

PUBLIC ACCOUNTS AND ESTIMATES COMMITTEE

Inquiry into the 2026–27 Budget Estimates

Melbourne – Wednesday 20 May 2026

MEMBERS

Sarah Connolly – Chair

John Pesutto – Deputy Chair

Jade Benham

Michael Galea

Mathew Hilakari

Lauren Kathage

Aiv Puglielli

Richard Riordan

Meng Heang Tak

WITNESSES

Ros Spence MP, Minister for Roads and Road Safety;

Jeroen Weimar, Secretary, Department of Transport and Planning,

Adam Maguire, Deputy Secretary, Network Design and Integration,

Fiona Adamson, Deputy Secretary, Transport Services, Department of Transport and Planning; and

Tracey Slatter, Chief Executive Officer, Transport Accident Commission, Department of Treasury and Finance.

The CHAIR: I declare open this hearing of the Public Accounts and Estimates Committee, and I ask that mobile telephones please be turned to silent.

On behalf of the Parliament, the committee is conducting this Inquiry into the 2026–27 Budget Estimates. The committee's aim is to scrutinise public administration and finance to improve outcomes for the Victorian community.

I advise that all evidence taken by the committee is protected by parliamentary privilege. However, comments repeated outside this of hearing may not be protected by this privilege.

As Chair I expect that committee members will be respectful towards the witnesses, the Victorian community joining the hearing via the live stream and other committee members.

Witnesses will be provided with a proof version of the transcript to check, and verified transcripts, presentations and handouts will be placed on the committee's website.

I welcome the Minister for Roads and Road Safety, the Honourable Ros Spence, as well as officials from DTP. Minister, I invite you to make an opening statement or presentation of no more than 5 minutes, after which time the committee will ask you some questions. Your time starts now.

Ros SPENCE: Thank you, Chair, and thank you for the opportunity to address the committee on the roads and road safety portfolio.

Visual presentation.

Ros SPENCE: Can I begin by acknowledging the traditional owners of the land on which we meet, the Wurundjeri people of the Kulin nation, and pay my respects to elders past and present. Can I also acknowledge that this is National Road Safety Week. Our thoughts are with any people that have been affected by tragedy on our roads, and I encourage everyone to just be a little bit more mindful as they are driving.

Thank you again. The investments in our road network in this budget will deliver a range of initiatives that will relieve cost-of-living pressure on Victorian families, repair and renew our road network, improve safety and reduce road trauma and update critical links across the state. The government is putting money back in the pockets of Victorians with a 20 per cent rebate on vehicle registrations. Currently light vehicle registration costs up to \$930.70 each year. With this 20 per cent rebate, a driver with one car will receive up to \$186 back from rego payments for 2025–26. From 1 June eligible vehicle owners can apply for the 20 per cent rebate through Service Victoria for up to two vehicles registered in their name. Applications will be open until 31 July, so that is two months to be able to claim that rebate.

The government is making its largest investment towards the repair and renewal of our road network in this year's budget. More than \$1 billion will be spent in 2026–27 to rebuild and repair our roads, ensuring they are safer, smoother and stronger. This is the biggest roads blitz in the state's history, with 70 per cent of the funds going to regional Victoria. Year on year the government has continued to invest more towards maintaining Victorian roads. Crews are out on the network right now delivering the last budget's \$976 million 2025–26 better roads blitz. That is thousands of on-road jobs, including major rehabilitations, resurfacing projects and pothole repairs. The government also recently announced the better roadsides blitz, delivering \$36.9 million of

increased maintenance along our busiest roads – works like increased graffiti removal, signage and safety barrier repairs and additional vegetation management.

The government is also getting on with a major program of arterial road upgrades right across Victoria, delivering safer and more efficient journeys for drivers, pedestrians, cyclists and freight operators. This budget will invest \$102.6 million to improve the transport links across the state that keep our communities connected. Across Melbourne the budget invests \$29.2 million to upgrade crossings, intersections and road surfaces from Melton South to Cockatoo. In regional Victoria \$73.4 million will be invested to develop road projects, tackle congestion and improve safety. You will see projects underway and in planning from Trafalgar to Connewarre, Epsom and towards the border in Tooleybuc. The government is continuing to invest in the life-saving road safety action plan. \$1.1 billion is being invested by this government as part of our commitment to halve deaths and significantly reduce road trauma by 2030, including \$350 million for new initiatives. This funding is enabling the government to deliver more critical road safety infrastructure, including safety barriers on high-risk kerbs and rural and urban roads, reducing the risk of crashes at high-speed rural intersections, and delivering safety improvements for pedestrians and cyclists at more than 100 high-risk sites across the state. We also want to ensure the safety of our children on our roads. It is why the budget is investing \$16.8 million towards the school crossing supervisor program over one year.

The government recently announced a further \$28.7 million in funding towards the safe local roads and streets program, bringing the total investment in this program to \$214 million. Eighty-seven per cent of Victoria's road network is managed by local government, and we know that the key to improving road safety in Victoria is to work with councils to improve road infrastructure. With this additional funding 100 more projects have been approved. That means local councils will be planning, designing and delivering more than 440 projects to improve safety on their roads, with all 79 of Victoria's local councils benefiting from this program. Thank you, Chair.

The CHAIR: Thank you very much, Minister. The first 7 minutes are going to Mr Riordan.

Richard RIORDAN: Thank you, Chair. Minister, just following up on some news reports today about 30-kilometre-an-hour roads – how much of a vision do you see that as for the state, 30-kilometre-an-hour roads? You have got some trialling in Stonington and a couple of spots. Is that something you are wanting to roll out across the metropolitan area?

Ros SPENCE: It is really for councils to decide with their local communities if that is something that they think will benefit their local community. They will then bring their proposals to us, and the department will have a look at them. But it is for communities to raise issues of concern in their local communities – and you would know in your patch where there are dangerous spots – and for councils to make a decision as to whether or not they think that that is an appropriate treatment to address that concern. We are talking mainly about areas near schools where there are kids getting on and off buses. But then they can undertake a trial and see whether or not that does have a positive impact.

Richard RIORDAN: All right. So it is a council issue predominantly. Minister, I refer to the performance measures in the 'Department Performance Statement', pages 132 and 133. If you are spending a record amount on road maintenance, why are the performance measures for virtually every aspect of road maintenance going down?

Ros SPENCE: Can you tell me which measure you are referring to?

Richard RIORDAN: It is on page 132. A really classic, most obvious glaring one there is the road areas being patched in regional Victoria, from 566,000 square metres down to 95,000 or 70,000 last year.

