ROAD SAFETY COMMITTEE
Discuss Pedestrian Safety in Car Parks
Sydney—5 August 2009

Members
Mr J. Eren
Mr S. Leane
Mr B. Tilley
Mr P. Weller

Chair—Mr J. Eren

Witness
Mr P. Huddle, asset general manager, Westfield
CHAIRMAN'S WELCOME

Mr HUDDLE—I'll send Brad Newton's apologies. He's our National Manager of Car Parks basically; he's unfortunately off today.

My name is Peter Huddle. I'm the Asset General Manager so I'm responsible for Westfield's activities in Victoria and Western Australia. And primarily we've done a lot of work in Victoria in the last couple of years, had a lot of experience in carparks, building them anyway.

Unfortunately I'm not 100 percent up to speed in terms of the briefing in relation to this. I had some input into the submission that was put on behalf of Westfield.

I can give you an idea in terms of Westfield's exposure in Victoria and how we firstly build and develop our carparks, and secondly, how we implement operating procedures in place to actually manage those carparks. The variations between carparks, which are what we call controlled carparks which is the Doncaster scenario where we have controlled pay parking systems in there versus the non controlled carparks which is the majority of the others.

Westfield has representation in eight shopping centres in Victoria which span the greater metropolitan region.

The CHAIR—You have one in Geelong as well.

Mr HUDDLE—Greater metropolitan and Geelong region. Of the eight shopping centres, six of them we directly own, manage and develop. We're an integrated business so we basically do everything from acquisition of shopping centres all the way through to development, managing leasing and marketing, et cetera.

Two shopping centres which are Knox and there's a little one at Casey Central we have ownership but we don't manage. They're managed on behalf of our JV partner which is AMP.

Just to give a perspective, we have probably, through the eight shopping centres, over 80 million people a year come through our shopping centres. Travelling through in the vicinity of 30 to 32,000 carparks. In the ones that we directly manage, there are probably 65 million people a year coming through our centres and about 25,000 carparks, to give you some perspective.

Generally the Centres would employ in the vicinity of 15,000 staff. We indirectly employ about 15,000 staff through our retailer relationships. So that sort of gives you some perspective in terms of our size in the Victorian market place.

As I said, we've just finished $1 billion worth of development in Victoria which, as you're probably aware, was a large redevelopment of the Westfield Doncaster Shopping Centre which opened in stages and completed last year. We did Geelong, which was an inner CBD redevelopment, which has controlled parking. And we did a growth area development in a place we call Plenty Valley, but maybe generally known as South Morang, which is the second stage of some plans we have out there. We’ve just lodged a development plan for our future development at Plenty Valley.

In terms of carparks themselves, we have two what we call controlled car parking operations which are Geelong and Doncaster. Doncaster was the first centre within the greater metropolitan Melbourne area outside the CBD where we've introduced controlled parking as part of that actual development.

The CHAIR—Can you expand on controlled parking?

Mr HUDDLE—Controlled car parking is primarily where, in Doncaster's instance, we've introduced paid parking which includes boom gates. It also includes what we call "Park Assist Technology".
Park Assist Technology is really trying to improve safety in the car parks. It's also trying to improve access into car parking spaces.

So instead of people continually circulating through carparks to try and find available spaces, the Park Assist Technology actually is a series of digital signs that guide people to the nearest vacant carpark.

The CHAIR—That's great. I was actually thinking about that, but is that a costly exercise?

Mr HUDDLE—Yes, it is. The broad costing on that technology itself at Doncaster, which is 5,000 car parking spaces, of which probably about 3,000 are covered with the Park Assist, we don't do it on the on-grade or on the roof deck, but it's about two and a half to $3 million to introduce that technology.

Mr LEANE—What influenced the decision to implement that?

Mr HUDDLE—In terms of Doncaster, we've positioned Doncaster as a sort of top level shopping centre. It's got a high end fashion offers, it's got a number of other incremental services. We considered that in any multi deck carpark where we've completely changed the whole landscape of Doncaster and people were unfamiliar with a new $600 million development, what it was, that came back in a whole brand new multi-deck carpark, that we would get our customers back quicker.

Plus, we saw it as a multi-deck carpark, an ease of navigational into an unknown carpark for these customers to ensure that they had a better shopping experience.

