to responding to that.

Mr JUDGE: As a supplementary to that, with all due respect, my question was really around the concept of monopolisation and price control mechanisms and the concern that, ultimately, the monopolisation or limited access to participate in freight movements will drive prices up in the long term. I am seeking a reassurance from the government about how you are going to manage that situation.

Mr EMERSON: Obviously it is touched on also in terms of the report itself. I am studying that report at the moment. We will respond of course. I am always keen to have competition in the sector as I do believe that it will help drive down the cost to farmers in particular. But we have to make sure we have a sensible plan in place to deal with that. That is why I am very much thankful to the committee for providing a comprehensive report. I will be looking forward to responding to its recommendations.

CHAIR: I call the member for Springwood.

Mr GRANT: Minister, I want to go to another road safety question, in particular to initiatives to influence driver behaviour. Can you outline how your department has revitalised government road safety campaigns with a view to changing driver behaviour?

Mr EMERSON: Again, as I say, I am very passionate about road safety and what we can do. I again thank Queensland motorists for doing the right thing so far this year and working well. The campaign on road safety never stops. I mentioned before that Join the Drive to Save Lives campaign, which was a new approach to road safety and an innovative approach. It was not just a campaign; it was a strategy to change road user behaviour. I mentioned earlier that, prior to the launch of the Join the Drive campaign in November, the Queensland road fatality rate was about 5.96 per 100,000 of population. That was for the period from 1 November 2012 to the last day in October 2013. The Queensland road fatality rate is now 4.84 per 100,000, and that is from 1 July 2013 to 30 June 2014. That is 24.9 per cent—almost 25 per cent—lower than the previous 12-month period. That is a big

change and a significant change. As I said before, think about it: this year 50 lives fewer will be lost on our roads compared to the same time last year. That equates to 50 fewer families grieving, and that is important.

The Queensland Road Safety Action Plan contained the commitment of \$19.8 million over three years. The campaign continues to target the fatal five: speeding, drink and drug driving, failure to wear a seatbelt, distraction and fatigue. The new emphasis is on community participation, action and engagement. We require the commitment of entire communities to make a difference to the road toll. We do, because it is not just individuals. Often you talking to your mate about not driving when he is tired or when he is drunk or telling him to slow down, that is all part of it. If you remember that Join the Drive campaign, it is very much about people in the community giving their message: what message do you want to send your fellow Queenslanders about driving safer? We launched that in November 2013 and it ran until January—over that Christmas period. That was a \$2.2 million campaign. As I said, Queenslanders were invited to share their message about road safety issues that mattered to them. They featured in TV, online and radio ads. More than six out of 10 Queensland drivers—63 per cent—recalled seeing the Christmas campaign. That is a good penetration rate.

Let me just go back on that, because remember when I talked about doing that campaign people asked, 'What kind of campaign are you looking to do?' Quite often in the past we have done a campaign that is very much a shock campaign. They have their place, but what all the research around the world shows is that, sadly, with road safety campaigns people can become a bit immune to them, become a bit blasé about them. What may have worked in the past may not work now. That is why we tried something completely different with the Join the Drive campaign. I think what you have seen in terms of both the recollection rate but also the actual road toll shows that it was a success. In those campaigns they featured members of the community—not paid actors, members of the community; real people from across Queensland talking about road safety.

The 'No time for speeding' campaign, which we launched at Easter and which was repeated in the June holidays as well, was TV, outdoor, online ads using interactive billboards for the first time. They could be personalised through the website. More than 1,100 people actually added their names to the billboards through the website. So they get their names up, again sending out that message, trying to engage the community in this. There was also, obviously, using social media, particularly Facebook, as the hub of the strategy.

Since the launch in November, there have been 69,811 pledges just on the Join the Drive website, 42,000 on the social media site, 92,000 website visits and 2,000 website submissions. So we have tried very hard to find an innovative approach. I think that has been a success but, again, the work on road safety never stops. It never ends. We are constantly going out there looking for different approaches, innovative approaches. I hope that the second half of this year will be as good as the first half on our roads. But any death on our roads is one death too many.

Mr GRANT: I have just one more question, Minister, on road safety, especially with respect to motorcyclists. How is the government making sure that road rules for motorcyclists are sensible and practical?

Mr EMERSON: I thank the member for Springwood. I appreciate that. What we have seen since coming to office is that the number of recreational motorcyclists registered has increased. So we are seeing more and more people getting on two wheels. The figures that I have show that recreational and commuter motorcycle use in Queensland is increasing. Registration numbers are up by 13 per cent from June 2011 to June 2014. That is up from 162,231 in the first period to 186,440. So we are seeing that motorcycle use continues to be popular and growing.

As you may be aware, I did release a motorcycle discussion paper and an online survey in late May this year seeking community feedback on proposed changes to road rules for motorcycle users. The survey was available on the 'Get involved' website for a six-week period and that ended just a week or so ago on 3 July 2014.

The topics under discussion were lane filtering, which would allow motorcyclists to ride at low speed between stationary and slow-moving traffic, acceptance of helmets approved under international standards and how a rider should sit and place their hands and feet when riding a motorcycle. That was a really interesting one, because anyone who has ridden a motorcycle knows that you have to take your feet off the pedals at some stage, particularly if you reverse your motorcycle, or push it back. But that was, strangely, against the law. I did not hear what the practicalities of reversing a motorcycle were. I do not know how people, who are reversing their motorcycle, keep their feet on the pedals.

We have had a total of 9,242 responses received. That is a pretty high rate. That is a very big response to a survey received over that consultation period with the majority of respondents indicating support for the proposed initiatives. Over 90 per cent were in favour of lane filtering, over 75 per cent were in favour of removing restrictions on where a rider must put their hands and feet and how they must sit and over 70 per cent were in favour of the expansion of acceptable motorcycle helmet standards. Again, helmets still have to meet the appropriate standards but, as I said earlier, allowing to access helmets under approved international standards.

The survey responses are being evaluated at the moment. Again, 9,242 are a lot of responses. They are being evaluated and will inform decisions about the future development of policies and rules for motorcycle riders in Queensland. If introduced, the changes will assist in reducing red tape and regulation as well as improving transport outcomes of motorcycle riders and helping to create a more efficient road network. So I am very much looking forward to that.

Obviously, Queenslanders embraced that survey. The number of motorcyclists on our roads keeps increasing. So it was a timely decision to do that. Obviously, it was welcomed by the number of responses and there were very positive responses in terms of some of the initiatives that we put up.

Mr WOODFORTH: Minister, I will let you grab some water because it is very important that you keep hydrated because you lose a lot of fluids when talking as much as you are doing today. How is the government making our school zones safer for our students?

Mr EMERSON: Thank you, member for Nudgee, and I thank you for your concern about my health. I appreciate that greatly. I am sure everyone on the committee and others can share that concern as well. School zones are part of our road safety campaign, really striving to improve the safety on our roads, particularly for our younger Queenslanders heading to school. As you would be aware, it is something that we flagged in the lead-up to the election. Probably about close to a year before the election I flagged this policy of rolling out flashing school lights at our schools. The interesting thing about this is that this had been talked about for years and years before we came to office. It had been talked about by the previous government. They always talked about doing it—rolling out a big campaign of these flashing school lights. It not happen. But we made an election promise and it has been happening. I know that MPs here have all received flashing school lights in their areas and we continue to roll out more and more.

As I said, our policy was delivering on a \$10 million major commitment to providing flashing school lights at 300 Queensland schools. Schools were selected on the basis of a risk analysis of school zones in Queensland and nominations particularly of problem areas by school communities through local members of parliament. Priority has been given to school zones with a significant crash history, a high level of vehicle and pedestrian traffic and higher speed limits or visibility problems. In addition to the 300 schools announced in 2012, flashing signs have also been installed at 126 split campus and multilane school zones. That is covering 135 schools. As of 30 June 2014, 177 school zones covering 205 of the 300 schools have had flashing school lights installed.

The traffic around school zones is one of the most complex road traffic environments encountered by motorists and students. Of course, speeding through school zones greatly increases the risk to children as the faster a vehicle is travelling the longer it takes it stop and the greater severity of the impact. The purpose of the flashing school zone signs is to ensure the safety of students by highlighting, reminding drivers, that they are entering a school zone. Obviously, flashing school zone signs reinforce the message to slow down in a school zone. It could save a child's life.

But this is a policy, as I said, that had been talked about for years—it might have been a decade—before we came to office. It was going to be happening. I heard about it for many years. It was promised over and over again. We kept to our election promise when we came in. I know that Mr Woodford, the member for Nudgee, and I know that other members here all received them. They are important to their local communities and we will continue to strive to meet our policy of 300 as part of our election commitment. We are delivering on that.

Ms TRAD: Mr Scales, can I just ask you in relation to page 5 of the SDS in terms of total expenses for the department, are corporate entertainment and hospitality expenses included in that figure?

Mr Scales: Thanks for the question, member for South Brisbane. Which part are you after?

Ms TRAD: In terms of total expenses for the department.

Mr Scales: Total expenses in terms of—

Ms TRAD: Hospitality, entertainment.

Mr Scales: Yes, they will be in there at page 5. They would be included in the revenue lines consolidated, I would guess.

Ms TRAD: Can you advise the total figure of that for the last financial year—the total expenditure by the department on hospitality and entertaining?

Mr Scales: I am sure I can get that figure for you.

Ms TRAD: Thank you very much, Mr Scales. Minister, I have a range of questions in relation to Queensland Rail. I am not sure if you would like to ask Ms Gluer up to the table if you need some assistance.

Mr EMERSON: Thank you. I will ask Helen to come up.

Ms TRAD: Good afternoon, Ms Gluer. Ms Gluer, can you advise how many staff work in Queensland Rail compared to March 2012?

Ms Gluer: Thank you for the question. As at 2 July 2013, there were 6,495.3 FTEs and, as at 30 June 2014, there were 5,878.8 FTEs.

Ms TRAD: Okay. Just in relation to the first figure, the 6,000 figure, that is for 2013?

Ms Gluer: That is as at 2 July 2013.

Ms TRAD: 2 July, 2013. In terms of the comparison with March 2012, which is what I asked—

Ms Gluer: My apologies.

Ms TRAD: Are you able to answer that question?

Ms Gluer: Yes, I am. As at March 2012—I will just get that number for you—since March 2012, there has been a reduction of 19.6 per cent FTEs and I can get the actual—

Ms TRAD: The actual figure.

Ms Gluer: The actual figure for you as well.

Ms TRAD: Can you please repeat that 6,000 figure—the 2013 figure?

Ms Gluer: As at 2 July 2013, it was 6,495.3. As at 30 June 2014, it was 5,878.8. Since March 2012, the reduction in FTEs has been 19.6 per cent and I have just got someone doing maths to give you the number.

Ms TRAD: All right. Are there any other plans for further job reductions in Queensland Rail, Ms Gluer?

Ms Gluer: Certainly I am looking at a whole range of how we can continue to improve efficiency, but as at this stage I have no plans.

Ms TRAD: How are you looking at improving efficiency, Ms Gluer?

Ms Gluer: There is no matter where I am not looking at how we can improve efficiency, member for South Brisbane.

Ms TRAD: You are not?

Ms Gluer: Sorry; there is no matter I am not looking at.

Ms TRAD: Okay.

Ms Gluer: As an example—

Ms TRAD: So job reductions could happen?

Ms Gluer: Further jobs could be done in different ways, but also the company literally just in the last month had a great result on its printing works with doing printing in a different way—a most substantial reduction. It has made substantial reductions in how it purchases everything from fuel through seating through a whole range of areas. I think it would be inappropriate of me to be ruling out any area for the future in how we can continue to provide efficient public transport.

Ms TRAD: Thank you, Ms Gluer. Minister, in relation to the appointment process for the Queensland Rail CEO, you will recall that last year we actually did discuss this at length. It was Mr Dawe who was actually applying for the job at that stage and remind me again: how long did he last in that position? Was it for five months, Minister?

Mr EMERSON: He was employed until he resigned for personal reasons on 9 January 2014.

Ms TRAD: Okay, so is that five months, Minister, just to confirm?

Mr EMERSON: As I said—

CHAIR: Member for South Brisbane, can you ask a reasonable question?

Ms TRAD: I am sorry, Chair; I seek your guidance. How was that unreasonable?

CHAIR: Where is it in the SDS?

Ms TRAD: It is about a statutory authority that the minister has responsibility for, but I am happy to move on.

CHAIR: He said that Mr Dawe was there. He said when he went. I think you can work it out.

Ms TRAD: Thank you, Mr Chair. Minister, can you advise how much the recruitment and selection process for the position of CEO has cost the agency over the last two financial years?

Mr EMERSON: The recruitment itself is a matter for the board of Queensland Rail and I might pass that over to the CEO.

Ms Gluer: In 2013 the recruitment cost incurred was \$209,155.70 and in 2014 the recruitment cost incurred was \$45,005.60.

Ms TRAD: Ms Gluer, I anticipate that that amount will continue to increase this financial year as plans are made to find a permanent CEO for Queensland Rail; is that right?

Ms Gluer: I am very fortunate that I am actually permanent at the moment.

Ms TRAD: Okay. I thought you were in a position for 12 months.

Ms Gluer: That is through to April next year, so at this stage the board has not advised what process they are going to undertake.

Ms TRAD: Okay, so you could remain there after April next year?

Ms Gluer: I think that will be a matter for the board and government.

Ms TRAD: Thank you very much. It was remiss of me: welcome back to the Public Service, because I know that you left Treasury for personal reasons as well. So welcome back.

Ms Gluer: Thank you very much.

Ms TRAD: In relation to Queensland Rail, Minister, obviously from the information provided by Ms Gluer there have been massive job cuts, almost a 20 per cent reduction in the number of full-time effective positions in the agency. Since the estimates hearing last year three people have actually sat in the chair of CEO of Queensland Rail. Can you advise when stability will return to the organisation and when you will start addressing issues in relation to falling patronage and also issues concerning safety in relation to the increase in SPADs?

Mr EMERSON: I would just take the opportunity to congratulate Helen Gluer on her appointment as CEO of Queensland Rail. Queensland Rail celebrates its 150th birthday next year and Ms Gluer is the first woman CEO of Queensland Rail in that 150-year history and she is doing an exceptional job in that role and I am very pleased to have her there.

In terms of how Queensland Rail is going, I think we have talked about that already in terms of one of the most remarkable turnarounds in terms of performance. As I pointed out earlier, when we came into office we inherited a Queensland Rail that had a three-year low in terms of reliability. We have changed that around to a decade high in terms of reliability. As I said earlier, from where we were to now we are now the most reliable metro system in Australia. That shows the kind of change in performance that we have achieved since coming to office. The previous government was very intent on having an unreliable service and not dealing with appropriate maintenance issues. They were very focused on massive increases in areas such as advertising and marketing, and we talked about that at the last committee hearing last budget. I gave very clear instruction to Queensland Rail to be much more passenger focused and much more customer focused. One of the most important things to do that is to improve reliability. In January 2014 we put on 1,000 additional weekly train services and we still did not see a dip in that reliability. You could understand that as a system comes on board with 1,000 extra services you may see a slight dip, but we have been able to maintain that remarkable reliability in terms of our services. So Queensland Rail is performing better than it was under the previous government under the previous transport minister, who oversaw a three-year low in terms of reliability. We have achieved a remarkable turnaround and Queensland Rail needs to be applauded for achieving that kind of turnaround.

Ms TRAD: In relation to page 17 of the SDS, there was a delay in the annual report for Queensland Rail, Ms Gluer, due to an audit by KPMG. Can you advise what the cause of the audit was?

Mr EMERSON: I will pass that over to Helen Gluer in terms of answering that question.

Ms Gluer: I will not be a moment.

Ms TRAD: You are right.

CHAIR: What is the number?

Mr SHORTEN: Page 17.

CHAIR: Page 17. What number is it, member for South Brisbane?

Ms TRAD: Yes, it is the SDS at page 17.

CHAIR: There are a lot of numbers on page 17.

Ms TRAD: That is right and it talks about Queensland Rail trips.

CHAIR: You do not know what the reference number is?

Ms TRAD: It is page 17, Chair.

CHAIR: You do not know what it is? Do we know it is in there?

Ms TRAD: In the annual report of Queensland Rail, Chair—

CHAIR: Are you talking about the budget SDS?

Ms TRAD: Yes.

CHAIR: You need to tell us where this is in the SDS.

Ms TRAD: It is on page 17.

CHAIR: Yes, but whereabouts?

Ms TRAD: 24.

CHAIR: Wrong pick.

Ms TRAD: No, it is not a pick. I am talking about Citytrain services.

Mr SHORTEN: I do not see KPMG mentioned in there at all.

Ms TRAD: No.

CHAIR: Moving on. Next question.

Ms TRAD: Ms Gluer, are Citytrain services included in the annual report of Queensland Rail?

Ms Gluer: Yes, they are.

Ms TRAD: So why was that annual report delayed last year?

Ms Gluer: If I could, member for South Brisbane, I will just go through a little bit of the history of the *Sunlander* which was the reason for the delay of the report, if that is all right, Chair.

CHAIR: Yes.

Ms Gluer: In October 2010 there was a project scoped at a cost of \$195 million for a 14-car set, and that cost was increased in 2011 to \$221.3 million. It was then rescoped in 2012 where a further \$70 million would be needed for a purpose-built maintenance facility and platform extensions that had not been previously identified. In December 2012 the project was descoped to provide a more efficient, value-for-money project with a saving of \$120 million—\$50 million in construction costs and \$70 million for a purpose-built maintenance facility that was no longer required. The first of the two refurbished tilt trains entered service on 28 October 2013 and the second in October 2014. So the *Sunlander* 14 project was scoped in October 2010 to deliver one new 14-car train upgrade to the existing Cairns tilt train. In December 2012 the project was re-evaluated, as I discussed just before. In September 2013—so after the financial statements would normally have been signed off and all finished for the year—Queensland Rail identified a number of serious issues in relation to the project, including poor project governance and failure to apply the appropriate accounting treatment to descoped approximately \$54 million of costs incurred in respect of works that would not become an asset—so they had been put to an asset where in fact they should not have properly been put there—and inadequate—

Ms TRAD: The total of that was \$54 million?