Ros SPENCE: That is addressing with post-flooding treatments. I will get the Secretary to add to it.

Richard RIORDAN: Minister, just on that, I was on PAEC a few years ago and then disappeared for a while. It is always flooding. I mean, flooding has been used as an excuse for distorting road repair. Can I tell you we have been in a prolonged drought in big parts of Victoria for quite some time. Last year was the driest year ever.

Ros SPENCE: There has also been considerable flooding across –

Richard RIORDAN: But doesn't it have an effect of a bit of a catch-up? If you are going to use flooding because you cannot get roads done, surely if you have a drought you get caught up. Anyway, so flooding is the reason for that?

Ros SPENCE: I will ask the Secretary to add to my comments.

Jeroen WEIMAR: Thank you, Minister. Good afternoon, Mr Riordan. As the minister said, we have seen over the last few years obviously recovery from that significant flooding event of a few years ago.

Richard RIORDAN: 2022.

Jeroen WEIMAR: Yes, 2022 – a few years ago. A lot of patching was done in those last two years before this year to recover, to ensure we can get those roads back up and running again. We have shifted focus to resurfacing and rehabilitation. What you will see in this year's figures is that we are expecting to be 24 per cent ahead of our target statewide for rehabilitation and resurfacing of our road network. I am also pleased to note that 81 per cent of our resurfacing and rehabilitation is in regional Victoria, recognising of course that is where the lion's share of our network operates. We feel that we are either on or ahead, the vast majority of our DPS figures –

Richard RIORDAN: But on that, just on your own figures there, Mr Weimar, you have got 802,000 as the actual in 2024–25 for metro areas, and it is expected to be only 557,000. Yes, I will concede that there is a slight uptick for regional road resurfacing, but as an aggregate it is still down.

Jeroen WEIMAR: No, to correct you, Mr Riordan, as an aggregate I think we are looking at 4.394 million for all of our pavement rehabilitation and resurfacing across the state. That is 24 per cent up on the target that was set for this year.

Richard RIORDAN: Minister, your target for resurfacing and rehabilitation is also falling short in metro, as we covered. The government resurfaced or rehabilitated 12 million square metres of regional roads, yet this year will do less than 3 million square metres.

Jeroen WEIMAR: Through you, Minister. I think there are just two corrections maybe. I think in our DPS outcomes for this year we are expecting 4.4 million square metres of pavement rehabilitations and resurfacing. I think the earlier measure from a number of years ago, admittedly before I was in the department, was a different measure. It was area treated, which incorporated a whole bunch of other data points in terms of realigning, road edge refixing, potholes et cetera. I appreciate the DPS measures have changed over recent years, so that the total area treated number from four years ago was a broader category of which pavement rehabilitations and resurfacing were a subset. It is a bit apples and oranges to compare those two numbers.

Richard RIORDAN: Have you created a new measure for relining. How many?

Jeroen WEIMAR: No, I do not have a new measure for relining.

Richard RIORDAN: So you have taken that out. Well, you are not measuring the amount or lack of white paint on the road.

Jeroen WEIMAR: We measure quite a lot, Mr Riordan, on the network, but the earlier definition that was held – again, before I came back to the jurisdiction – about four years ago was a much bigger, broader metric. With our new Victorian road maintenance contracts, we have a much more specific set of KPIs that we measure them to, so we can get tighter control over what work is done on the network, recognising we are prioritising our resources to the areas that need it most. Some of those are reflected in these DPS measures.

Richard RIORDAN: Okay. The government repeatedly references 70 per cent of funding going to regional areas. DPS, this report, on page 133 shows the area of road network in regional areas is 76 per cent of the state. Why are regional roads being short-changed?

Jeroen WEIMAR: If I go back to my rehabilitation and resurfacing number, this year, of the total area that we are rehabilitating and resurfacing this year, 81 per cent will be in regional Victoria – 357 and 487.

Richard RIORDAN: A question that I asked earlier in the week, but it is now appropriate for this one, is the government has very recently completed – sorry, that is not the question. It is to do with the TAC’s contribution to road safety. It shows that road safety funds received \$75 million less than forecast for the financial year from the TAC. This is where funds are received from the TAC and are used for road safety initiatives. Why did the fund fall by more than 40 per cent?

Tracey SLATTER: Thank you very much for your question, Mr Riordan. Our expenditure, the TAC’s investment in road safety has actually increased. For example, for road infrastructure in 2024–25, \$72.25 million, compared to \$54.85 million in the previous financial year. The TAC investments go across a number of delivery agencies. That includes the Department of Transport and Planning but also police and also the department of justice in relation to cameras.

The CHAIR: Thank you. Ms Kathage.

Lauren KATHAGE: Thank you so much, Chair, Minister and officials. Minister, I wanted to ask about road maintenance. You can see on page 90 of BP3 there is information there about that work. I mean, we need roads to connect and to get everywhere we need to go. It is absolutely vital that they are in good condition. So how will this budget ensure that those roads are maintained so we can get to where we need to go?

Ros SPENCE: Thank you, Ms Kathage, for the question, and I am very pleased to talk to you about roads. It is something that we do often before I had this portfolio and now with more frequent chats, so that is very good. I thank you for the question, and I share your view on the importance of roads in the lives of Victorians. Our roads keep Victorians connected. They link people to family and friends, to work, to health care, to education, while also moving freight to deliver the goods that we rely on every day. In fact Victoria has the highest road density in the country. That means that it is easier for Victorians to get to any point of the state with a road than any other jurisdiction in Australia. The government maintains 23,000 kilometres of arterial roads across the state, as well as critical road assets like traffic signals, bridges, major culverts and other roadsides. It is a task that we take very seriously, and it is why we have committed over \$1 billion this year for road maintenance – \$1.041 billion, to be precise – and this is the latest record investment in our roads over the past few years.

Since 2014 our investment in our roads has more than doubled. We have invested nearly \$3 billion over the past three years, in the largest sustained investment in road maintenance in Victoria’s history. Through budget investments like this record amount, we are able to maintain and deliver long-term value on our roads, securing reliability and safety for everyone who uses our roads, and this investment will help us to repair potholes, to rebuild road pavements and to resurface roads to keep drivers, pedestrians, motorbike riders and cyclists safe. It will also enable crews to deliver other vital work across the network, including preventative works, mowing, graffiti cleaning, tree trimming and inspecting and maintaining important structures like traffic lights, bridges, signage, safety barriers and other assets. To give you a sense of some of the work that was completed over the course of the last financial year, I can tell you that our crews have repaired around 187,000 potholes, the equivalent of one every 5 metres between Melbourne and Sydney. They have cleaned up 127,000 square metres of graffiti, equivalent to around 3500 billboards completely covered in graffiti. They have mowed 1,900,000 metres, the distance from Melbourne to Brisbane, and crews have also repaired or replaced 31,000 signs and inspected 13,600 barriers. We know that there is more work to do and that is why this investment is so important.