Mr LEANE—Some of the people that we've been speaking to about the safety of pedestrians in carparks were saying engineering of the carpark is very important, as in making corners and obstacles where you can't get up a lot of speed.

Was that decision also taken as a safety issue as well? Because if you've got someone driving around and around and around, frustration and also potential, the more you drive around a carpark, the potential is --

Mr HUDDLE—The more frustrated you get.

Mr LEANE—Yes. And also more potential of an incident because you're going the further distance. Was that taken into account? Do you think it's a good safety measure?

Mr HUDDLE—I think it is a good safety measure. It wasn't the primary reason for putting the technology in. I think you'll see where we redevelop centres, if we introduce controlled parking in other centres, that that technology will become part and parcel of that introduction.

It's primarily a convenience aspect as the number one priority and getting people to find their carparks quicker. You're right. If they don't find that, you get that sense of frustration and potentially that may lead to decision making which is not always the best.

The CHAIR—Just to go further from that technology, which is a great idea and I was actually thinking about it, but as you actually enter the carpark and you get your ticket, if it was an allocated carpark, for example, rather than just having a light which says anybody can park there so there may be a race to that carpark, you pick up your ticket and it says "level 3, carpark X is your carpark". So there's no fight to get to that carpark by others, is that technology available do you think?

Mr HUDDLE—I don't believe that technology is available. If I draw an example, Doncaster has 5,000 car parking spaces. On a weekend we'll have 25,000 cars come in and out of those 5,000 spaces. The technology is not as precise so you'll always have some people circulating through the carparks.

The other point is centres the size of Doncaster will also have people who will there be for a food shop or they'll be there for a department store shop and they'll want to park as close to those locations as well. So
part of our smarts that we put into the design instructions of these centres and the marketing and operation of these centres is basically best parking for signage.

We have, for example, parents with prams parking areas which are designated parking areas with direct access into the mall. We have best parking, for David Jones or Myer or the supermarkets. So that, along with that technology in terms of the signage, gets people quicker again from the entry gate into the best available carpark for their destination.

**Mr WELLER**—You said about this technology, if you introduce it at other centres. So you've got plans to?

**Mr HUDDLE**—Typically we're introducing that technology when we're introducing controlled parking. It almost becomes a hand and glove type scenario.

**Mr WELLER**—So as you do redevelop the car parking, another one, it will be in there?

**Mr HUDDLE**—Yes, if we introduce controlled car parking. Plans will always change but typically, where we've introduced controlled parking in Victoria, for example, it's because we would have a commuter parking concern. So if we believe that if we had free parking in Victoria, there's a significant, in Doncaster's case, a bus terminal. There's already a park and ride facility down the road which is at capacity. Unless we introduce controlled parking, then a substantial amount of our car parking spaces, which are dedicated for customers, would be taken up by commuter parking.

So where we don't have that particular issue, there's not the emphasis to introduce controlled parking, and hence not the emphasis really for this technology to go hand in glove.

**The CHAIR**—We wouldn't mind coming out and having a look at the car parking.

**Mr HUDDLE**—We're quite happy to have that.

**Mr TILLEY**—Can I add, if we get the opportunity to do the tour at a particular shopping centre, probably on the weekends, Saturday or a Sunday.

**The CHAIR**—Or Thursday night?

**Mr HUDDLE**—Thursday night and Saturdays are generally our busiest trading periods.

**The CHAIR**—Just going back to that Parents with Prams parking, are they parks that you sort of angle park backwards so that you take out the pram from the boot at the kerb?

**Mr HUDDLE**—No, they are standard. Typically we nominate a series of those spaces as close to main doors where we believe a parent would like to actually shop. So they are not always park to a kerb, but they are normally a designated group of spaces. It is effectively an honour system, there is no validation, however it is marked by signage, it is well lit, close to an entrance – but close to an entrance with easy access in and out for parents with prams.

It is the spaces we have identified as larger spaces in some circumstances, but generally the spaces are generally the standard carparking size space.

**Mr LEANE**—Speaking of signage, is there a policy for Westfield so far as the speed limit is concerned across the board in your carparks or do you take it carpark by carpark?

**Mr HUDDLE**—It is basically Australian Standards and carpark by carpark. If we take Westfield across Australia, in some areas we just do a one way circulation through our carparks. In Victoria the majority are two ways and generally that comes down basically to what people are used to in each particular
state. We did our research prior to building Doncaster, for example.

