

# TRANSCRIPT

## STANDING COMMITTEE ON THE ECONOMY AND INFRASTRUCTURE

### Inquiry into infrastructure projects

Melbourne — 15 September 2017

#### Members

Mr Bernie Finn — Chair

Mr Khalil Eideh — Deputy Chair

Mr Jeff Bourman

Mr Mark Gepp

Ms Colleen Hartland

Mr Shaun Leane

Mr Craig Ondarchie

Mr Luke O'Sullivan

#### Participating members

Mr Greg Barber

Ms Samantha Dunn

Mr Cesar Melhem

Mr Gordon Rich-Phillips

#### Witnesses

Mr Trevor Jensen, and

Ms Marilyn Wane, Save St Kilda Road.

**The CHAIR** — Welcome to our hearing today, which is hearing evidence in relation to the inquiry into infrastructure projects, as I am sure you are aware. All evidence taken at this hearing is protected by parliamentary privilege; therefore you are protected against any action for what you say here today, but if you go outside and repeat the same things, those comments may not be protected by this privilege. I would ask you to open with a 5 or 10-minute opening statement, and we will take questions after that if you are happy to do that.

**Mr JENSEN** — Thank you, Chair. Good morning. My name is Trevor Jensen. I am the chair of the RDP — the Royal Domain Plaza — owners corporation. I am also a member of Save St Kilda Road, which we are here to represent today. My colleague is Marilyn Wane, who does all the work. We are most grateful to her. Thank you very much for the invitation to appear today. We appreciate it very much.

From the outset let us be very basic about it: this is a very important project. It is absolutely essential to Victorian infrastructure, and there is no question about that. It is infrastructure that my great, great-grandchildren in 100 years time will probably use. Whether it is in the same form as we know trains today, I do not know. It might be like an iPhone X; we do not know. It is overdue, and it is probably short-sighted, if anything. We feel that this is a time where we will look back in maybe even 10 or 15 years and say, ‘Why wasn’t South Yarra station also included in this project?’, but that is out of scope. I just make the statement and leave it there, if I may.

Save St Kilda Road made a request to the Legislative Council to review design elements. We were seeking to have a deep cavern station up at Domain. That request was continually rebuffed and certainly has not gone ahead, yet we are somewhat disappointed when we do see Mr Tattersall’s comments on reference where he says that it is not more expensive to go deep when you take all the issues into consideration et cetera. I listened to him before, and I was disappointed to hear again the mention that it has to be shallow because of the number of people that are going to come through the station. Under ROI information we have, those 50 per cent of the people changing there are all assumptions. I would sort of question that. I travel in on the tram all the time, and I watch the people now that are changing from the old number 8 tram to what was the original tram route — I cannot remember the number of it now — that used to go up. It is the 58 now. They, particularly on the wet days, are quite annoyed, so whether people are actually going to do this is questionable. But when you look at airports around the world like Bangkok and a whole lot that we look at, there are pretty big escalator systems there that are quite good. They move the people very rapidly. In our world today, maybe 1 minute or 2 minutes to some people is pretty urgent, but for the longer impact that this is going to have, I question why it could not have been deep cavern.

I also travel extensively to London and to New York — in fact we will be there next Tuesday — and I am going to take some photos and send them back, because it is quite right that the work going on is disruption, but they are small sites. They are not the massive sites that we are going to have here — a site of a kilometre long. Most of the sites in New York are holes that are the size of this room, and London is the same, the Crossrail. There is disruption. You cannot expect any project not to have disruption — we accept that — but we must be able to understand it and understand the impacts that go with it.

Consultation along the way may be not quite as chutzpah-ish as has been presented today. Certainly the last speaker made it quite clear about what we are seeing as well. Around where we are, up there in the Royal Domain, I talk to the owners of the various businesses. Nobody has come near them to talk to them about some of these issues. The guy that runs the little cafe downstairs has 60 available seats on the footpath every day. Working on what he tells me is about \$15 per customer, a small family business there has the potential loss of up to a quarter of a million dollars. That is a small family business. Nobody has offered him a pizza oven or even been near him. It is an Italian restaurant, so he might be interested in a pizza oven, but that aside, it shows a complete lack of business understanding when they do not go and start to talk to these people.

The dust and the noise: we have got the sludge farm just up the road on Domain park. Again we know from the EIS, or we are told from the EIS, that there will be 280 truck movements a day out of that area. The sludge that is coming out — as was recognised by Mr Tattersall here — is going to be pretty smelly. It is going to be this lava rock. Exposure to the air does create the smells. We have got no information at the moment on the toxins associated with that. There is no real understanding of the smell associated with that.

