

Questions taken on notice and further information agreed to be supplied at the hearings.

Committee:	Financial and Performance Outcomes
Inquiry:	2021/22 – 2022/23
Hearing date:	22 November 2023
Witness:	Paul Younis
Committee Member:	Danny O’Brien MP
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Question:

Danny O’Brien: Okay. Can I ask: the questionnaire states that in 2021–22, 11.4 million square metres of road pavement was ‘resurfaced and rehabilitated’. What percentage of the road network was resurfaced in each of the years?

Paul YOUNIS: Look, that is a straight calculation, which I can do. I have not got that figure there, but it is around that 8 per cent to 10 per cent. I think there was one year we did a bit more than that to catch up on some previous ones, but that is a simple calculation.

Danny O’Brien: Can I ask for that on notice, then, for both years – so the percentage of the network, plus the kilometres, the actual length?

Answer:

Location	2021-22			2022-23		
	Length of network treated (km)	Area of network treated (000’s m2)	Percentage of network treated (%)	Length of network treated (km)	Area of network treated (000’s m2)	Percentage of network treated (%)
Metro	114	1,436	2.6	104	995	1.8
Regional	1,257	11,478	6.6	1,727	9,029	5.2
State-wide	1,371	12,914	5.6	1,831	10,024	4.4

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Question:

Danny O’Brien: I can only go by your own questionnaire, Secretary, and with the TAC as well. Can I move on to wire rope barriers. What is the repair and maintenance spend in both years for the roadside barriers? We were told in 2021 it was 3500 repairs at a cost of \$11 million.

Paul YOUNIS: That is pretty consistent to what we are having now. We have around 4000 repairs a year – it varies a bit – which is a fantastic indication that they are doing their job. That figure of repair is similar – around 3000. So that works around that \$11 million to \$12 million.

Danny O’Brien: What percentage of that is funded by VicRoads and how much is funded by TAC?

Paul YOUNIS: The percentage funded by TAC and our appropriation – I will have that figure, unless you have got that figure.

Will TIEPPO: No, I have not got that split up, Mr O’Brien.

Danny O’Brien: Could you take it on notice for me?

Paul YOUNIS: Yes.

Answer:

The Transport Accident Commission (TAC) has committed to funding maintenance of all safety barriers installed under TAC-funded projects, such as those installed under the Safer Roads Program. In 2021-22, the TAC invested \$11.8 million in barrier remediation works and a further \$8.9 million was invested in 2022-23.

The Department of Transport and Planning (DTP) maintains all other barriers across the arterial road network. DTP spent \$892,687 in 2021-22 and \$918,821 in 2022-23 in barrier maintenance.

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Question:

Kevin DEVLIN: Secretary, if I could add, South Kensington has obviously been right next to the tunnel portal for Metro Tunnel, so it has been a significant area under construction –

Ellen SANDELL: There have been some minor upgrades to the entrance of a park.

Kevin DEVLIN: and constrained by the amount of work going on in that exact location at South Kensington.

Ellen SANDELL: Well, if that is the barrier, we would be very interested to know. If it is genuinely that we need to wait for those works to finish before we can consider South Kensington, the community would really appreciate knowing that.

Kevin DEVLIN: We will confer over that.

Answer:

The State Government funded an upgrade at South Kensington Station in 2020-21 as part of its Building Works Covid-19 Economic Stimulus Package. The scope of works included upgrades to platform coping, platform fencing, shelter and seating on the platform, installation of new tactile ground surface indicators and lighting upgrades. These works are now complete.

As part of Metro Tunnel Project, Childers Street was realigned outside South Kensington Station for the construction of a new station forecourt and station entrance canopy, increasing pedestrian space. The construction of public spaces on Childers Street and a pocket park on Ormond Street was finished in late September 2023. This work has delivered significant improvements to local amenity, including new lighting, landscaping, a pedestrian crossing, seating, and bicycle storage areas. New trees have also been planted and almost three thousand square metres of garden beds have been planted.

There are no current plans for further upgrades to the station at this time.

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Question:

Ellen SANDELL: Thank you. That is clear. You mentioned that it is about the stops but it is also about the trams that can access the stops. My understanding is that route 19 is currently served by a mixture of both high- and low-floor trams. Accessible stops obviously would be more useful immediately on routes where they already have low-floor trams, so why not route 19 as part of this?

Paul YOUNIS: I will have to take that one on notice – exactly why – unless we have got an update on that. Route 19 still has a number of inaccessible stops, as you said, but the critical ones along there are at the hospital.

Answer:

Melbourne's Tram Plan, released on 31 August 2023, sets out how the Government will continue to deliver a tram network for the future that puts passengers first and gets them to where they need to go. It identifies the best way to move forward for the network, services and tram infrastructure and ensures Melbourne's trams continue their critical role in moving locals and tourists alike.

