C O R R E C T E D V E R S I O N

STANDING COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT AND PLANNING

REFERENCES COMMITTEE

Subcommittee

Inquiry into environmental design and public health

Melbourne — 6 September 2011

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Mr. M. Hopkins, executive director, policy and communications division,

Ms F. Calvert, director, strategy and resource efficiency, policy branch, Department of Transport.

The CHAIR — Welcome. I am sure you have appeared in public hearings before. I am obliged to advise you that you are covered by parliamentary privilege, but the same comments you make outside this hearing are not covered by parliamentary privilege. There will be a transcript provided to you in about a week to check, and if there are issues to pursue, please contact Keir Delaney. For the record, I ask you to provide your names, the organisation you represent and its address so that if there is correspondence to follow up, we have got those details on record. After that, please go straight into your presentation and allow maximum time for us to ask questions so that we can have some genuine interaction on the key issues.

Mr HOPKINS — Michael Hopkins, executive director, policy and communications, Department of Transport, Level 15, 121 Exhibition Street, Melbourne.

Ms CALVERT — Fiona Calvert, director, strategy and resource efficiency policy, policy and communications division, Department of Transport, Level 15, 121 Exhibition Street, Melbourne.

Mr PEARCE — Robert Pearce, deputy general counsel, commercial branch, DOT legal division, Department of Transport, Level 15, 121 Exhibition Street, Melbourne.

Mr HOPKINS — Thank you for the opportunity to present. Given the committee's focus on environmental design and public health, our focus today will very much be on active transport, walking and cycling, the trends that are happening and what are some of the barriers to lifting levels of walking and cycling.

I will present you with a quick run-through of some of the stats and some of the trends in walking and cycling, talking about some of the reasons that those things are happening, and then Rob will talk about governance and the legislative framework that covers walking and cycling.

Overheads shown.

Mr HOPKINS — That is the overview, and I think you have a copy of this. The first few slides will present a picture of the number of short trips that are taken in Victoria and the sort of trips that are amenable to transfer — shifting to walking and cycling. The majority of trips are relatively short, with 55 per cent of all trips being less than 5 kilometres and 74 per cent of trips being less than 10 kilometres, and that goes across most trip categories, whether it is for shopping, work and so on.

Mrs PEULICH — Plus all the transport modes.

Mr HOPKINS — That is all transport modes, including walking, cycling, public transport and motor vehicles — so yes, across all modes. I will break that down a little bit, because some of the car numbers in particular are quite interesting.

Trip lengths, not surprisingly, tend to be further the further out you go. There is a fairly strong trend there. These are trips for purposes other than work. These are your shopping and educational trips. As you can see, the longest trips for general purposes other than work are about 4.8 kilometres and the median is about 3.2 kilometres for a shopping trip and an education trip, but there is a fairly clear trend there. The further you are from central Melbourne, the longer those trips are going to be to a factor of 300 per cent between Melbourne and the Mornington Peninsula.

You see the same trend for work trips, only work trips tend to be significantly longer. I think the median for non-work trips is about 3.2 kilometres while the median for work trips is about 14 kilometres, but there is the same spatial distribution and the same impact of much lower densities the further you get from the city. There are longer travel times, longer travel distances to jobs, and particularly not just where people are living, but the absence of jobs in outer Melbourne municipalities, because that is a strong driver of long-distance travel from outside.

The median distance for private motor vehicle trips is about 5 kilometres. What we are trying to display here is that the average walking trip is about 700 metres, a bicycle trip is about 3 kilometres and vehicle trips are in the order of about 5 kilometres. What that says, given that motor vehicle trips make up more than 70 per cent of the total trips and the average trip is about 5.4 kilometres, is that there is a lot of driving that could be substituted by walking and cycling.

Mrs PEULICH — And it could be multiple trips in a single day?

Mr HOPKINS — It can be multiple trips. The average Victorian makes about 3.8 trips a day. That number has not changed much over the past 30 years or so, and we do not expect to see that change very much in the future either. How it is split between those is the potential to see change. What you see here are some of the trends. It is a little bit hard to see the yellow in the middle, which is public transport, but clearly education trips are the trips that involve the least car travel, the most — —

Mr SCHEFFER — Sorry, I cannot read that. What is the text along the bottom?