Through another committee that both Marilyn and I sit on, which is called the G12, we have been looking at some of the truck movements around there. That is a very congested area — really congested. There is a new

tram station to go into Park Road, and it is down to a single lane. We are going to see St Kilda Road go to single lane now for quite a considerable time — not for two years, but for quite a long time. This project is going to be disrupting this area for eight years — a disruption that is necessary — but in the meantime our cafes cannot get people to pull up and do deliveries. We are in a single lane.

Emergency services: there are quite a few older residents around there, and it is inner city, where we use public transport. Cars in that area are becoming a thing of the past. Even the new buildings that are being built down there have got a reduction in the number of garaging sites available as part of a move towards a reduction in vehicles, and that is where we are going. But because of that, whether people want to use taxis and Ubers or whatever they want to use, the ability to stop there without causing disruption is going to be significant in the area. These are issues that have to be, I think, given a lot more consideration.

As you said, Chair, you cherish Flinders Street down here. I think the world probably cherishes St Kilda Road. I am not a Victorian. I am a Queenslander, but I am here by choice. Many people go to Queensland, but I have come here to live by choice, because it is a magnificent city.

**The CHAIR** — That raises a whole series of questions on its own, I would say.

**Mr JENSEN** — I will accept those. I was born in Alpha, which even raises more going forward. That aside, we have got a magnificent boulevard up there that we will never, ever see the same as we go forward.

We went to a meeting at the South Yarra senior citizens community club. To give an idea of consultation, consultation is supposed to be somewhere where we discuss things and we listen and we take advice. We went to the meeting up there. It was chaired. They expected 20 to 30 residents. We had over 200 residents there that night, and we were not permitted to ask any questions. That is not acceptable, quite frankly. There was quite a lot of discontent. During the evening we had the opportunity to talk to the officers that were there — terrific young people, no doubt. They were lovely and they tried to answer the questions for us, but we got contradictory information all night. We asked them about, for example, the loss of trees associated with the movement of the rail track. We were told simply it was not in scope. The very next day on the trees up there was posted a permit notice seeking approval to remove 120 trees. Heritage Victoria has put a hold on that pending more work on the plan, but this is the kind of disappointing consultation process that we are seeing.

As I said, we absolutely support the fact of the infrastructure, but people can handle bad news; you cannot handle no news. What we are finding is that we are getting information given to us on Twitter. My name is not ‘Trump’; it is ‘Jensen’. I really do not have a Twitter account, so as a landlord I do not see a lot of the information because we are getting it literally hours before, sometimes almost coincident with, work starting in a tweet, telling us things are going to happen. The website exists. The website has got to be used a lot smarter in putting out their information to us. That is what we want. With information, people can start to prepare. If you have got visitors coming for the today or you have got anything planned, you might want to change that, so it is a very simple process.

I think it is very important that Metro starts to have a better appreciation of the customer, for want of a better word. We are customers in some ways. That said, the engagement program that Mr Tattersall spoke about is very good compared with some of the other consultation with the general community. We are getting letters dumped, for example, that are supposed to be put in the mailboxes, but they are bringing them on a Saturday. Most of the buildings in our area have concierges who are not available on a Saturday, so they are being dumped at the front door, found on a Monday if they are still there and then starting to be circulated. Again, as an owner who does not live in the area, I sometimes do not get to see them. The only information we get is being distributed through our own OC committee, such as G12+ and others that are doing a much better job at getting the information out. It is a great disappointment.

We look to Crossrail as being a terrific model. If you look at their documentation, for example, they are very simple two-page pamphlets. On noise alone, I spent my whole life in the aviation industry. I love the sound of a jet engine but I cannot stand the sound of a motorbike, and yet they probably make exactly the same amount of noise. Probably we in the aviation industry outdo them. But, that said, a lot of people do not appreciate that when they say we are going to have a decibel rise of 10 decibels, it is exponential and so it is going to be a lot louder than what we have. A lot of our older people do not understand that.

With the glazing opportunity that is going to be offered, when you read the mitigation you have to go to about page 7 or into the appendix, which is way up the back, to find out what is happening. We have got some really lovely people who live around our area, but some of them are older people. Even with my glasses on and being, I hope, still fairly with it, we have got a print here that is probably in 8-point, 9-point font and you have got to wade through it up to the appendices, which are way up the back, to get the information. Crossrail does put out a lot of very good documentation, which is simple, and this is the kind of thing we think we need to move to.