Lauren KATHAGE: Thank you, Minister. It is interesting because when we think about road maintenance, it is not just the road itself, it is some of those other types of activities. What other ways do we improve road safety through this, and where would we expect to see that work happening?

Ros SPENCE: Thank you, again, for the question. You are right, road maintenance really does extend beyond patching work, resurfacing and rehabilitation. That is why we have announced a \$36.9 million roadside amenity package. This package will allow us to deliver a roadside cleaning blitz focused on some of Melbourne’s busiest freeways. Our crews will be hard at work over the coming months, cleaning up and restoring roadsides on our busiest arterial roads across the state. You will see our teams working their way along both sides of our busiest corridors, including the Monash Freeway, Princes Freeway West, the Western Freeway, West Gate Freeway, Hume Freeway, Calder Freeway, Western Ring Road, South Gippsland Freeway, Mornington Peninsula Freeway and the Tullamarine Freeway. Our crews will be hard at work cleaning and restoring roadsides, including extra mowing, rubbish removal, graffiti removal and vital sign and

barrier repairs. I think it is important to note that we deliver routine maintenance work such as this all year round, right across our road network. This package is an increased level of activity targeting high-priority issues on eight of our busiest freeways, some of which are those key gateways that connect regional Victoria to metropolitan Melbourne. This work will be done progressively along both sides of the freeway corridors over several months. We will let motorists and commuters know and communities know when and where they can expect to see our crews, but they will see them out and about.

Lauren KATHAGE: Thank you, Minister. Despite the weather in Mr Riordon's electorate, there can be rain in other places. We know that flooding can have an impact on the road and we know that roads can be impacted even by bushfires. We know that there was some support available following the recent bushfires. Can you tell us more about the maintenance work following events like that?

Ros SPENCE: I can and I thank you again for raising this really important issue. Natural disasters are of course devastating on a number of levels. There is the immediate impact and then the recovery activities needed to follow such horrific events. I will just go to a couple of issues. When these events occur, we act swiftly to ensure that we can make as much of the road network accessible as soon as possible. Following the fires on 7 January, the department mobilised quickly to restore road access as soon as it was safe to do so. After the appropriate inspections could take place, we announced an \$81.8 million package for critical road repairs supporting safe community access. This includes repair to roads damaged by clean-up operations and heavy vehicle detours that were required during the response phase.

Across other affected regions, assessments have been completed and recovery works are well advanced, including vegetation removal, signage and guidepost replacement, safety barrier repairs, pavement works and resealing. Significant restoration works have been delivered across more than 170 kilometres of fire-impacted state-managed roads, and all state-managed roads and bridges reopened after an engineering inspection of 13 bridges.

The CHAIR: Thank you. Ms Benham.

Jade BENHAM: Thank you, Chair. This might be a question for the Secretary. As of today, how many potholes have been filled this financial year?

Jeroen WEIMAR: Thank you, Ms Benham. I do have that number.

Jade BENHAM: Terrific.

Jeroen WEIMAR: We have fixed 211,874 potholes, as of 15 May.

Jade BENHAM: As of 15 May – excellent. Thank you.

Jeroen WEIMAR: You are welcome.

Jade BENHAM: As of today, how many sections of road are there subject to a pavement-in-poor-condition management plan?

Jeroen WEIMAR: We currently have 185 sections of road subject to a 'pavement in poor condition' definition. I should just maybe explain for the benefit of the committee that we undertake of course a whole series of regular road inspections across our entire 23,000-kilometre network, with around 40 inspectors a day out there managing the network. They make those determinations. Of the 185, 63 of those are due to be resurfaced or resealed or see significant patching by the end of this financial year.

Jade BENHAM: Great, because some of those plans have been celebrating birthdays. Some of them are just about ready to start primary school. They have been there for quite some time.

Jeroen WEIMAR: Well, obviously we triage the work we see on the network, and around a third of our road maintenance budget is spent on ensuring we maintain and fix issues that come up from time to time. The potholes you refer to – when we see pavements in poor condition we prioritise those depending on the category of the road, the scale of the works and the cost of getting those works done.

Jade BENHAM: And if they are not a high priority, they just sit there for a few years?

Jeroen WEIMAR: No, I would not say that. I think there is always a prioritisation you have to do on a network of this scale, and I think we are very responsive to, for example, the agricultural sector, recognising those key agricultural routes, and other key industries and communities that rely on certain routes. There is a complex prioritisation of the network. That is why we have regional teams working closely with regional communities to make sure we get the balance about right.

Jade BENHAM: Sure. For those sections that might be under plans, how long are some of these sections? What is the longest section that might be under a plan?

Jeroen WEIMAR: I do not have that information to hand, but they can be anything from a few tens of metres to maybe one or two –

Jade BENHAM: It would be data that the department would keep, though, wouldn't it?

Jeroen WEIMAR: This will be data we will have in the department somewhere, absolutely.

Jade BENHAM: Would you provide that to the committee?

Jeroen WEIMAR: I can certainly go and have a look and see what I can find.

Jade BENHAM: Fantastic. Thank you so much. How many Victorians have lodged claims for property damage from roads so far this financial year or for the 2025 calendar year?

Jeroen WEIMAR: We have received and assessed so far this year 592 claims.

Jade BENHAM: How many were successful?

Jeroen WEIMAR: Thirteen of those claims were successful out of those 592, and again –

Jade BENHAM: Thirteen?

Jeroen WEIMAR: Thirteen – 1-3. Again, if I could maybe put that in context, we have 6.8 million vehicles active on the road network, traversing that road network, on most of the days of the week, so we have a large number of users. I think those 592 claims would be about 0.01 per cent, there or thereabouts, of the vehicles that we see on the network. With a lot of the claims of course people are also claiming against their insurance or they may not be travelling on our roads, recognising the majority of roads are not actually DTP roads.

Jade BENHAM: Does that also include people who have walked across a state government road, tripped on a pothole and injured themselves, damaged property on their person et cetera? Is that captured in that data?

Jeroen WEIMAR: I would not know. My suspicion would be that these are largely motorists. But again, as I have said, when we investigate these claims, we find a lot of claims are on council roads or other roads, and that is quite understandable, or we find people are also claiming on their insurance, again, which is quite appropriate.

