

TRANSCRIPT

STANDING COMMITTEE ON THE ECONOMY AND INFRASTRUCTURE

Inquiry into infrastructure projects

Melbourne — 18 November 2015

Members

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Mr Khalil Eideh — Deputy Chair

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Mr Scott Charlton, Chief Executive Officer, Transurban.

The CHAIR — I declare open the Standing Committee on Economy and Infrastructure public hearing. The committee today is hearing evidence in regard to the inquiry into infrastructure projects, and today's evidence is being recorded. I remind you that all evidence taken at this hearing is protected by parliamentary privilege. Therefore you are protected against any action for what you say in here today, but if you go outside and repeat the same things, those comments may not be protected by the same privilege. At this point I ask you to state your name and your title for the record, and then we would be interested to hear your opening comments. We will move on to some questions from there.

Visual presentation.

Mr CHARLTON — My name is Scott Charlton, and I am the CEO of Transurban. I have a very short presentation with a little bit of background on the western distributor and Transurban and the position there. I have a couple of opening statements. As you know, the residents of Melbourne's west face crippling congestion on the way to work and trying to get home, and commuters from Geelong and the Surf Coast compete with the west's growing suburbs to get into the city. Obviously people and businesses from Ballarat and beyond face increased delays travelling to the city, particularly on the M80 ring-road. Anyone who lives in the north-east or the south-east of Melbourne knows that incidents on the West Gate Bridge impact the network.

Our headquarters are in the Docklands, and we can see portions of the Bolte Bridge and we can see the West Gate and the entrances to the Burnley Tunnel. Most days when we see abnormal congestion we say, 'What has happened on the West Gate Bridge?'. That is mostly the likely source of congestion across the network. When we say networks, these roads do not operate in isolation, whether it is CityLink, the Monash, the M80, the Tullamarine or the West Gate. They operate as a network, so when one is congested or has issues, the whole network is impacted. As we say, when the M1 stops, essentially Melbourne stops. Our proposal provides new city-shaping infrastructure to address this growth in transport and livability challenges that are facing Melbourne, and I will go into a bit more detail.

Just quickly, though, for those of you who are not familiar with Transurban, we are a top ASX20 company. We own and operate 15 roads both here and in the US. Our company began under the Kennett government with the building of CityLink. That was our first asset. Since then, particularly in Victoria, we have partnered with successive governments to enhance the road network in what is the world's most livable city. We have done the Tullamarine-Calder Freeway interchange and M1 upgrades, delivered under the Bracks and Brumby governments, and we are currently doing the CityLink-Tulla widening project, which we worked on with both the Napthine and Andrews governments. That started work last month, in October.

In total, these projects have seen us as a company invest an additional \$1.5 billion on upgrading our network since the opening of CityLink, and while we have operations in Sydney, Brisbane and Washington, DC, Melbourne is our headquarters. We have approximately 1000 employees, and half of those are based here in this city, so we are obviously passionate about Melbourne and Victoria.

Our industry and impact both on Australia and Victoria are substantial. I do not know if you saw the recent report by the Bureau of Infrastructure, Transport and Regional Economics that said the cost of congestion in Melbourne is now \$4.6 billion a year and is expected to grow to \$10.2 billion by 2030. Similar numbers were also released earlier this year by Infrastructure Australia, and obviously these costs are ultimately borne by households and businesses right across the state. It hurts economic productivity, and we think action is obviously required.

Also, earlier this year KPMG released an independent report looking at the economic contribution toll roads have made to this country. It found, using conservative methodology and economic modelling, that toll roads delivered benefits of \$52 billion in present value terms over 10 years, and in Victoria that equates to \$8.6 billion in economic benefits, including \$4.4 billion to businesses, improving travel times, reliability and operating costs, with households another \$4.2 billion along the same lines. The industry employs 860 jobs here annually, and obviously there are additional environmental benefits through reduced congestion.

In relation to why we think there is a need for the western distributor, for those of you who live in Melbourne, everyone would know the issues with the West Gate. The population is set to nearly double by 2051 and become the nation's largest city in the same decade. Over the coming years, the population of Melbourne's west is expected to rise from 700 000 people to 1.1 million people, effectively meaning we have to cater for two

cities the size of Geelong within the west. Over the same time, average travel times between the west and the city will grow by 50 per cent, making it harder for people to access their jobs or get home at the end of the day.

The total volume of freight through the port of Melbourne will nearly double, and yet it has no direct connectivity with the western suburbs, with the motorway. This obviously does not impact just the city; agricultural products, dairy, fruit and vegetables are key containerised exports through the port of Melbourne. But like those in the city's west, businesses, farmers and exporters in the west often face difficulties or costs in getting their products to the port and then out to the world. Despite this, truck movements accessing the port are forecast to increase by 173 per cent by 2041, and without action this will undoubtedly lead to more rat-running and have a substantial impact on Yarraville and Footscray.

The over-reliance on the West Gate Bridge as the primary road connection between the city's west and east means our state also faces severe costly disruption across the network for even a minor traffic accident, let alone a major incident. These are the reasons why we believe there is a strong need for the western distributor, and we are not the only ones. If you look over the recent past, projects like WestLink, the truck action plan, east-west link's western section and the West Gate distributor have all been put forward by successive governments to look at dealing with the West Gate situation.

To give you a bit of detail on our exact design, I will talk you through the various stages. The first one is the Webb Dock improvements. That is highlighted there in the grey area. This will boost and improve access between Webb Dock and CityLink, improve traffic flow by separating the Webb Dock vehicles heading to the Bolte Bridge from the rest of the M1 traffic trying to access the city or the east, reduce the risk of truck rollovers and subsequent network delays and improve safety by reducing the merging and weaving across the busy corridor.

The next section is the upgrade to the West Gate Freeway, which will see capacity increase by 50 per cent and improve traffic flow with two additional lanes in each direction between the M80-M1 interchange and Williamstown Road for the 200 000 vehicles that rely on this corridor daily, providing a fully managed motorway with automatic incident detection, lane use management, ramp metering and incident response and using best practice for that freeway. We are also looking at strengthening works to the structures and the freeway to allow heavy freight vehicles to access directly into the port.

The next section is a tunnel which will increase the river crossing capacity by 60 per cent. It will be a tunnel running with initially two lanes in each direction and a full emergency lane with the ability to commutate very quickly to run three lanes and provide redundancy to the West Gate Bridge, connections into High Street to get dangerous placarded loads off suburban roads like Francis Street and providing direct access to the West Gate Freeway.