**The CHAIR** — Could I ask you if you think they are doing that deliberately?

**Mr JENSEN** — I feel that they are not as open as they should be, to be quite honest — yes. I think that sometimes going down to smaller print is what you do if you do not want people to read things. We see that all the time. If you read any insurance policy or something like that, where is the real detail that gets you into trouble? It is in the smaller print that is about a 2-point font.

**Mr GEPP** — I assume that the aviation industry prints everything in large, block letters, do they?

**Mr JENSEN** — No, we do not in the aviation industry.

**Mr GEPP** — No. I thought so.

**Mr JENSEN** — We do not. I am not going to defend that in any way. If you get into the tickets, if you really read the conditions around an airline ticket, you probably would not get one —

**Mr GEPP** — You would not buy one.

**Mr JENSEN** — and you would not go flying. Let us be very honest about it. But that is out of scope today, I suppose, too.

What we are looking for though, and I think that in this area it would be great to see, is a better presentation of the information to us so that we can actually understand in simple terms what is going to happen with the toxins, what is going to happen with smells. We have got other impacts that are not really being addressed. For example, we are seeing impacts in our area now with letting. Just in our building alone we have got six apartments now, and people at this stage do not want to move in there because they do not understand. I actually have an apartment available down there at the moment which has been getting \$630 a week. We cannot, at \$550, get people interested at the moment because they just do not know what is happening. That is more than the \$5 to \$10 that we anticipated. That is my own problem.

We have got the Cross Yarra Partnership now coming in. They are going to have some variations. It is going to be very important that we get that information and understand it. Very simply, the message we would like to bring today in lots of ways is that we want information. We want timely, open information coming to us. This is a live project. Things are going to happen. There will be problems along the way, problems that we do not anticipate in the next eight years that it is going to be in place. We want transparency; we want honesty. As I said, we can handle bad news. We know that these things are happening, but we just need to have information available to us. I think that is probably the greatest weakness that we are seeing as residents in the area at the moment. Thank you.

**The CHAIR** — Thank you very much for your presentation. Can I just ask you about the subject of trees, and I do know a little bit about this because in the house I sit next to Margaret Fitzherbert, who I am sure you are familiar with. Whether I want to know it or not, she has been telling me about the tree issue in St Kilda Road. I am a bit concerned — I am more than a bit concerned — about the story that you tell of the meeting the night before the signs went onto the trees where you were assured that the trees were not an issue. Is this an example of a one-off or an ongoing process that you have been subjected to?

**Mr JENSEN** — That was the fact that we were told they were out of scope that night, and the very next day a notice went up. It is possible always that the individual who told us that story may not have been aware that it was going up, and I offer that. We have had tremendous support from your colleague in the house going forward, but the number of trees that are being dealt with now has been reduced as more attention has been paid to it. There has certainly been an awareness of that. We are going to lose some trees. But again when you have got a kilometre-long site, and you do look at New York and you do look at London where we have these smaller holes, maybe we are not going into the ground at the right place and maybe we are not doing it. Has it

gone too far? Are we getting the information presented to us now at a point where it is a fait accompli and we cannot do things about this? So a beautiful boulevard will be lost and the trees will be lost.

**The CHAIR** — Who is getting it wrong? If these holes, as you describe them, are far, far bigger than what we are seeing overseas, who is getting it wrong in Melbourne?

**Mr JENSEN** — Who is getting it wrong? I think the engineering guys. I am not an engineer, but I think that you could really go back. When you do go overseas and start to look at these projects, there is a lot of tunnelling around the world. They have tunnelled massive tunnels through the Alps, all of these sorts of things. There is a lot of experience, and we have some good experience around; there is no doubt about it. The team that are on the CYA project are pretty smart cookies. So I think there could be another look at how we go into the ground. Are we going in in the right place and are we going in at the right size? I think this could still be looked at this stage to see whether we do need this massive, kilometre-long area. There is going to be a lot of dust associated with them. I know they are going to put a covering down, but it is going to create lots of problems. This is not for two years; this is for nearly eight to 10 years. So we have this gap in the landscape. I believe there is an opportunity.

**The CHAIR** — We invited to appear before us today both the Lord Mayor of Melbourne and the CEO of the Melbourne City Council. Both declined, which I must say surprised me significantly, given this is an issue that is impacting their city — our city — enormously. But they obviously had something else on, something more important to do — lunch maybe, I do not know.

**Mr JENSEN** — TGIFs.

**The CHAIR** — It may have been a range of things. I am just wondering what level of cooperation and support you have had from the Melbourne City Council in your experience of recent times in trying to get a fair go on this.