Jade BENHAM: So the government has paid compensation to 13 motorists.

Jeroen WEIMAR: Thirteen – that is right. DTP has.

Jade BENHAM: Okay. So that is for this financial year or calendar year?

Jeroen WEIMAR: For this financial year to date.

Jade BENHAM: For this financial year to date. Okay. Thank you so much. The government claims to be spending \$1.04 billion on road maintenance next financial year. Can you tell the committee how much of that is spent on, as the minister mentioned before, graffiti removal, litter removal, vital sign and barrier repairs, grass mowing, vegetation and weed spraying?

Jeroen WEIMAR: Yes, I can give you a reasonable sense of that – maybe not by individual category, but let me tell you what I have in front of me. Thirty-one per cent of that \$1.04 billion will be on planned pavement

treatment, so the resurfacing and rehabilitation works I was talking to Mr Riordan about. Around 32 per cent is based on our routine maintenance work, including, infamously, pothole filling, emergency response –

Jade BENHAM: Thirty-two per cent is on the pothole filling?

Jeroen WEIMAR: No, 32 per cent is on routine maintenance – the routine maintenance of the entire network, the inspections of the network. We do around 400,000 inspections a year to ensure, again, we triage the works appropriately.

Jade BENHAM: So 32 per cent of the \$1.04 billion.

Jeroen WEIMAR: Of the \$1.04 billion. Fourteen per cent – critically important – will be spent on drainage and structures, the 10,000 or so bridges and culverts that you do not see on the road network that are critically important to its long-term health and its capacity to bear weight. Twelve per cent of the funding is on traffic signals – 8000 traffic signals on the network and of course the increasingly complex information technology we use around the network. We also of course have the West Gate Bridge to maintain, a prized asset, and we have a few other pieces in the rest of the tale. The minister referred particularly this year to \$36.9 million on a road amenity blitz to focus on the pieces of the network that Victorians see, although I am pleased to note that in this financial year we have increased by a factor of seven the amount of graffiti cleared off the network already so far.

Jade BENHAM: Great, thank you. Has the new iPAVE report undertaken by the National Transport Research Organisation assessing the state of our roads been undertaken in 2025–26, and if so, how much of the network is rated good, very good, poor or very poor? And can a summary or a report be provided to the committee?

Jeroen WEIMAR: I am not personally familiar with that work. I might ask Mr Maguire to see whether he has got any information on the NTRO work. Thank you.

Adam MAGUIRE: Yes, sure. Thank you, Secretary. I just want to acknowledge road safety week as well. We do work closely with the NTRO to undertake pavement assessment testing. Like most jurisdictions across Australia, we do that on a regular basis. I understand the most recent run has been completed, but we are waiting on the report and the advice from the NTRO on the current condition.

Jade BENHAM: Okay. Is that something that will be made public?

Adam MAGUIRE: We have not historically made the NTRO reports public, to my knowledge, but I can check.

Jade BENHAM: Is it something you can provide to the committee?

Adam MAGUIRE: I can check that.

Jade BENHAM: Great. Thank you so much. I just want to go back to a question that Mr Riordan had about the 2022–23 budget for the actuals and the performance measures. There were 11,478 square metres of road resurfaced or rehabilitated. It is the same performance measure. That was in the 2022–23 budget. For 2021–22 the road square metreage was 11,478 square metres of road resurfaced or rehabilitated. What was the area that you had?

Jeroen WEIMAR: The area that we are delivering this year on road resurfacing rehabilitation is –

Jade BENHAM: So it is lower?

The CHAIR: Mr Weimar, I am going to stop you there. We are going to come back this way. Mr Tak.

Meng Heang TAK: Thank you, Chair, Minister, officials. The registration rebate is very popular among residents in my electorate. Minister, I refer to the funding in budget paper 3, page 83, for the light passenger vehicle registration rebate. Could you please provide us with a bit more information about what this program is?

Ros SPENCE: Thank you for the question. This is a really important program that I am very pleased is provided in the budget. We know that families are under a lot of cost-of-living pressure, so in this budget we will put money back into their pockets with a 20 per cent rebate on car registration, worth up to \$186 per vehicle. When families are already stretched we know that every dollar counts, and this is money straight back into the pockets of Victorian motorists. The rebate applies to all eligible registrations in the 2025–26 financial year. It does not matter when you paid your registration or whether you paid it by instalments; as long as your registration falls in this financial year, you will be able to claim the rebate. And this relief is for Victorian families, not corporate fleets. We know that small businesses have access to other government support, including energy bill relief, Victorian energy upgrades and commercial solar rebates. This is intentionally targeted towards those families that we know are really doing it tough.

Meng Heang TAK: Thank you, Minister. When will Victorians be able to access this rebate and get this money back in their pockets, and where can they have that access?

Ros SPENCE: Thank you for that supplementary question. Families will be able to access the rebate, and the rebate will be capped at two vehicles per person. From 1 June through to 31 July they will be able to claim that rebate. The system is designed to be simple and fast through the Service Victoria website or app, with no complicated document uploads required by the applicant to prove their eligibility. Instead the system will validate eligibility automatically using VicRoads registration data, and payments will generally be processed within 30 days. If they are complex cases, they will of course be longer than that, but we would hope that payments can be made in 30 days. Doing this program online or through the app means that there will be money in Victorians' pockets faster.

Anyone who needs help navigating the online system can contact the Service Victoria call centre for assistance, so there is support there as well. But we are making it as simple and quick as possible, knowing that people are doing it tough now.

Meng Heang TAK: Thank you. I am glad to see that roll out. Minister, I understand that this is a new program. Why was it important for the government to introduce it in this budget?

Ros SPENCE: Thank you again for the question. Registration is really one of those bills that can sneak up on a family, usually at the most inconvenient time, which is why we have already implemented a range of payment options for people. Registration payments can be between \$652 and \$932 each year for most Victorians, and a 20 per cent rebate means real savings on a bill nearly every family pays. Everyone gets the same percentage back – 20 per cent on whatever they pay – so this is a really fair way of ensuring we can respond to real pressure on families right now, on top of the free public transport that is happening at the moment and the half-price public transport for the second half of the year. These are ongoing cost-of-living supports. We cannot control what is happening overseas, but we can certainly help right now to ease the cost-of-living pressures on Victorian families.

Meng Heang TAK: Thank you. Fantastic. Moving on to the school crossing supervisor program – the lollipops – I refer to budget paper 3, page 83, Minister, which outlines the funding for the school crossing supervisor program. Can you please outline how this funding is improving road safety outcomes for school-age children?