Then we move to the elevated section around the port located above Footscray Road, which will provide full motorway-standard connections into the port of Melbourne, direct motorway-to-motorway connections from the western distributor to CityLink and, for vehicles heading to the north and also south to west, an access into the city fringe. We can deliver all this without acquiring any residential housing.

To date our community consultation has been a crucial component of the project and will be the case moving forward. Our team has been out in the community talking to the local residents. We have launched a dedicated community consultation online hub and distributed a regular newsletter to keep people informed of what is happening with the project. Stakeholders we have been talking with include, for example, MTAG, RACV, the local councils, the Victorian Transport Association, the City of Melbourne and government agencies like VicRoads and the planning department. Feedback so far has been incorporated into our proposed design and will continue to refine aspects of the proposal following the latest round of community consultation.

These are some of the key benefits we see for our proposal, and this is obviously across the whole network. It will relieve pressure on the West Gate, providing a new river crossing to help distribute traffic from the west trying to access the city by offering a new access point into the city. For those living in the west or beyond — cities like Geelong or Ballarat — the project will help boost the reliability of travel times, make it easier for people to plan their journeys and ensure that they spend less time stuck in traffic when heading to work or trying to get home. It also offers significant economic benefits by creating jobs now and delivering long-term productivity improvements once completed that will add to the gross domestic product of Victoria. Providing

full motorway-standard connections to the port will also be of benefit to Victoria's critical freight and logistics industry, as well as the businesses and farmers who rely on efficient port access.

Importantly refinements to our proposal will now see us remove unsightly overhead powerlines in the inner west, clean up a contaminated land site in Yarraville, create new open space for local residents and complete the missing link for the federation walking and biking trail, which I know is a key issue for some of the members at the table and a key issue for that inner west suburb.

In addition there are also key road safety benefits this project can deliver. Our networks operate on two-thirds fewer injuries than the broader Australian network, so safety is obviously a key issue for us.

In closing, infrastructure goes to the heart of the livability of this city and the state. We have developed what we believe is the right solution in response to the existing crippling congestion on the M1, the rapid growth expected in the suburbs and the need to enhance access to the nation's busiest container port to assist business, farmers and exporters across the state, as well as providing very important relief from trucks in the inner west.

We believe we are putting forward a unique opportunity to deliver a value-for-money solution that sees Transurban take traffic risk, leverage our balance sheet to finance the project, bring the project forward and provide tolling and operation synergies with CityLink. We have significant experience in procuring and managing the delivery of projects, and we believe the solution is ready to proceed. We have continued to work productively with the government through stage 3 of its assessment.

Mr Chairman, I am happy to take questions, but I would like to remind the committee that we are in stage 3 of the government's market-led proposal process, which means the government are still assessing if they want to proceed at all with the project — if they want to proceed with Transurban. If they do choose to proceed to stage 4, more details will be released, commercial negotiations in detail will commence, community consultations will continue and the formal planning process will begin at that stage.

The CHAIR — Excellent. Thank you, Mr Charlton. We will proceed with some questions. I will begin. What do you see as the role of private companies in creating road policy?

Mr CHARLTON — We do not look to create policy; what we look at is to find solutions to what we see are transport issues in the network. We present ideas to different stakeholders, whether that be government, people like the RACV, the federal government. We present what we think are solutions to what we see are problems in the network; it is up to the government to determine what the actual policy is. If you look at the western distributor, it has been past policy of various governments to look at how they deal with the West Gate Freeway. We see that as the biggest road transport issue in Melbourne, so we are just offering some solutions, but we do not dictate policy.

The CHAIR — Is it fair to say that your need to make a profit on any road project underpins all other considerations when considering working in partnership with the government?

Mr CHARLTON — We need to make a fair return for our shareholders, or at least at the time we do a deal we need to assume that we make a fair return, but the risk is on us. If we do not make a return because the traffic is not there, the escalation is not there, if we do not build it correctly, then that risk falls to us. But at the time, yes, we believe we need to make a fair return.

The CHAIR — Indeed. What sort of margin would your company require to take on a project?

Mr CHARLTON — We just use industry standard, which I think is the best way to discuss it. We would be looking for industry-standard returns. We do not look at it specifically on a margin. Every project is assessed on its risk, but we just look at industry-standard returns. That is still being negotiated with the state.

The CHAIR — If we were to look specifically to the western distributor project, would it be fair to say that if Transurban could not make a profit from the project, that you would walk away?

Mr CHARLTON — If we did not think we could make a fair return for our shareholders, we would not proceed. Correct.

The CHAIR — Is it true that any contract you sign for the western distributor project would only be profitable if there was considerable federal government money offsetting the construction costs or if there was an increase in tolls on existing roads?

Mr CHARLTON — There are many ways to fund these projects. What we propose, to align the tolling regimes with the existing networks, is effectively two-thirds to come from Transurban and the other third to come from federal or state government funding. That will align the tolls then with the new western distributor along the existing network tolling regime that we have on CityLink, and that is what we think is good policy or fits in with the existing network. The exact funding really is up to the state and how they want to proceed and how they would like to deal with the network. If the state could put in more money, we could lower the tolls. If the state wants to put in less money, we could look at how else to compensate on the other side.

The CHAIR — Sure. Negotiations have been going on with regard to the western distributor project for almost a year now. What chance do you think there is of reaching an agreement with the government?

Mr CHARLTON — It is not actually negotiations; it is an assessment. If you look at the government's market-led proposal, which we submitted in March and the government then decided to take into stage 3 in April, their proposal now is what they call the assessment proposal in stage 3. If we get to stage 4, then it is actually commercial negotiations at that point in time. They are assessing it. We think the project is a great project for Melbourne. We think it offers value for money and brings forward critical infrastructure and provides funding from the private sector so the government can do more with its money for public transport in other places. We are optimistic, but at the end of the day it is a government assessment decision whether they want to move forward or not. You would have to speak to the government.

The CHAIR — Are you concerned about how long it is taking the government to assess the proposal and come back to you?

Mr CHARLTON — We are just following their process. Anyone from the private sector always thinks that government takes too long to do almost everything they do. We would always like things to be quicker, but there is a process to be run and we are working collaboratively with the state in that process.

The CHAIR — Certainly. Looking at your own modelling for the western distributor project, where would the traffic go once it enters the CBD? Do you see a further bottleneck being created in the CBD?