**Mr JENSEN** — We are actually in the Port Melbourne area.

**The CHAIR** — You are in Port Phillip?

**Mr JENSEN** — Yes, so we are outside that area. We do a lot of work with them just on the general development out there, but we are actually outside the scope. So in all fairness to the Lord Mayor, not talking to us would be acceptable, I guess. It would be nice if we had more liaison, but nevertheless.

**The CHAIR** — Yes, we would certainly agree with that as well. We were very much looking forward to hearing from Melbourne City Council, because it is not just St Kilda Road that we are examining today but the whole range of issues in the CBD. It is extremely disappointing that the Lord Mayor and the CEO decided that they had other things to do.

This consultation meeting that 200 people attended, where you were not allowed to ask questions —

**Mr JENSEN** — Correct.

**The CHAIR** — This has me intrigued — very much so. Was that a one-off or do you feel that you have been led by the nose in the consultation process rather than actually being part of an open discussion?

**Mr JENSEN** — There have been a number of set-ups where we could go and talk to people. This one was particularly set up, where we were going to get a presentation. A lot of the others we have just gone along to information evenings and they have been available. All the people have been there and it was a matter of asking questions, but this was particularly set up where we were going to get presentations from Metro rail. Mr Tonkin delivered that. Yarra Trams were also present that night to give us an explanation about what was going to happen with the number 8 tram and so on. It got a little bit testy, to be quite honest, when people could not ask questions. One gentleman from one of the areas jumped up on a chair and made a pretty bold statement about what was going on.

This is the disappointing part because when you have people there all people want to hear is what is happening, and to ask a question, if you cannot answer it — I have been asked lots of questions in my life where I have said, 'I'll have to take that on notice and come back to you'. That is all we want. That particular night there were

200 people there who were all interested — they turned up and they were pretty sensible residents from right around the community — and just to be closed down really left people with a poor opinion of the Metro process. It was unfair, but they created that for themselves.

**The CHAIR** — And has that consultation process improved any since then?

**Mr JENSEN** — The consultation now — they spoke about this one. The committees have been set up with small groups, but from there we have to then disseminate the information. Maybe that is a pretty good way going forward, because they are getting it. I would say that the new structure that Mr Tattersall spoke about does look as though it will be good. Our process will start in about November, and I think it has potential to be very good. But we have been going along to another committee, the G12, and again it has not been as smooth a series of meetings as it could be.

**The CHAIR** — Could you tell me about the G12? Because I am not familiar with it.

**Mr JENSEN** — G12 is outside the scope of today for me, because we are on Save St Kilda Road, but G12 is all of the buildings around the Domain area. We meet every second Monday to look at all the issues in the area — not only Metro rail but also a lot of the development in the area.

Another point that is very important is that a lot of the work that was conducted was because they thought of this as a commercial area. It is not. It is a residential area. The police headquarters, for example, have been sold to be commercial. The Royce Hotel is on the market to be commercial at the moment. Since the start of this project 20 buildings have gone from being commercial to residential since the planning process started, so what we are actually looking at now is outdated information. The G12 is looking at the interests of all of this group. We call it the G12+. It is looking at all the interests and the issues that are associated with the development that is going on in the area — the roads, et cetera.

**The CHAIR** — Are others involved in the G12 concerned about the impact of this project?

**Mr JENSEN** — Absolutely. A number of letters have been written to other areas along the same lines around the issues. There is a lot of work going on out of that committee around certainly the movements of trucks from the sludge farm out to Sunbury and places like that.

**The CHAIR** — We out in Sunbury are delighted to hear that.

**Mr JENSEN** — I bet you are.

**The CHAIR** — I look forward to following that up in the not-too-distant future.

**Mr JENSEN** — As I say, there are 280 trucks a day, and if you come down Park Street now, with the trams going down there and the super-stop being created it is very difficult. We had discussions with the fire brigade, for example. Getting the fire brigade into the areas there now if we had a major problem is a real issue. The fire trucks used to come up Park Street to Domain to go across into South Yarra and those sorts of areas. They cannot go there now, so they have a whole new tracking system that they have had to put in place. But they found out — again, very much at the last moment — from what the station commander down there told me on my visit.

**The CHAIR** — If you think Park Street is bad, you should see Sunbury Road just at the minute.

**Ms HARTLAND** — My sense is that you think the project is a reasonable one long-term because it is delivering infrastructure, but it is how it is being done and how it has been communicated to you.