A key component of the Tram Plan is taking a new corridor approach to planning tram stop upgrades. This work investigates options for streamlining the design and construction of accessible tram stops. Accessible tram stops are being developed with this corridor-by-corridor approach, with current priorities focussing on one corridor for delivery (La Trobe Street in the CBD).

The State Government funded \$5.1 million in the 2022-23 State Budget to develop three corridors to provide options for future accessibility upgrades (Droop Street, Footscray; High Street, Thornbury and Smith Street, Fitzroy). Stops in other areas and corridors will be considered as part of future development packages however the timeline for delivery of future tram stop corridors is yet to be determined.

Construction of a new level-access tram stop for Route 19 on the doorstep of the future Parkville Station is in the final stages of completion. The upgraded stop, on the corner of

Grattan Street and Royal Parade will allow people to switch easily from tram services to the train network at Parkville when the Metro Tunnel opens to passengers and provides level access to the hospital and university precinct. The stop features raised tram platforms on both sides of the tram tracks, shelters, seating, lighting, and visual and audible passenger information systems.

Any significant changes to the Sydney Road corridor, including Route 19 tram stop upgrades, needs careful consideration and investigation to balance the needs of all transport users, traders and people who live in the community.

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Question:

Ellen SANDELL: Wonderful. Thank you. I would like to ask about Punt Road. The department has been telling us for years that you are working on a Punt Road strategy for the part that is covered by the Punt Road acquisition overlay. What is the update? Has it commenced? What is the expected completion date?

Paul YOUNIS: I would have to take that on notice. The exact update of the Punt Road program with the overlay application, planning wise, I would have to take that on notice.

Ellen SANDELL: Are you reviewing outdated public acquisition overlays like the one on Punt Road to better utilise the land that is covered by them?

Paul YOUNIS: Once again, I know we did a lot of the planning work around that, and I know we completed it a couple of years ago in relation to the overlays and what was required and any updates to do with that. I have not got an update on the exact status of that.

Answer:

The Department of Transport and Planning continually reviews Public Acquisition Overlays (PAO) in the context of an evolving transport network and changing land uses.

The Punt Road Acquisition Overlay review undertaken in 2017 resolved to retain the full public acquisition overlay, to effectively meet the community's future transport needs and improve safety and amenity for all transport users. As part of this review, the Department of Transport and Planning provided technical transport advice on the Punt Road corridor.

To support the decision to retain the Punt Road PAO in full, the Department of Transport and Planning is finalising a further technical review of the corridor. This advice will guide future decision making along the corridor and will provide greater clarity to property owners adjacent to the Punt Road corridor.

In addition to this advice, the Department of Transport and Planning has developed a Punt Road Corridor PAO information sheet, to provide guidance to affected landowners. This is available on the Department of Transport and Planning section of the Victorian Government website.

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Question:

Ellen SANDELL: Thank you. Could I ask for the status of the Windsor station extra entrance project? I think preliminary designs of the second entrance have been completed, but I am interested in the status beyond that.

Paul YOUNIS: Once again, we will have to take that one on notice.

Answer:

In the 2021-22 State Budget, the Government funded planning and development work for a potential future second entrance to Platform 1 at Windsor Station.

The Department of Transport and Planning has now completed this planning work and preliminary designs for a potential future second entrance for Government consideration. The work has included consideration of the interfacing Windsor Siding Reserve pathway connection that Stonnington City Council is developing and delivering.

Delivery of station upgrades is prioritised based on a number of factors such as patronage demand and growth, safety and accessibility issues, as well as site complexities and constraints.

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Committee Member:	Ellen Sandell MP
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Question:

Ellen SANDELL: No problem. Thank you. Asking about the electric vehicle tax, do we have the figures on how many individuals paid the tax in 2022–23?

Paul YOUNIS: I know what the total number was of income from that. It was about \$3.9 million –

Ellen SANDELL: Yes, we have got the income. I was just interested in the number of individuals.

Natalie REITER: I think it was provided on Monday.

Paul YOUNIS: We can definitely provide that –

Ellen SANDELL: No, it was not the number of individuals. I asked DTF, and they asked me to ask this department.

Paul YOUNIS: I wish they had told me that they asked you to do that. I would have got that.

Ellen SANDELL: Are you able to provide that on notice?

Paul YOUNIS: If I can provide that figure, which I surely will be able to, because we know the number of electric vehicles that are registered and that registration

Answer: Customer information is stored in VicRoads core systems and shows that in the financial year 2022/2023 there were a total of 21,653 individual customers required to pay the charge.