Ros SPENCE: Thank you again for that question. I am very pleased to be able to speak on the school crossing supervisor program. Budget paper 3 outlines \$16.8 million for the program, increasing the 2026–27 total investment to \$28.3 million. This includes \$11.5 million from the recurrent budget, and the funding will continue the program into 2026–27. This is in addition to the \$57.3 million invested over the last two years.

The program has a significant history here in Victoria. For over 50 years school crossing supervisors have been keeping our kids safe on their journeys to and from school, and we have the most extensive school crossing supervisor program in the country, with more than 3000 supervisors located at primary and secondary schools right around the state. The program is one of several measures to keep schoolchildren safe on our roads, and it is supported by other road safety treatments, including school speed zones, school education programs and infrastructure.

The program is visible in our local communities, and it is highly valued by parents, by carers and guardians of children and young people travelling to and from school. We know that the program positively contributes to

local community driving behaviours and perceptions of road safety, and I am very pleased that we have this additional support in the budget. We know that families value the safety of their children around schools. I remember the school crossing supervisor helping us get across the road, and I remember them helping my son get across the road, and everyone sees them and they recognise who they are. They become quite a trusted person in the school community, where people know to give them a wave – good people doing good work, looking after all of our kids.

Having a number of new schools in my area, I also know that it is not a set-and-forget program. Sometimes the crossings will be put in at a new school, but we find that the access to the school is more appropriate when relocated elsewhere. So it is something that can evolve as schools grow and adapt to their needs but a program that is really important. I am very pleased that we have got this additional funding, and I know that it will be welcomed not just by the community and everyone that uses these but also by the councils that we work with to deliver these programs.

Meng Heang TAK: Thank you, Minister.

The CHAIR: Thank you very much. Ms Benham.

Jade BENHAM: Thank you, Chair. I just want to circle back to the graffiti that we were talking about earlier. Did you say, Secretary, that you had done seven times the previous amount of graffiti removal? And can I ask how much that cost? Because last year I believe it was \$1.5 million for graffiti removal, in 2024–25, if I am right.

Jeroen WEIMAR: Thank you, Ms Benham. The data I have got here is that in 2024–25 we removed 21,000 square metres of graffiti.

Jade BENHAM: At a cost of?

Jeroen WEIMAR: I do not have those numbers in front of me. In this year we are on track to remove some 147,000 square metres.

Jade BENHAM: At a cost of?

Jeroen WEIMAR: Again, I do not have the details in front of me.

Jade BENHAM: You had the breakdown before of the road maintenance, so what percentage was graffiti removal?

Jeroen WEIMAR: I did. That will be sitting within the 32 per cent that we spend on emergency management, routine maintenance and various other things.

Jade BENHAM: Are those breakdowns something that you can provide to the committee?

Jeroen WEIMAR: I can certainly see what I can find.

Jade BENHAM: Great, thank you so much. I now want to circle back to property damage. Of those 592 claims, how many are still active at the moment and have not been determined?

Jeroen WEIMAR: Those 592 claims are the ones that we have received and assessed this year.

Jade BENHAM: Okay. So they have all been assessed. How many are active at the moment?

Jeroen WEIMAR: I do not have that data in front of me, but I am aware this is the number that we have closed down so far this year. Obviously we are still in the year, so we will continue to see some claims coming in, I am sure.

Jade BENHAM: Yes. But you do not have the data to hand of how many there are active at the moment?

Jeroen WEIMAR: No, I do not know.

Jade BENHAM: Is that something you could provide to the committee?

Jeroen WEIMAR: I can see what we can find.

Jade BENHAM: Great. Thank you so much. I want to move on to SprayLine Road Services now. The government has very recently completed the privatisation of the only remaining government road company, SprayLine Road Services. How much money has the government received for this privatisation?

Jeroen WEIMAR: Thank you, Ms Benham. This is really a decision to outsource SprayLine Road Services, as you say.

Jade BENHAM: Outsource, privatise – it all gets mixed into the same bucket often, doesn't it?

Jeroen WEIMAR: If I may just provide a bit of context, this is all around the road management contracts that we operate within Victoria. We have eight VRMCs currently. In this financial year SprayLine was operating certainly up in your neck of the woods, the Loddon Mallee region, and also eastern metro. As we have gone through and essentially made the decision to retender those contracts, we have had good bids in from some commercial operators, and as part of that transition some of the SprayLine Road Services teams will be transferring into those commercial operations –

Jade BENHAM: Okay.

Jeroen WEIMAR: and continuing to deliver their road maintenance services into Victoria.

Jade BENHAM: Great, that is good to hear. So how much money has the government received for that move?

Jeroen WEIMAR: This is essentially a reprofiling of the investment that we have made in SprayLine services and the money we spend on our road maintenance contracts. Instead of it being an in-house activity, it will now be an outsourced activity.

Jade BENHAM: So you have received no money for that transaction?

Jeroen WEIMAR: There are a fairly complex series of transactions that we are finalising at the moment.

Jade BENHAM: I mean, the budget process is a pretty complex process, which is why we are here, Mr Weimar.

Jeroen WEIMAR: Indeed it is. But this is a transaction we are implementing at the moment. It will start with effect from 1 July coming up, next financial year. This is essentially a transition of a resource, of a team of people, into a new road maintenance contract structure.

Jade BENHAM: Okay. I will rephrase the question. Does the government receive any input from that transaction?

Jeroen WEIMAR: Not directly, because it is netted off in terms of the net expenditure on those road maintenance activities.

Jade BENHAM: Right. So there is no reinvestment then put back into road maintenance.

Jeroen WEIMAR: There is a reinvestment in the sense that our judgement is and our assessment is and the work we have done is that it will be significantly cheaper for the state to maintain its roads in that way. We have done a value comparison assessment based on the fact we have outsourced six of the road maintenance contracts over a number of years, and we can see the value for money the state is receiving for that. When you are spending a billion dollars in road maintenance, getting value for money is important.

Jade BENHAM: So it is better value for money doing it this way, is what you are saying.

Jeroen WEIMAR: Absolutely.

Jade BENHAM: Thank you. Okay. The other one: are there going to be any jobs lost through this move?

Jeroen WEIMAR: No.

Jade BENHAM: None at all?

Jeroen WEIMAR: No.

Jade BENHAM: You guarantee it?

Jeroen WEIMAR: All the blue-collar workers sitting within SprayLine Road Services will be transferred to the two operators that are taking over.

Jade BENHAM: What about the white-collar jobs?