**Mr JENSEN** — Principally, that is exactly right. There can be no doubt that this is vital, and in reality it should probably have been started 25 years ago.

**Ms HARTLAND** — When you talk about the meeting, was this the kind of situation where it was not actually a public meeting but you were gathered and there were a whole lot of maps on the wall and individuals to speak to you? It is a standard process. I think it is terrible, having gone through it a number of times myself. I live in Footscray. We had regional rail, and that is exactly how they did it. We did not oppose the project, but

they treated residents quite badly. What would you want the project to be doing? What kind of consultation do you want — or information? It is probably past consultation; it is actually the information.

**Mr JENSEN** — It is information now. What is that classic saying? There comes a time in every project when you shoot the engineer and get on with the job. The engineer has been shot, and we are on with the job now. I think that we have to know what is going on. This is where I think that the website needs a more modern approach in having information that is simple and that will tell us the program for the next week — road closures, but not finding out via a tweet that in two hours time a road is going to close. We have had it down to that level. We just need that sort of information coming out. There is no reason for Metro rail to hide from us. You can have robust discussion, but you can still be pretty good mates. I have certainly had robust discussion with Mr Tonkin, and we can still say hello to each other and talk to each other. Not everybody supports the Swans, as I do, but I still talk to them.

**Ms HARTLAND** — So with the community liaison committees sometimes they work really well; sometimes they are a bit of a disaster. Would you see that that is a reasonable way to go so long as then the information is being sent and got really quickly to people?

**Mr JENSEN** — Yes, I think so — through these new committees and getting the information out there. If the committees that we have set up now in these areas are informed as well, they have got the ability to disperse the information as well. Again, it is getting the website to be friendly. Let us face it, it is the way of life today. Everybody can look at their phones.

**Ms WANE** — Can I just say that several requests were made at former smaller committee meetings that Metro set up to have a dedicated section on their website in relation to the works in Domain, and they have consistently refused to do that —

**Ms HARTLAND** — What was their rationale?

**Ms WANE** — In terms of: ‘Tomorrow we are going to close Albert Road’. Could you please have told us that last week instead? Or do not tell us this morning. There was one incident where they had a community information session on the closure of Albert Road before they closed it to dig the sewer. It was communicated to the community two or three weeks out, and then one afternoon — I think it was a Wednesday or a Thursday — they put up on their website and emailed a few people to say, ‘Sorry, we got the date wrong. It is today starting at 4 o’clock’. They did that at 3 o’clock.

**The CHAIR** — They did not change the date?

**Ms WANE** — No, they said, ‘We’ll have another session in three weeks time’, but the works were starting a few days after that. So they were going to have a session to tell us about it after they had closed Albert Road and barricaded the park. That is the general —

**Mr JENSEN** — That is the disappointment.

**Ms WANE** — just-in-time information that comes to us.

**Ms HARTLAND** — I have been through quite a few projects, both as an MP and as a local resident, and a range of governments and nobody ever seems to quite get it right. Do you think one of the things that this committee should be looking at is presenting to government, ‘This is a standard tick box way that you should tell people about projects’? We cannot legislate, but it could become custom and practice that everybody does it in this way. That would ease some of the angst.

**Mr JENSEN** — Agreed. I think that is a good way, because we have a duty of care to keep our people informed that there are other issues. There is legislation and we can be over-legislated, but there is a responsibility really to keep people informed, particularly when we have got services involved here. There are businesses involved in things like that. People have to have that to get it done. There is no reason to be scared or to hide from people and not tell them what is going on.

**Ms HARTLAND** — With your G12, who formed that? How was that formed?

**Mr JENSEN** — Marilyn Wane was very much part of it as one of the conveners of it. Do you want to speak to that?

**Ms WANE** — It came about as a result of the C107 planning thing that went through last year. All of the buildings along St Kilda Road got together because they were talking about ridiculous heights and very intense developments. So it was formed in order to lobby council and government, and as a result it became involved in all the other issues.

**Mr JENSEN** — It was the 60-metre rule and a lot of those rules that we dealt with. We were dealing with Port Melbourne fairly effectively. If I may say, the committee has done extremely well with the council. I know it is outside the discussion today, but the council down there has actually really taken it on board and worked very closely with us, which has been great.

**Ms HARTLAND** — So you are in-between two councils. You are in-between Port Philip and the City of Melbourne.

**Ms WANE** — Yes, the City of Melbourne.

**Mr JENSEN** — If you cross the road the other way, you start to go into Prahran — or Stonnington, rather. We are at the crossroads.