Mr HOPKINS — Each of these is clustered, so in each of the clusters there are four bands — inner Melbourne, middle suburbs, outer Melbourne, and regional and regional centres. The one on the left is work trips, then shopping trips, education trips, social and recreational, other, and what we call non-home-based trips because most of the trips we cover start at home or end at home. There is a group of work-related travel that usually sits in the middle. I hope you can see the colours there, but what this shows is that education trips, particularly, attract the largest numbers of walking and cycling trips. It is less so for shopping trips — —

Mr SCHEFFER — Is that because it is school?

Mr HOPKINS — That is partly because of school, but I will come to that. That is somewhat of a deceptive aggregate because there is a big difference between primary school children and others. I think that is the next slide, but what you see here is that for shopping, other and recreational purposes car is king, and it is quite hard to shake that. However, there is another trend, if you can see it in the left-hand bars in each of those, that again there is a fairly strong preponderance of walking, cycling and public transport in inner Melbourne, and the further you get out towards the regions, public transport, walking and cycling tends to drop off.

What I was saying about public transport and walking being very much for education trips — dominating for education trips — is that we need to understand that there is quite a big difference there between primary school age kids and secondary and tertiary students. More than two-thirds of primary school students are driven to school. That has changed quite significantly over the past 30 or 40 years.

Mrs PEULICH — Is that because of working mothers?

Mr HOPKINS — There are a couple of things that we suspect sit behind that. It is quite hard to disaggregate. We have done some work with VicHealth to try to get behind this. When you ask people they will generally talk about things like stranger danger and fear of children's interaction with the road network. When you push a little bit deeper and you look at some of the overall trends, changing workforce participation has had a fairly significant impact on our travel patterns over the past 40 years more generally, so what you are seeing is a lot more complexity in travel and a lot more trip chains — for example, dropping the kids off on the way to work, stopping at the university on the way home and those sorts of things. We have a suspicion, and it is no more than that because it is a little bit hard to test, that when you start getting into those trip chains, it is much easier to stay in the car. What we do not know, though, is how inflexible the connection is between, say, dropping the child at school and a working life — for example, if you have to get to work by 9 o'clock, you need to drop the kids off by so and so time, and that makes it hard to do. We definitely think workforce participation is an underlying trend, but when you ask people they will talk about fear and safety concerns.

The CHAIR — Just on that, for obvious reasons I am interested in the Geelong statistics. In relation to that 71 per cent with primary school students in particular, when you think of the number of primary schools and the location of people's homes in relation to those primary schools, which is something that is clearly visual in your mind, that seems extraordinarily high. It is not necessarily dropping off your child at a primary school and then going another five suburbs to your workplace.

Mr HOPKINS — No. Some of those trips will be short. I do not want to make too much of the trip chaining here, because we do know that about 50 per cent of those car trips are literally taking the child to school and then returning to home, so there is still a large proportion of those.

The CHAIR — That tells a story in itself, too.

Mrs PEULICH — There could also be a component that the child is dropped off to the nearest safe point to a school, so that could go part of the way towards explaining it.

Mr HOPKINS — What you see here is, if you like, the dominant mode. When we measure these things we measure the journey from beginning to end, but we look at the dominant mode that people took. In some of these cases there will be a short walking trip that is followed by a public transport trip, or vice versa, or a child being dropped at a safe point. But there is a fairly clear difference here between the primary, secondary and tertiary levels.

These are some of the macro trends. If you look back over the past 40 years or so, almost half the rate of children are walking to school. Distance is a strong predictor here, and if you do not have these slides large enough, we are happy to provide them in a form in which you can read them. Again this shows the trends across all trips, comparing metro Melbourne, Melbourne as a whole and the regional centres. The car is obviously dominant in regional Victoria, with public transport, and walking and cycling, playing a much stronger role towards the centre. Really what this says is that a walking trip obviously begins with an origin and a destination, but it depends on those two things being relatively close together, the environment between them, the walking environment, and whether you have somewhere pleasant that offers a pleasant experience to walk through.

Mrs PEULICH — Just before you move away from that, obviously the popularity of cycling is more relevant to the inner metro suburbs — —

Mr HOPKINS — Yes.

Mrs PEULICH — Where there is a distance, but in addition to that, to what extent is the cost of parking in the CBD a driver of people walking or cycling when they live close by?

Mr HOPKINS — We have never done any analysis of the relationship between parking costs and cycling. I suspect between walking there is not going to be a strong correlation. I do have a later slide that talks about some market research we have done. It talks about why people have stopped driving, and that is probably useful.

Mr SCHEFFER — When you are talking about a regional centre there, you are talking about Ballarat, Bendigo and Geelong, obviously.