Mr CHARLTON — There are different levels of traffic. You have a lot of truck traffic obviously trying to access the port. The trucks will be able to now do from the M80 three trips in the time it used to take them to do one trip. Then you have got some car traffic trying to access the north; obviously they would go up on CityLink. Then you have other car traffic trying to access the north of the CBD.

You have to remember what role the West Gate plays now. A lot of the car traffic coming over the West Gate is still trying to access the north of the CBD, but what they do is use Montague Street, Kings Way, Power Street, and they try to make their way through the city to access the northern employment areas of the city, the university and other things to the north of the city. What we are able to do is take some of that pressure off of the trans-city traffic and move that traffic around to the north where they are actually trying to get to at the end of the day.

We are looking at different connections into the city at Footscray Road, Dynon Road, how it ties into E-gate, so we have some different solutions of how to handle that traffic and disperse that more amongst the north of the city. If we get into stage 4, that will all be made public.

The CHAIR — Would you say it is a concern of yours, the potential for a bottleneck there?

Mr CHARLTON — All the traffic for us is a concern — where it is going, how it is being distributed, what we do with it. We spend a lot of time. We have the largest strategic modelling team in Australia that looks at traffic, land use planning, behavioural science, how best to handle the traffic. Trucks in the inner west are a concern, cars accessing the city are a concern and what we do is try to come up with the best solutions to deal with the issue as best we can.

The CHAIR — Does this mean that any CBD bypass of the West Gate Freeway needs some version of a freeway link to the Eastern Freeway to make it efficient — to make it work?

Mr CHARLTON — Most of the traffic we are dealing with is trying to either access the city or go north. Most of the traffic we are dealing with, because it is coming over the West Gate, is not dealing with the Eastern Freeway.

The CHAIR — There was some reference to acquisition of residential properties. You were saying — —

Mr CHARLTON — No, there was a reference to no acquisition of residential properties.

The CHAIR — Sorry. Indeed no acquisitions, you were saying, of residential properties will be required —

Mr CHARLTON — Under our proposal.

The CHAIR — under your current plan.

Mr CHARLTON — I have to again state that this is our current proposal. If the government changes it, we are happy to talk to the government, but currently under our proposal, no acquisition of residential land.

The CHAIR — That is specifically for residential land. What other land may need to be acquired? Is there commercial?

Mr CHARLTON — There is some state land around the port. There is some old railway access land. There might be one or two small commercial portions that we would have to look at, depending on what comes out through the final design and goes to the formal planning process.

The CHAIR — Okay. With your current plan, though, is it likely that there are commercial premises that would need to be acquired?

Mr CHARLTON — Potentially we are talking about less than 10, but even then it is not actually the whole business or the whole land site. Some of it is just taking a small corner or taking a few metres here and there, so it is pretty minimal.

The CHAIR — Is there any public open space of any type that would need to be acquired?

Mr CHARLTON — When we did the first design we went out and did community consultation, and you saw the numbers. We have had direct meetings with over 1000 people. We have met with 50 different stakeholders. We have done 30 000 leaflets. We have had 20 000 visits on the website. The biggest response in the survey was that 90 per cent of the people were saying to do more to get trucks out of the inner west. To do that with the current proposal, we do have ramps that go over the Stony Creek reserve and then into what is now SP AusNet's industrial land there, where we look to do the portal. That is the only open space we would have to acquire, which is where the piers would be to support the ramps. But then we would take the SP AusNet land, which is currently contaminated land owned by a company, and convert that into land that we can provide back to the community, so there would actually be more open space than prior to the project. But we are also assessing how we mitigate that proposal as we go through the next phase as well.

The CHAIR — What impact would that have on the amenity of the current open space?

Mr CHARLTON — There would be a structure going over parts of Stony Creek — a couple of ramps — so that we can get ramps into Hyde Street and so we can get the placarded vehicles, which cannot use the tunnel, directly into the terminals there. That would be the impact; there would be piers and an overhead structure.

The CHAIR — Excellent. I do have some more questions, but I might open up to other members of the committee.

Mr EIDEH — Victoria has the much sought after status of the nation's freight and logistics capital, an industry crucial to our economy. How would your proposal support the freight and logistics operation?

Mr CHARLTON — Melbourne has the country's biggest port, and that is expected to expand dramatically. As I said, with truck trips increasing 173 per cent, right now there is no direct access to a motorway from the west, so unfortunately they have to access through Yarraville and Footscray suburbs there, which obviously causes conflicts with the residents and with the vehicles. It is not a great outcome for the logistics industry.

What we are looking to do is strengthen the West Gate Freeway, which will allow larger B-doubles and B-triples — so much more efficient — but then a motorway and motorway connection to the port. As I said, our modelling would show that trips from the M80 — where now a freight industry could make one trip, in that same time they would be able to make three trips to the port, substantially increasing the productivity of the freight industry, substantially increasing the productivity of the port itself and removing a substantial number of trucks from the inner west.

Mr EIDEH — Tell me, as I just talk about technology — as I was saying, new technology is being rolled out on your roads. What type of technology and innovations are you planning to incorporate to do the western distributor, and how will this help motorists?

Mr CHARLTON — One of the things Victoria is leading in is the smart motorway technology which you see on parts of the Monash. We are doing the CityLink-Tullamarine widening upgrade now, for which we use what we call lane use management. There is automatic incident detection. It effectively is a ‘smart’ road. With that sort of technology we can better monitor and operate the road and make it more efficient, in particular dealing with incident management, which obviously is a safety issue, providing more reliability and availability to the road. You will see those gantries go up and the variable speed signs being able to manage the traffic, particularly when you are dealing with over 200 000 vehicles a day on the West Gate. It is probably one of the busiest roads in Australia.

There is a lot of technology coming, and we are building out for future technology. In fact in the US three weeks ago now we ran automated vehicles down our road in the US. In the future projects we are looking at how we build out the technology to be prepared for what is coming with automated and what we call connected vehicles, where the cars actually speak to the roads. It is actually changing pretty fast, the industry.

Mr EIDEH — I have a final point, just a quick one. What benefit do you expect this project would have for people and for businesses in regional communities?

Mr CHARLTON — Like I said, the biggest component of the port of Melbourne is actually agricultural products leaving in containerised fashion — dairy, fruit, meat and vegetables. Being able to access the port from the west and from a motorway condition will make it much more reliable for those providers, and obviously some of those have more time-critical freight because of what type of freight it is. Again, for them time and reliability are critical, and this will provide that additional access.