**Ms HARTLAND** — Yes, I know what you mean.

**Mr GEPP** — Thanks for coming along today. The G12: can you just give me a bit more information about it? Who precisely is on it, who constituted it and how long has it been in operation?

**Ms WANE** — It started as a group of 12 buildings all along St Kilda Road, and now I think the membership is almost 20 buildings.

**Mr GEPP** — I think there is already a copyright on the G20!

**Mr JENSEN** — Yes, we cannot use that.

**Ms WANE** — The G12 has been invited to put two representatives on the new Cross Yarra Partnership committee, and they have done that. So basically it is just a group of interested residents. Mainly it is made up of the chairmen of each building.

**Ms WANE** — Yes.

**Mr JENSEN** — We have got some chairwomen. Let us be honest; the committee is pretty balanced.

**Ms WANE** — Yes, they have the same concerns as us.

**Mr GEPP** — So it is mainly residents?

**Ms WANE** — It is all residents.

**Mr JENSEN** — All residents.

**Mr GEPP** — Can any resident join?

**Ms WANE** — It is by invitation. We ask for one rep from each building. We do not have a public forum. It is just a get-together on the things that are happening in the area, and we compare notes and lobby accordingly.

**Mr JENSEN** — It is 1½ hours every second Monday. It starts at about 5.00 and finishes at 6.30. It is a fairly tight agenda. It really is more pitched towards the development in the area, but of course this has had a major impact so there has been a lot of discussion about it.

**Mr GEPP** — Is it supported by any politicians?

**Ms WANE** — Not really. It is a private group looking after the interests of the residents.



**Mr GEPP** — This meeting that you talked about earlier, Mr Jensen — the 200 people with questions — when was that held?

**Ms WANE** — It was on 30 November.

**Mr JENSEN** — November last year.

**Mr GEPP** — I ask the question because you talked about the trees and the planning process et cetera and the National Trust coming out on this particular project. On their website they talk about the fact that there was a process where there was some public plans made available, I think, back in May and through to July last year. As part of the planning process there were environment effects statements that were prepared, distributed and made publicly available. Then there was an inquiry and an advisory committee appointed which held public hearings from August to October last year. Then there was a report that was produced by the planning minister, and he ultimately released his assessment under the Environment Effects Act after what seemed to be a fairly lengthy seven-month process. But I thought your earlier evidence was that there was a lack of engagement up until that point.

**Mr JENSEN** — That is true — with us. There is some work going through. There is a very separate group of people that are looking at some of those issues — Barry Jones and a group of people are very active in that. They are looking at it more as a heritage-saving issue. We have gone down the path of looking at the trees in relation to our own area. They were looking a bit broader, I think, in the picture as well of what we wanted. There is some work being considered also from where the old South African monument was as to whether there can be development down that way too. There is quite a lot of work — you are quite correct, Mr Gepp — that has gone on in respect of that, but the work that we are looking at has been more about the trees in our own area. That is where Save St Kilda Road came about — because of the number of trees that were going to actually be taken out as part of this construction.

**Ms WANE** — Can I just add to that? In regard to the EES process, there was a series of community engagements that took place, but there was still thousands of people living in that area that were completely unaware of it. They had not been notified. They had probably 20 to 30 people turn up to each session. When we formed Save St Kilda Road we had our first public event on 1 September last year, and that is when we started yelling from the rooftops about the loss of trees and how many would be going. There were thousands of people who lived around that area who had no idea. So once again the communication into the community was very, very lax. People were not getting the message.

**Mr GEPP** — How would you propose that that communication occur?

**Ms WANE** — I think they probably need to be sending them to every property owner and making sure their distribution channels into every property are actually working, because every time there is a notice we do a survey on who has got it and who has not. Out of 10 buildings, three might have got it and the rest do not. Some people get emails while some people do not, even though they are signed up. It just seems that it is a very sloppy process.

**Mr GEPP** — Just on the issue of the trees, again, the National Trust say on their website that that was one of the considerable issues for them. They particularly raised the issue of 81 trees in Tom's Block, but through the process I talked about earlier those concerns had been addressed to the point where the National Trust, relying upon their own significant tree expert committee — they have their own tree expert committee — have come out and supported the project and supported the plans that are in place today.

**Mr JENSEN** — Yes. One of the issues is about the trees that are going to replace the trees that go. There is a plan, but a question will come back as to whether those sorts of trees will ever go back in there and what kind of trees will go back in, whether they are gum trees or something else and whether they can be planted back in the soil at the levels, given it is a shallow construction. So there are a number of issues around that going forward. Also I think that you cannot be emotionally attached to some of these trees because some of these trees have got a life anyhow. I think if you go and look at their work, they took some of that into consideration that some of the trees would naturally come out within the time frame, and they took a lot of that work in. So when you go deeper into their work, they are experts. They had experts on the trees and they took some of that into consideration, so there is a part of that that is in there as well.