Mr HOPKINS — The regional centres that are covered by the Victorian Integrated Survey of Transport and Activity (VISTA) are Geelong, Bendigo, Ballarat and Shepparton.

Ms TIERNEY — With those regional centre statistics, is that public transport within that regional centre or does it also include those who commute to and work in Melbourne?

Mr HOPKINS — No, it is purely public transport and walking trips within the regional centre.

Mr SCHEFFER — So it is only looking at those broadly on the western side of Victoria.

Mr HOPKINS — In that 100-kilometre arc or that 90-minute arc. It covers about 90 per cent of Victoria's population.

We do know that people who use public transport are more likely to get a component of their daily physical activity. In fact this is demonstrating journeys to work by public transport, and you can see the pronounced spatial disparity across Melbourne. There are a couple of pieces of data that support the link between public transport and active transport, and one is a bit of work that came out of the States that I think is referenced at the back of this. It shows that a much higher proportion of people using public transport are more likely to have met their daily requirement of physical activity.

The second is our own analysis of VISTA, and by separating the public transport trips and the walking trips we know that the people who take public transport are, on average, likely to have spent 30 minutes or more a day walking. We are now at the point where we can actually cost that particular health benefit into the way we cost transport projects. A public transport project has a small benefit; proportionally it is a very small benefit that literally comes from people walking the 800 metres or however far to their transport service.

Mrs PEULICH — So safety on public transport and car parking at railway stations is going to be crucial for everyone to be able to avail themselves of that opportunity.

Mr HOPKINS — Car parking at railway stations potentially pushes the other way in the sense that you are not getting the health benefit from driving to the train station.

I am sure the committee will be aware of the trends that have been happening in public transport over the past few years. There has been a fairly significant shift. This is total public transport boardings. We are now back at the point we were at after the war at the time of great growth.

I will point out to you some of the yellow bars there that are generally global or local events that we would have expected to result in a drop in public transport patronage. As you can see with the GFC, we are not seeing the same level of drop-off that you might have expected 20 or 30 years ago. If you have a look at the recession from the early 1990s, there is quite a marked dip in boardings of about 30 million boardings a year. You do not see that in 2008 or 2009.

It is interesting to correlate this with the previous chart about the number of people who use public transport. If you correlate that with urban density, as you can see there is a fairly strong direct relationship. The denser the area, the easier it is to provide and access public transport because the stops will be generally closer together.

There are quite significant spatial differences between the rates of car ownership. What this shows is car ownership across the Melbourne statistical district. The areas in red have ratios of car ownership greater than one per adult resident. Given that car travel, whether as a passenger or a driver, accounts for about 77 per cent, you begin to see that there is quite a strong story and that that 77 per cent is well weighted towards the outer metropolitan areas. Within inner areas there are lower rates of car ownership and greater rates of public transport use.

If you take into account the distances travelled in outer Melbourne, access to public transport and different rates of walking and cycling across inner and outer Melbourne, you can actually put all that together and get a picture of the greenhouse gas emissions that you are getting from transport across Melbourne. This is from 2006. We are in the process of updating this bit of analysis at the moment, but what you see is that there are some fairly strong trends towards very greenhouse-intensive transport in outer Melbourne, while in inner Melbourne the shorter distances to travel, greater walking and cycling rates and greater access to public transport all result in significantly less in the way of CO_2 and CO_2-equivalent emissions.

I will touch briefly on the potential to increase active transport. The likelihood that people will walk short trips of up to 1 kilometre, even if these trips are less than 1 kilometre, varies significantly across the metropolitan area and across the state more broadly. We are talking about trips that are walkable by a large majority of the community. We showed before that the average walking trip is 300 metres or 400 metres, but for all of these trips below 1 kilometre you are still seeing quite a spatial disparity. Part of this is explained by the fact that in inner Melbourne origins and destinations are closer together — you do not have to walk as far to get to the shop or wherever. But we think there are some clear opportunities to increase rates of walking and cycling, particularly in regional centres and in the outer metropolitan areas.

One of the things that is driving that average trip length being quite short, and I mentioned before that the average car trip is less than 5 kilometres, is that most people actually work either in the local government area in which they live or in an adjacent one. If you look at the far left-hand side, 95 per cent of people in Stonnington are working either in Stonnington or in a neighbouring municipality. That drops off fairly quickly after Moreland in Melbourne because you have got those inner city areas that are one LGA away from the CBD, so that is a distorting factor there. But even in Nillumbik, for example, you have 40 per cent of people working either in Nillumbik or in the adjacent areas of Banyule or Whittlesea.