Ms Gluer: That is right; and inadequate reporting to the board regarding the entire scope and cost of the project. Identification of those issues led Queensland Rail delaying finalisation of its June 2013 accounts in September 2013—so the issues came to light after 30 June 2013—and subsequently led to the board approving the net write-down of the descope portions of the project in the amount of \$54 million in November 2013. Final unqualified accounts were then tabled for Queensland Rail in the parliament in December 2013. A comprehensive review of the project was undertaken and various corrective actions were identified, including improvements in procurement practices, project governance, project reporting et cetera. The corrective actions are currently being implemented and the matter is under ongoing review by the Queensland Audit Office.

Ms TRAD: Thank you very much, Ms Gluer.

Mr WOODFORTH: Minister, just moving on to customer service, could you please advise how customers dealing with your department are benefiting from revitalised front-line services?

Mr EMERSON: The budget shows that the 10-minute wait time target was exceeded, reducing to eight minutes for the 2014-15 financial year. So our target was 10 minutes and we exceeded that in terms of those wait times in that we did better than that. This current budget shows that we are reducing that now to an eight-minute target time. The state average customer wait time for 2013-14 for the financial year to date is six minutes and 34 seconds and wait times have been consistently under 10 minutes since we have come to office. Data based on the monthly average of 283,000 customers at our 59 customer service centres shows, again, that our wait times are consistently under that 10 minutes, but we continue to try to enhance and streamline our services by training staff and provide convenient online services.

There has been a 5.62 per cent increase—almost a six per cent increase—in transactions through self-service options and we also have four mobile customer service centres utilised across the state to deliver transport services to provide greater coverage and support in regional and remote areas. Let me give you some examples about that in terms of the improvements. In Cairns, for instance, in March 2011 the wait times were about 12 minutes and 35 seconds. We have got that now down to five minutes and 35 seconds—12 minutes 35 down to five minutes 35. In Greenslopes it has gone from 11 minutes and 22 seconds down to seven minutes and 37 seconds in March of this year. At Ipswich it has gone from 12 minutes and 55 seconds—almost 13 minutes—down to five minutes and 41 seconds. At Logan City it has gone from 12 minutes and 36 seconds down to six minutes and 36 seconds—almost a halving. In Redcliffe it has gone from 10 minutes and 42 seconds—again, almost a halving—down to five minutes and 29 seconds. So we are as a government working to revitalise our front-line services. You can see in terms of those numbers considerable reductions and we exceeded what our target was. In some of those examples I gave you—at Cairns, Greenslopes, Ipswich, Logan City and Redcliffe—you can see quite substantial increased improvements since coming to office.

CHAIR: Minister, how is the government making it easier for customers to interact with your department?

Mr EMERSON: Transport and Main Roads is a very big and very busy portfolio and in fact, probably in terms of interactions with government, it is probably the busiest of all of the portfolios. I just mentioned to the member for Nudgee in terms of wait time improvements. We are also benefiting people online. TMR continues to deliver new online services to allow customers to interact with Transport and Main Roads 24/7—24 hours a day, seven days a week. I can proudly say that over 58 per cent—almost 60 per cent—of customers are using this method. This is an increase of almost seven per cent of customers now using electronic self-service channels compared to 2013, so it is quite a substantial increase since 2013. I might pass over to the director-general to complete that response.

Mr Scales: As the minister said, we are trying to move a lot to online services. We have recently introduced three new online services in June—driver licence replacements so a customer is able to replace a lost, stolen or destroyed licence online so they do not have to go into a customer service centre; demerit points check so you will be able to check any demerit points online any time free of charge; and you can also request a traffic history report online as well. We are continuing to work on initiatives for self-service transactions. These three issues are just something that we have done very recently so we are getting more services online so you do not have to physically go into one of our centres.

CHAIR: Thank you for that. On the same theme looking at one-stop shop initiatives, can you outline how you are contributing and improving that process to make one-stop shop operations within the department?

Mr EMERSON: Sorry, Mr Chair, I missed that one. Can you repeat the question, please?

CHAIR: Following on from that question, it is really a supplementary insofar as the government's one-stop shop initiative. My question is: how is your department contributing to improving that process?

Mr EMERSON: Thank you, Mr Chair. We are committed, as you know, to the one-stop shop initiative which is being led by Minister Walker's Department of Science, Information Technology, Innovation and the Arts. We continue to contribute to the deliverables developed in the one-stop shop plan in 2013-18. One-stop shop is about making government services simpler, clearer and faster with the view to improving the services we deliver to our customers. The initiative looks at joining up services across all state government agencies, and that makes sense from a customer perspective particularly. They do not want to keep having to go from A to B to C to D to E. So we can do the one-stop shop driving an integrated approach where a customer can access information and services at one point of contact either by phone, online or in person. We continue to work very closely not just at a minister to minister level but clearly at a department to department level. I might get the DG to add some more to that.

Mr Scales: Thank you, Minister. As you said, we are working very closely with DSITIA. There are two pilots—one at the Lockyer Valley at Gatton and Scenic Rim at Beaudesert. We are looking to have these open and operating by the end of this calendar year. We are also deploying some of our fleet of mobile CSCs and putting more services into them to help this process. We are participating in the Boonah QGAP refresh which will result in online licensing and registration services being available in the council at QGAP. We are also looking at self-service kiosks and video pods. We are also contributing to the one-stop shop at a higher level. The object of the exercise is to take as much as we can out to the people and, as the minister said, just one place at one time.

There is also the initiative of the change of address tell us once pilot. So if you tell us once in TMI you are telling all of government. Also we are making sure that complaints and feedback are centralised so whether you are using the telephone or online you only have to tell us once about your address, for example. We are fully committed to this. We are contributing towards the two pilots at Lockyer Valley at Gatton and the Scenic Rim at Beaudesert.

CHAIR: Thank you for that. It seems like you will get a good result.

Mr GRIMWADE: Minister, acknowledging that Queensland toll roads are privately managed, could you please advise what the government has done to ensure the best customer service experience when travelling on toll roads?

Mr EMERSON: I thank the member for Morayfield. That is exactly right. Queensland toll roads are privately managed, but we have worked to make sure that the customer experience is better where we can. In August last year I asked my very hardworking assistant minister, the member for Chatsworth, Steve Minnikin, to begin a review into customer service issues experienced on Queensland toll roads. The review looked into the common complaints. I am sure as a local MP you experience these kinds of complaints. I do and I am sure other MPs do. That is why we wanted to have a look at these and see what we can do—complaints like customer service, fees and charges and difficult processes when travelling across multiple toll roads. The review team was made up of representatives from Queensland Motorways, BrisConnections, Brisbane City Council and Transport and Main Roads, as I said, led by my very able assistant minister, Steve Minnikin. I might get the DG to give some more details about that.

Mr Scales: Thanks for the question, member for Morayfield. We identified as part of that process a series of short-term and long-term initiatives. Firstly, we developed a joint Queensland toll roads website. We got the operators to commit to a joint customer service charter. We made sure that toll signage was erected at appropriate points in the motorway to advise you what the tolls were in advance of getting onto the toll road or toll tunnel, implemented better payment channels and consistent processes. That was on the short-term quick wins.

With regard to longer term initiatives, our colleagues in Brisbane City Council are looking at the reasonableness of fees and charges going forward. We are considering rolling up multiple trips and demand notices so fewer fees. We are also looking in the longer term at high-tech solutions for payment and toll road travel. If you bundle all those together, you get a reduction in customer

complaints by the state but also to our colleagues in Brisbane City Council. We are looking for improved customer satisfaction of payment processes and customer service practices. We are trying to get an environment for innovative technology to assist customers going forward. It is all about the customer and providing the best possible customer service that we can.

Mr GRIMWADE: Minister, to go back to some of those safety concerns we were talking about before—and certainly some of those have been raised around trains and public transport services in the Morayfield electorate—can you outline what is being done to make the public transport safer and what results are these efforts showing?

Mr EMERSON: Thank you, member for Morayfield. As I have said before, the LNP government is committed to ensuring public transport is not only frequent, reliable and affordable but, importantly, safe as well. The government has increased the number of senior network officers patrolling our bus, train and ferry network. From 1 August 2014, 11 more SNOs, senior network officers, will be deployed on the network taking the total amount of SNOs to 55. I can announce today that a further group of SNOs will be recruited and trained in the coming months, further boosting safety on public transport.

The SNOs will work alongside 66 Queensland Police Service rail squad officers. I do appreciate the good cooperation and close working relationship both with the Minister for Police, Jack Dempsey, and all the people from QPS in terms of doing this. In addition, the LNP government has worked hard to ensure all bus drivers can go about their jobs without fear of harm or attack. In fact, attacks on bus drivers have decreased by more than 20 per cent across the south-east and almost 50 per cent on the Gold Coast since 2012. Since the introduction of private security guards on Gold Coast bus services when this government came to power, driver assaults have reduced from 94 to 48. TransLink has also provided funding to a number of bus operators to retrofit the existing fleet with CCTV cameras including capital grant funding of \$1 million for Brisbane transport over 2011-12 to 2012-13 to retrofit 307 buses. This contribution was matched 50-50 by the Brisbane City Council and it retains the ongoing maintenance costs. Capital grants of \$53,000 were given to Caboolture Bus Lines to retrofit 16 school buses and it retains the ongoing maintenance costs within the existing contract funding.

What we plan to happen by the end of the year to support the Safe Night Out Strategy, which has been talked about, is approve options and analysis of a three-year trial for increased scope of services. That is a NightLink bus service to provide five Friday and Saturday night services on two additional routes—Fortitude Valley to Aspley and Brisbane CBD to Garden City. In terms of that aspect we are working with those additional senior network officers to continue to strive to make our public transport safer, more reliable, more frequent and more affordable.

Ms TRAD: Through you, Minister, to Ms Gluer: does Queensland Rail collect information regarding the cost of rail journeys taken for free after the ninth journey?

Ms Gluer: No, member for South Brisbane. Patronage is an issue for DTMR, not for Queensland Rail.

Ms TRAD: So you do not collect journey figures?

Ms Gluer: Not to my knowledge. I will just check. TransLink may but we do not.

Ms TRAD: Okay. I refer to the answer provided to question on notice 14, which is in relation to the cancellation of off-peak services, specifically in relation to 2012-13. I acknowledge that was an abnormally high number and the reason given for that was Tropical Cyclone Oswald. In the 2010-11 floods there were disruptions as well lasting as long as a week for some services. What was the cancellation impact at that time for 2010-11?

CHAIR: Where is the reference? I think it is in there because I think I saw it.

Ms TRAD: It is in relation to question on notice 14.

CHAIR: That is the question that came back.

Mr EMERSON: Just a clarification, please, Mr Chair. I looked at that question on notice. The question being asked by the member for South Brisbane refers to an event in I think 2010?

Ms TRAD: 2011.

Mr EMERSON: The question on notice refers to the financial year 2011-12 and obviously the floods occurred in the financial year 2010-11 so it is not actually in that question on notice.

Ms TRAD: Yes, that is why I am asking now, Minister. I am asking for those figures for that financial year.

CHAIR: Can you repeat the question, please?

Ms TRAD: Of course. In the 2010-11 floods there were disruptions like there were in 2012-13, as was answered in question on notice 14. In 2010-11 some of those disruptions lasted as long as a week. I am asking what the cancellation impact during that 2010-11 period was like?

CHAIR: The budget we are talking about now is 2013-14 to 2014-15 so that is outside the scope of this estimates.

Ms TRAD: With your indulgence, Chair, we have asked for information regarding finances as well as performance outside this financial year that have been allowed.

CHAIR: They are not allowed today. The budget we are referring to today and the figures are there is 2013-14 and 2014-15.

Ms TRAD: It is hardly a very transparent and accountable way of operating, Mr Chair.

CHAIR: That is what the budget is.

Ms TRAD: Of course. Why wasn't question on notice 14 ruled out of order then, Mr Chair?

CHAIR: I did not do it.

Ms TRAD: Okay. That is an excellent answer. Ms Gluer, in relation to how decisions are made about the cancellation of trains, who makes that decision and what criteria is used?

Ms Gluer: That decision is made by Queensland Rail. Member for South Brisbane, at any one time it could be a number of people who are contributing to that decision. Train control would always be at the forefront of that, but it could be a driver advising of an issue on the network. It could be a guard advising of an issue on the network. It could be a network officer advising of an issue on the network. So that decision could come from a myriad of areas, but train control would always be at the forefront of making that decision.

Ms TRAD: Are trains ever cancelled because they are running late? Is that one of the criteria?

Ms Gluer: No. I think what the member for South Brisbane may be talking about is when we ran a train express.

Ms TRAD: No.

Ms Gluer: Certainly I have no knowledge of cancelling a train—when you say it is running late, if the train is incapable of running we would cancel it.

Ms TRAD: Yes. But if it is running grossly late is it cancelled to advise passengers that it will not be there?

Ms Gluer: Can I just please check, if that is all right? With your indulgence, Chair, I will just ask Kevin Wright, who is the General Manager of Rail Operations, to answer that.

Mr Wright: If a train were running late and it was going to impact on significant other services, a decision would be made to cancel that train and look after the customers on the following trains. That decision is only taken when the train is significantly late and would have a major impact.

Ms TRAD: Can I ask how much is significantly late?

Mr Wright: It depends on what time of the day and how many customers are utilising the train service. So that decision is made dynamically through the train control centre and they would evaluate the circumstances at the time.

Ms Gluer: It would also, member for South Brisbane, depend on which line the train was running late on because of the consequential impact on trains following it. So it is all about making sure that we get customers to the destination on time, not necessarily the trains on time.

Mr Wright: It is about moving customers, not moving trains.

Ms TRAD: I understand.

Mr Wright: That is the stance we take.

Ms TRAD: Mr Wright, in relation to isolating the number of instances where trains are cancelled because they are running significantly late, is that able to be done? Is Queensland Rail able to isolate the number of cancellations due to that category?

Mr Wright: Yes, we can. We have our statistics and the reasons behind every train cancellation and every late service.

Ms Gluer: Indeed, member for South Brisbane, every day if there is a late service—and the good news is that some days we do not have any of those—we actually have a meeting to analyse every service that has run late to make sure that we can continue to improve the outcome for our customers.

Ms TRAD: Terrific. So, in relation to the last financial year, can I get the number of trains that were cancelled due to them running significantly late?

Mr Wright: I would be able to obtain those, yes. I do not have them to hand.

Ms TRAD: Thank you very much, Mr Wright. In relation to the full end of financial year results—because I understand that only a part result to May 2014 has been supplied in the answer to question on notice No. 14—when will the full figure be available?

Mr Wright: The full figure is available and it is approximately 96½ per cent on-time running. That is customer impact.

Ms TRAD: Sorry, Mr Wright, in relation to the number of Citytrain services that were cancelled.

Mr Wright: I do not have the cancellations.

Ms TRAD: Sorry, not cancellations. For the number of trains that were cancelled full stop, when will the full financial year figure be available?

Mr Wright: They would be available now, but I do not have them to hand.

Ms TRAD: Minister, can I ask that your department take that on notice?

Mr EMERSON: Fine.

Ms TRAD: Thank you. So there were two issues: one was the proportion of cancellations that were due to significant delays and also the full financial year effect figure—

Ms Gluer: Of cancellations.

Ms TRAD: Yes. Thank you very much.

CHAIR: Thank you for that. I call the member for Yeerongpilly.

Mr JUDGE: Minister, you have articulated that you have Australia's most reliable services but it has been made evident that we also have a very expensive service in Brisbane. So there are challenges. In terms of lessons learnt, I do not want to focus on the negative but the bus cut survey and the taxi subsidies were problematic. They clearly required re-working. They were not necessarily responsive to feedback that was given and they required adjustment. It was referred back to Brisbane City Council, do you recall? So the survey, in my view, although it may have had a quantitative outcome, did not have a qualitative outcome.

Our public transport system has a strong aspect of social responsibility in terms of dependency by people who do not have access to other forms of transport. This links in again to having full access to rail stations—not only rail stations but bus services and taxi subsidies and so on. How is the department improving its methods of conducting surveys? In hindsight, looking back at the bus cut survey and the taxi subsidies and the decisions that were made from feedback, how are you addressing those sorts of issues that have such negative outcomes for people who are heavily dependent on public transport?

Mr EMERSON: I thank the member for Yeerongpilly. Let's just go back and be very clear where we are now compared to where we were. We put in 3,000 additional weekly services. That means there are a lot more services out there for a lot more people. That is an important thing to be aware of. But I do not claim any government is perfect. I know that my immediate predecessor, the now Leader of the Opposition, at one point claimed that we had the best system in the world. I am always striving to make our system better, and that goes across my portfolio—always trying to make it better. So there are always ways we can continue to improve our performance in terms of feedback and such things. I have no doubt about that, member for Yeerongpilly, and I know that you would expect that to be the case. We always learn lessons from what we are doing and trying to improve.

I go back to the bus review again. We had a situation where we had not had a review for more than 20 years. You talk about customers wanting bus services. I know there would be members here who have bus services in fast growing areas where they had not had bus services previously and

there was strong demand. Again, the aim is to put buses where the demand is. In some cases there were bus services running where there was duplication of services or very few people using a certain service and other places where there was not a bus service at all. But always we can learn, and we should be learning. The department itself, as I have said to the DG on many occasions, should be a burning platform. It should be that idea that they can do better, strive to do better. That is what I expect from the department.