**Mr GEPP** — Can I talk a little bit about this communication issue? While you were giving your earlier evidence, I jumped onto the Metro Tunnel website. It seems to have a very comprehensive amount of information on it, both current but also projected. It is talking about, for example, St Kilda Road. From 25 September until mid-October it is reduced to one lane, then it talks about from mid-October until early 2018 St Kilda Road will operate as two traffic lanes, then from early 2018 — and so it goes on. It has got information for all of the major arterial roads. You raise the issue of services. It talks about changes to trams and changes to local bus services — public transport. It gives information for pedestrians and cyclists. What other information are you —

**Mr JENSEN** — There is a tremendous amount of information on there. What we are looking at is how you can simplify it down. A lot of that information is quite broad and goes a longer part across the project. I think that when you come into it what would be good is to have a very —

**Mr GEPP** — Can I just stop you there?

**Mr JENSEN** — Certainly.

**Mr GEPP** — Let us talk about road changes for St Kilda Road. I would not suggest that this is broad or comprehensive. It says:

From 25 September, St Kilda Road will intermittently be reduced to one lane in the city-bound direction between Kings Way ... and Park Street ...

That seems pretty succinct to me.

**Mr JENSEN** — It is.

**Mr GEPP** — It gives you time frames and tells you what is going to happen. What less are you wanting?

**Ms WANE** — Can I just give you an example? This morning —

**Mr GEPP** — In terms of what I have just read out, what is unacceptable to you in the context of your evidence?

**Mr JENSEN** — There is nothing unacceptable about that. This is the interesting point.

**Ms WANE** — Park Street has been partly closed for many weeks. It has been opened for several days now. This morning I drove out of Wells Street, tried to go left, and Park Street is closed. We have had no notification. This is our exit from our car parks, which gets us to the rest of town, and they have closed the road and not advised us.

**Mr JENSEN** — It needs to be dynamic. That has got a lot of really good information; there is no question about that. That is not in question. What I am looking for is if I dive on there straightaway now, it could tell me that there is a problem in Park Street — there are ways. Given the amount of disruption that is going on in some of the areas, it could be more dynamic — that when a road does close down, something can come onto there so that we know it. This is the kind of thing where people do get caught out right now. We know that all of this disruption is going to go on for eight years. They are putting information about that nature onto there. It could be clearer on just a front page: what is the situation now. For example, this morning —

**Mr GEPP** — So you want it in real time?

**Mr JENSEN** — Moving more to real time. For example, this morning there were massive winds in Sydney. Anybody that wanted to go to Sydney today really could not fly, could not go up there, because the airport is virtually closed — another good reason for Melbourne. We are fortunate with a great airport here. But getting into real time, when people are going to do things, you could get onto there and just look at it: 'Don't go this way, don't do that'. There are lots of terrific apps around that are so simple today that you can use. That is the longer term generic or strategic news. We need the actual tactical news. We want to bring it into those terms.

**Mr GEPP** — I am just trying to establish something there, because I was getting the impression earlier that there was a dearth of information. But in fact that is not the case; there is a lot of information.

**Mr JENSEN** — Too much information in some ways. If you went down that path —

**Mr GEPP** — Well, you either want more or you do not want more. I am confused.

**Ms WANE** — Concise, clear.

**Mr JENSEN** — Can I explain myself on that?

**Mr GEPP** — I mean, if we are going to suggest to MMRA that they come up with a different form of communication, you have got to be clear about whether you want more or less.

**Mr JENSEN** — There is a lot of information on the website, which is terrific because it goes into a lot, but what you need is the good tactical information now — that when people just go to the site they do not have to navigate around to find it. It would be great if you could go onto the front page and there would be what is the situation right now. We know the roads are going to be closed right through until a certain point. Generally around the school holidays a lot of extra work goes on because the kids are not going to school. We know they are the times when we are going to be down to one lane, as we were last school holidays. But what is actually happening today? What if they have had to close it down to zero lanes? That happened the other day because things happen in a project. It is reality, and we have got to work with reality. But just having that information so that if somebody is going to move somewhere or do something, you know St Kilda Road is now closed and could possibly be closed until 2 o'clock. That is the sort of tactical information that we are really looking for. That is the depth that you want.