I am referring back to Doncaster because that is probably the most relevant example, the feedback was they were used to the two way circulation in that carpark so we didn’t go to a change of a one way, but the speed limit, lighting, to take your other point in terms of the turning circles, the ramp positionings, all that are driven by Australian Standards but are also driven by the whole carpark design, traffic management plan in and out of those carparks.

Mr LEANE—Just on a different tack, so far as your security contractors or personnel, they have got equal onus or rights to secure the carpark as the shopping space as well, is that right? Your security personnel, if someone misbehaved in a shop or the food court or something, they would have ways of dealing with that?

Mr HUDDLE—Yes.

Mr LEANE—It would be exactly the same as in the carpark?

Mr HUDDLE—Yes. Our carparks are monitored. Our whole centres are generally monitored 24 hours a day, in Doncaster 24 hours a day.

Mr LEANE—Is it monitored by cameras as well?

Mr HUDDLE—We have got CCTV and security personnel.

Mr LEANE—All in the carpark as well?

Mr HUDDLE—Yes, not as much as through the centres but within our carpark we do have CCTVs through the carpark primarily at entrances and exits, and again, it is dependent on the particular centre.

In terms of security, they have standard operating procedures which operate in the entire centre, including the carpark in terms of security, not only in terms of incident and accident reports but also vandalism, crime, that type of thing as well through the carparks, and as well as our customer service, we nominate in peak trading periods and in general trading periods, but particularly in peak trading periods, there is additional customer service within our carparks to facilitate that ease of traffic congestion and movement in and out of the centre.

Mr LEANE—If we take Doncaster as the example, do you know what the speed limit is, would it be more than 10km?

Mr HUDDLE—I’ll have to come back to that.

Mr LEANE—Because the previous gentleman we had was talking about deemed shared zones for pedestrians and cars being 10km and I suppose as far as Westfield is concerned, if you have got areas where you cannot isolate the pedestrians from cars – which is in most of your carparks – would you resist as far as deeming them shared zones and making sure people are going 10kms.

Mr HUDDLE—There is a speed limit in there, I think it is 10, but I will have to come back to you on that, however there are other physical barriers that are in there that will prevent speeding, not only in terms of ramping detail, access in and out of each floor, but also speed humps that are by Australian Standard throughout our entire carpark which does naturally reduce speed limits through the decking of our carparks.

The CHAIR—We notice some carparks have a special surface where the tyre squeaks. Is that deliberate?

Mr HUDDLE—No, that is not by design, it is purely just part of the concrete construction and going up into the carpark.

The CHAIR—It is an audible alarm for a pedestrian of an approaching vehicle, because as you know,
new cars are very quiet these days, and you can certainly hear them coming as the tyres squeak.

Mr HUDDLE—It really just depends on the construction of the new carparks.

The CHAIR—We thought it was new smart technology.

Mr HUDDLE—There is a valet section within Doncaster valet parking section which is basically a painted concrete finish on the floor which again has a different type of noise.

Mr TILLEY—Westfield certainly has to be commended, as you said about Doncaster I recently went out to that centre and certainly not being particularly big on retail therapy, I just happened to have my family with me, but my experience was made better by getting into the centre and my sufferance and getting out of the place was certainly to be commended. It will make no doubt a lot of shoppers’ experience a better thing.

Taking that into consideration, is it in the design with the retrofit and the terms of cost, is there a direct benefit for safety? Firstly, is the priority there for the shopping experience or is the safety side of it coincidental?

Mr HUDDLE—Again, I think they go together. Unless you are providing a safe environment you are not going to get your turnover through the door and your customers to actually go in there.

There are probably two aspects in terms of the safety in a shopping centre carpark, one is actually the physical design to Australian Standards, the traffic management plans in terms of theory about how we build the shopping centres and the second part is really the operational day to day. After it is all designed, built and happening, what actually occurs on the day to day to ensure that the fundamentals in the design actually keep going and that is really the traffic management plans and in terms of Doncaster we acknowledge there were some general traffic congestion issues on Doncaster from the opening and about two months ago we have completely assessed the entire carpark and reintroduced an ongoing traffic management plan, which takes into account things like blocking of entrances, accidents on roads, how to get customers in and out through various entrances of the carpark, if there is any sort of safety issues within the carpark and how to allocate people to various entrances or basically to ease that congestion or mitigate any potential risk.