Mr JUDGE: I have a supplementary, Chair, if I may. This probably goes to the heart of what I am saying. I give you a very real example in Yeronga of the Fairfield aged-care facility, which is heavily dependent on public transport. Now their patronage might be low but their reliance is very high. It seems to me in the surveys that are being conducted by the department of transport that those sorts of issues are being overlooked and ignored, with dramatic impacts on our senior citizens and on our people with a disability. Now, if you are measuring it on patronage alone, I respect that efficiencies are required, but there is also that social obligation. It just seems that that social obligation is continuously being ignored by the government. I am asking, in terms of service delivery, how you intend to address that going forward.

Mr EMERSON: I will give you a perfect example of listening to the community. This will interest both you and the member for South Brisbane.

Ms TRAD: I can rattle them off, Minister.

Mr EMERSON: A perfect example is the BaT project, because in your community—and the member for South Brisbane has a policy, as you know, to continue to put forward Labor's Cross River Rail project—what that means is that more than 100 homes and businesses, many of them in your electorate, would be razed, destroyed, wiped out as part of Labor's plan for Cross River Rail. So when we came into office we looked at putting in the BaT project. What that meant was there were no private homes and resumptions occurring—none in your electorate. When you take out more than 100 homes and businesses, that has a massive impact on our community.

Let's take a community like yours, member for Yeerongpilly. One of the challenges we faced as we strived to do that was about the survival and the decommissioning of the Dutton Park train station. Again, we went out for community feedback, took on board that feedback and we have worked with the engineers to ensure that Dutton Park can stay upgraded, but at the same time, member for Yeerongpilly, we do not see those kinds of resumptions that were going to happen in your electorate. So, again, that is a perfect example of listening to the community. It concerns me of course that Labor's plan remains. Not only would they do it if they were in office; but they continue to strive and demand that we do their plan while we are in office which would see more than 100 homes and businesses razed, including many of them in your seat of Yeerongpilly.

Mr JUDGE: With all due respect, if I may ask a further supplementary, I know the outcome that was achieved in terms of the resumptions. There were a lot of people in Yeerongpilly who were very grateful for the outcome. So I acknowledge that achievement. The question really is about the dependency that our senior citizens and our people with a disability have on the public transport system. It seems to me that the nature of the surveys that are being conducted are quantitative rather than qualitative. These people have a heavy demand on public transport and it seems to me their voices are not being heard. They are low in number and you are saying that these services are not fully patronised, but at the same time there is a social responsibility to support these people. How is Queensland Transport in its service delivery dealing with those sorts of issues?

Mr EMERSON: I will give a very clear example and again compare and contrast, because if Labor were in how power those people would have been hit with 15 per cent fare increases every year. The pensioners, the seniors, would have been hit by those 15 per cent fare increases. We have strived and, as you know, kept to our election promise and halved Labor's planned fare increases and also now capped fare increases at 2.5 per cent. Of course those concessions are still there for those seniors, but imagine what the case would be if Labor were still in power. Those seniors that you are raising concerns about would be struggling with those much bigger public transport bills because of Labor's policy. When you are hitting pensioners with 15 per cent fare increases every year, that is a massive increase and that is why we have worked to help them as well.

CHAIR: Do you have anything further?

Mr JUDGE: As much as I was going to get out of the question I have got out of it.

Mr EMERSON: With your indulgence, Chair, I think the director-general has some responses to make in terms of earlier questions.

CHAIR: That would be perfect.

Mr Scales: In response to the member for South Brisbane's questions on notice: the first question was: please provide the date all material for the production of the DTMR SDS was finalised with Treasury in preparation of the final budget? That date was 21 May 2014. The second question was: please provide the date the department became aware that the light rail service would not commence until after 30 June 2014? We got the official delay notice on 2 June saying there would be a delayed start of 30 June. That is the second date.

On the issue of surcharge fees, which is merchant fees for people who use our services, which was the second question on notice, for the financial year ending 30 June 2014 there was about \$3.5 million in merchant fees. That was a surcharge percentage of 0.4 per cent. The rate is set by our colleagues in Queensland Treasury for all of government. That applied to all services paid by credit card within TMR.

CHAIR: Thank you for that.

Mr Scales: The third one—

CHAIR: There are few more, sorry. We will keep it rolling.

Ms Gluer: Chair, if I may, I will just confirm that the number of FTEs in Queensland Rail as at March 2012 was 7,317.

Ms TRAD: March 2012?

Ms Gluer: Was 7,317.

CHAIR: Thank you, Ms Gluer. Mr Scales, do you have more to go there?

Mr EMERSON: No. We are fine.

CHAIR: That is it. Thank you, ladies and gentlemen. The committee will now adjourn for one hour. The committee will resume its examination of the estimates for the Minister for Transport and Main Roads at 2 pm.

Proceedings suspended from 1.00 pm to 2.01 pm



CHAIR: The estimates hearing for the Transport, Housing and Local Government Committee is now resumed. We will continue with the examination of the estimates for the Minister for Transport and Main Roads.

Mr EMERSON: Mr Chair, there were a couple of questions asked earlier that I said I would report back on.

CHAIR: Yes, Minister?

Mr EMERSON: I was asked about the number of bus services added on the Gold Coast, Logan and the Sunshine Coast. That was 1,121. Mr Scales was also asked about the total figure of hospitality and entertainment by the department in 2013-14. I am a bit surprised by this question, I have to admit, Mr Chair. The total for 2013-14 was \$9,181.39. I was surprised because that compares markedly with the situation for the last year of the former transport minister, Anastacia Palaszczuk—

Ms TRAD: Point of order, Mr Chair. You are not allowing questions about alternative years.

CHAIR: He is answering the question.

Ms TRAD: So he is allowed to answer about alternative years but I am not allowed to ask about alternative years?

CHAIR: He is answering the question and we will allow two years.

Ms TRAD: Okay.

Mr EMERSON: I can understand why the member for South Brisbane may be concerned about this answer. As I said—

Ms TRAD: It is about the uneven chairing.

Mr EMERSON: The question asked was the total figure of hospitality and entertainment by the department in 2013-14. In 2013-14, it was \$9,181. This compares and contrasts to the last year of the Leader of the Opposition and then transport minister. So it was \$9,181 last year; under Anastacia Palaszczuk when she was transport minister, it was \$62,000, so six times as much. It does make me wonder, Mr Chair, why the member for South Brisbane was so keen to ask the question.

CHAIR: There is not much fun in your department, is there?

Mr EMERSON: It is lean and mean and working hard for the public. I make the contrast that six times as much was spent when the current Leader of the Opposition was transport minister.

CHAIR: Thank you minister. I call the member for Algeester.

Mr SHORTEN: Thank you, Chair. Minister, I draw your attention to page 9 of the SDS, particularly in relation to marine safety activities for commercial and recreational vessels. I also note that you tabled a report into marine incidents yesterday. Can you outline the results of the department's efforts to improve marine safety?

Mr EMERSON: Thank you, member for Algeester. You are quite right: I did table a report yesterday. In 2013, there were 724 marine incidents reported in Queensland. That was down by six per cent on the previous year, but obviously we prefer to have a situation with zero marine incidents. Of those incidents, there were 945 vessels, involving 724 marine incidents. 404 were commercial vessels, 41 hire-and-drive vessels and 500 recreational vessels. I will hand over to the DG to complete this question, but I do make the point that it is very important that we strive to improve marine safety and often that is the responsibility of those involved in it. In Queensland, recreational boating is very popular, but the reality is that many of the problems we do face are because people are not doing the right thing. I will hand over to the DG.

Mr Scales: Thank you, Minister, and thank you for the question. The SDS measures mentioned by the minister are maritime fatalities per 100,000 registrations. The MSQ marine arm supports the reduction of casualties and incidents by managing the aids to the navigation network, so navigation aids in the sea, along our coastline and also in the rivers that recreational, commercial and trade vessels all use. We also have a system called VTS, vessel tracking system, that monitors ships within the Great Barrier Reef. Each ship over 50 metres has a transponder on it, so we can see where it is on screens in the VTS control room. We monitor the safety of commercial ships, recreational boats and also port pilot services in Queensland.

We provide on-the-ground education, enforcement and also marine incident investigations and pollution response capabilities. On the marine incident investigations, we try to feed the results back to the industry, so we can all learn. On pollution response, we are the first responder for the reef and in Queensland waters, and we have pollution control vessels at all the ports. We manage our waterways and ship movements, so we are looking at things like speed limits, buoy moorings, marine zones, aquatic events and any IDAS assessments and any assessments that actually develop the waterways along the coast. MSQ is trying to strongly engage with the industry and also recreational authorities. The government is rightly concerned about the safety of the environment and that was the report that the minister tabled yesterday. We have a number of response strategies in place to make sure that we monitor safety, but also with any oil spills or anything like that we are the first responder, along with AMSA, the national authority involved in this. We have a range of activities that we do, but it is all about minimising the risk to boaties, either operational or recreational.

Mr SHORTEN: Moving from waterways to motorways, Minister, with your department's unprecedented investment in roadway and road construction, can you outline to the committee what steps are being taken to improve safety around the multiple roadworks across the state?

Mr EMERSON: I thank the member for Algeester for that question. He is quite right: we have a very significant infrastructure program in TMR. As the QTRIP program details, we will see \$18 billion of works over the next four years. There are some fairly big programs, obviously, in the coming years, particularly in terms of the Bruce, the Warrego and other roads. We have responsibility for 30,000 kilometres of roads across the state. There are about 180,000 across all the state, but we have 30,000. In fact, as a department, we have the biggest state controlled road network of any state in Australia. It is important, of course, that we do have safety on our roads and we are obviously striving for and committed to a zero harm strategy culture within TMR. TMR has developed a road work traffic management improvement project with a vision of achieving road work sites that are safe for workers and road users at an affordable cost. I will get the director-general to elaborate on that, if that is okay, Mr Chair?

Mr Scales: I thank the member for the question. As the minister said in an earlier response, we have a program with three action areas: engineering, enforcement and education. With the whole program, we are trying to improve the safety of our road workers, including the traffic controllers, and delivering safe and reliable travel through work sites. It is important that people get through work sites

with minimum delays as much as possible. We are also trying to reduce excessive and incorrect roadwork signage that can sometimes be confusing if you are not used to the piece of road that we are working on; we are improving driver compliance with speed limits in roadwork sites, and we are working with our colleagues in the police on that; and we are achieving the above on an affordable cost basis.

As I said before, we have the three Es: engineering, enforcement and education. In engineering, we are looking at realistic and practical road speed limits, restoring driver confidence in the roadwork signage and hopefully encouraging innovation in roadwork signage practices. Nobody likes to see lots of roadwork signs when there is nobody actually working, so we are encouraging the private sector to come to the party on this and reduce the signage wherever possible and wherever practical and wherever safe. Action area 2, enforcement: we are increasing the speed compliance effort and increasing the enforcement of roadwork signage practice. If you see a roadwork sign, you can be assured that we are trying to enforce the speed limit through there as well. The third area is education: educating drivers on the consequence of speeding, educating our contractors and workers on the impact of poor signage, and educating our traffic managers on better signage practices is the third element. The project approach focuses on speed limit and roadwork signage consistency, while also creating credibility, therefore encouraging respect from drivers and voluntary compliance. For those who choose not to comply through roadworks, there will be consequences through more effective enforcement.

CHAIR: Thank you, Mr Scales. To add another part to that, Minister, while we must have a safe environment for our workers on the roads, it does seem as if at the present we have a very costly system. The lollipop people seem to be a major industry, whereas signs work 24 hours a day and do not answer you back. There might be a more practical way of doing it. Are we heading into a situation where the cost of some of these things can be excessive? Is there any possibility of a review? Are there better ways of improving safety around the work sites on the roads, and the speed limits as well? As Mr Scales mentioned, you are looking at some of the speed limits and removing some of the signs when they are not necessarily applicable. We have noticed a lot of that in recent times. You would be driving along the road and it looked to be perfectly good and finished and line marked, yet the old signs are still there. There is a lot of frustration out there.

Mr EMERSON: Thank you, Mr Chair. I understand that. Given the amount of roadworks, particularly in your area in terms of the Warrego, I can understand that. It is a strange situation when you are the roads minister. For a long time before we came into office, people complained that work was not being done; there was not enough work being done. Often when you are out there with a large roads project and program, there is frustration among motorists because there are delays while work is being undertaken. People understand that work needs to be done and they want the work being done, but they do get frustrated and that is understandable. People have busy lives and they want to get to work or get their kids to school. Of course, as the DG has indicated, it is very important that we have the processes in place to ensure that our road workers are safe in terms of what they are doing. As the director-general has indicated, we are constantly working to try to improve it. It is frustrating. It is frustrating for me when I am driving along and I see a sign saying 'slow down, roadworks are on', but no-one seems to be there. That is what we have been working on. I might get the DG to elaborate a bit more on that, because I think it is an important question you ask, Mr Chair.

Mr Scales: It is very important that we recognise when we are working under traffic, having people with the lollipops is a dynamic way to get more vehicles through a particular area. We have looked at this with the industry and we are putting it back on the industry. Rather than TMR saying, 'This is the traffic management system you will have', we are asking the people who are tendering for the road network to say, 'Right, you give us an RPEQ professionally qualified engineer's view on how the roadworks will actually be managed and it will be your responsibility'. We started to flip it over towards the contractor, rather than us actually putting it in. As you say, signs do not answer back and sometimes they are more efficient. But if you take a road that is under traffic, the guys with the lollipops do actually get more traffic through in a dynamic situation. We are doing a number of things, but we have engaged the industry on it and we recognise it is an issue that we need to move forward on.

CHAIR: Thank you for that. Mr Grant?

Mr GRANT: Thank you, Mr Chairman. Minister, I will go to infrastructure projects and priorities. Can you outline the government's top three transport infrastructure priorities and update on each?

Mr EMERSON: Thank you, member for Springwood, for that question. As you would be aware and as I have indicated, we do have a very big infrastructure program. As I said earlier, the QTRIP program, for instance, is \$18 billion as detailed in the figures. In fact, the QTRIP program for this year is \$4.8 billion. That is 37 per cent more than the previous government had planned to do for this year. That is a substantial increase compared to what was being planned previously.

You asked about the three priority projects. The first one, clearly, is the Bruce Highway upgrade north. When we came into office one of the first things we did was establish a task force to have a look at the Bruce Highway. The RACQ had identified that if the kind of work that had been being done just continued on we would see, sadly, between 300 and 400 people killed on the road over the next decade. So we looked at a program of work and what we called the Bruce Highway Out of the Crisis plan. We detailed a whole series of projects dealing with issues of safety, capacity and flood mitigation up and down that 1,700-kilometre stretch of road. Then there is the Gateway Upgrade North. They are the two particular items of what we have done.

We released our Bruce Highway Action Plan in 2012 to fix the Bruce Highway. We worked very closely, can I say, with the Abbott government in Canberra, because they gave a very strong commitment in terms of the Bruce and particularly in terms of keeping spending at 80 per cent federal funding for that road. You have heard me talk in parliament about how important the Bruce is and how committed we are to working on the Bruce and also the Gateway North upgrade. Last week I was at the Gateway to look at the finalisation of works for the Gateway Additional Lane project. We are looking at that being completed later this year. Then of course we will see the first spades in the soil for the Gateway Upgrade North by the end of the year. That is what you will see as part of a \$10 billion, 10-year program of works. That is a pretty big project.

The second aspect is the project clearly addressing Brisbane's public transport capacity, both bus and train. That is the BaT project. I have already mentioned that in terms of that project. Geotechnical work is underway. We have been refining the plans for that. Obviously we made recent announcements regarding changes to that, making sure we can get Dutton Park station—preserving that land at Victoria Park but also ensuring, as I mentioned earlier to the member for Yeerongpilly, that we do not have any of those resumptions. Under Labor's plan more than 100 homes and businesses would have been razed, destroyed. That will become a very crucial link and deal with capacity problems not just with train but also with bus moving forward.

I know that for many out west this will be a very important project but it is also important for all of Queensland. The Toowoomba second range crossing is something that has been talked about for many, many years. It took an LNP government in Canberra and in Queensland to get it up and running. I know that while all members of parliament should be very pleased with that, particularly the members for Toowoomba North, Toowoomba South and Lockyer are very excited about that project. It is an important project. We are obviously working with the federal government on that. I attended an industry briefing in Toowoomba the other month, and we signed and confirmed the memorandum of understanding with the federal government in May 2014. The Australian government has committed \$1.3 billion to the project. An invitation for expressions of interest is currently with the market. That closes tomorrow. This is a project that has been talked about.

So those three projects—the Bruce Highway and Gateway North, the BaT project and the Toowoomba second range crossing—are the projects that are most important to us.

Ms TRAD: Minister, in relation to your response regarding the Bruce Highway, I refer you to page 20 of the SDS. In the list of projects listed in the SDS, can you please advise which of those projects were not included in the previous federal government's \$5.7 billion, 10-year plan to upgrade the Bruce Highway?

Mr EMERSON: Thank you, member for South Brisbane. Let us just go back and then I will answer that question. Let us remember again where we came from. As I mentioned before, this is a road that had been neglected for many years by the previous Labor government. In the first weeks of becoming the minister I announced that we would begin the work to develop a plan to get the Bruce Highway back up and running. We developed that plan—a \$10 billion plan for the Bruce Highway, going all the way from the Bruce at the top, in Cairns, all the way back down obviously into the Gateway North upgrade. That was a very important project to achieve. Again, we worked very closely with our federal counterparts.