**Mr GEPP** — So we have got the broad information up on the website but what you are looking for is —

**Mr JENSEN** — We want to get more into the real time.

**Mr GEPP** — All right. Because it does talk about that there are going to be intermittent road closures, and it tells you about the adjoining streets from 15 September to 23 September. If I am correct, what you are asking for is something that goes out to residents or that residents can look up to see that in fact the intermittent closure will be between 11.00 a.m. and 3.00 p.m.

**Mr JENSEN** — Right now, if I was heading back up St Kilda Road — and we all virtually carry these things today, pests as they are — I can go in there, as you say, and look it up. I know that until the middle of the month or the middle of November there are going to be all of these closures. That is fine, but what is happening now? That is what we are really looking at. That is when we come into that level of information.

**Mr GEPP** — So we just need a bit more precise, real-time information.

**Mr JENSEN** — Real time. Timely.

**Mr GEPP** — There is no lack of information out there. There is a lot of information out there.

**Mr JENSEN** — There is no lack of information about the long-term project in lots of these areas.

**Mr GEPP** — But I have just talked about there being something up here which tells me about an intermittent road closure between 15 September and 23 September.

**Mr JENSEN** — Intermittent. Is it closed or is it open? That is the issue.

**Mr GEPP** — Yes, I take your point. What you want to understand on a given day is what that word 'intermittent' means.

**Mr JENSEN** — Correct.

**Mr GEPP** — But that is not bad information for you to know that within that eight-day period there are going to be some road closures. You want to drill down a little bit more; I get that.

**Mr JENSEN** — I would not say no to what you have said. I acknowledge that and accept that, and you are absolutely spot on, but when you get into 'intermittent', that is where it would be nice to know that if I am about

to set off on a journey, am I going to get caught for 2 hours on St Kilda Road or do I duck down somewhere else? I cannot go Punt Road.

**Mr GEPP** — Okay. I am clear about what you are seeking. Thank you.

**Ms HARTLAND** — Can I just add to that, though, about the realms of flexibility? I am just looking at the website too, and as someone who is renowned for not being very IT savvy, I have to say that I can find the information very quickly — but I am looking at Park Street. You would be asking that everybody knows to check this between 6.00 and 8.00 in the morning, and that would tell them the schedule for the day, roughly.

**Mr JENSEN** — No, you could look at it now.

**Ms HARTLAND** — It would not be precise, but it would be between these 4 hours.

**Mr JENSEN** — For example, they need to close the road this afternoon. Say they hit a water main and they need to close the road. Something like that should not happen, but it is probable that something will happen. If it goes straight onto the site and I am now about to head back out towards Prahran, I could look at that and ask, ‘Will I go home and try and get a tram down here, or will I duck off and get a tram and go the back way?’. I am a public transport user, so I would like to know.

**Mr GEPP** — But we also understand that as much as we try — and you would know this from the aviation industry — it only takes one small thing to go wrong —

**Mr JENSEN** — Absolutely.

**Mr GEPP** — and chaos ensues further down the track. It is subject to the vagaries of machinery, people, weather — you know, all of those things.

**Mr JENSEN** — An 8-minute delay on your first flight in the day — just for what it is worth — can cost you, by the end of the day, a 220-minute delay on that service associated, to give you a sense of just how delay expands. You know that when you drive on the road there can be an accident at 7 o’clock in the morning — lots of studies have been done on it — and at 3 o’clock in the afternoon everyone is still slowing down where the accident was because that is what the traffic did earlier. Those are the facts of movement. Delays do cause ongoing issues and are consequential.

**Ms HARTLAND** — I am just thinking about this issue out loud. The emergency services Facebook pages and websites could have someone dedicated in there who is updating them all the time. Again, it is that issue around what is required for any project rather than just this project, so that we set a standard.

**Mr GEPP** — I am sure that there is the prospect of more real-time information.

**Ms HARTLAND** — Because of technology becoming so much better.

**Mr JENSEN** — With the great technology and everything we have got today, we cannot keep up with it. It has probably changed since we sat down.

**The CHAIR** — I would put money on it.

**Ms HARTLAND** — It will never be perfect, but a bit more information would be helpful.

**Mr JENSEN** — Correct.

**The CHAIR** — Thank you so much for coming in today. We do appreciate it enormously. You will receive a transcript from Hansard in the not-too-distant future, not that you will need to change a single word, but if you were to, just let us know and we will be very happy to do that. Thank you very much.

**Mr JENSEN** — Chair and members, we really do appreciate the opportunity today. Thank you very much.

**Witnesses withdrew.**