Jeroen WEIMAR: They will go through the normal VPS restructuring process. As you know, through other processes, we always look to ensure the VPS is lean and efficient, and we are treating them as we do other parts of the department. So when we periodically make restructures, there is a process for that.

Jade BENHAM: And how many FTE will be lost?

Jeroen WEIMAR: I do not have those numbers to hand, but the number of people, from memory, who sit within SprayLine Road Services in the white-collar group is in the region of around 30 to 40 people.

Jade BENHAM: If, as you said, you are looking for efficiencies there, that could be 30 to 40 jobs lost in that white-collar section of SprayLine?

Jeroen WEIMAR: Those conversations are happening at the moment. We are out for consultation at the moment, so it would be premature for me to make a judgement as to what that outcome is going to be.

Jade BENHAM: Just so we are clear – I just want to make sure, as you said it is very complex, and I would love you to explain it to me like I am a four-year-old – the government does not have a government road builder any longer. And yet we did not receive any money for it. Is that right?

Jeroen WEIMAR: Let me maybe explain it another way, Ms Benham. We currently pay for, in this financial year and for a number of financial years, the cost of the staff that we employ to maintain the roads in those two regions –

Jade BENHAM: I got that.

Jeroen WEIMAR: the capital equipment that they use, the depots that they use and all those other facilities. Instead of paying them directly and managing it directly through that cost centre within the department, it will be a cost that we now manage through our road maintenance contracts. So we will see a lower cost for greater output as we transition into that model.

Jade BENHAM: So it is like a barter deal. We are not getting any money for it at all. We have sold off our government road builder and did not get any cash for it.

Jeroen WEIMAR: Well, it is essentially a cost structure that we face currently within the department. That cost stops. We will see fewer costs being expended in the future as we move to this arrangement. I think it is a fairly straightforward arrangement.

Jade BENHAM: Okay. I want to go on to the safety – actually, we will come back to the TAC, as we were saying before. As Mr Riordan has pointed out, this is from page 130 of the questionnaire. The Road Safety Fund receives \$75 million less than forecast this financial year. This is where funds are receded from the TAC and used for road safety initiatives – Road Safety Week, for example. Is that right?

The CHAIR: Apologies, Ms Benham. We are going to Mr Galea.

Michael GALEA: Thank you, Chair. Good afternoon, Minister, Secretary and officials. Minister, I would like to talk to you about road safety. Specifically I believe in your presentation you referred to the road safety action plan. With reference to that, Minister, could you talk to me about how you are addressing road challenges in Victoria specifically within this budget?

Ros SPENCE: Thank you, Mr Galea, for your question. We know that road trauma costs Victoria over \$6 billion per year in direct and indirect costs. It is a major public health issue with significant social, emotional and economic impacts. Regardless of who is involved in a crash, every Victorian is impacted by road trauma, and we know that there is more that we can do to reduce road trauma on our roads. That is why Victoria's 10-year road safety strategy was launched in 2021, and it sets ambitious goals to halve the lives lost and reduce serious injuries by 2030 and eliminate road deaths by 2050. Our strategy is being delivered by a series of action plans. This approach allows us to adapt to changes in knowledge, the environment and the community over time. Released in December 2024, the current *Road Safety Action Plan 2* sets out the key work of our road safety partners as we keep working towards that vision. By eliminating risky behaviours such as speeding, which we know is the leading cause of road trauma, and implementing the broader safe system approach, we will reduce the likelihood of crashes happening in the first place, or traumatic outcomes where they do occur.

Action plan 2 includes a \$350 million investment in four new road safety infrastructure programs which are due to commence delivery in the coming months, including full safety barriers on divided urban roads, pedestrian head-start signal safety improvements, safety barriers on high-risk curves and rural low-to-mid-volume intersection treatments. This follows a \$263 million investment over three years to support key initiatives under the first action plan from 2021 to 2023 and contributes to over \$1.1 billion in total investment in road safety through to 2027–28. We are turning our minds to the next phase of the strategy with action plan 3. Development of that will commence later this year. I want to take this opportunity to thank our road safety partners – the Department of Transport and Planning, Department of Health, Department of Justice and Community Safety, Victoria Police and the Transport Accident Commission – who work with us and are supported by local governments and many stakeholders to improve the safety of our roads across the network.

Michael GALEA: Thank you.

Ros SPENCE: I could just go on a little bit more on that. The TAC has done much work in the road safety space since the late 1980s, and you will all be familiar with their campaigns. I am very pleased to see that work continue. I recently had the pleasure of participating in the MP activation event as a precursor to National Road Safety Week that was held here in Parliament in the south library. The event was hosted by the TAC and other road safety partners. I hope members found some time to stop and learn more about the road safety initiatives while they were here. They also had some very good information on investments in your local communities, so it was a really worthwhile event. Road safety is always front of mind as we continue to make every effort to reduce fatalities on Victorian roads, and we do this by reducing speeds, by upgrading road safety infrastructure and through various road safety programs. So thank you for your interest.

Michael GALEA: Thank you, Minister. I am particularly also interested in some of the various other initiatives under this program, such as the safe local roads and streets program, in particular in my electorate in Victor Crescent in fact, in Narre Warren, which is a street that I am very familiar with, having recently had a temporary electorate office on that street before I was consigned over the road here. Minister, I can tell you from my experience of my time there it is very, very busy street and very hard to cross. There is a very good cafe there, Butlers Kitchen, which I will give a plug to, and also an urgent care clinic that this government invested in across the road. It is very difficult at some corners to get across. There is now a crossing that has been installed on that location, pretty much right at the spot it needed to be, which is very good to see. My office is not there anymore, but I understand it has made a big difference in Victor Crescent in Narre Warren. Can I ask you a little bit about this program and how it is delivering safer outcomes in places like mine and also across the state?

Ros SPENCE: Yes, thank you. It sounds like you have got a lot going on there. That is terrific work.

Michael GALEA: It is a busy street.

Ros SPENCE: I thank you for that supplementary question. It is a vital program that I am really pleased to speak on. The program is a \$214 million partnership between DTP, the TAC and local government to deliver road safety infrastructure on local roads. The program was launched in 2023, and it recognises that while local governments manage 87 per cent of the Victorian road network, they often face barriers to delivering road safety improvements, so \$2 million is allocated in non-competitive funding to each Victorian council to fund infrastructure, and the program includes capacity and capability building for each council. I am pleased to share

that today we have announced 100 new projects valued at \$28.71 million as part of a supplementary funding round of the program. The Member for Polwarth, if he was here, would love to note –

Michael GALEA: We will pass it on.