One of the challenges we faced, of course, was that the previous Labor federal government was planning to change the traditional funding arrangements for our federal roads. Traditionally, federal roads are funded 80 per cent from Canberra and 20 per cent from Queensland. We saw that

being changed in the last Labor budget. The then infrastructure minister, Anthony Albanese, announced in his budget that he wanted to strip federal funding back down to 50 per cent—from 80 per cent to 50 per cent. We are talking about a \$10 billion scope of works. Normally it would be funded \$8 billion and \$2 billion. Suddenly Canberra said that it wanted to slash that funding. The same scope of works would see \$3 billion extra on the state bill. That means that either you put money into that and you take it from somewhere else or that work is not done. So that was a real blow to Queensland. I was very pleased that when the Abbott federal government came in it agreed to retain the 80 per cent funding level.

The member for South Brisbane did ask me about that series of projects. She asked specifically about new funding towards a new of major projects.

Ms TRAD: That is not what I asked. I asked which of those projects listed on page 19 of the SDS were not in the \$5.7 billion former federal Labor government's 10-year plan for the Bruce. That was my question.

Mr EMERSON: Thank you, member for South Brisbane. I was going to say that the Australian government's commitment confirms new funding towards a number of major projects. In terms of the \$6.7 billion Australian government commitment to the Bruce Highway, \$5.3 billion is new funding to progress the following projects. There is \$24.5 million in 2014-15 to commence stage 1 of upgrading the Bruce Highway between Caloundra Road and the Sunshine Motorway at a total estimated cost of \$1.134 billion. There is \$14.5 million in 2014-15 to commence stage 1 of the Mackay ring road at a total estimated cost of \$560 million.

Ms TRAD: In the previous plan.

Mr EMERSON: There is \$8.5 million in 2014-15 to commence the six-laning extension of the Bruce Highway between Robert Road and Foster Road.

Ms TRAD: Also there previously.

Mr EMERSON: There is \$4 million in 2014-15 to commence the upgrade of the Bruce Highway at Yellow Gin Creek at a total estimated cost of \$45 million. There is \$3 million in 2014-15 to commence the upgrade of the Tinana interchange in southern Maryborough to improve safety at a total estimated cost of \$38 million. There is \$2.5 million in 2014-15 to commence the Sandy Gully Bridge upgrade at a total estimated cost of \$57 million. Of this, \$5.3 billion is new funding to progress the following projects.

This year \$770 million will be spent on the Bruce Highway as part of the QTRIP plan. That is a record spending on the Bruce Highway—on this vital lifeline for the state. We are delivering on the Bruce Highway. I do make the point that the former shadow minister for main roads, who was here last estimates, told the *Cairns Post* that, in Labor's view, spending state money on the Bruce Highway was misspending of state money. That is a disgraceful statement basically saying that the state spending money on the Bruce Highway was a waste of money. I completely disagree. I would think everyone in the House, no matter where they come from—apart from Labor—would agree that the Bruce Highway deserves to have money spent on it.

Ms TRAD: It is also disgraceful that the federal LNP government thinks it is a waste of money to spend money on public transport infrastructure. Returning to the capital statement, I refer you to QTRIP, page 11. There has actually been a decrease of approximately \$1 billion in the program allocation for the state network. Can you account for that \$1 billion decrease?

Mr EMERSON: I thank the member for South Brisbane for that question. I make the point again that in terms of the QTRIP program—an \$18 billion program—we are forecast to spend \$4.8 billion this year, which is 37 per cent more than Labor was planning to spend on QTRIP this year—more than a third more than Labor was planning to spend. There will always be variations, obviously, in QTRIP, particularly in terms of natural disasters, with NDRRA spending and those sorts of things. But the important thing is to compare and contrast. Here we have a QTRIP plan that is \$4.8 billion. That is 37 per cent more than Labor was planning to do in this year. That is the extraordinary difference between what Labor planned to do and what we plan to do.

I will stand by my QTRIP plan, which was strongly welcomed by the RACQ when it assessed the budget. I know that those communities up and down the Bruce Highway seeing \$770 million being spent on the Bruce Highway will welcome it. I know that people in the Warrego seeing money being spent on the Warrego will welcome that. The people in the area of the Toowoomba second range crossing will welcome seeing that project get underway.

Across Queensland, people understand that we are a government that is delivering. They understand and remember—they have not forgotten—the failures of Labor to deliver over its 14 years in office. What I see again is a Labor Party that says it should have, it could have, it would have but it did not. They had 14 years, but they did not deliver.

Ms TRAD: Minister, in relation to the Ipswich Motorway upgrade between Darra and Rocklea, is there any contribution to that project by the state?

Mr EMERSON: Thank you, member for South Brisbane. In terms of the Ipswich Motorway, let us just go back to where we were in terms of that project. In 2007 Kevin Rudd, when he was running to be Prime Minister, came out and declared that he would build the Ipswich Motorway at 100 per cent funding. That was his election promise and he broke that election promise. At the next budget he came out—

Ms TRAD: How about we talk about this SDS, Minister? How about we talk about this budget? Is there an allocation to the Ipswich Motorway upgrade between Darra and Rocklea? That is the question. Yes or no?

Mr EMERSON: Then we saw Kevin Rudd say he would spend 80 per cent. So it was 100 per cent initially but he broke that election promise; 80 per cent—

Ms TRAD: What are you spending, Minister?

Mr EMERSON: Eighty per cent—

Ms TRAD: What are you spending?

Mr EMERSON: Eighty per cent—

Ms TRAD: Easy question.

CHAIR: The minister is giving a background. He is coming to the point soon.

Ms TRAD: Oh, yes. I think we all know what he is doing. It is called filibustering.

Mr EMERSON: Thank you. More smear and sneer from the member for South Brisbane.

Ms TRAD: I think it is accurate.

Mr EMERSON: That is all the member for South Brisbane can do. She is not interested in the facts. The facts were that Kevin Rudd initially promised—

Ms TRAD: I am interested in the fact regarding the allocation in this budget, Minister.

Mr EMERSON: And then Labor—

Ms TRAD: Chair, I do seek your guidance. I am actually interested in what allocation has been made in this budget.

CHAIR: The minister is giving a background to it, and—

Ms TRAD: No, he is not, actually.

CHAIR:—he is about to come to his point.

Ms TRAD: Is he?

CHAIR: I can see where it is coming.

Mr EMERSON: Thank you, Mr Chair.

Ms TRAD: Got the cheat sheet?

CHAIR: No, I haven't. It is your question, remember?

Mr EMERSON: Good point, Mr Chair. Obviously the member for South Brisbane is getting confused about who is asking the questions and who is answering them.

Ms TRAD: Well, you are not answering them and it is pretty clear, Minister.

Mr EMERSON: Thank you again. Then of course, member for South Brisbane, we saw the last federal Labor budget. Initially 100 per cent promised to spend, then 80 per cent. And guess what we got to? Fifty per cent. In fact, a current Queensland ALP member of parliament voted to slash that spending to Queensland. That is the member for Redcliffe, who voted for that budget to continue to slash funding. In terms of the commitment to the Ipswich Motorway, we continue to negotiate with the federal government—

Ms TRAD: So zero. Okay.

Mr EMERSON:—and we are saying—

Ms TRAD: Next question.

Mr EMERSON: No, I haven't finished my answer yet, member for South Brisbane.

Ms TRAD: Well, it is zero. It is pretty clear. You continue to negotiate.

CHAIR: The minister has not finished off his answer. He was just about to wrap—

Ms TRAD: Well, he has.

CHAIR: Who knows?

Ms TRAD: He said he is continuing to negotiate.

CHAIR: He might have a surprise for you.

Ms TRAD: I doubt it!

Mr EMERSON: As we know the federal government has confirmed \$279 million to the Ipswich Motorway. We continue to be committed to that project in terms of 20 per cent funding, as we have said. I make the point that the Ipswich mayor also backs our approach. He believes that the federal government, irrespective of who is in government, should be spending 80 per cent on that road.

I make the point that we will not accept 50 per cent. We did not accept 50 per cent from the previous government. We are not accepting 50 per cent from the current government. I make the point that the previous federal Labor government promised to fund it 100 per cent and Kevin Rudd and Labor broke that promise. Our 20 per cent for that project is available and ready to go, but we will continue to negotiate with the federal government.

CHAIR: I call the member for South Brisbane.

Ms TRAD: So zero dollars. Okay, Minister, I turn your attention to question—

Mr EMERSON: Mr Chair, I am not willing to be verbally by the member for South Brisbane. I know she gets confused about these things.

Ms TRAD: What is the allocation, Minister?

Mr EMERSON: As I said, 20 per cent of the project—

Ms TRAD: What is the allocation in this budget?

Mr EMERSON: As I said to the member for South Brisbane—and I will repeat it again—the federal government has committed \$279 million. Our 20 per cent is available—

Ms TRAD: We got this last time. Chair, I ask you rule on repetition—

Mr EMERSON:—and ready to go.

Ms TRAD:—which you have been very lenient on.

CHAIR: The minister is just pointing out the federal government's funding. Minister, can you—

Ms TRAD: I understand what the minister has pointed out.

CHAIR:—come to the point of what the per cent is for Queensland.

Ms TRAD: My question was very specific. I will go on with my questions.

CHAIR: The 20 per cent.

Mr EMERSON: The money is in the budget. Let me clarify again so the member for South Brisbane—

Ms TRAD: What is the total—

Mr EMERSON: The money is in the budget.

Ms TRAD: What is the total allocation?

Mr EMERSON: The \$279 million we will match with 20 per cent. We will match their 80 per cent with our 20 per cent. We have said that. Irrespective of who is in government, we will fight for 80 per cent. The only people who are not willing to do that are Labor. Labor rolled over and said, 'We're happy to take 50 per cent.'

CHAIR: Thank you, Minister, that is good.

Ms TRAD: Talk about rolling over on public transport, Minister. I refer you to your answer to question on notice No. 330 of 2014. You have provided a list of some 196 roads or 884 kilometres of roads that have been damaged by natural disasters that are yet to be repaired. Can you advise on the status of these roads to be repaired?

Mr EMERSON: Thank you, member for South Brisbane. Unfortunately, over a number of years, as many would be aware, we have had natural disasters in Queensland that have caused significant impacts on our road system. I refer back to Cyclone Oswald, for instance, and the aftermath of that.

Ms TRAD: I thought we could not talk about Oswald.

Mr EMERSON: The reality is that it had a massive impact on our road network. If I recall, about 12 per cent of our network was affected by Oswald, with almost a billion dollars worth of damage being done to the road network. I did not mention before the 180,000 kilometres of roads across our state. There was a massive impact from Cyclone Oswald.

We learnt the lessons from the impacts of the weather events of 2011. We worked to make sure that we could achieve getting contracts out and getting work underway to deliver projects in a timely fashion. We have strived to do that. We continue to do that.

In contrast, what we saw in 2011 was that it was a considerable amount of time before the previous government was able to get contracts out to get work underway. We have dramatically reduced the time it takes for that work to be underway.

Oswald is a perfect example of that. I remember being with Mal Forman, the mayor of Bundaberg, and seeing their bridges being fixed. They are important connections for that city. Recently I was just outside Rockhampton to see the work being done there. We saw the Mount Morgan crossing. I inspected that shortly after the impact of Oswald. It was a massive project. There were 35 significant land slippages. I was pleased to other week to head up to Rockhampton just before the range reopened. From memory, that work cost about \$20 million. Some 75,000 tonnes of reinforcing material had to be worked on. It was a very complicated project.

As I said, there were six disaster events affecting Queensland just this year—in 2014. I know for those personally affected it has been devastating, but in terms of the big events we saw in previous years we have had only had six disaster events affecting Queensland in 2014 causing approximately \$150 million in total estimated damage to the state controlled road network. Some 30,000 kilometres have been affected and \$150 million in damage has been done to the state controlled network.

With better planning with industry it has enabled the department to respond quicker to disaster events, to fast-track emergency repairs and to reconnect the community. We will complete all work in 2014 and 2015. I might just ask the DG to elaborate on that, if that is possible.

Mr Scales: Thank you for the question. Tropical Cyclone Ita was the most severe disaster event affecting Queensland in 2014. It temporarily closed 576 kilometres of the state road network and over 1,000 kilometres of the state rail network and seven ports. Ita caused approximately \$50 million in damages, as the minister said. We plan to have all the 2014 event reconstruction work complete by the end of June 2015, subject to funding. That is the cut-off from the federal government in terms of 75 per cent of that.

The three natural disasters during 2013—Oswald was the main one—caused over seven kilometres of damage to our road network, which is over 23 per cent. Some 630 kilometres required total reconstruction. All that work is now out to tender and moving forward, if that helps.

Ms TRAD: Thank you, Mr Scales, that was very succinct and informative.

CHAIR: I call the member for Springwood.

Mr GRANT: I want to go back and seek a little more information with regard to the BaT project. Can you outline for us any work being done on an improved design that benefits the local community? I wanted you to take the answer to my last question a little further, if you can.

Mr EMERSON: Thank you, member for Springwood, for that question. Obviously we have gone out and spoken to the community about the project. We have gone out and put a draft reference design out. We released that in March of this year. We spoke to the community and stakeholders to give them an opportunity to provide comment throughout the five weeks of the extensive consultation program. We had more than 3,000 people participate in the community consultation during that period.

The community provided valuable feedback about the benefits and potential impacts of the design, with many comments relating to the project's southern and northern portals. The key issues raised during the consultation related to the location of the northern tunnel portal and the impacts to Victoria Park and also the southern portal, including the decommissioning of Dutton Park station.

So after listening to the community, the government released a final design for the BaT project on 24 June 2014. At the northern portal the majority of the BaT infrastructure is now contained within the existing transport corridor. So that is significantly decreasing the permanent impacts to Victoria Park. The refined design includes preservation of the natural green space as a valuable community asset. The BaT tunnel still provides a key link for buses using the new Legacy Way tunnel via a connection near Victoria Park.

At the southern portal the communities of Dutton Park, Annerley and Fairfield will benefit with Dutton Park station to remain open. It has been determined that trains are capable of travelling on slightly steeper grades than originally allowed for in the draft reference design. Obviously having slightly steeper grades means that we can shorten it and preserve Dutton Park station. That is a good win for the community. That means that the length of transition from the tunnel to the existing tracks can be shorter and slightly steeper. As a result, Dutton Park station can remain open.

I make the point again that, unlike Labor's plan, we are not having those private resumptions—100 homes and businesses raised which was part of Labor's plan and continues to be their plan. They continue to urge us to implement their plan to destroy those 100 homes and businesses.

Once the BaT project is operational, Dutton Park station will be offered a significant increase in rail services to the CBD with about 18 trains per hour in peak times and eight trains per hour in off peak times. The rail connection will slash travel times, with a six minute train trip from Dutton Park into the CBD's new underground George Street station. Dutton Park station will also be upgraded to become disability and mobility impaired accessible. I mentioned four stations earlier. Dutton Park is also going to be upgraded for universal access.

The project will now finalise the reference design and prepare an environmental impact statement. It is expected that the final reference design and EIS will be available for public comment in the second half of this year. The project is expected to cost about \$5 billion. That is approximately \$3 billion less than the previous government's proposed Cross River Rail and the Brisbane City Council's suburbs to city projects combined.

We are delivering more and using taxpayers' money wisely. Dutton Park station will be kept. Victoria Park will be kept. None of the 100 homes and businesses that would be destroyed under Labor's plan will be destroyed.

CHAIR: I call the member for Nudgee.

Mr WOODFORTH: My question falls between safety and infrastructure. With regard to safety, can the minister say what has been done to improve safety around level crossings and what results those efforts are showing? From an infrastructure point of view obviously two of those are going to include construction works around my area. Would you like to talk about what the effect of that will be?

Mr EMERSON: I thank the member for Nudgee for the question. He has touched on the issues. I know he is proud to be delivering this for his electorate. It was very much a key election promise. I go back to the meeting at the Geebung RSL where we saw the then member for Nudgee refusing to commit to that project—

Mr WOODFORTH: And look at it in 2020.

Mr EMERSON: And look at it in 2020. I take that on board. Labor would look at it in 2020 and there would be no commitment. We committed to delivering it in our first term in office. Anyone who goes out there and sees what is happening knows that it is being delivered. We are ahead of schedule in terms of that project. I take on board that issue.

It does not just involve the infrastructure at Robinson Road, Geebung but also the overpass and level crossing at Telegraph Road, Bracken Ridge. Why were those two chosen? They were the two identified by the RACQ as the most dangerous level crossings in South-East Queensland. Robinson Road is particularly dangerous for pedestrians and Telegraph Road is particularly dangerous for vehicles and level crossing incidents. It was important for us to improve the safety of those.

We have been very much committed since coming to office to improving level crossing safety and reducing the number of collisions and near misses at level crossings. Sadly, we still have some very reckless individuals in our society who are willing to put their own lives at risk and others' lives at risk to break the law at level crossings.

I saw some horrific footage at one of our level crossings recently. Parents were pushing their child in a pram across a railway track. They pushed through the gates and ran across the line. You can see from the footage as they push the pram across the light of the train coming down the track. They have broken through the gates to go through. Not only are they playing Russian roulette with their own lives, but playing Russian roulette with their child's life and that of others as well. The reality is that one near miss is one too many. I urge all road users to do their part by obeying the signs and signals.

There were 11 level crossing collisions in 2013-14. That is below the five year average of just under 13. There were 343 near misses at level crossings throughout Queensland, with 249 on the Queensland Rail network, which, can I say, is a drop of 27 per cent. We have, in terms of our education program, seen a significant drop. Twenty-seven per cent is a good result. A great result would be zero near misses, zero collisions, but to see a 27 per cent drop in near misses is a significant improvement.