Mr FINN — Scott, thank you very much for coming in today. Contamination is obviously going to be an issue because that part of the world is subject to a great deal of contamination. I would assume that if you go ahead with this project, you will need to remove a great deal of contaminated soil. Do you have any estimates as to how much at this point you would have to remove?

Mr CHARLTON — I do not have those specific numbers. We have had two different geological experts working through that area. Like you said, there are areas that have contamination. The good thing is that because it has been studied and it is so old, there is lots of data on that area. The answer is that as we go through the formal approval process we will deal with the contamination, but we have factored that into our pricing. I do not have the details of actually how many exact cubic metres. I am happy to take that on notice — that expectation of contamination.

Mr FINN — If you could provide it, that would be very helpful. Do you have any idea where that contaminated soil would go after it was removed?

Mr CHARLTON — It depends on what kind of contamination it has and if it can be treated. Depending on contamination, some of that gets treated on site. You can do heat treatment or other treatment, or it may have to go to special landfill, depending on the type of contamination. Again, as we go through the formal planning process and the EPA approvals, we will deal with all those details, but we are certainly aware of the contamination and the type of soil we have to deal with, and it is not the easiest place in the world.

Mr FINN — I am sure that is the case.

Mr CHARLTON — It is not Sydney sandstone.

Mr FINN — Given the fact that you do have a fair idea of the sort of problem that you face, you must have given some consideration as to where that soil would go. Could you give us an idea of where the soil that cannot be treated on site would go?

Mr CHARLTON — I do not know the exact names of the landfill sites, but there are different landfills obviously across Victoria that are certified for different types of material, whether it is treated, pre-treated or post-treated, so it will go to an appropriate site according to the formal planning approval process. Sorry, I do not know the names of the landfill sites.

Mr FINN — Fair enough; that is fine. The Premier — he was the opposition leader then — told us before the last election that he had a project called the West Gate distributor that was ‘shovel ready’. I have not been able to find out, despite many requests this year, exactly the details of this West Gate distributor. Has he let you in on the secret? Are you aware of his plans for this West Gate distributor, and have you included that as a part of the western distributor?

Mr CHARLTON — I think the West Gate distributor was just before the election, which was effectively ramps coming off the West Gate into the field terminal area there — obviously not a tunnel or a connection directly into the port. That is our understanding of the proposal before the election. We are not privileged to any of the details. As I said before, we understood that the government was looking at that. Obviously the previous government was looking at the east–west western section to deal with the West Gate redundancy. There has been the WestLink project in the past. There has been the truck action plan. There have been lots of different proposals to try and deal with it. We have come up with what we think is the best proposal we can do, but I am not privileged to any of the details around the West Gate distributor.

Mr FINN — As a representative of the west, as indeed is Ms Hartland, I have had a number of constituents come to me very concerned about the impact this will have on people in Yarraville and surrounds. You suggest that the trucks may come off Francis Street, and if that happens it would be a very good thing obviously, but what assurances can you give them that ramps and elevated roads are not going to make their lives even more difficult than they already are?

Mr CHARLTON — First of all, we are doing everything we can do as we go through the assessment and community consultation process to mitigate impacts on any of the residents. When we first did the original proposal, again the surveys and the discussion and all the meetings with the residents of Yarraville and Footscray and others were about, ‘How can you get more trucks off the road?’. That was the major concern. That is why we adjusted the proposal to include these ramps.

These ramps are I think at the closest point about 150 metres from any homes, so I think there were some misreported comments when we first came out that somehow these ramps were going over people’s homes — 150 metres. We are not saying it does not impact on the amenity of what they see, and we have got to work through that process. It does get more trucks out of Yarraville and Footscray, and that is something the government is assessing in which proposal they want to go forward with.

Mr FINN — Would it get the trucks out of Yarraville or just put them above Yarraville?

Mr CHARLTON — Again, the ramps are above Stony Creek, so they are not above any town, any structures or any commercial properties. They are not above Yarraville; nothing is above Yarraville. They would get them onto these ramps, which go through Stony Creek and then into an industrial property — owned by SP AusNet — into a tunnel.

Mr FINN — I have one final question. Yesterday, I had to travel to another committee meeting — committee meetings are just a joyous part of life in this caper — and I had to travel to Morwell. I live out past the airport, and I heard on the radio that the Tulla was blocked, which is not an unusual event these days, so I decided that I would try to get to the Eastern Freeway and up EastLink via the ring-road and cut my way down to the Eastern Freeway that way. It took me nearly 2 hours to do that. Can you suggest — and I have been trying to work out how anybody could suggest this — or can you give us any hope that this project will make accessing the east and the west, either way, easier?

Mr CHARLTON — Certainly again, as I said, any time there is an issue with the West Gate, what it ends up doing is causing congestion on the Bolte Bridge, and then that leads into congestion obviously into the

Burnley Tunnel and that leads to congestion all the way down the Monash, so we can certainly say that by relieving pressure on the West Gate Bridge that is going to relieve pressure on the network in the south-east, and relieve pressure on the city centre and relieve pressure on the north. Way up in the north-east corner I am not sure that will have as big an impact, but certainly on the south-east it will have an impact.

I think as the Premier said at one point as well, we are looking at additional solutions as to how we can enhance the network on the Monash by using some technology and expansion of some capacity of the Monash potentially as part of the project. Yes, I can say it will help relieve the network. I can say that if nothing is done, if you look at the growth of the population in Melbourne and what is going to occur over the next 20 or 30 years, your 2 hours will look like a decent trip.

Mr FINN — It will become four.

Mr CHARLTON — Our biggest concern is infrastructure — and all kinds of infrastructure. We believe in public infrastructure, we believe in walking and we believe in cycling. An integrated transport network has to be invested in in Melbourne if it is going to protect its liveability.

Mr FINN — I am an enthusiastic walker, but I am not walking to Morwell for anybody. I just wanted to ask one question. Irrespective of what you call it, Melbourne will eventually need a link between the east and the west, won't it?

Mr CHARLTON — You need additional capacity to travel between the east and the west. Regarding how that capacity is travelled and what kind of capacity it is, we try to look at solving transport problems and being outcome focused, so what are we trying to deliver? Again, we are agnostic as to whether it is rail or road. Some solutions are better for rail, some solutions are better for road but, yes, there will need to be additional capacity everywhere in the network. There will be, just with the population growth.

Ms HARTLAND — I would like to start off by saying that as a resident of Footscray I actually understand these issues incredibly well, and the list of questions I have today are the questions that at the what you call community consultation process have not been answered, so I will start off from that. These are questions that my office has devised, and also we asked local residents about the questions that have not been answered at the information sessions.