There are probably two elements of that, unless we have safety as our forefront it will have an impact in terms of customer perception, which will have an impact in terms of turnover and ultimately our viability in those centres.

Mr TILLEY—Leading on from that, and I probably need to seek some assistance from the Chair as this transcript will eventually become a public document, the commercial confidence and having eight carparks in Victoria, is it an intention for Westfield dependent upon Westfield Doncaster’s program and seeing how effective it is. Is there a future consideration to expanding that throughout all the carparks throughout Victoria and Australia?

Mr HUDDLE—It would be a site by site analysis and again, the key consideration for us is the commuter carparking issue, and hypothetically, if we had a centre that was earmarked for a future transport mode where there is going to be rail or bus associated with that, that was near our centre, then there would be a high consideration to say introduce controlled parking, otherwise the spaces are going to be dominated by commuter parking.

There is no specific plan across all our centres but we would be looking at it on a site by site basis in terms of a development of a centre.

Mr WELLER—When you design the carparks, you look at trying to separate pedestrians and cars as they go down, are there walkways?

Mr HUDDLE—It is difficult to do. There are pedestrian movements through the carparks and again, we are operating at shopping centres that are effectively twelve months old versus ones that are potentially thirty years old and they are relevant to the building standards at the time and when we are upgrading they are relevant to the building standards at the time.
So there is a mixed bag in terms of the whole design of our carparks. There are walkways throughout carparks which are part of our approved plans in terms of traffic management plans to get the development signed off, which will include pedestrian movements and access through our carparks into our main entrances of the centre.

Mr WELLER—The other presentation that we had talked about line of sight. So your carparks are designed to maximise line of sight?

Mr HUDDLE—Yes, absolutely. It is always a relative scenario because line of sight is dependent on the type of structure you have in there. You need a certain amount of columns to hold up certain carpark decks so the line of sight is more along the lines of, if you take the current construction as a given, how can you improve lighting, how can you improve signage, how can you improve access to get from where you are and into the centre.

Mr LEANE—Have you had any serious incidents in carparks in the last few years?

Mr HUDDLE—we don’t have a huge amount of incidents. We have had a serious incident this year, in Southland carpark, a pedestrian was hit and unfortunately passed away. That was not in the carpark, it was in a loading dock and that is subject to a current enquiry at the moment. To the best of my knowledge that is the first death that has occurred in Victoria.

Part of our reporting issue, we have our own reporting system in terms of any incidents that occur within a shopping centre. We do not have a high degree of incidents reported in our shopping centres in terms of pedestrians being hit. We obviously have some carpark damage within our shopping centres. That doesn’t say that it is not reported elsewhere. Typically at the majority of the centres, we do tend to find in a lot of areas we are the town centre precinct and typically towns grow around us these days so we typically have a strong association with the local police force and there is some information sharing on incidents that occur and that is how we find out some incidents have occurred externally, but if something does occur in our carpark it is almost no news, news to the police, news to us.

Mr LEANE—As far as Knox goes, you said AMP manage that?

Mr HUDDLE—it is a three way ownership and AMP manage it.

Mr LEANE—Westfield is part owner, do they own the ozone area and all that in Knox shopping area?

Mr HUDDLE—we do not split area, it is purely the whole centre and the whole ownership is split between AMP, Dexus, which is the old Deutsche Bank and ourselves. Basically we all own, we all split in responsibility of that centre and AMP have the management rights of that centre.

Mr LEANE—There are plans to develop that further, aren’t there?

Mr HUDDLE—There is always a plan. There is no imminent plan on that one at the moment, but in those types of things you suggest, it is a fantastic area, it is still part of the growth area and the northern fringe of that growth area.

Mr LEANE—That is just going back to your comment about towns growing around, I think that would be a perfect example actually.

Mr HUDDLE—it is.

Mr LEANE—Of towns and the Council being next to you and the police station being across the road.

Mr HUDDLE—you have got the eastern highway extender through there and in the future, no doubt,
larger bus terminals into there.

The CHAIR—Can I just ask in relation to when you are actually building a carpark, are there any set guidelines that you are guided by in terms of standards for that carpark?

Mr HUDDLE—Absolutely.