Ros SPENCE: the \$500,000 that has been allocated to install high-speed raised safety platforms on Deans Creek Road and Pound Road in Elliminyt, and the Torquay township will also benefit from over \$800,000 in road safety upgrades. Other upgrades include \$500,000 for a roundabout at Karadoc Avenue and Sixteenth Street in Irymple, in the Member for Mildura's electorate.

Jade BENHAM: Irymple, Minister.

Ros SPENCE: Irymple, my apologies – and \$442,000 for various road safety upgrades, including speed reduction at Wallara Waters estate in Wallan, in the Member for Yan Yean's electorate. I know she will be very happy about that. So there are programs right across the state. These little programs – not little, some of them are quite substantial – have a big impact, and we know that councils will struggle to do these by themselves. Being able to have a program where we can fund these important safety works – they will all add up and make our roads safer, and that makes us much better communities.

Michael GALEA: Thank you, Minister.

The CHAIR: Thank you. Mr Puglielli.

Aiv PUGLIELLI: Thank you, Chair. Good afternoon. To start us off I am on budget paper 4, page 153. The next-generation trams will have external cameras. Some of the newer trams currently on the network, I understand, have these already. Can I ask: are these cameras being used to enforce road safety rules in instances like cars passing stopped trams at speed?

Ros SPENCE: It is my understanding that that will not be the case. I can get the Secretary to speak to it in greater detail.

Aiv PUGLIELLI: Thank you.

Jeroen WEIMAR: Thank you, Minister. Thank you, Mr Puglielli. Yes, we are adopting, particularly on the G-class trams in the public transport portfolio, external-facing cameras on the trams, primarily as a driver safety assist. This ensures that the driver can see all the exits and can also see what is happening around her or him. They are not enforcement cameras in any way, shape or form.

Aiv PUGLIELLI: Okay. So we have not, for example, seen any infringements issued on the basis of things captured through those cameras?

Jeroen WEIMAR: No, that is right. I am speculating a bit, Mr Puglielli, but in the event of a serious accident I suspect the police would be interested in any evidence they could gain from those cameras. But that is more as contextual evidence rather than as a fine enforcement or civil enforcement mechanism.

Aiv PUGLIELLI: Okay. Thank you. I will move on to a different question about cameras. Can I ask: how many red-light cameras are there at pedestrian-only crossings in the state?

Jeroen WEIMAR: The way that we operate our safety camera systems here in Victoria – just to be clear from our papers – particularly through the TAC, we have obviously the road safety action plan. That includes a significant camera enforcement component. Those cameras are delivered through the Department of Justice and Community Safety under the purview of the Minister for Police.

Aiv PUGLIELLI: Okay. So you do not have visibility of that?

Jeroen WEIMAR: We have no visibility of that – no pun intended.

Aiv PUGLIELLI: That is all right. I will move on. One of the most dangerous roundabouts in Melbourne is the Haymarket intersection near the Queen Victoria Market, although I understand everyone in North Melbourne commonly refers to it as the roundabout of death. Just to walk across the road as a pedestrian, I

understand, sometimes means you are having to cross five different crossings. I understand in 2019 the department of transport released a report on the future of this precinct, and that recommended immediate commencement of a design-led masterplan process to transform the intersection and surrounding boulevards. Should this committee expect to see the government deliver a full redesign of that intersection and investment in road safety across that precinct over the forward estimates?

Ros SPENCE: It is certainly a very busy intersection. I think we have all had frustrating moments trying to get around that, whether it be on foot or by car. You have clearly got a fair bit of the history there. I might hand to Ms Adamson to talk to this in more detail.

Fiona ADAMSON: Thank you, Minister. I would have to check on that report from 2019. What I can say is that certainly my teams, working in conjunction with Yarra Trams, are doing some design work there. Things were put on hold until the Metro Tunnel was delivered, and obviously there was the opening of Grattan Street as well. Now we have picked that up again. We have actually got tram renewals due there in the next couple of years as well. So we are taking the opportunity whilst we have got those works coming to have a look at the whole precinct again and work with stakeholders there. We have been working with City of Melbourne as well. So look, there are redesigns being done, and as soon as we have something to communicate, we will.

Aiv PUGLIELLI: When you mentioned things being put on hold, was there a period of time that that was occurring for? How long was that going on? You were saying there were things put on hold because of the Metro Tunnel.

Fiona ADAMSON: I think there were designs done and there was stakeholder engagement done. There was a decision made to wait because there was so much disruption around there and closure of areas with Grattan Street, but we are now picking that up again. I think that was over a couple of years.

Aiv PUGLIELLI: Okay. Thank you. You might have just alluded to this. I understand that there was an upgrade proposal for this area from PDG and CSL, which I think Yarra Trams, who you mentioned, and the RACV have backed, as well as all the biomedical institutes in that intersection. Has the department investigated that proposal?

Fiona ADAMSON: I think there were conversations some time back. What I do know is that we will re-engage with that group to make sure we have got feedback from all stakeholders in the area. So that is one of the things we have got planned, with CSL et cetera.

Aiv PUGLIELLI: Okay. And for what period of time will that be ongoing?

Fiona ADAMSON: The engagement?

Aiv PUGLIELLI: Yes.

Fiona ADAMSON: We would expect that to be happening this year.

Aiv PUGLIELLI: Okay. Again, to the earlier question, on the rectification of this area, this roundabout, would we expect that to be completed over the estimates?

Fiona ADAMSON: As you know, it is a complex area. There are lots of stakeholders. We need to consider emergency services vehicles as well. I think we need to get final planning designs agreed with the multiple stakeholders, and that is something we will provide advice up to government for consideration.

Aiv PUGLIELLI: Okay. Thank you. I will move on to another roundabout. This one is more local to me. Nillumbik Shire Council is urging immediate action following the Greensborough Bypass–Diamond Creek Road roundabout being named Melbourne’s most dangerous intersection after thousands of road users took part in an RACV survey identifying the most hazardous roundabouts from across the state. This particular intersection received the highest number of votes, representing a longstanding safety concern that has been held in the local community. Can I ask: has the government identified that site as a priority site for road safety improvements, and what work is happening there?

Ros SPENCE: That is another one I am familiar with, having grown up out that way. That roundabout has been the bane of people's existence for quite a while, so thank you for raising it. I will get Ms Adamson to speak in greater detail about this one.

Fiona ADAMSON: Can I just check which one it is again?

Aiv PUGLIELLI: It is the Greensborough Bypass–Diamond Creek Road roundabout.

Fiona ADAMSON: Right. I might need to take that one on notice, actually.

Aiv PUGLIELLI: That is all right.