My first one is around traffic modelling. Do your traffic modelling and value-for-money analysis of the project also include a scenario where there will be reduced truck volumes, possibly up to 3500 a day, if the rail port shuttle goes ahead?

Mr CHARLTON — For us, whether the rail port shuttle goes ahead or not, the risk on us if we do the project is for us to take that traffic risk. We include network enhancements going forward over the next 30 or 40 years depending on what we think will happen in rail and road, but we are not really familiar with the details of the rail port shuttle. When we try to find details it is very hard to find what the actual project is, but we are happy to look at that, and when we come out in the formal stage the modelling will be released. If they go forward with the project, traffic modelling will be released in the formal approval process.

Ms HARTLAND — I am more than happy to pass on the details. I am a bit surprised you do not have those details about the rail shuttle, but I am happy to pass them on.

In relation to traffic modelling and again value for money, what percentage of container trucks travelling to the port entrance on Footscray Road do you presume will use the tunnel, also considering the numbers of placarded loads?

Mr CHARLTON — What we say is that we are getting up to 50 per cent of the trucks off the inner west as far as we see, and some of them are obviously accessing the port and some of them are accessing CityLink. It will also depend on the final design. I think if you are going to go to a lot of detailed individual questions about numbers, specific numbers and specific streets, we are going to get a lot of the same answer that if we move forward to the next stage — and they are just assessing a high-level proposal — the next stage is the formal stage where we present all the details around the traffic.

Ms HARTLAND — That is probably why the consultations have been so poor so far. This basic information that local residents need to have has not been available. When you — —

Mr CHARLTON — I would just make a comment there. This is not a formal process yet, and we have been more transparent than in any other process. We are just in stage 3 of an assessment of whether the government even wants to proceed with the project, much less go through with it, and we have tried to be as transparent as possible with a high-level design, what we are trying to achieve, how the tolls look, how we are trying to fund it. I appreciate that any major project causes concerns in the community, and there will be at least a year or two-year-long formal approval process if the government decides to proceed with that project. We will continue to consult with the community. We do apologise if there is any anxiety, but we have been as transparent as we possibly can be at this point.

Ms HARTLAND — I am a local resident, and I would have to dispute that, because the maps that have been at the consultations — they are squiggly lines on maps — whereas I am aware that you did present to the council very detailed mapping, and when we asked for that at the consultation we were told that it was too technical and ‘you would not understand it’. That does not sound very transparent to me. My next question —

Mr CHARLTON — I do not think that is actually what was presented, but that is okay.

Ms HARTLAND — All right. Well, maybe you could present it at the next consultation and then we could see whether that gives us more information than the squiggly line on the map does.

You talked about the fact that there would not be an amenity impact and that it would be 150 metres to houses on Stony Creek. The people who live between Stony Creek and Francis Street already have the West Gate Bridge, and if you go down there it is incredibly noisy at the best of times, so how can you say there will be no amenity effect when there is going to be a flyover 150 metres from their homes?

Mr CHARLTON — I think if you go back and check my words, I said there will be an amenity impact and we will do everything possible to try and mitigate that impact. If those were not my words, then I apologise because we have never said there would not be an impact. As part of the planning approval process, again from noise and from construction, we have to go through and meet all the EPA and other guidelines around noise and construction impact.

Again, going back to our original design without the ramps — trying to balance out trying to get as many trucks out of the inner west as possible versus, unfortunately, potentially some amenity impact to those residents near Stony Creek — again I would say there is no formal approval process yet; there is no formal agreed design with the state. This is very early days. All the residents will continue to be consulted and continue to have their say going forward.

Ms HARTLAND — What processes will you use, then, to stop the obvious noise that these residents are going to have from both having the West Gate Bridge and a flyover very close to their homes — and Francis Street on the other side?

Mr CHARLTON — Francis Street would not be our responsibility unless it is part of the environmental approval, and then —

Ms HARTLAND — As a cumulative impact.

Mr CHARLTON — There are EPA guidelines around noise. Obviously we deal with those every day on roads like CityLink, where we have noise-retaining walls. We monitor the noise constantly to make sure that we are within the guidelines set by the approval process. Again, if we go through the western distributor process, there will be, as part of the environmental approval, guidelines on noise and impact on residents. That can be handled by sound walls or sound tubes and different methodologies. So we will meet the guidelines as set out by the government.

Ms HARTLAND — So those people will be impacted, and they will be severely impacted by noise from both the flyover and the West Gate Bridge that they currently have, and they will lose open space.

Mr CHARLTON — We will actually have more open space than before.

Ms HARTLAND — Usable open space, not open space that is covered by a flyover?

Mr CHARLTON — That is the current plan.

Ms HARTLAND — So they will actually lose open space in Stony Creek.

Mr CHARLTON — The piers will go through Stony Creek with a structure above it, but we plan on returning some of the SP AusNet land back to the community, so in the end they will have more open space than before the project started.

Ms HARTLAND — In regard to AusNet, it is a contaminated site. Do you have any idea of what the contamination is on that site, because it is a very difficult site, and as I understand, there may be large amounts of intractable waste on that site? Are you aware of, or can you present to the committee, the contamination report for that site?

Mr CHARLTON — We have done the work on that. When we get to the formal planning process, that will be all part of the EPA assessment. Again, at this point, to present details of how we are going to excavate, details of design, exact connections, where the stop signs go — —

The government has not even decided whether they are going to approve the process. Then we have to go through consultation again, then we have to go through a formal planning process. I appreciate, again, that might cause anxiety to some of the residents; it is just that we are incredibly early in this project.

Ms HARTLAND — It is causing a great deal of anxiety to many residents. On the issue of the elevated freeway route above Footscray Road and possible off-ramps to the port section, taking into consideration that hopefully there will be a rail shuttle, will that project impact on the rail shuttle's construction, or is that something you need to take on notice?

Mr CHARLTON — Not that we are aware of. Whether it is public transport or other rail projects, because we are going on top of Footscray Road we do not believe it impacts any projects that we are aware of.

Ms HARTLAND — When will the business case for this project be released?

Mr CHARLTON — We submitted a business case, obviously, to the government when we submitted in March, and they went to stage 3 in April. There is a summary of that business case on our website, consult.transurban.com. The government are doing their own assessment and their own business case to satisfy themselves, again, whether they want to move forward with the project. It is up to the government to release their business case on their timetable. We do not dictate that.

Ms HARTLAND — That is the end of my questions for the minute.