The CHAIR—Where do you source that information, is it from Council?

Mr HUDDLE—No, there are Australian Standards in terms of building the majority of these things. In terms of us building a carpark, we will go off precedent. We will see what we have developed. We have had a significant development pipeline in the last ten years. So we will understand what has worked well and what hasn’t worked well, so we will have our own design input into that.

We will externally go for traffic management and traffic engineering surveys in terms of what we can do on a particular site and then we will overlay the Australian Standards. Ideally we would like to exceed the Australian Standards in the majority of our centres.

So that is width of aisles, size of spaces, length of runs, ramping positions, ensuring that they are ideally outside on the carpark edge rather than in the middle can improve sight lines and the overlay from us, which is not Australian Standards, is stuff like Park Assist and those type of technology. At the moment it is working successfully. Will it be introduced into all of our centres, it is a case by case scenario, depending on incidents that occur.

Half of the centres in Victoria are large flat deck carparks. Whereas in New South Wales, for example, we are working on smaller footprints in terms of land so you will see retail and carparks vertically stacked, where it becomes more of a concern.

The CHAIR—We were discussing earlier, for example, employees working at the centre would come in at 7.30, 8 o’clock in the morning, would park their vehicles and would not come back to that car until later that day. Is there a policy that they should park the furthest away so that the customers come in and out obviously don’t have to drive so far? Do you have a policy on that?

Mr HUDDLE—Yes. It is always a topical one, particularly with our retailers and more importantly with their staff, but generally our policy is the prime carparking spaces are designated for customers and we provide a well lit, well secured staff employee carparking area. Again I will refer back to Doncaster and I am happy to arrange that tour for you when you go to Doncaster. The top deck of Doncaster is actually a staff employee carparking area. Plus we have another designated area for staff carpark. Again, they are well lit, good access into the centre, they are also secured and because it is a controlled parking area at Doncaster, the employee has a separate card system that allows them to trigger the smarts within the control part of the system and it also gives them a discount rate.

In our non-controlled parking, for example, Southland, Plenty Valley, Airport West, and Fountain Gate are all our non-controlled parking areas which we manage. There are designated employee parking areas within those areas, but again, it is pretty much an honour system.

If you take the view that there is probably the best part of 2000 employees in those particular centres per centre as an average, and that rotates probably once or twice a year, it is impossible to actually monitor where they are actually parking, but again, they won’t be the prime spaces but they will be well secured and well lit spaces that allows direct access, whether late at night or alternatively, early in the morning.

We also throughout the majority of our centres have a system where if an employee does feel as though they want an escort from their car into the centre or vice versa, then they can call through and we can organise security escorts to their car.

Mr LEANE—With Doncaster and I take it with the development you increased your carparking
capacity by a decent per cent. At Christmas time will there be enough capacity? Is there ever enough capacity
during the last two weeks before Christmas?

**Mr HUDDLE**—You would probably get the same response out of every shopping centre in Australia
and the answer is probably no. We build our shopping centres that have capacity, in all honesty for probably
fifty weeks of the year and for Christmas, it really is an anomaly.

**Mr LEANE**—But with the new system on the carparking, I take it that there is a sign to say it is full
at the entrance?

**Mr HUDDLE**—Yes. Actually, at Doncaster we are currently having some interesting discussions with Vic
Roads and we are almost there.

When we are in the position of developing a carpark, we also have to have a current agreement between
Council and State and this is where you have overlap between State and local roads and Doncaster there is an
overlap. That overlap will occur in every single centre. Sometimes we own the roads. At Airport West we
own the major road going in and out.

In terms of Vic Roads in terms of Doncaster, we are in the process and we are almost there and we will seek
assistance if we don’t get there, there is some remote signage actually on the roads leading into Doncaster, so
you are giving earlier alert to cars to say this carpark has this much capacity and the next carpark has this
much capacity.

**Mr LEANE**—Good idea.

**Mr HUDDLE**—How that features for pedestrian safety is again you are not getting frustrated drivers
driving around. So along Williamsons Road, which is the front facing road and Doncaster Road, which is the
main road leading down into the eastern, the current plans have only just been submitted after extensive
negotiations with Vic Roads about two weeks ago, which looks for six forward signage which are digital,
which are linked straight into the Park Assist equipment, which notifies people what spaces are available in
each carpark.