Queensland's commitment to improve level crossing safety is articulated in our Queensland Level Crossing Safety Strategy 2012-21. That sees the government and industry working collaboratively to make a range of positive improvements to safety at public level crossings. We did establish a Queensland level crossing safety group to manage the strategy and bring together all the relevant stakeholders. That strategy covers the 1,400 public rail level crossings across Queensland. There is a tonne of them out there. The Rail Transport Service Contract provides funding annually for the delivery of the safety improvements at open level crossings and pedestrian crossings of the state supported rail network including replacement of life expired assets. TMR, working with Queensland Rail, conducted a \$2.1 million technology trial of three new and innovative rail level crossing safety technologies to evaluate whether they have a positive effect on driver behaviour at level crossings. Two of these live trials have been completed. A third technology currently is being trialled and we are looking for an evaluation report again expected in the second half of 2014. Again it is not just about education, we are also looking to see what new technology there is, possibly innovative ways to make our open level crossings safer across the state. As I said, there are 1,400 public rail level crossings across Queensland. There are a lot of them, many of them open, and we want to make them as safe as possible. That is on top of that significant infrastructure, as I mentioned, in your strategic electorate and also at Telegraph Road, Bracken Ridge as well, member for Nudgee. Thank you, Mr Chairman.

CHAIR: Thank you. Member for Nudgee?

Mr WOODFORTH: If we go back to some major projects, the budget outlines the commitment to the Toowoomba second range crossing. Can you provide an update on the industry interest in the project?

Mr EMERSON: Thank you again, member for Nudgee, and through you, Mr Chair. As I mentioned a bit earlier, I did travel to Toowoomba earlier this year to present an industry briefing on that. But if you go back again, this is a project that has been talked about for many, many years. This has been on the wish list for those people out in Toowoomba, but I make the point, Mr Chair, and you would be very much aware of this, this is not just a win for the people in that area, this is a win for the Queensland economy because there are significant financial benefits, economic benefits, to the state by having the Toowoomba second range crossing up and running. That is why we are so proud as a government that we signed that memorandum of understanding with the federal government committing to an 80/20 per cent split on that project. Now, that is all subject to the bids that we will receive clearly making sure we can demonstrate value for money.

The memorandum of understanding was confirmed when we signed that in late May 2014—so a couple of months ago. The Commonwealth was committing to \$1.285 billion. The Queensland government was committing to \$321 million. The state is seeking to enter into contractual arrangements with the successful proponent for the design, construction, financing, operation and maintenance of the road over a 25-year period. The Queensland government remains committed to partnering with industry to ensure the project achieves best value for money. There has been an extensive process of industry consultation undertaken during a business case development in late 2012 during which industry showed a strong interest in the project, member for Nudgee. The registration of interests for the Toowoomba second range crossing was released on Friday, 31 January this year and closed on Friday, 7 March 2014. The state received 63 responses to the registration of interests from industry, with registrations ranging from international and Australian consortia through to smaller local construction companies. An invitation for expressions of interest is currently with the market and closes on 16 July 2014—tomorrow. Industry briefing during this expressions of interest process was held, as I said, last month on 12 June 2014 in Toowoomba. Up to

200 local, national and international attendees participated in the briefing, representing industry groups such as contractors, operators and financiers. It was good to meet and to speak to them on the day. I could see their enthusiasm for this project, only backed up and only exceeded, I suspect, by the enthusiasm of the people of Toowoomba who have waited a long time for this project.

By partnering with industry in delivery of the Toowoomba second range crossing the Queensland government will ensure that the people of Queensland receive a world-class, value for money infrastructure solution long overdue, much hoped for, much wished for, that we are delivering. Mr Chairman.

CHAIR: Thank you, Minister. That is certainly a major project. It will deliver benefits to the whole of this state. Minister, just moving on in a bipartisan way in relation to the Bruce Highway, can you inform us as to what the budget actually delivers for the Bruce Highway? I know you touched on a few aspects of it a while ago, but I think we need to just nail down some of the major funding sections that you are looking at on the Bruce Highway.

Mr EMERSON: With pleasure, Mr Chair, because, as you know, I am a very strong advocate for getting the Bruce Highway fixed, getting it to the state it should be. I might just touch on some of the projects. As I said, this year there is a record \$770 million program, but let us talk about some of the projects, the key continuing projects, and then we will look at some of the key new projects as well if that is okay. In terms of continuing projects, the Yeppen South floodplain upgrade south of Rockhampton, due for completion in November 2016, will provide a new elevated crossing on the Bruce Highway. I remember being there after Cyclone Oswald and seeing the Bruce Highway closed at that point. We have been working particularly with the member for Keppel, Bruce Young, who is very much aware of that as an issue. That project goes on. The Townsville ring road, due for completion in October 2016, will provide capacity improvements with a high-speed bypass at Toowoomba for heavy and commercial vehicles. The Pumicestone Roys-Bells Creek Road interchange upgrades for capacity improvements is due for completion in May next year, in 2015. Realign, raise and upgrade for flood mitigation the highway from Sandy Corner to Collinson Lagoon, which is due for completion later this year; and the Cooroy-Curra section A, the Cooroy southern interchange to Sankeys Road. I do make the point that I mentioned a few of those in terms of flood mitigation. The work we are doing is not just about flood mitigation, it is about safety and increasing capacity as well. They are some ongoing projects at the moment.

Key new projects to commence in the forward estimates period include the Mackay Ring Road stage 1, construction of a route around Mackay between Stockroute Road and the intersection of the Bruce Highway and Bald Hill Road; the Sunshine Motorway stage 1, an upgrade of the Caloundra Road interchange and a partial upgrade of the Sunshine Motorway interchange; Cooroy-Curra section C, and that is Traveston Road to Keefton Road; realignment between the Traveston interchange and the proposed Woondum interchange; and the Cairns southern access corridor—that is stage 2—Robert Road to Foster Road, a capacity upgrade for the section between Robert Road to Foster Road to six lanes.

As I said earlier, Mr Chair, if the government does not do this work, the RACQ has forecast between 300 to 400 people will die over the next decade. That is why this work is so important. That is why we are so proud of the work we have been doing. That record \$10 billion over 10 years, all the way from Cairns down through the Gateway North, these are important projects for these communities and I know they are welcomed. When I travel, and I have travelled up and down the Bruce Highway, I know when I speak to local communities about these projects how important they are to those local communities.

CHAIR: Thank you, Minister. Earlier on this morning you talked about the centre line safety treatments on the highway. Have you got data in relation to the benefits of that? You talked in general about it this morning and how you thought it was good, but do you have any data that you could share with the committee?

Mr EMERSON: I am being handed some information now. As I said, quite often it is sometimes these innovative solutions that make a significant difference. Sometimes they can seem remarkably simple as a solution. It is not always the most expensive solution that is the best solution. Sometimes it can be the most affordable, best use of taxpayers' dollars that gets you a great solution. We have allocated \$10 million to the wide centre line treatments along the Bruce Highway. That is part of our, as I mentioned already, \$350 million Road Safety Action Plan. Obviously there has been work done as well in terms of clearing hazardous objects close to the roadside of the Bruce Highway. That is another \$10 million. In terms of that wide centre line treatment, that will be applied over 350

kilometres of the highway. The highway is just under 1,700 kilometres. We are applying it to about 350 kilometres of it. The treatment increases the separation between the oncoming vehicles, increasing the chances of avoiding head-on collisions.

CHAIR: How wide is it actually?

Mr EMERSON: In a moment I will get the DG to give you that. He is the engineer. I have seen them. I am sure anyone driving along those roads would have seen them. As opposed to just one line, they are wider. It does not have to be massively wide. It is just that instantaneous moment, which is that fraction of a second extra, that it gives a motorist crossing it to alert them, that can make all the difference. The audible lines are implemented to alert drivers, particularly fatigued drivers, when they cross the centre line. Overseas experience shows that this cost-effective treatment can reduce the number of serious crashes—so it comes to your point here—by 20 per cent. It is a significant improvement. The trial on the Bruce Highway between Cooroy and Curra has achieved a 58 per cent reduction in crashes. Again, it is a simple solution, but a very effective solution. We continue to work to look at those things, but that is a pretty significant improvement. I might get the DG to mention something more about that.

Mr Scales: Thank you, Minister, Chair. The actual centre line treatment varies. It is about 600 millimetres wide to a metre but can go wider at junctions. I have driven the Bruce in the dark and it really is spectacularly good because you can actually see the cats' eyes in your headlights. There is actually one on Coro Drive at one of the junctions. So if you are travelling along Coro Drive heading out towards Indooroopilly they have the same sort of centre line treatment there. As the minister says, it is a fairly simple idea. I think the proof of the pudding will be in the eating. It is a trial, but our colleagues in Europe have used this to great effect to actually reduce the separation between oncoming traffic and, as we all know, a lot of the Bruce is single lane either way. So this treatment, between 600 millimetres and a metre the majority, but bigger at junctions, does make a considerable difference.

CHAIR: Is there a limit on the width of the road? I mean, some roads are not going to be suitable because they are too narrow. Is there a rough figure as to how wide the road can be before they can be used?

Mr Scales: Yes. Our smallest roads on the Bruce are 600 millimetres, .6 of a metre, which is enough for the physical separation.

CHAIR: What I mean is the overall width of the road?

Mr Scales: Yes, the overall width of the road is a constraint, Chair, absolutely right.

CHAIR: The likes of the Warrego Highway in some places, you probably would not be able to use it.

Mr Scales: Not in every case.

CHAIR: Thank you. I call the member for Yeerongpilly.

Mr JUDGE: Minister, just in relation to the heavy vehicle movements that are occurring, there are national heavy vehicle movements and obviously city based heavy vehicle movements. In areas such as around the Brisbane Markets you have got Kessels Road and Fairfield Road that endure a great deal of heavy vehicle movements due to the Brisbane Markets having over a billion dollars worth of produce a year coming in and out of there. Kessels Road over the last five, 10 years is becoming very, very problematic. What is the department's strategy to deal with road networks that suffer that type of heavy vehicle movement which also endure heavy passenger vehicle movements as well?

Mr EMERSON: Thank you, member for Yeerongpilly, and through you, Mr Chair. I was very pleased recently to join the Deputy Prime Minister and federal minister for infrastructure, Warren Truss, in terms of commissioning the Mains Kessels Interchange. That road itself is, from memory, the busiest intersection in Brisbane. You would know it well, member for Yeerongpilly.

Mr JUDGE: I do.

Mr EMERSON: My understanding, speaking to locals, is that that interchange has made a significant difference in terms of that. I do applaud particularly the department but also the contractor in terms of the work on that. I understand that whenever you have infrastructure and significant large pieces of infrastructure there is some disruption and inconvenience. While you are building to make things better, sometimes they get slightly worse. But my understanding from the feedback that I received is that there was very little impact for locals while that was underway and there was strong

feedback in terms that they seemed to have managed that project very well. It is an ongoing challenge for us in terms of infrastructure. As you know, one of the things we are very keen to see, and we have been talking to the federal government about, is inland rail. I come back to my Moving Freight strategy—and the committee's report—that I released about trying to get more freight onto rail if we can. It is a multipronged approach, I guess. We want to make sure our roads work better and those bottlenecks and those challenging interchanges are dealt with in a sensible way, but trying to get more freight onto rail also helps in terms of that problem. I might ask the DG if he has something to add on that.

Mr Scales: Thank you, Minister. Thanks for the question, member for Yeerongpilly. We are working with the industry on this. We are using the Moving Freight strategy as a platform, but we are looking at a heavy vehicle action plan as freight vehicles get more and more intense in terms of our point loads and get heavier. So we are looking at using, as I say, Moving Freight as a platform. We are looking at how we can get these heavier vehicles on to freight routes. As the minister said, the Mains-Kessels intersection, 90,000 vehicles a day use that Monday to Friday. So we try to design that out where we can but, obviously, the dollars are not as plentiful as they might be. We have captured the industry really and we are working with industry on a collaborative basis using Moving Freight to see where we can design out instances that you suggest, like the \$1 billion worth of goods going into the Brisbane markets.

Mr JUDGE: I just had a couple of questions around heavy vehicles, then I wanted to touch on pilotage and then lastly on cycling. I will stick with heavy vehicles for a moment. Are there any thoughts being given to the times of days that heavy vehicles can use those roads? Clearly, during peak hour movements for motor vehicles—people going to and from work and Griffith University is just located near there as well and it endures a lot of traffic there—has there been consideration about the timing of heavy vehicle movements?

Mr EMERSON: I might answer that, if that is okay, member for Yeerongpilly. It is something that, no, we have not looked at, because basically we understand the need to continue to move these trucks around and to deal with business. This is part of economic activity and we have to be very conscious of that. These are jobs and these are creating businesses. That is why we try to look for those other solutions. We look for how we can manage in terms of getting more on to rail, how we can make sure that the interchanges are better. But we have to be very conscious that we do not put further impediments in front of business that employs people, generates jobs and generates economic growth.

Mr JUDGE: I want to go now to port and pilotage services and the recent privatisation of that—moving it to the port corporations away from Maritime Safety Queensland—the concern being with the increase in coastal freight movements and international freight, the protection of the Great Barrier Reef and environmental concerns. What assurances are in place? What is the experience internationally on the privatisation of port and pilotage services? There is a concern that it was done purely for privatisation as opposed to any other reason. That is held by a number of people.

Mr EMERSON: Thank you, member for Yeerongpilly, for that question. As you know, when we undertook this this was something that had been occurring in other parts of Australia already. So it was not something unique to Queensland at all. We were probably catching up to some of the other parts of Australia in terms of doing that.

Mr JUDGE: With all due respect, if I can just interrupt for one moment: we have a Great Barrier Reef; they do not.

Mr EMERSON: Thank you, I appreciate that, and that is why we worked to ensure that we do the right thing by the Great Barrier Reef and preserve that. But we also look at what is happening in other parts of Australia as well in terms of that process. As you know, the provision of service was devolved on 2 November 2013. Pilotage is compulsory for most ships—that is ships of 50 metres or longer—that visit Queensland ports. The reality is that safety standards were not impacted. As I make the point again, this is something that happens in other parts of Australia. Yes, I take on board what you have just said: the Great Barrier Reef is important to us. That is why we made sure that there was no impact to safety at all from these changes. It was not something that Queensland was doing and leading the way; it was something that had happened in other parts of Australia already.

Mr JUDGE: Lastly, in relation to the cycle changes that have occurred recently—the one-metre rule and so on—you touched on engineering, education and enforcement. It has been well reported in the media that enforcement has been an issue as acceptance of this change in cycle safety legislation has come into play. Can you tell me what you are doing to address that?

Mr EMERSON: In terms of that, as you know, this committee made a recommendation and I accepted part of the recommendation. The recommendation of the committee was to bring in the one-metre rule permanently. What I did—

CHAIR: A safe passing distance, Minister.

Mr EMERSON: And a safe passing distance as such. Thank you, Mr Chair. I stand corrected. What I said was that we would have a two-year trial and that is underway. I think the feedback strongly from the cycling community to me has been that they have seen a change in attitude on our roads. That is what the aim of it was. It was not about fining people; it was about actually changing an attitude on the roads. Why did I ask the committee to examine it? Because over the last five years we have seen a doubling in the number of deaths of cyclists on our roads. So it was important to have a look at this. We brought in the change as part of a package of change, not just in terms of the safe passing distance but also in terms of crossing across a solid white line to give motorists a chance to pass a cyclist where it was safe to do so and also increasing the fines for cyclists, to bring them up to the same level as motorists. If you do the crime, you pay the fine no matter whether you are on two wheels or four wheels.

What I am looking for over the two-year trial is to see how well it can be implemented, how well it can be enforced. But, member for Yeerongpilly, if the feedback coming back to me from cyclists is that there has been a change in attitude on the roads, that they feel safer on our roads, that seems like a pretty good sign. That is a good indication. It is not about fining people; it is about changing the attitude on our roads and that is what the aim has always been: to make our roads safer. That was my riding orders, I guess, to the transport committee: to have a look at how we can make our roads safer for cyclists.

So I thank motorists out there who have been, I guess, more aware. That has been part of it. It is not a war out there on our roads. Sadly, some motorists, sadly, some cyclists, treat it as a war. Some do the wrong thing and do not obey the rules. The rules are there whether you are on two wheels or on four wheels. As I said, just to reiterate to the member for Yeerongpilly, the feedback has been that there seems to have been a change of attitude on the roads for cyclists. That is good news.

Ms TRAD: In relation to the Toowoomba range crossing, which you referred to earlier at page 20 of the SDS, can you guarantee that this will not be a toll road?

Mr EMERSON: I thank the member for South Brisbane. We have indicated from day one that it will be a toll road. So that is no guarantee at all, because we have indicated that there will be a toll on it. That is no revelation. Anyone who has followed this—and I assume as the shadow minister for transport and main roads you would be very much aware of a major road infrastructure project in Queensland—and from day one it has been talked about as having a toll. So no, I have said what we have said before. We stand by what we said before. A toll has always been anticipated in terms of that project. So that is what we talked about from day one.

Significantly, of course, this is a project that Labor has never wanted to do—never wanted to do, never did it when they were in office in 14 years. I can tell you that the federal Labor government was completely opposed to this project—refused to fund it, refused to even contemplate doing it. Labor has always been against the Toowoomba second range crossing.

So we are getting on with the job. As the member for Warrego knows, we are delivering a project. As I gave that lengthy response earlier, it was a great pleasure in June—a month or so ago—to attend the industry briefing with up to 200 local, national and international representatives and consortia looking at that project. There is great interest in that project and it was great to be able to sign the memorandum of understanding with the federal government—with Warren Truss, the federal infrastructure minister and Deputy Prime Minister. We are getting on with an important project for that area. I know that the LNP is completely behind that project, because it has taken an LNP government in Queensland and an LNP government in Canberra to deliver that project.

Ms TRAD: Minister, if the project is fully funded as you claim, why does it need a toll?

Mr EMERSON: No, I did not mention anything about fully funded in my statement just then. I do not know where you got that from. You asked me a question whether it was going to have a toll. I said that it would have a toll. I made it very clear in terms of that project that there is funding there that would be subject to private input. For instance, it may be that the toll will pay for the maintenance of that project, but that is going to be up to the business case that is developed in consultation as part of the industry briefing. So that will be the case. We have made it very clear.