Ms TIERNEY — My questions are also around consultation, particularly with local residents. Can you outline the type of consultation that has taken place so far — whether it has been on weekends or weekdays, whether there has been material that has been translated and whether any of the feedback from those consultations has been incorporated into your proposal? The second broader question is in relation to the next stage. What can we expect in terms of the type and delivery of genuine consultation between Transurban and local residents?

Mr CHARLTON — All of the above, as far as meetings go — weekends, weekdays, weeknights, council meetings, pop-up stalls, town hall meetings and council meetings, briefing basically anyone who wanted to be briefed. Regarding stakeholders, again, RACV, MTAG, the residents of Stony Creek and Docklands. Wherever it may be, we have tried to address all the stakeholders and offer all the opportunities to come either here one on one or to one of the many meetings. We have a website, again, if you want to look at consult.transurban.com, which has feedback from a lot of those meetings, and people are able to post their issues. Then we have a summary of all those feedback sessions. I will not go through that in detail; it is quite a detailed document.

Surveys were conducted. Again, the biggest feedback from those sessions was, one — I will use the word — ‘Thank God! Someone is hopefully going to do something about the trucks in the inner west. Can you do more?’. That was the original — ‘Can you do more to get trucks out of the inner west?’ — for our first design. Then, putting out the revised design proposal, the feedback has been, ‘That’s great, but now we have some affected residents around Stony Creek. What can we do to mitigate that or lessen the impact, and can you continue to look at the revised proposal?’. Some have proposed going back to the original proposal. Again, that is for government to assess and us to continue to walk through the process.

Our plan from here — depending on what the government does with the proposal — if they decide to proceed, which is called stage 4, would be to go back out into community consultation and get more feedback around the proposal. At that time it is likely that the formal planning process will start, which is to be run by the state; we do not run the planning process, although we will provide input and arms and legs as much as we can for feedback from the community. That is a fairly long, lengthy and involved process, with all stakeholders getting a chance to input into that process.

Ms TIERNEY — On a different topic, you have talked about how one incident on the West Gate — and I think many of us have experienced it — can cause enormous issues across the network. Clearly part of any solution for our whole road network is how quickly we can respond to vehicle breakdowns, accidents and other incidents. How do you propose to handle managing these types of issues as part of this project?

Mr CHARLTON — One of the things we have proposed, besides the technology we talked about where you have automatic incident identification and the technology and being able to use land use management systems to move the traffic around, is increased incident management. Right now on CityLink we run incident management. It runs roughly about a third of the time the rest the network does its incident management, so we are much quicker on response and dealing with incidents, which obviously makes the road more reliable and frees up that capacity as soon as possible. We are proposing increased incident management as well as the technology to increase the reliability of the road going forward.

Ms TIERNEY — So there will be a lot more people around managing — —

Mr CHARLTON — Yes. We use a lot of data and technology. Around CityLink — it is hard to see them sometimes because they are behind screens or behind noise walls or wherever they may be — we know at different times of the day where incidents or nose-to-tails or things are likely to occur or congestion is to occur. We move our vehicles around, we watch our data, we adjust the speeds to try to make sure that we get the best out of the roads and then we have a lot more vehicles per kilometre on the road than, say, the wider Vic network, just because of their budget and what they do. We are proposing to have more of a city-like response, which, again, is about one-third of the wider network response.

The CHAIR — I just have a few more questions for you, Mr Charlton. The funding model for the western distributor in broad terms would see one-third of the \$5.5 billion it costs for the road project recovered through tolls on the new road, one-third by extending the tolls on CityLink for 10 to 15 years and one-third handed over from the commonwealth government. Given the justification for road tolls — that the cost of road infrastructure is paid by those who use the infrastructure — what is the justification for recovering a significant proportion of the cost for the western distributor from motorists who use CityLink and will not be using the western distributor?

Mr CHARLTON — Again, I think as I said before, the road operates as an integrated network. You cannot say these individual assets operate by themselves, so congestion on the West Gate or congestion on the Monash affect CityLink and vice versa, so beneficiaries of the western distributor include those people who use CityLink. I think as part of the proposal — again comments have been made by the Premier or the Treasurer or have been in the press — they are also looking at how we can increase capacity and availability on the Monash as well to increase the overall network function. That may well be part of the plan. Again it is up to the state to see if they want to take that forward. But again these things do not operate in isolation.

The CHAIR — How many vehicle journeys do you estimate would use the western distributor and CityLink each year? Do you have those figures?

Mr CHARLTON — We have said that when the western distributor starts it would be in the first year of operation — again these are very high level numbers — in the order of 30 000 but doubling within a very short period of time. If you think of the western distributor as the safety valve and redundancy for the West Gate, that is a 15 to 20 per cent reduction in traffic on the West Gate. If you think about if you had the West Gate at school holidays all the time, that would probably be a more pleasant experience.

In relation to CityLink, it is not so much traffic as the number of transactions. We put out a quarterly release with all our transactions. I will send the committee the last quarterly release, which has all the transactions on CityLink.

The CHAIR — What I was hoping to get to was how many would use just the western distributor, how many would use just CityLink and then how many would use both CityLink and the western distributor. Would you have some modelling for those types of figures?

Mr CHARLTON — We have not made that public. But I think the bigger impact is not so much that those people who are using the western distributor are using CityLink; it is that the people on CityLink are now getting a run into the south of the city or out to the south-east or out to the west, because they are not constrained by the West Gate where they come over the Bolte Bridge. I think everyone is pretty aware of the problem with the Bolte Bridge at the moment, which we are trying to alleviate somewhat with the CityLink widening, which will provide more capacity there. But again the biggest issue is the 200 000-plus vehicles coming over the West Gate that clog up the network.

The CHAIR — Given the significant funding that is being sought from the commonwealth government, what discussions took place with the commonwealth prior to the Premier's announcement of the project on 30 April 2015?

Mr CHARLTON — We had no discussion. It is not our place at that time to discuss with the commonwealth government the commonwealth government and state funding. Obviously the commonwealth had said they made money available for roads depending on which road it was, but that was really up to the state and the commonwealth.

The CHAIR — Do you think that lack of engagement has hindered the project?

Mr CHARLTON — All we understand now is that they are working together to see if they can progress it. I cannot comment on that. That is a relationship between the state and the feds.

The CHAIR — Have any alternative funding models been considered for the project? For example, if the extension of the CityLink tolling concession was to be removed as a funding option for the project, what alternative sources could be considered?