**The CHAIR**—Do Westfield get any feedback from their customers in relation to the size of carparks,
which leads me onto the next question of liability. I am not saying that this happens at Westfield but my car is
always ending up worse for wear after I have parked it in a certain carpark, because they are so narrow, the
doors hit your car and there are dents on it and so forth.

In terms of liability, you don’t have signs saying Enter at Own Risk?

**Mr HUDDLE**—Yes we do.

**The CHAIR**—Has that ever been tested in terms of liability?

**Mr HUDDLE**—In terms of carpark, vehicle damage would be the number one concern. In terms of
complaints coming back from a carpark, it is one of those areas where we do have the signs Park at Your Own
Risk, we can’t control people’s traffic movements in and out of those carparks, whether they take up one or
two spaces, whether they slam doors and all those types of things.

That is probably the number one concern that we have, but again, we have not had people take us on lately in
terms of liability. Unless there is proven to be complete negligence on our part, we don’t take those cases.

**The CHAIR**—So that is why you have those waivers, so to speak, on display, is because of damage
to cars rather than obviously damage to pedestrians.

**Mr HUDDLE**—There are a couple of reasons. We use our best endeavours in designing these
carparks to at least meet Australian standards, if not exceed, to provide security through the car parks, there is
a monitoring system, but for example, we do have incidents where cars get broken into or cars stolen and where damage does occur to cars within the carpark. The signs are basically there to say that this is a public carpark for the shoppers only but basically you still need to protect your assets.

Mr WELLER—What about pedestrian safety? So if I'm walking through one of your carparks and because there's not adequate line of sight or whatever and I get cleaned up by a car?

Mr HUDDLE—We would bring Work Cover in to investigate and there would be an automatic, as taking the most recent example, there would be an infringement notice issued with a right of repair, in terms of what are you going to do about this? Bring our standards up to the Australian Standard but potentially there is an incident that occurred here, we don't believe it's satisfactory, come back us within a certain time period in terms of your risk management plan to indicate these things.

Mr WELLER—I'm not an employee of yours, so why would WorkCover be interested?

Mr HUDDLE—Because an incident was notified to us, it's likely that incident will also be notified to Work Cover. We would also understand the situation immediately and we'd properly inform WorkCover depending on the severity of the situation. Again it's part of our protection. It's also part of our overall insurance policy coverage.

The CHAIR—So ultimately, I have estimated that TAC, which has registration fees and so forth, would also be notified. In terms of medical treatment, who actually pays for that? Is it then the centre, the TAC, Work Cover? How does the pedestrian --

Mr HUDDLE—I'd have to come back to you on the specifics, and whether we've had any specific cases, and I'm happy to do that.

The CHAIR—That would be great, just to clarify.

Mr HUDDLE—I'll clarify.

The CHAIR—So would you have any recommendations that you might want to put to us?

Mr HUDDLE—I think from our point of view, I'm more than happy, as I've mentioned a couple of times, and you guys brought it up in terms of the Doncaster, I'm more than happy to take you through the tour and give you an understanding of how the carpark was put together, but more importantly who is involved in the operation of that carpark and how the traffic management plans are put into place. And in terms of the peak event management period being a Christmas period, how we cater for that, which is primarily offsite car parking and a bus which is taking staff offsite.

From our point of view, reported through to us, we have minimal incidents which occur within our carpark. We believe that we design at least to the Australian Standard and we come through a range of, particularly development experience and operational experience, to manage these carparks effectively.

Particularly in New South Wales we manage a lot of controlled carparks within our own management team. Our Centre Managers have carpark managers reporting through to him. We've got some experienced people that are within our business.

But coming in sort of cold, my apologies, today, I can have a think of some recommendations. From the number of incidents reported through to me, again I'm the General Manager so I'm over the top of everything, but I may not get all the detail of everything, we believe the current system is pretty good, in terms of us dealing with pedestrian safety in the carparks.

The CHAIR—It's interesting. You've put into perspective for us, 80 million people that use your carparks. It's an enormous amount of people in and out.
Mr HUDDLE—80 million people use our centres. Not everyone travels by car but even if you take a 50/50 split on that, we still have a significant amount of car usage coming into us. Car parking areas are still important for us.

The CHAIR—Thank you very much for your accept today.

Witness withdrew.