The only thing that is unclear is why Labor continues to oppose that project, why Labor did not want it fund it, why Labor was against it, why federal Labor was strongly opposed to it. That is the only thing that really is unclear. For such an important project, not just for that region as I have pointed out before but to the whole of Queensland and economic growth, why was Labor so opposed to it.

Ms TRAD: Mr Scales, just in relation to the Toowoomba second range crossing, can you advise what the projected usage is? I assume that you will be giving them to the private investors because it will be a toll road.

Mr Scales: Thank you for the question. That project is currently being run out of Projects Queensland for the business case. As far as the actual numbers are concerned, that will feed into the business case. I do not have the numbers with me, because the project is being operated by Projects Queensland until it gets to business case and then it will be handed over to the department to deliver.

Ms TRAD: Mr Scales, you are informing the business case, I assume, then? Who is doing the modelling? Projects Queensland?

Mr Scales: Projects Queensland.

Ms TRAD: All right. So you are doing nothing in relation to it?

Mr Scales: We have people embedded in the team providing advice, but it is a similar sort of project to the new generation rolling stock, where Projects Queensland—

Ms TRAD: Has the lead.

Mr Scales: Put the commercial deal together and then, once the commercial deal was put together, handed across to us.

Ms TRAD: Okay. Based on modelling and advice from DTMR?

Mr Scales: No, modelling advice from the private sector, probably from consultants.

Ms TRAD: Right. How are they verified independently? They are independent consultants?

Mr Scales: As I said, the project is being run out of Projects Queensland, not by the department at this stage.

Ms TRAD: Right, okay.

Mr Scales: I am not dodging the question.

Ms TRAD: No, no, I understand.

Mr EMERSON: It may be a question for the Treasurer when he is before the estimates.

Ms TRAD: Yes. I thought that the agency that was spruiking it in their SDS would have answers to those simple questions, but obviously not.

CHAIR: The time is up for a change now. Thank you, member for South Brisbane. I call the member for Morayfield.

Mr GRIMWADE: I just wanted to go back to some of those major projects. You were talking about the Gateway north. Obviously, it is a big bottleneck. A lot of commuters from my electorate go through it to and from the city and they write to me quite often about it. So I applaud you for having the fortitude to go ahead and upgrade that intersection. With increased numbers on that road, what is the status of the additional lane between Sandgate Road and the Deagon deviation?

Mr EMERSON: Thank you, member for Morayfield. Yes, it is not just your members in your electorate there, but I think a lot of people travelling in that area coming from Brisbane up to the Sunshine Coast and back have experienced the delays, the bottlenecks, the frustration and that is very understandable. We want to, obviously, where we can, make sure that people can get to work on time, can get their kids to school on time.

I mention the Gateway North upgrade that you mentioned and, of course, the GAL—the Gateway additional lane—as well. It was very pleasing for me to just the other week attend an inspection of that project with the Deputy Prime Minister, Warren Truss, and also the member for Sandgate, Kerry Millard, who is also, along with you, very interested in that project.

The Gateway additional lane project will provide an extra northbound lane for 2.5 kilometres between Sandgate Road and the Deagon deviation. It is a jointly funded project between the Australian federal government and the state government. It will, as you quite rightly pointed out, member for Morayfield it, will help manage congestion during the afternoon peak period. Work began on that project shortly after we began office in April 2012 and they are currently on track for completion ahead of schedule subject to weather and construction conditions.

Motorists are already driving on the newly completed northbound land of the Gateway Motorway across the new Cabbage Tree Creek Bridge at Deagon. The widened Depot Road overpass is completed, and the benefits will include widening the motorway to three lanes to increase capacity, easing traffic congestion and improving travel times for motorists, increasing safety for motorists, encouraging long distance travellers to remain on the motorway and off local roads and, as I said, reconstructing bridges at Cabbage Tree Creek and the widening of the Depot Road overpass to accommodate the additional lane.

As I said, works did begin in April. I inspected the works a week or so ago, and we expect them to be completed this year. I think that will be a significant improvement to the Gateway. Of course then we get on with the Gateway north upgrade as well—member for Morayfield, again, I know a project that is very close to your heart and very close to any motorists using that part of the Gateway. But the GAL project is almost completed—a great result. Then we get on to the GUN—and that again is another significant project.

Mr GRIMWADE: Thank you, Minister. I will continue in regard to QTRIP and the investment we have in Queensland. I am very interested to hear about the QTRIP program and what is happening around Queensland in regard to the investment going forward. Can you outline what the budget delivers for Queensland roads and the comparison with the Queensland Transport and Roads Investment Program?

Mr EMERSON: Thank you, member for Morayfield. I will go through that. As I said before, the QTRIP program is \$18 billion—\$18.1 billion to be precise—over four years. Breaking that down, that program from 2014-15 to 2017-18 comprises \$4.8 billion in 2014-15, \$4.2 billion in 2015-16 and, as I said, \$18 billion over the four years. The QTRIP program, the Queensland Transport and Roads Investment Program, is developed according to TMR priorities and budget outcomes and in consultation with essential agencies and obviously myself as the minister. The state budget documentation—Budget Paper No. 3, the Capital Statement; Budget Paper No. 4, the Budget Measures; and Budget Paper No. 5, the Service Delivery Statements—outlines the capital works in 2014-15 financial year only.

Some of the major initiatives in the state budget and QTRIP will see \$374 million from the Australian, Queensland and local governments towards construction of the \$988 million Moreton Bay Rail Link, which is a dual track passenger rail line from Petrie station to Kippa-Ring station; \$177.3 million from the Australian and Queensland governments towards the \$590 million duplication of the Bruce Highway Cooroy to Curra from Cooroy Southern Interchange to Sankeys Road, section A; \$130 million towards the \$150 million capital recovery and reconstruction work program resulting from the natural disaster events throughout the state in early 2014; \$80.4 million from the Australian and Queensland government towards the \$200 million Townsville ring-road stage 4, and that will provide a high-speed bypass of Townsville for heavy and commercial vehicles; \$66 million from the Australian and Queensland governments for the \$137.5 million duplication of a section of the Bruce Highway from two to four lanes from Vantassel Street to Cluden—I inspected that project not long ago up in Townsville and it is great to see that project well and truly underway and on schedule and that it was not affected by the recent weather events in Townsville; \$50.7 million from the \$119 million upgrade of the interchange at Smith Street and Olsen Avenue and improvements on Smith Street east of the Pacific Motorway; \$47 million from the Australian and Queensland governments for the \$296 million project to provide a new elevated crossing of the Bruce Highway across the Yeppen flood plain, which I have detailed previously.

There is even more, member for Morayfield. There is \$30.4 million from the Australian and Queensland governments towards the \$1.6 billion Toowoomba second range crossing bypass north of Toowoomba; \$25 million for the new generation rolling stock project; \$24.5 million from the Australian and Queensland governments to commence the \$341 million stage 1 upgrade of the Bruce Highway between Caloundra Road and the Sunshine Motorway; and \$14.5 million from the Australian and Queensland governments for the \$560 million upgrade of the Mackay ring-road stage 1. It is a big program, a comprehensive program. That is why we saw the RACQ being so complimentary of the work we have been doing in terms of those roads. They understand the hard yards we have been doing in terms of getting significant improvements to our road infrastructure while also keeping control of costs such as rego for the family car.

CHAIR: I call the member for Algester.

Mr SHORTEN: Minister, I know it is always at the forefront of your mind that you are using taxpayers' money to build infrastructure. Can you give the committee an understanding of what is being done to lower the cost of building Queensland's transport infrastructure?

Mr EMERSON: Thank you, member for Algeester. I do appreciate that. One of the challenges I had when I became minister was the cost of delivering infrastructure in Queensland. I had a look at the Australian Bureau of Statistics figures. What they showed was that the cost of delivering infrastructure in Queensland over a 10-year period had gone up about 79 per cent. That figure needs to be compared to what was happening in the rest of Australia. In the rest of Australia it had gone up in the 60 percentage bracket. So the cost of delivering infrastructure was significantly more costly over that 10-year period in Queensland compared to the rest of Australia.

I am a minister who is very conscious of dollars. We saw before that there has been only one-sixth of the hospitality bill in my department compared to the previous transport minister, as the member for South Brisbane pointed out. We have been very conscious of making sure that we try to spend our dollars sensibly and try to get the best result. We do not want gold plating of these projects. We want to deliver because if we can deliver a project at a fairer cost, at a more sensible cost, we can do more, and that is important for us too. We had a look at the stuff that was nice to have rather than needed to have. As I said, we removed gold plating and looked for more innovative approaches. I mentioned road treatments in the Cooroy to Curra section on the Bruce. We are looking for innovative approaches, not necessarily the most expensive approaches. Have a look at that trial, as I mentioned those figures before—a 50 per cent reduction in crashes. There is an example of where we can actually look to improve safety but not at a phenomenal expense.

So we look at improving technical and infrastructure work, delivery skills—use packaging and delivery options to reduce the cost of a project—and also optimising asset management. Again, we are doing all of these things to try to make sure we can deliver infrastructure, much needed infrastructure, at a good cost, at a good price, for taxpayers, trying to use taxpayers' dollars wisely. I might just ask the DG to elaborate on that, Mr Chair.

Mr Scales: Thank you, Minister, and thank you for the question, member for Algeester. The department has responded proactively to the rising costs of infrastructure prices, which are tender prices, to 2012 and beyond, also the reduction in available funding and the government policy direction that we had to watch every dollar—do more with no more. In November 2013 we got the industry together and ran a number of workshops, including a workshop with industry regarding reducing the cost of infrastructure. The minister actually opened that. There were over 100 members of the construction industry, consultants and various other people there. The outcome of the workshop, with collaboration from industry, is that we developed a series of initiatives.

As the minister said, we are looking at innovation. We are looking at laser technology now for doing surveys, so it is like a little carpet driven along behind a vehicle. It is a bit like Google maps, so it does like a point cloud so we are able to survey structures without doing the actual physical management—lasers do it. We are using composites for bridges. We have over 300 timber bridges in the state. So we are looking at plastics to do that. We are using something called foamed bitumen. We are also in the city using Bluetooth detectors to do traffic counts rather than just using people on the ground doing physical surveys. So we are doing a lot with innovation.

We are continuing to use Austroads and Australian standard specifications so that we have a common set of standards here that industry can know and understand. We are continuing to implement cost-efficient and competitive tender processes, so we have a suite of documents that are transparent. We are continuing to look after specifications and standards in a responsible manner—again, the priority has been safety and reduction on long-term costs. And we are embracing strategies so it is easier to do business with the department.

There are three main reports that we produce: one is proposed major works to competitive tender report. So for anything over \$1 million we will use a suite of documents and a suite of technologies there. We have also embraced the Roads Australia Pipeline report. So that is \$15 million and above, and that is on the Roads Australia website. And we are using the National Infrastructure Construction Schedule, an ICS, which is a national information repository—so anything over \$50 million. So we have strata in terms of different projects and techniques, but we are working really collaboratively with the industry to get the best possible way forward.

Mr EMERSON: I might just add to that. As I said, member for Algeester, we are very keen to make sure we can get the best price for these projects, because the best price we get means we have more money to do more. That does not please everyone you would be surprised to know. You

would think that people would understand that it is important for taxpayers to see their government is actually delivering projects for the best price possible. They are not in the business of wanting to see us spend more money than we need to for a project. But I did note there was a comment made recently saying that there were concerns that the government, us, were really screwing down prices on major contracts. That was the concern that was raised. That concern of course was raised by the member for South Brisbane.

Ms TRAD: Screwing down subcontractors, Minister, I think it was.

Mr EMERSON: I have the quote here—and I will quote thank you—from Patrick Condren's program on 4BC. The quote is 'process where they are really screwing down prices on major contracts'. Yes, we are trying to get the best price possible. Our job is not to pay the most for a project. Our job is to get a fair price for a project to make sure we are getting the best value for taxpayers' dollars. We are not interested in returning to the waste we saw under the Labor government. But clearly with those kinds of comments about concerns of us trying to get the best price for a project show that that continues to be Labor's policy of spending big—big taxing, big spending, a lot of waste.

CHAIR: I call the member for Alger.

Mr SHORTEN: Thanks, Minister. You have probably answered my next question which was: what are you doing and what is the department doing to ensure that taxpayers get the maximum value out of their investment in infrastructure? You have probably pretty well answered that, so I might move on, if you do not mind. How was the government consulting with the road freight and agricultural freight industries to ensure that regulations are practical and support the growth of the Queensland economy?

Mr EMERSON: Thank you, member for Alger. To be honest, I am very happy to keep talking about our policy of trying to get the best value for infrastructure projects and contrast and compare Labor policies. But let me talk about that issue you raised. I work very closely with my ministerial colleague the Minister for Agriculture, John McVeigh. I have attended a number of round table meetings with him and industry stakeholders about issues particularly pertinent in terms of freight movements and agriculture, so we have worked well on that and we are delivering on our commitment to grow a strong four-pillar economy, developing the agriculture, resources and construction and tourism sectors.

As I have mentioned before, we have released our Moving Freight strategy. We released that in 2013. That strategy was developed through dealing with stakeholders, getting their feedback and talking to them about what they see as the important thing. Of course, as you know, member for Alger, we also commissioned your committee to undertake that task which I know you did diligently and you spoke to a whole range of stakeholders. We are getting on with the job of developing a better freight strategy in consultation with industry. To do that I have re-formed the Road Freight Industry Council to include key road freight industry representatives. That council will provide practical and informed industry input to the department to ensure that road freight policy development and regulations are practical and support growth in the economy. The council leads industry discussions and provides real world input to the department on a broad range of topics relevant to the heavy vehicle and agricultural sector including a critical regulation component.

I have also established a new agricultural transport industry council to provide the agricultural industry with a more direct opportunity to inform freight planning in the development of better regulatory approaches. The agricultural transport industry council has established an operational subcommittee that will specifically improve current regulations and cut unnecessary and restrictive red tape. The subcommittee is chaired by an industry representative and is supported by senior departmental officers responsible for transport regulations. We want to work very closely, we are working very closely, with the industry on that crucial issue of freight movements across the state.

CHAIR: Thank you, Minister. The committee will now adjourn for 30 minutes. The committee will resume its examination of the estimates of the Minister for Transport and Main Roads at 4 pm.

Proceedings suspended from 3.30 pm to 3.59 pm



CHAIR: The estimates hearing of the Transport, Housing and Local Government Committee is now resumed. We will continue with the examination of the estimates for the Minister for Transport and Main Roads. I call the member for South Brisbane.

Ms TRAD: Thank you very much, Mr Chair. Minister, in your response to a previous answer in relation to the non-decommissioning or the government's backdown on the decommissioning of the Dutton Park train station, you advised that it was because it was miraculously discovered that it was engineeringly possible to have a steeper tunnel for the rolling stock. Minister, is it correct that it was an engineering solution?

Mr EMERSON: I thank the member for South Brisbane. I take that question. What we did is we went out there and undertook considerable public consultation across that project. As I have detailed already, we had a comprehensive public consultation process talking and seeking public feedback. The two issues particularly that were raised during that feedback period were about both the southern and the northern portals. In terms of the northern portal, that particularly was around impacts on Victoria Park. Through work with the department, we have been able to look to alleviate those impacts on Victoria Park. In terms of the southern portal, the feedback was about the decommissioning of Dutton Park station. We looked at the gradients in terms of our train system, particularly with what the new generation of rolling stock trains could do. We wanted to see if we increased the gradient of that southern portal, whether that would alleviate that problem. We spoke to engineers about that. We felt that, instead of a three per cent gradient, we could have a 3.25 per cent gradient and the trains could deal with that gradient. That would also mean that we could maintain the Dutton Park station so we did not need to decommission it.

When we started this project, again we looked at what the previous government had done. We were very much aware of the fact that their plan involved those 100 homes and businesses being destroyed. That was Labor's plan. We did not want to do that. We were looking for a plan that did not see any private resumptions. While, unfortunately, that initial plan did involve the decommissioning of Dutton Park station, it did away with Labor's intent of raising those 100 homes and businesses. However, through feedback and talking to the engineers and looking at what was possible, we have been able to modify that plan. That has been a good result.

Dutton Park station, far from being decommissioned, will now become a far more important part of the BaTT project and that network. As I said, it also will have universal access. That is an important thing to deliver for that project. Let me talk at a bit more length about the project itself. We will see a combination of a railway and a busway in a single double-decker 15-metre wide tunnel beneath the Brisbane River and the Brisbane CBD. It will run from Dutton Park in the south to Victoria Park/Spring Hill in the north. The BaTT project will include three new underground stations at Woolloongabba, George Street and Roma Street. It will be a once-in-a-generation city-defining project. It will increase public transport capacity across the Brisbane River, offer faster and more frequent direct and reliable bus and train trips to the CBD from across the region to help manage congestion by getting families to where they need to be quicker and lay the foundation for a sophisticated international standard turn-up-and-go transit system for Brisbane.

We released the draft reference design on 19 March. As I said, there was comprehensive and extensive community feedback. I was very pleased to make that more recent announcement regarding changes that would alleviate concerns at Dutton Park and at Victoria Park as well. Importantly, moving forward, we have earmarked as part of our Strong Choices investment program \$1 billion for the BaTT project. As I said, this project will make a significant difference. That is why when we have done the industry briefings we have seen such strong enthusiasm. I have done a number of industry briefings already on this project. Those who have seen the geotech work underway, both in George Street and on the river, know that we are well and truly going ahead with this project and it will make a significant difference to public transport, both rail and bus.

CHAIR: Thank you, Minister. Member for South Brisbane?

Ms TRAD: Thank you, Chair. Mr Scales, in relation to the BaTT project and the Dutton Park train station, was a steeper incline for the southern portal ever part of the original options put to the minister? It seems pretty basic.