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Question:

Danny O’Brien A quick one before we wrap up – the questionnaire on page 34 shows a Treasurer’s advance of \$51 million needed to: ... progress with a joint venture model for VicRoads Registration, Licensing function. That is the privatisation of the licensing function, effectively. What was \$51 million needed by taxpayers to progress that for?

Paul YOUNIS: So there is an income – the licensing program, the joint venture allocation, received an income from the government of \$7.9 billion.

Danny O’Brien: Can I perhaps get an answer for that on notice? You have run out of time, Secretary. Is that possible? Could I ask you to take that on notice?

Paul YOUNIS: I will take it on notice and provide a response, yes.

Answer:

The funding supported a range of service commitments made prior to the registration and licensing separation, such as the new online products that were initiated to support digitisation of functions during COVID, and associated uplifted identity management capabilities.

The funding also supported various capital commitments linked to the separation, including accommodation fit outs and property novations.

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Committee Member:	Ellen Sandell MP
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Question:

Ellen SANDELL: How much did the acquisition of the Yarra council depot at the Fitzroy gasworks cost?

Angela SKANDARAJAH: I would have to take that specifically on notice. Development Victoria acquired the site from DTF, so that would be part of the previous –

Answer:

A capital grant was paid to the City of Yarra of \$17.5 million to facilitate the relocation of its depot operations. The land was not acquired as it was Crown Land.

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Question:

Ellen SANDELL: How much did the remediation of the land cost?

Angela SKANDARAJAH: The remediation is still ongoing, so the final numbers have not been confirmed.

Ellen SANDELL: Okay. Do you have any initial numbers – say, cost to date?

Angela SKANDARAJAH: I would again have to take that on notice. DTF is primarily responsible for the remediation costs.

Answer:

This project to remediate the historical contamination caused by gasification processes commenced in 2018. The Environmental Protection Authority (EPA) issued an Environmental Action Notice, requiring extensive remediation to create a safe and clean environment to ready the site for development and this involved a range of activities on-site including the demolition of buildings, excavation and removal of soil to an approved processing facility.

While residual remediation works continue, the major works on site have now been completed, with the EPA Environmental Auditor having finalised the audit process to enable the next phase of site development.

Remediation was managed by the Department of Treasury and Finance (DTF), so questions regarding the delivery of the remediation, including any contractual matters, should be directed to DTF.

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Question:

Danny O’Brien: Has herbicide application increased as well?

Paul YOUNIS: I am not aware of herbicide application. We have our fire management and roadside management program, which we have an allocation of funding to. That is an allocation. We have not changed that allocation through these programs.

Danny O’Brien: Could I ask you to look at that on notice for me, because there certainly is an issue where it is physically impossible to slash the roadside because of the barriers. If you could take that on notice.

Answer:

The use of herbicide for the control of vegetation near and around roadside safety barriers is something that has been undertaken for many years. Herbicide spray rates and treatment types have remained similar, however the overall program of works has increased in line with the increased length of safety barriers installed across our road network.

Non residual herbicide is currently used for this task. The herbicide control reduces or removes the need to mow around the safety barriers. I am advised that the use of herbicides is both an effective and efficient means to control vegetation around the safety barriers as mowing and whipper snipping is cost prohibitive.

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Committee Member:	Bev McArthur
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Question:

Bev McARTHUR: Thank you, Chair. I am going to Angela – just before you vacate your seat, if you do not mind. Tell me, what species of timber was used in that timber build in the Bendigo hub?

Angela SKANDARAJAH: I am not across the detail. I will have to take that on notice.

Bev McARTHUR: Well, was it hardwood or softwood?

Angela SKANDARAJAH: Hardwood.

Bev McARTHUR: Hardwood. So where did it come from?

Angela SKANDARAJAH: I would have to take that on notice.

Bev McARTHUR: Can you take it on notice?

Angela SKANDARAJAH: Yes.

Bev McARTHUR: We want to know whether it is Australian hardwood or imported. Okay, thank you.

Angela SKANDARAJAH: It would be Australian.

Answer:

Galkangu Bendigo GovHub is one of the largest mass timber projects in Australia.

The GLT (glu-laminated timber) columns and beams were manufactured by ASH (Australian Sustainable Hardwoods) out of Heyfield, Victoria. The GLT is Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification (PEFC) certified Victorian Ash, 100 per cent re-growth from Victorian plantations.

The CLT (cross-laminated timber) flooring was manufactured by XLAM out of Wodonga, Victoria. The CLT is PEFC certified, plantation radiata pine timber, milled to strict CO₂ specifications by Hyne at their Tumbarumba sawmill.

The Galkangu Bendigo GovHub project has received the Australian Certified Timber Award, at the 2023 Timber Design Awards. The design allows for maximum exposure of the timber, celebrating it as a viable, environmentally conscious material, and creating a workplace that enjoys the benefits of biophilic design.