Fiona ADAMSON: I will talk with my team around that and provide more information.

Aiv PUGLIELLI: That is okay. I will move on to another matter. I understand Major Road Projects Victoria undertook community engagement in 2025 with Mickleham and Kalkallo communities regarding how they needed Donnybrook Road to be upgraded. I understand there was strong support to add new lanes to the Donnybrook Road bridge over the Hume Freeway and to upgrade the Donnybrook Road and Mitchell Street intersection. Can I ask, given this feedback, why are upgrades currently only being considered for Mitchell Street and Dwyer Street?

Ros SPENCE: The funding that is currently provided – there is state and federal funding. The most recent addition enables us to do the greatest priority works. Stage 1 is the upgrade of the roundabout to an intersection – that is important – and stage 2 is an additional bridge across the Hume. This is really important, and we need to also have some pedestrian access, because at the moment there is basically none. This will enable some pedestrian access, duplicating the series of road from Dwyer Street to Mitchell. The additional bridge is the key as priority.

Aiv PUGLIELLI: Thank you.

The CHAIR: Thank you. Mr Hilakari.

Mathew HILAKARI: Thank you, Minister, and thank you, officials, for your attendance this afternoon. I am taking you, Minister, to page 71 of budget paper 4 on the capital program and particularly the investments we are making in metropolitan roads and regional roads in Victoria. Can you please outline the plan for delivering these road upgrades and speak to the way in which funding has been allocated to regional and metropolitan roads?

Ros SPENCE: Thank you for your interest, Mr Hilakari.

Mathew HILAKARI: I am very interested in roads, as you know.

Ros SPENCE: Yes. We do know that roads play a really vital role in the lives of every Victorian, both metropolitan and regional. They are connections in regional communities that they rely on to get them to jobs, to education, to family and to friends, and they help carry hundreds of thousands of tonnes of freight all around the state every year. This funding will be split between regional and metropolitan projects, and the projects were selected on the level of benefit and safety that they will deliver to the community once they have been completed. It is important to say, though, that 70 per cent of the funding will go to regional Victoria, given that they are those conduits for getting our produce around the state and it is where we see more fatalities, unfortunately.

In this year's budget we have allocated \$29.2 million for the delivery and planning of a range of road projects across metropolitan Melbourne, including much-needed works to improve safety on our roads. Fifteen projects are included in this funding investment under the metropolitan road upgrade program, and this includes both the delivery of 12 projects and the development of another three projects. These projects are located across metropolitan Melbourne, and they include upgrades to pedestrian crossings and improvements to intersections as well as the planning and development of other works to improve safety, congestion and efficiency on our network. The budget also allocates \$73.4 million for the delivery and planning of a range of road projects across regional Victoria, including much-needed works to improve safety on our roads. Eleven regional road upgrades are being funded, including the delivery of five projects and the development and planning of a

further six. These include projects that are co-funded with the Commonwealth, money for urgent safety upgrades and for investigations into future safety projects, including pedestrian crossings.

Mathew HILAKARI: Minister, I am hoping you can outline some of those projects in the metro area in more detail. I am pleased to hear that you mentioned that the federal government is turning up in Victoria once again, after a long absence of more than a decade.

Ros SPENCE: It is good to have a partner in Canberra again, that is for sure. I can certainly outline some of those projects that will take place in metropolitan areas, and I am sure that there are a few people in the room who will be very happy with some of the new projects that will be commencing. I suspect the Chair is already aware of the signalisation upgrade slated for the Dohertys Road and Woods Road intersection in Truganina.

The CHAIR: Very, very happy, Minister.

Ros SPENCE: That is great. This project will seek to add additional pedestrian legs to an existing signalised intersection, and development work will confirm the final scope and designs of this project. I assume that the Member for North-East Metro would like to know – or would know – all about the proposed upgrade to the intersection of Ryans Road, Wallowa Road and Allendale Road in Eltham North. That is a good one in that area. The funding in the budget will deliver stage 2 of this project, which may include various civil works. The traffic queuing for this intersection during peak times continues to grow and frustrate the local community. This project is one that will have benefits for the broader local community as it is a common route to the M80, so that will be very good for that community. The previously funded stage 1 of the project will provide for fully controlled right-hand turns and upgraded street lighting, and this funding builds on that work.

Mathew HILAKARI: I note that there has been a significant – in fact, the majority of the road funding is for regional areas. Can you outline some of the projects? I know the Member for Mildura is on the edge of her seat waiting to hear if there is any further road funding in her patch and why it is important.

Ros SPENCE: Thank you. I am quite happy to take that question. There are many state-managed roads in our regions. We know that they carry the heaviest loads, and that is why it is important to invest in our regional roads, which connect communities. The Member for Mildura will be pleased to note that important works include high-priority project funding to address safety, capacity and operational risks at the Tooleybuc bridge. This single-lane structure over the Murray dates back to 1925. I do not think that was part of our tour when I visited. As one of the top priorities in the Murray River crossings program, the bridge is critical for maintaining reliable regional connectivity, supporting local communities and enabling tourism access, so upgrading the bridge and its approaches is critically needed to improve safety, enhance transport efficiency and strengthen the broader transport network both in Victoria and New South Wales.

Jade BENHAM: It is on the highway between Adelaide and Sydney, Minister.

Ros SPENCE: Very good.

Jade BENHAM: Lovely sporting club – I will take you to dinner one night for lemon chicken and fried rice.

Ros SPENCE: Wonderful. We are also undertaking important work on the Princes Highway East in Trafalgar to install traffic signals at a dangerous intersection that has seen seven casualty crashes in an area that is seeing increased population and visitor numbers. Upgrading these signals is critically required to improve safety outcomes, enhance connectivity and support the overall activity of the township. There will also be important works undertaken at the Calder Highway–Maiden Gully Road intersection, reflecting the increasing pressure that residential and commercial development is putting on this intersection. And the Strzelecki Highway will benefit from overtaking lanes from Mirboo North to Leongatha, given the hilly and winding alignment of this section and increasing traffic volumes that have contributed to the run-off-road crashes. And an alternative freight route, also at Leongatha, will help address the heavy freight volumes moving through that township.

Mathew HILAKARI: Thank you, Minister.

The CHAIR: Thank you very much, Mr Hilakari. Minister, officials, thank you for appearing before the committee tonight. The committee will follow up on any questions taken on notice in writing, and responses are required within five working days of the committee's request.

The committee will take a short break before beginning its consideration of the portfolio for agriculture at 5:25 pm. I declare this hearing adjourned.

Witnesses withdrew.