Mr Scales: I thank the member for South Brisbane for the question. The original slope was three per cent. We were asked to look at whether it was possible to increase that slope so we could keep the station. The new generation rolling stock basically will operate on a 3¼ per cent slope. Originally, it was a three per cent slope. We looked at options beyond that and we looked for 3¼ per cent. The new generation rolling stock of 75 trains that form part of that has a more efficient traction package.

Ms TRAD: That did not come to light until?

Mr Scales: Correct.

Ms TRAD: Sorry, it is a question: it did not come to light until when? What was the date?

Mr Scales: I have not got an exact date. I can tell you that we launched the reference design in March for consultation and that was a three per cent slope down. As a result of work between then and 24 June when we issued the revised plan, we looked at a 3¼ per cent slope

Ms TRAD: Minister, is there any intention to ensure that the Park Road station is able to be an interchange station?

Mr EMERSON: As we have seen already, what we anticipate now is that the Dutton Park station, under the revised reference plan, will become very much a key station. That will be the key station in that part of the plan now for the project. That gives those extra benefits we talked about. It will become a busier station. I think I mentioned earlier the 18 services per hour. There will be disability access now at Dutton Park. It will become an important station as part of the BaTT project. It will be just six minutes to the CBD. It is important for us to focus now on that station and that will be the revised plan again.

I think this is a win for the community. They did have concerns about it and, as a government, we listened. We said we would go out and do extensive genuine community consultation. That is exactly what we did. There were concerns raised about the southern portal and there were concerns raised about the northern portal. There were concerns raised, again, from residents of Spring Hill about the impact on Victoria Park. We listened to that. As the DG has indicated, when we looked at the new generation rolling stock, the important thing was to make sure that it could deal with that higher gradient. When the draft reference design went out, there was a three per cent gradient. We looked to see what we could do in terms of ensuring that we did not have to decommission Dutton Park station. We succeeded in doing that by increasing the gradient, as the DG just said, to 3.25 per cent. Again I make the point—and the member for Yeerongpilly was out of the room when we mentioned this, I think—we are achieving this without raising those 100 homes and businesses, many of them in his electorate. It has been a good result.

Ms TRAD: Minister, in relation to the Moreton Bay rail link, I note that there has been a revision down of the cost of the project. Can you itemise the cost savings on that project or has the money come out of contingency funding from the project?

Mr EMERSON: We have seen a reduction in the cost of that project. Again, I go back to some earlier comments that some out there would like us to pay the most possible for a project. I can tell you the most expensive project possible is not always the best project. The most expensive solution is not always the best solution. We have strived, as a government and as a department, to see if we can deliver projects with the most respect for taxpayers' dollars. What we have seen is a revision down of the cost of that project. In fact, while we have been able to achieve a savings in terms of that project, we are doing more. The project's total budget is \$1.147 billion, with contributions from the Australian government, the Queensland government and the Moreton Bay Regional Council. The federal government has reduced its contribution to the Moreton Bay rail project in the federal budget by \$159 million, based on expected savings to the project.

What is important, of course, is that we are delivering more as part of that project and that is what is important for us to do. We are delivering more than was there previously, but I make no apologies for delivering a project at the best possible cost for taxpayers. We would expect all governments to try to deliver projects at the best possible price. Obviously, we will be talking to the federal government about reinvesting those savings back into other parts of our transport system, but the fact that we can save money on a project is a great win for taxpayers, while delivering more in terms of the project itself.

Ms TRAD: I am sorry, Minister, but just a supplementary are you confirming that the money from the Commonwealth, any savings on the Moreton Bay rail link, will be given back to the Commonwealth or will not be given back to the Commonwealth in the expectation that it will be reinvested into other transport?

Mr EMERSON: The federal government has reduced its contribution to the Moreton Bay rail link based on the fact that we made expected savings on the project, as you would expect. There are contributions from three tiers of government for this project. We will be in talks with the federal government, obviously, to see if they can reinvest that money back into other projects in Queensland. The important thing is people should not be focused on the cost of a project; they should be focused on the actual delivery of the project. The idea that we are delivering a project at a cheaper price and a more effective price, but also delivering more carparks and upgraded road access on top of what was there previously, shows that we are respecting taxpayers' dollars. We are determined to deliver these

projects at the best value for taxpayers. I think the alternative is to spend as much money as possible and I think that is a wasteful approach. It does not get you best results in terms of these projects. I think that is a good result for that project.

Ms TRAD: Minister, I am happy if you want to take it on notice. In my original question I did ask for an itemised list of the cost savings. I am happy if you want to take that on notice. I hear that you have said that we are doing more with less. If you could itemise what the cost savings are and what more you are doing in terms of the project, that would be great.

Mr EMERSON: As I said, the cost savings are about \$159 million of the total cost project. In terms of those extras that we are doing, there are additional carparks that we are putting in place, improved access and upgraded access roads in the area. We are doing more. Member for South Brisbane, we are doing more in those parts of it.

Ms TRAD: Would you itemise the savings, Minister? That is what I am asking.

Mr EMERSON: As I said, that is a total cost for the project of \$159 million in terms of savings. That is across the board. It is making sure we can deliver projects at a cheaper price. It is not about saying, for instance, we are not doing this or that. The reality is that it is the cost for the project and we have reduced the cost for the things that we are going to do. It is not about taking things out of it.

Ms TRAD: In what areas of the project have you achieved those savings?

Mr EMERSON: Across the project.

Ms TRAD: Could you itemise that, Minister? That would be terrific. You are not going to take that on notice?

Mr EMERSON: As I said, it is \$159 million we have reduced across the project while delivering more. We have not cut anything from the project; we are delivering more in the project.

Ms TRAD: So, Minister, just to confirm: you are not taking this on notice?

Mr EMERSON: What I am saying—

Mr SHORTEN: This is carrying on too much.

CHAIR: The minister has answered the question. Next question.

Ms TRAD: He has not. With all due respect, Chair, he has not. I am asking about the savings and I am asking about gaining an itemised list of those savings.

CHAIR: The minister has said on three occasions now how much the savings are. The figures have been given.

Ms TRAD: Yes, but I am asking for an itemised list, Chair. This is completely within the role and responsibility of committee members throughout estimates.

CHAIR: It is up to the minister to answer the question in the way he sees fit.

Ms TRAD: Okay, and I am asking him if he will take it on notice and provide an itemised list of the savings.

CHAIR: He said he has answered the question.

Ms TRAD: No, he has not. If the answer is no, then the minister is wilfully withholding from the Queensland taxpayers information that has been requested through the estimates process.

CHAIR: Next question. Moving on. Thank you for that, member for South Brisbane. I move to the member for Springwood.

Mr GRANT: Minister, flood recovery efforts have been significant and sad with respect to those who have suffered loss. Could you articulate for us the status of flood recovery efforts from natural disasters?

Mr EMERSON: You are quite right in terms of what I have seen in my electorate in the past with the devastation from the 2011 floods. My electorate itself saw 3,000 homes impacted by that disaster in 2011, so I know personally the kind of impact it does have on families. After we see the streets cleaned of the mud and such things or the rubble cleaned off the side of roads, it goes on well and truly after the streets seem to be back to normal. The impact will go on for many years afterwards. The reality is that we have had a number of significant natural disasters over the last couple of years and we plan to complete all our works in 2014-15 for those natural disasters. As I indicated earlier, we have had six disaster events affecting Queensland in 2014 and we are working as quickly as we can to get the contracts out. We do not want to see the kinds of delays we saw after

the 2011 events in Queensland and we have worked very hard to get those projects up and running. Tropical Cyclone Ita was the most severe event to affect Queensland in 2014, and that temporarily closed 576 kilometres of state road network, more than 1,000 kilometres of our state rail network and seven ports. So while Ita was not as big as some of the events we had seen previously, it still had a major impact not only on communities, on homes and on individuals but also across our transport network—across rail, across roads and across ports. I might get the director-general to elaborate on it, if that is okay.

Mr Scales: Thank you, Minister. As the minister said, Tropical Cyclone Ita this year caused approximately \$50 million worth of damage to the state road network. We have completed the emergent works to get the network back up and running and restoration works are in the planning and design stage now. The department plans to have all 2014 event reconstruction works completed by the end of June next year, which is when the federal guillotine happens. Three natural disasters during 2013 caused 7,600 kilometres of damage to the road network—about 23 per cent—and 630 kilometres required reconstruction. If you take from 2010, 2011, 2012 and 2013, about 27,000 kilometres of our road network has been damaged by natural disasters—that is, 82 per cent—so we have had it quite bad in terms of natural disasters affecting our network. During that period a total of \$6.9 billion has been allocated to reconstruct road and transport assets damaged by the natural disaster events and all 2010 to 2013 event works were presented to market by December 2013. So progress has been \$73 million in works are nearing contract award, \$977 million worth of works are in delivery and \$5½ billion worth of works are completed. All 2010 to 2013 event works are on track to be completed by December this year, so we are doing quite well in that regard.

To give you some examples of key projects completed, the Grigor Bridge over the Mary River at Conondale has been completed. In terms of the existing Toowoomba range road alignment, we have now finished that to make it more flood resilient and there have been repairs to the Tim Fischer Bridge on the Bruce Highway, which is Maryborough to Gin Gin. The minister mentioned the repairs that we did to Don Tallon Bridge in Bundaberg on the highway. We completed that within 22 days of actually seeing the devastation on site. We have done concrete barrier works on Neerkol Creek Bridge on the Capricorn Highway near Rockhampton. We have reconstructed Cardwell. Cardwell was washed away into the sea and we have reconstructed that and that has recently been opened. We have done slope stabilisation and land slip repairs at Cunningham's Gap, and every time we repair a bit of Cunningham's Gap we get another event and it moves along and damages a bit more and then we go and fix that. We have done pavement repairs on significant stretches of the Bruce, the Warrego, the Cunningham, the Landsborough, the Gore, the Leichhardt and the Capricorn highways and we are doing this work through the Natural Disaster Relief and Recovery Arrangements, which is a joint federal and state initiative. Under these current arrangements, the Australian government provides up to 75 per cent of funding, with 25 per cent from the Queensland government.

Mr GRANT: Minister, how is the government consulting with the road freight and agricultural freight industries to ensure that regulations are practical and support growth in the economy?

Mr EMERSON: As I have indicated before, we do work very closely—very closely—with the road freight industry and we have been consulting with both the road freight and agricultural areas. As I said, I have released the Moving Freight strategy and worked very hard with the local stakeholders across Queensland to develop that strategy. That strategy outlines the government's 10-year strategy for freight in Queensland and was a response to the Queensland government's commitment to facilitate economic development and growth. It identified 38 actions to support more freight on rail and the agricultural sector, and hopefully the committee also had a look at that issue as part of its deliberations and investigations into rail freight as part of your report, which I will respond to, as I have said, this year. Implementation is underway on those 38 actions and progress is being made against 26 actions.

Completed activities include the establishment of the agricultural transport industry council and restructure of the Road Freight Industry Council; establishment of a 2014-15 route assessment program for high productivity PBS class B freight vehicles, and \$200,000 in funding has been allocated for 2014-15; and developments for stages 1 and 2 of the heavy vehicle action plan in terms of development of policy and guidelines for industry to undertake their own route assessments for PBS class B freight vehicles. Activities in progress include the preliminary planning and design for tunnel floor lowering and additional passing loops on the Toowoomba range. As I mentioned before, that \$50 million in terms of those passing loops is about trying to get more agricultural freight on to rail, as is the lowering of those historic tunnels, and \$57 million has been allocated in 2014-15 for that project. There has been the commencement of negotiations with the Australian government

implementation group about inland rail. We said that we want inland rail. We are very keen to see that occur. In terms of development of future tender arrangements for a future regional freight and livestock transport service contract, again those contracts are going to be very important going forward. We want to make sure we get it right. We want to learn from the past and see if we can make sure we can lock it in. I know that that is going to be important to everyone who has been involved in those committee hearings.

Other activities in progress include the commencement of a resource rail lines link planning study in Central Queensland to support mining inputs and agricultural inputs, and \$200,000 has been allocated in 2014-15 for that; commencement of the north coast line rail planning and capacity improvement study, and \$350,000 has been allocated for that in 2014-15; commencement of a sea freight action plan to inform the viability of coastal shipping—because it is not just about rail and it is not just about road and we also want to make sure that the sea plays a very important part in freight movements as well—and \$125,000 has been allocated in 2014-15; and of course there is also investigation of contestability options for the Mount Isa rail corridor as well. We are working across-the-board. It is important to get that feedback. It is important to work with stakeholders. We do not do this in isolation. We work with your report and we work with stakeholders' feedback, and they will also be providing feedback to us on your report after they go through it as we develop our own responses to the report.

Mr WOODFORTH: Minister, I want to talk about some infrastructure regionally, and I want to start with Townsville because it is a place I go to several times a year. What is the time line for the Townsville ring-road and is it being delivered on budget?

Mr EMERSON: Townsville is a great place to visit and a great town. I will be up there tomorrow as a part of my ministerial duties. Tomorrow we will be seeing some really impressive infrastructure work up there, as we have done in the past as well. In terms of the Townsville ring-road specifically, work is due to commence on the \$200 million Townsville ring-road section 4 in mid to late 2014 and completion is expected in mid-2016, weather permitting. The project is expected to be delivered within budget. The 11½ kilometre section will complete the 22 kilometre Townsville ring-road, providing a bypass of Townsville particularly for freight vehicles heading to the port of Townsville from the north. This will greatly benefit the resources, agricultural and construction sectors—three of the four pillars of the Queensland economy. This project will improve the reliability, connectivity and safety of the ring-road for all motorists. We will improve overtaking opportunities by constructing a section of the four-lane divided carriageway from Saunders Creek to the Dalrymple Road West overpass. The project also includes new bridges over Saunders and Stoney creeks as well as a pedestrian crossing between the open level rail crossing near Mount Low Parkway. The project is being constructed on the Bohle Plains, which is a known habitat of the endangered black-throated finch. All environmental permits have been obtained which demonstrates that the project team has taken all appropriate measures to protect the species. Tenders for construction have been called and we expect the successful contractor will be selected in August.

Mr JUDGE: Organisations and businesses like LendCorp have indicated that the privatisation of assets like ports will ultimately lead to cost burdens and price hikes. It is well known that the Newman government is planning on asset sales to fund its infrastructure. With regard to the implications on business as a result of such a strategy, has that been factored into the future plans for infrastructure development throughout Queensland?

Mr EMERSON: We have outlined a Strong Choices Investment Program, the Strongest and Smartest Choice, and that details the divestment of assets and long-term leases for, say for instance, the port of Gladstone and the port of Townsville. What we have indicated as part of that Strong Choices Investment Program is that we would use 75 per cent of those funds to pay down debt left to us by the Labor government. As you are aware, we do have \$80 billion of debt. We have a \$4 billion interest bill on that debt, so we are working to look for a solution. We do have a plan to pay down that debt and we will use \$25 billion of the funds obtained through the divestment to pay down debt. The other \$8 billion plus will be invested back into Queensland, including \$5 billion covered by my portfolio in terms of infrastructure. The details in terms of that are about \$1.5 billion going into roads in South-East Queensland, \$1.5 billion going into roads in regional Queensland, \$1 billion to kick-start the BaTT project and also \$1 billion into rail infrastructure. In terms of rail and road across Queensland, that is a significant investment into infrastructure on top of what we have already detailed as part of our future program.

The Strong Choices Investment Program does give real opportunities in terms of investment. The reality is that when we are doing investment of the type we are talking about—and we have spoken at length about rail and about roads—when you go outside South-East Queensland, roads are very important, and the member for Warrego would know this very well. When you talk about infrastructure, that means roads to people in regional and rural parts of Queensland. That is why there is that \$1.5 billion investment in regional roads plus that \$1.5 billion for SEQ roads. That is an important part of that project so that we would see significant benefits. That is not just about mums and dads driving around getting the kids to school and such things; that is a big economic generator for the communities—and I see the member for Warrego nodding his head. The fact is that, when you put that kind of money into regional roads, that is a big boost to the economic growth of those areas, a big boost to jobs in those areas. You can see that there is an economic payoff as part of paying down that debt and then also investing money into assets. I make the point that I have not heard one plan from the Labor Party in terms of that project to deal with debt and to put that kind of investment into infrastructure.

Mr JUDGE: In relation to the integration of projects like that, the write-down of royalties has been reported in the most recent budget. If the cost of exportation goes up—and companies like Glencore are flagging that right now—that will have an impact on Queensland's budget. How is the government dealing with that type of issue across departments to make sure that their strategy does not ultimately produce a negative outcome?

Mr EMERSON: I do thank the member for Yeerongpilly. Of course, the port of Gladstone and the port of Townsville are run as GOCs. They are run on a commercial basis already. They are run to make sure that we are getting a good result for the taxpayer, a good result for those GOCs. Let's not forget that the port of Brisbane was sold off by the previous government. It continues to function well; it continues to deliver. I think it is the biggest port in Queensland. It continues to deliver but, again, it will provide significant investment and recycling of assets into our economy—those kinds of things I have talked about such as rail infrastructure. The committee report itself, as you know, detailed the need for investment into rail infrastructure. Again, \$1 billion is earmarked for public transport rail infrastructure, \$1.5 billion for regional roads and \$1.5 billion for SEQ roads. So there is \$3 billion for roads. That is a big investment in infrastructure. That is a big investment into those areas.

Mr JUDGE: Just one last question, the ACCC spoke about vertical integration of assets, and the Brisbane port got a mention in that. How are we protecting against that in relation to other major ports, Gladstone in particular? Townsville has been flagged for leasing. Does the government or the department have plans to prevent that sort of outcome?