Mr CHARLTON — The way the state's assessment works is that we put forward our proposal and the government has to assess that proposal, so they cannot pick and choose and say, 'We'll change this and we'll change this', if you read the market proposal guidelines. What I think the government are doing with their own assessment is saying, 'Okay, what if we did it ourselves? What if we funded it with a different model?'. The government then have to look at what are the alternatives of progressing with this project and Transurban with other alternatives. The government are doing that assessment, and you would have to ask them what models they are looking at.

The CHAIR — Is the extension to the CityLink tolling make-or-break for the project? If that were not to proceed, would that break the project?

Mr CHARLTON — Again, we put forward a package proposal, so there is a proposal. That is like saying, 'If you don't build the western distributor, would you just do CityLink?'. We put forward a proposal. It is up to the government to assess the whole proposal. I guess by definition everything in the proposal is make-or-break because you cannot just start separating one without the other.

The CHAIR — How do you suppose the Victorian government might undertake a value-for-money assessment on the project given the contribution from the Victorian government is zero dollars?

Mr CHARLTON — I read in the press the discussions with the Treasurer and the feds all the time. They have to make a decision, if there is a funding gap, on where that money would come from and how they would fund it. Again, we think the proposal balances the toll levels and the capacity enhancements to the network with a contribution from the government, whether it be state or fed at that level around \$1.5 billion to \$2 billion. They have to make that assessment, and if they feel they cannot find the money, then obviously the project would not proceed.

The CHAIR — The Premier's press release on 30 April 2015 said that if the project was agreed to by the government, it would start at the end of this year and be completed by 2020. Given there are 43 days left in this year, do you expect that we will see boots on the ground this year?

Mr CHARLTON — There is actually one component, Webb Dock, and I talked about that project, where because of the way it is situated — the planning approval already in place for doing the work — there is potential to get started on that job.

The CHAIR — Recently at a hearing of the inquiry into the proposed lease of the port of Melbourne, Mr Brendan Lyon, the chief executive officer of Infrastructure Partnerships Australia, an organisation of which I believe Transurban is a member — is that correct?

Mr CHARLTON — Yes.

The CHAIR — And I believe you are the deputy chair.

Mr CHARLTON — I am one of the deputy chairs.

The CHAIR — How many deputy chairs are there?

Mr CHARLTON — I think there are three.

The CHAIR — At that inquiry into the port of Melbourne lease, Mr Lyon stated:

As each member of the committee is aware, Victoria has become associated with sovereign-type risks since the government's decision to terminate the contract for the east–west link. While this matter is awkward to raise in a cross-party committee, it is nonetheless very real and a material contextual issue to this transaction. It is one that relates directly to the value of the port lease ... Whatever else the committee might hear, I submit that the east–west link cancellation has damaged Australia's, as well as Victoria's, reputation.

Mr Lyon also went on to say:

Indeed I was recently in Europe and the UK for a brief round of briefings with major global equity and debt investors and contractors outlining the Australian infrastructure investment opportunity. In every single briefing the east–west link was raised. Everyone from Brussels to Britain asked what the east–west means for future investments in Victoria and in Australia.

Ms TIERNEY — The side letter, too, was mentioned it.

The CHAIR — Thanks, Ms Tierney. Aside from the obvious opportunity that the cancellation of the east–west link has created for your business in terms of the western distributor project, what impacts do you consider that the east–west link cancellation has had on future investment in Victoria?

Mr CHARLTON — All I can talk about is from Transurban's perspective. Melbourne is our home; Victoria is our home. We put a proposal forward that we were willing to invest \$3.5 billion into the state of Victoria to improve its infrastructure, so I think you take that at face value. As one of Australia's largest companies headquartered here, we are willing to invest a \$3.5 billion. I cannot speak for European investors.

The CHAIR — Sure. Have you increased the risk premium in respect of future investments that you make in Victoria, including the western distributor?

Mr CHARLTON — Like I said, our returns are in line with industry standards and not dissimilar to what we have done on the CityLink widening project. We have now done three projects in Victoria working with successive different governments. We have done a similar thing four times now in New South Wales; we are in the process of doing this now in Brisbane; we have done it twice in Virginia. This is nothing new to what we do. We have not increased our risk premium, if that is your question.

The CHAIR — Thank you. What do your equity and debt holders think about the east–west link cancellation?

Mr CHARLTON — I thought we were here to talk about the western distributor.

The CHAIR — We are here to talk about it absolutely, and it directly relates to the western distributor.

Mr CHARLTON — Our equity and debt holders are willing to back Transurban in what we do. I guess the answer is that they are willing to back management's judgement, and they are willing to back us on the western distributor.

The CHAIR — In terms of a road solution for Victoria, how does the western distributor compare to the western section of the east–west link?

Mr CHARLTON — We think eventually — it is probably quite a few years out, or decades out — you will need to do some other connection from the M80 probably into CityLink. What we have tried to design with the western distributor is, when you look at that port connection, the ability then to take that port connection out to the M80, but it is probably 30 or 40 years away before you need that kind of additional capacity.

When we look at the east–west west solution — and we thought that was \$10 billion to \$15 billion — we think that the western distributor solves that issue at least for the next few decades at a substantially reduced cost. In particular, it improves the productivity of the port and gets the trucks off of the inner west in a fairly short period of time. The problem with the east–west west solution as well was that it was at least a decade or so of a build project and obviously acquiring a substantial amount of residential land to do that project.

The CHAIR — My next question was whether you consider the western distributor to be a replacement for the east–west link or a stopgap measure, but I think you have probably answered that in saying that the time frame — —

Mr CHARLTON — I would not say it is a stopgap. Eventually you will need additional capacity, but like I said, you are going to need additional capacity everywhere. We think it is a much more efficient use of capital and a better solution.

The CHAIR — On the eastern side of the city, where you currently have a freeway, that comes to an end at a T-intersection, and it looks like the western distributor will do the same for the western side of the city. There is a missing link here, and I believe it used to be referred to as the east–west link eastern section. Is there an inevitability regarding this missing link?

Mr CHARLTON — Like I said, there is inevitability to upgrade all the infrastructure across Melbourne. How you solve additional east–west movements of people, whether they be rail, road or something, we would encourage everyone to look at the problem. But I am not going to comment on the east–west east link. We were not involved in the project.

The CHAIR — Sure. Can Victoria’s freeway system cope without the freeway on the eastern side being connected to the freeway on the western side of the city, in your view?