Mr EMERSON: Thank you, member for Yeerongpilly. Projects Queensland, Treasury, are leading that project. I am sure there will be plenty of opportunities to ask the Treasurer about that when he appears on Thursday. I do say again that this does provide a strong plan to deal with the disastrous debt left to us by Labor. It is an opportunity to invest into Queensland, to ensure that we do get that recycling of assets and investment into those key areas of rail and road. It is good that we have a plan because there is no plan from our opponents. All we see is more of the same. I sat in the chamber for the 50 minutes of the opposition leader's budget reply speech. I did not hear a plan at all to deal with debt and deficit. I did not hear a plan to deal with the infrastructure needs of Queensland. For 50 minutes I listened to him. Again I thought—and we were promised—we would get the solution; we would get the plan. As the shadow Treasurer told us a while back, be patient. We thought that was going to be the moment when we were going to get the plan. Fifty minutes later we were still none the wiser because Labor still does not have a plan. We have a real plan to deal with the debt, the deficit and the infrastructure; and Labor has no plan at all.

CHAIR: I call the member for South Brisbane.

Ms TRAD: Minister, I refer to your answer to question on notice 361 of 2014. You were asked why the passenger load survey is no longer conducted for Queensland Rail and you replied that it was too expensive and that the data was already captured through go cards. How do you capture paper ticket movements on the rail network without the passenger load survey?

Mr EMERSON: I thank the member for South Brisbane. We do capture details in terms of the go card information. Previously we had to deal with estimates in terms of paper tickets because it is not an accurate count. It turns out that go cards provide far more informative and accurate information. One of the great benefits of the go card system is providing far more accurate data. At the moment roughly 80 per cent of journeys are being taken on go cards, so we are getting more and more accurate information. In the past, before go card and even when there were fewer take-ups, we

had to do estimates and surveys but it still was not 100 per cent accurate. The fact that we have so many people now taking go cards means that we can now provide a far more accurate process using the go card system rather than the previous system that was being used.

Ms TRAD: So you just model it; you do not capture paper tickets? Is that what you are saying?

Mr EMERSON: As I said before, previously they would do samples and then model that. So it is no different in terms of what was happening previously, except because we have so many people now taking go cards we actually have a far more accurate system than we had previously.

Ms TRAD: The reason why you no longer publish the passenger load survey is because, according to your answer, it is too expensive. How much did it cost?

Mr EMERSON: I have not got those figures in front of me. I will strive to get that to you before the end of the session.

Ms TRAD: Thank you very much.

Mr EMERSON: I do make the point that we are talking about figures from 2012, well before this budget session.

Ms TRAD: It seems that you are allowed to answer for previous years; I am just not allowed to ask for previous years.

Mr EMERSON: That is to you, Mr Chair.

Ms TRAD: Just in relation to—

CHAIR: Just hang on a minute. We better sort this out so we know what we are doing. You can give background to a question and it does not reflect that. However, basically when you ask a question, we are questioning the 2013-14 and 2014-15 budget. If the question does not relate to that, Minister, you do not have to respond.

Mr EMERSON: I stand by my previous response then.

Ms TRAD: He is not going to answer it. Through you, Mr Chair, could I call up Ms Raneé Crosby, one of the witnesses. Ms Crosby, in relation to the question asked by the member for Yeerongpilly and the answer given by the minister previously in relation to the port of Townsville, can you advise what preparations are underway for the divestment of the port of Townsville?

Ms Crosby: Before Christmas we were requested to participate in a scoping study. So it was publicly advertised that JP Morgan were appointed to do a scoping study for the port of Townsville. Our involvement was to provide the information requested through Treasury to support that scoping study.

Ms TRAD: What has happened since then?

Ms Crosby: Since then it has been with the government for review. I think the Treasurer made an announcement publicly about what would be taken in the Strong Choices plan, which involves the integration of the port of Townsville and the Mount Isa rail line and the long-term lease of those assets for 99 years.

Ms TRAD: So the north-west rail line is part of the complete project?

Ms Crosby: Yes.

Ms TRAD: Thank you very much. I have no further questions of you, Ms Crosby.

CHAIR: I call the member for Yeerongpilly.

Mr JUDGE: Minister, this is probably a simple question just to help you finish up. In the Yeerongpilly electorate—and I am here to represent the good people of Yeerongpilly, and I will do that—

Mr SHORTEN: Till you leave.

Mr JUDGE: I refer to top-up facilities—I beg your pardon? What did you say?

Ms TRAD: It is okay, he has found his voice.

Mr JUDGE: An irrelevant comment coming from the member for Algester; I will ignore it. A lot of constituents in Yeerongpilly are seeking more top-up facilities. Can you outline the position of your department in terms of providing additional top-up facilities at public spaces, near shopping centres and so on to help the good people in the Yeerongpilly electorate?

Mr EMERSON: I appreciate the fact that people want the most convenient way to get those top-up facilities. I think every member has experienced someone in their community saying to them they are very keen to get more facilities in their local area. We obviously had some arrangements already in place—contractual arrangements—before we came to office. We have been looking at a number of options such as seeing whether we can almost retrofit some existing facilities into areas and expand out the number of facilities. The go card machines themselves are quite expensive and the normal facilities we put into, say, a newsagent or a convenience store are not the most inexpensive pieces of equipment.

What we will try to do in this coming year is to go out there and look for innovative approaches. We will see if we can use the facilities that are already in some stores and shops to see if we can almost graft on the go card facility as well. That is what we have been trying to do. I do want there to be as much convenience as possible for this not just in your electorate of Yeerongpilly, but in all electorates. That is what we are striving to do: to work as hard as we can to do that. We are still doing that. We are still working out a way to do it. It is very much an important goal for me to do that. As I said previously, we have a lot of people now using the go card. We want to make it as convenient as possible to use it. Of course, as most people know, you can also arrange automatic top-up of your go card, which does not require you to regularly top up your go card.

Mr JUDGE: It would seem to me that it is related to patronage: the easier you make these facilities, the more inclined people are to use them. That is the nature of the question.

Mr EMERSON: I do understand what you are talking about and we are trying to strive to do that.

CHAIR: Thank you Minister, I call the member for Nudgee.

Mr WOODFORTH: Minister, I wish to go back to some infrastructure regionally. It is great to support the regions, as you are. How are the Far North Queensland roads benefiting from this budget and, in particular, the Peninsula Development Road?

Mr EMERSON: I thank the member for Nudgee. Those regional roads are a long way away, but he is a member who is not just interested in his own electorate, but in all of Queensland including that Central Queensland area and the Peninsula Development Road. The 2014-15 to 2017-18 QTRIP publication outlines investment in road infrastructure in Far North Queensland of \$263 million in 2014-15 and \$652 million over the next four years. This includes \$18.4 million in 2014-15 as part of the Australian government's \$208.4 million contribution, the Cape York regional package. I know this is something that the member for Cook, David Kempton, has been very rigorous in pushing, particularly in terms of the Peninsula Development Road.

The challenge for the Peninsula Development Road is obviously the remarkable climatic conditions up there—those monsoonal rains, the storms and such things—that obviously put a lot of pressure on that road. Therefore, when it closes, it puts a lot of pressure on those local communities up there. That \$18 million in 2014-15 as part of the Australian government's \$208 million contribution will be an initiative that includes funding for the upgrade of key roads and infrastructure to better connect areas of economic opportunities with local communities. In terms specifically of the Peninsula Development Road, of the \$262 million allocated in 2014-15 in Far North Queensland, \$10.8 million directly relates to the Peninsula Development Road. The 2014-15 budget provides \$7.2 million to complete sealing sections of the road between Laura and Weipa. I know when I was recently in Cooktown for a community cabinet, again with David Kempton, he was lobbying as always for more works in his area and more work on the Peninsula Development Road. He has been a good advocate up there for that area and we continue to deliver for Far North Queensland including the electorate of Cook.

CHAIR: I want to move on to a couple of roads. I have an interest in the Warrego Highway upgrade, as you might—

Mr EMERSON: I did not think you would miss the opportunity, Mr Chair.

CHAIR: That is right. Not only that but I still have a few mates who live on Outback Way west of Boulia. Can you also in the combined answer outline what has been done to upgrade Australia's longest short cut?

Mr EMERSON: It was great recently to be in that part of the world with my good mate Rick Britton, Rob Chandler, Butch Lenton and the other mayors out that way as well. It was also good to make that announcement about Australia's longest short cut, the Outback Way. For those who do not know, it theoretically stretches all the way from Cairns to Perth, diagonally across, but really going

into sections across that way. We have worked with the federal government and local councils, and I want to make special reference to local councils in the Rapad group out there, because a number of mayors approached me last year about this—as I said, Boulia, Barcaldine, Blackall-Tambo, Longreach, Winton, Barcoo and the Diamantina Shire Council—about working together. They made a significant contribution working together as a group of councils to lobby me and to lobby the federal government.

I was very pleased that we could make an announcement with the federal government in March this year of \$24.5 million of funding—\$11 million was allocated by the federal government, \$10 million was allocated by the state government and \$3.5 million coming from those councils. That package targeted the development of the Outback Way, Australia's longest short cut, with \$13.75 million invested over three years between Winton and the Northern Territory boundary. As I said, that was proposed as a package by the Rapad group, the Remote Area Planning and Development Board representing those seven councils. It is a magnificent example of councils working together on a project.

The money was not just going to be spent on the Outback Way. Providing work for Outback Way goes through two of those councils. There was also a package of other works meaning that all seven councils got work for their local area. Again, an economic driver for their local areas but Outback Way potentially is a great tourism driver for that area as well. As I said, Outback Way stretches in one sense all the way from Cairns to Perth. Really it stretches from Winton to Alice Springs and to Laverton in Western Australia. When I visited with the Deputy Prime Minister it was great to see so many people from Boulia turn up for that announcement. They had had a bit of rain out there and that was good news at the time. I do not know how it has been since then.

CHAIR: It has not rained since, Minister.

Mr EMERSON: No, but they said that rain will hold on until maybe the end of the year. There was a bit of Mitchell grass growing and things like that. I know they were hoping for more but that was very good news for them when we made that announcement about the Outback Way. I am sure that was the feedback you have received as well, Mr Chair.

Mr GRIMWADE: Minister, I want to move on to the Great Barrier Reef. Can you give us an update today in regard to coal exports across North Queensland ports?

Mr EMERSON: I thank the member for Morayfield for the question. It would be no news to anyone that the price of coal has not been great over the last couple of years. We have seen a fall-off in the price. To some extent those prices have stabilised more recently, but putting aside that in terms of coal exports in terms of tonnage rather than dollars I am pleased to report that Queensland ports have exported a record 208 million tonnes of coal this financial year. That is up almost 16 per cent—15.9 per cent from the previous year. That is the first time we have passed 200 million tonnes of coal exports.

The increase was driven by the continued strong demand for Queensland's high-quality coal, even though globally coal has been in oversupply but people understand the high quality of coal coming out of Queensland. As I said, weaker international coal prices have created challenging conditions. Despite this, Queensland coal companies have been resilient, increasing production, lowering unit production costs by around 20 per cent and improving productivity. Coal remains Queensland's No. 1 export commodity and is of massive importance to Queensland's economy.

The coal industry employs over 20,000 people and generates export revenues of over 24 billion per annum. China remains Queensland's largest export customer for coal, taking 28.4 per cent of total exports this financial year. Exports to Queensland comprise 24.5 per cent of total exports followed by India at 16.8 per cent and South Korea at 11.3 per cent. The Queensland government is working hard and planning proactively to ensure our coal industry can keep growing at record rates. It is crucial that our rail and port systems are ready to handle the next phase of growth in exports. The government's Galilee Basin State Development Area is enabling a coordinated approach to developing two multi-user common rail corridors from the Galilee Basin to Abbot Point. These corridors will provide Galilee coalmines with an efficient route to the port of Abbot Point and will support a major capacity boost for our coal transport system.

The Galilee Basin SDA will also minimise impacts on landholders where we have recently reduced the footprint of the rail corridor to Abbot Point by 94 per cent. We have also recently released our Queensland ports strategy which aims to balance economic development with protection of the

environment. The strategy includes actions to establish five priority port development areas including long-established major coal ports of Abbot Point, Gladstone and Hay Point. The strategy also prohibits dredging within and adjoining the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage area for the development of new or the expansion of existing port facilities outside PPDAs for the next 10 years.

In terms of those coal exports, Abbot Point, 22.9 million tonnes, a 29 per cent increase from 2012-13; Dalrymple, 67.54 million tonnes, an 8.3 per cent increase; Hay Point, 40 million tonnes, up 19 per cent; Gladstone, 69 million tonnes, up 21 per cent; and Brisbane, seven million tonnes, up 7.3 per cent. As I said, this is the first time on record we have passed 200 million tonnes. While prices remain flat, our industry remains resilient. They have worked to reduce their production costs, improve their productivity and Queensland coal continues to be in demand.

Mr SHORTEN: Minister, given your previous comments today that the Great Barrier Reef is an asset to Queensland, and bearing in mind that there are a number of vessels travelling to and from Queensland ports, can you please advise what measures are in place to track this traffic to ensure the safety of the reef?

Mr EMERSON: I thank the member for Algeester for the question. We do appreciate the value of the Great Barrier Reef. The member for Yeerongpilly mentioned it earlier as well. We have been working to ensure we continue to have a safe and protected reef. We are committed to ensuring that vessels on the Great Barrier Reef are safe and operate in a safe manner. We have a REEFVTS system in place. I might get the DG to explain and expand on that.

Mr Scales: Thank you for the question. We have a REEFVTS system which tracks vessels over 50 metres in length, although we do encourage vessels below that to have tracking systems fitted to them. It is voluntary for ships but we do encourage it. It is a joint operation with AMSA, the Australian Maritime Safety Authority, and MSQ, Maritime Safety Queensland. Since the introduction in 2004 the average number of groundings in the REEFVTS area went from on average one per year to one in 10 years so it has been pretty successful. It is a 24/7, 365 day facility. It is operated from our Townsville VTS centre. We have a backup centre in Gladstone. To complement, we service the department's five port VTS centres at Cairns, Townsville, Hay Point, Gladstone and Brisbane. So we have port VTS but we also have one that looks all the way to the Torres islands and the Great Barrier Reef.

Approximately 11,400 vessel movements occurred in 2013-14. We track them using radar, an automatic identification system like a ping on the ship itself and Satsee, which is on board comms system so it gives you speed and it also gives you heading and you can see this on the screen all the time. We have had only one minor collision in 2014 which was a fishing boat which was not tracked by VTS. As the state economy relies on access to shipping routes through the Great Barrier Reef, it supports the four-pillar economy as well. The port VTS centres, which are the ones that look inwards rather than looking outwards, tracked 18,000 ship movements in 2012-13. This is to protect the approximate value of export trades from our ports in the Great Barrier Reef area of \$40 billion a year.

We also have a north-east shipping management plan developed jointly by the Commonwealth and the state so we are making sure that we manage what we have. As a range of additional measures, we have a system of physical aids which are basically lights and navigational aids and anything in the reef through AMSA has compulsory pilotage and MSQ which is compulsory pilotage in the ports. For interest, I know the AMSA monitoring system monitors one-tenth of the world's surface so this is a subset of that.

Mr EMERSON: Mr Chair, I might ask the CEO of Queensland Rail, Helen Gluer, to respond to an earlier question she was asked and provide additional information.

Ms Gluer: The member for South Brisbane asked whether we could provide the total number of trains cancelled in 2013-14 and the proportion of those cancellations due to trains running late. The answer is in 2013-14 the total number of train services, peak and non-peak, cancelled was 1,254.20 compared to 2,523.20 in 2012-13 and 1,323 in 2011-12. All cancellations will have been because the train was going to run late due to an incident or issue, and all those cancellations statistics are captured in our on time running results.

CHAIR: Thank you for that.

Ms TRAD: Can I confirm something in relation to that answer? Ms Gluer, cancellations in terms of significant delays did not occur in this financial year?

Ms Gluer: I am not sure I understand that question.

Ms TRAD: We spoke before about cancellations due to significant delays which does occur; yes?

Ms Gluer: As I have said here, all cancellations will have been because the train was going to run late due to an incident or an issue. Obviously an issue could be that it has been stranded on a train track for an hour, as an example.

Ms TRAD: Or that it is running significantly late?

Ms Gluer: Yes.

Mr EMERSON: Mr Chair, very quickly, I will ask the CEO to confirm again that they are captured in our figures. Can you confirm that, Helen?

Ms Gluer: Absolutely, Minister. They only run late if an incident or an issue has occurred, though. But they all do come into our numbers, Mr Chairman. So if we cancel a train it is not like we are making our on time running numbers look better. That is absolutely not the case.

CHAIR: Thank you for that. The time allocated for the consideration of the estimates of the Minister for Transport and Main Roads has now expired.

Mr EMERSON: Mr Chairman, can I say a quick thank you to the committee, to the member for South Brisbane and all the other committee members including the member for Yeerongpilly. To yourself as chairman, to the research panel but particularly to my ministerial staff, to all those who attended today I suspect it is a new form of torture to have to listen to six hours of the Minister for Transport talking about these things but I do appreciate their fine efforts. Again, I thank the efforts of the committee, the department and my hardworking ministerial staff including my chief of staff, Andrew Berkman. To the CEOs and staff from Queensland Rail, the Gold Coast Waterways Authority and port authorities, you have all made a great effort here. Thank you, Mr Chairman, and the committee for its efforts today.

CHAIR: Thank you, Minister. On behalf of the committee, I thank you and your advisers for your attendance. I remind all visitors that the archived video footage that will be provided on the parliament's website is the sole source of proceedings until the Hansard transcript is produced early next week. This completes the committee's hearings for the estimates of the Minister for Transport and Main Roads. Before I conclude, on behalf of the committee I thank officers of the Parliamentary Service for their assistance with today's hearing. I now declare this estimates hearing of the Transport, Housing and Local Government Committee closed.

Committee adjourned at 5.00 pm