Mr CHARLTON — It depends on what you decide to define ‘cope’ as. Again, we say that the more infrastructure that can be built, the better for the productivity of the city of Melbourne and the state of Victoria. The exact solution is not up to us. We are hoping that Infrastructure Victoria will be able to develop a long-term plan that will be consistent among both parties so that over time we can develop a lot more infrastructure.

The CHAIR — Just a couple of concluding questions. The Treasurer, Tim Pallas, told 3AW radio in July that he had met with Transurban before the November 2014 election to discuss Labor’s plans on and around the West Gate Freeway. What did Transurban propose at that particular meeting?

Mr CHARLTON — We did not propose anything. We meet with everyone. We meet with the opposition, we meet with the federal government, we meet with the federal opposition, we meet with the RACV, we meet with the transport association — we meet with everyone who is a stakeholder in infrastructure to talk about the problems around infrastructure and how we solve them. Meeting with Tim when he was in opposition was just talking about infrastructure in general and where we see issues and problems, just the same as we have met with Matthew Guy and Michael O’Brien since they have been in opposition to talk about transport. We meet with any stakeholder who is interested in infrastructure.

The CHAIR — Just today at 11.31 a.m. there was a media release sent out by the Victorian government entitled ‘Labor government strengthens market-led proposal guidelines’. It is with regard to a five-step process for market-led proposals. Are you aware of these new guidelines?

Mr CHARLTON — I assume they are the same guidelines that were published before we went out back in February, but given it was 11.31 and I started this committee hearing at 11.15, I am not aware of what it says.

The CHAIR — I was interested to see whether or not you had been provided with details of this prior to today.

Mr CHARLTON — Most of the stuff that we see we find out from the media. I assume it is the same guidelines we are currently following. If the guidelines have changed, we will look at the guidelines. I cannot comment on something I have not — —

The CHAIR — No, that is right, but just considering where you are at the moment and where Transurban is in the middle of this process, does it concern you that there are these new guidelines that have been released without consultation with you at the moment?

Mr CHARLTON — I do not know what has changed. It could be the post office box of where we are supposed to drop off the reports. I do not know. These market-led proposals, which now basically all the states have and which are sometimes called unsolicited proposals, are constantly updated by the different departments as they see fit. I assume it is an update without material change affecting our proposal, but if it does, we will assess it when we read it.

The CHAIR — Very good. Just one final question, if I could, Mr Charlton. Transurban donated \$22 000 in 2009 to Labor. Has Transurban made any political donations to state or federal Labor since June 2014, when the last round of political donations were published by the AEC?

Mr CHARLTON — First, we do not make political donations. We attend industry functions and different industry forums, and sometimes there is sponsorship, but we do not make political donations. You can check it all with the AEC, obviously. Over the last 18 months between both Liberal and Labor in Victoria it is just under \$10 000 or just over \$10 000 to, again, attend industry or different events but not make political donations. It is pretty much fifty-fifty between both parties. But you can check with the AEC.

The CHAIR — That is why I was asking, because those have not been published by the AEC up to this point.

Mr CHARLTON — Victoria is just over or just under \$10 000, but it is roughly fifty-fifty between the two parties.

The CHAIR — Is that \$10 000 to Labor — —

Mr CHARLTON — Total. I think roughly one is \$6000 and one is \$4000. I cannot remember which is which.

Ms TIERNEY — Fifty-fifty between Liberal and Labor.

Mr FINN — Ask Gayle. She seems to know.

The CHAIR — Yes, she knows a lot.

Mr CHARLTON — I hate to disappoint you, but we are agnostic to politics. We just want to build infrastructure.

The CHAIR — We are used to disappointment.

Mr FINN — I am very keen to ask just two quick questions. On the CityLink concession, and I ask this as one of your best customers — —

Mr CHARLTON — Thank you for your patronage.

Mr FINN — I live at the end of the Tullamarine Freeway, so I am frequently on the Tulla. How much longer under your proposal will we be paying tolls on CityLink if your proposal is approved by the government?

Mr CHARLTON — The original concession was to 2034. When we did the upgrade to the CityLink-Tulla widening that was extended to 2035. We proposed in our proposal that it would be between 10 and 15 years, depending on final scope, cost, government contribution and tolling regime. All these things still have to go

through the commercial negotiation before we get into stage 4. We have said between 10 and 15 years, so by my rudimentary maths that would be 2045 or 2049 or something, but that is still to be finalised.

Mr FINN — That will see me out, I am afraid. I note your comment earlier that you learn what you learn from the media, pretty much like us to a very large extent. What we have seen this year is the government talking your proposal up without actually agreeing to it or giving it any sense of formal approval, so you could be led to believe that you were in with a fair shot of being approved here. You no doubt would have spent a great deal putting this proposal together. I would imagine, given the effort and the time and everything else that has gone into it, it would be many millions of dollars. Given the government's very public stance of talking this up, if they do not approve it, would you consider seeking compensation from them for the costs already spent by you in putting this proposal together?

Mr CHARLTON — Under the stage 3 guidelines it is very clear that we cannot seek compensation. I guess it depends on what the government decide to do. If they decide to do nothing — in other words, if they do not want to do the project at all — then we are out of luck, and that is the role we play when we are trying to deliver infrastructure. We think it is a very compelling project, otherwise we would not have spent the money or the time. The government may decide to proceed with the project but without Transurban. There may be some intellectual property that they would like to get, like all our detailed designs, drawings, traffic modelling, whatever. Then that would obviously be a commercial negotiation if they want to do it, or they can go and do everything themselves. But no, there is no compensation if they cancel the project.

Mr EIDEH — On a different topic, Mr Charlton, active transport connections are becoming increasingly important to the community, and upgrades to walking and cycling paths are now commonplace in VicRoads projects. Will you be looking to incorporate upgrades to this type of infrastructure as part of your plan?

Mr FINN — Walking and cycling; that is the Tulla most days.

Mr CHARLTON — Certainly completing the Federation Trail is one of the proposals we put forward. Obviously urban design is very important as well, particularly in Victoria — always outshining New South Wales and Queensland in urban design and artwork. But certainly completing the Federation Trail, both for biking and walking, is key and important. We are also looking at removing the overhead powerlines to increase the amenity of the area. We are very conscious of the impact we have on the area, and we look to provide benefits not only in the reliability and travel time savings and taking the trucks off the street but in other amenities as well.

The CHAIR — Excellent. Mr Charlton, thank you for being a witness before our inquiry today. I remind you that a transcript of your evidence will be provided to you for proofreading, and that evidence will eventually be available on the committee's website. Once again, thank you.

Committee adjourned.