Here we show the number of people who walk and cycle to public transport — excuse me if the numbers are a little small. If we talk about access to train stations, at the moment we have got 40 per cent of people driving and 90 per cent of those people are driving 9 kilometres or less, whereas we have got almost 60 per cent of people walking to their train stations. The vast majority, or 90 per cent, of people walking those trips are walking 1.8 kilometres or less. If we take it back to the 25th percentile, which is about the average walking trip, you will see an awful lot of people walking to stations but it tends to drop off fairly quickly as the distances get longer. Not surprisingly people are walking much shorter distances to tram stops as there are a greater number of tram stops. There are similar numbers for buses although, given the role of buses particularly in outer

suburban Melbourne as a collector service, you are seeing people walking a lot further to a bus stop than they would to a tram stop.

The question was asked before about whether parking costs were a driver of people switching to cycling. What we are showing here is five years of data from Metlink, and this is asking people who have reduced their amount of driving in the last 12 months what was the motivation. You can see that very early on, from 2006, for the first couple of years petrol prices were a very strong driver of getting people to reduce the amount of driving. 'Changed jobs' is one of those things that will always drive a degree of change — it sits in the background. But it is interesting to look at some numbers in relation to parking costs. While quite a significant thing in 2006, it has been explaining about 7 per cent of reduced travel. It is interesting to look at 'environmental concerns' and 'health and fitness', given the opportunities for health and fitness in active transport. The general trend is that people who are more concerned about health and fitness will take up walking and cycling and, while I am speaking in generalities here, the people who register 'environmental concerns' are more likely to switch to public transport where it is available.

I want to give you plenty of time for questions, so I will quickly race through these slides. Accident rates in walking peaked in 2007 and have been declining ever since. I will show you some statistics about this, but if we map this against the number of people walking, we are seeing a reduced risk when it is compared to exposure.

Mr SCHEFFER — What is the story there? You would expect that to be consistent, would you not? Why do accidents when people are walking shift? From 641 in 2005 and then it goes up by one-third to 800 over two years? That is an awfully steep increase.

Mr HOPKINS — That is hard to explain for that period.

Mr SCHEFFER — To what do you attribute that?

Mrs PEULICH — How do you attribute more accidents to pedestrians?

The CHAIR — Yes.

Mrs PEULICH — Just by the sheer numbers. You have a particular number of accidents per thousand people and if you have got more people on the road, you will have an increase in statistics.

Mr SCHEFFER — Yes, but by that much?

Mrs PEULICH — It depends on how many people are walking.

Mr HOPKINS — That two-year period is quite an extraordinary leap, and it is not reflected in exposure, which I will talk about.

Ms CALVERT — You might need to have a longer time series, which unfortunately we do not have available, to really understand what might be going on. It may just be an aberrant year.

Mrs PEULICH — It could reflect on how we are managing our traffic and roads.

Mr HOPKINS — In relation to cycling, when you are talking about relatively low numbers, fatalities is not necessarily a useful measure here because there is so much noise. I am sure that VicRoads would agree with this, but cycling is an area in which it is relatively difficult to get accurate data. Where people report incidents to the police or injuries are reported to hospitals we have got good data, but we suspect that a fairly large proportion of small cycling incidents and injuries are not reported.

Mr SCHEFFER — It is better to go on a train late at night than walk?

The CHAIR — Or than cycling?

Mr ELSBURY — Your problem is when you are walking home from the train station; that is where the real problem is.

Mrs PEULICH — Or from the railway car park.

Mr SCHEFFER — My point is that, in relation to the much-touted danger of public transport, it is all relative.

Mr HOPKINS — In order to do that comparison, the part that is not mentioned here is exposure. The number of incidents on public transport needs to be balanced against roughly 500 million trips a year, while the number of walking trips will be significantly larger than that. As an exposure risk it would be an interesting question.

I talked a little bit before about fear of strangers and about safety concerns that parents have, and you can see here from the VicHealth numbers that this is not just about walking to school. This is a broader social issue about people having confidence about their children in local areas. Some similar work was done to really understand some of the drivers behind cycling. Unsafe conditions, speed and volume of traffic and a lack of trails are the major reasons people indicate for cycling; infrastructure is much more of an issue for cycling than it is for walking. I will not refer to these, but there is some research and references in the packs that the committee might like to look at later.

I will leave you to read this; it does not lend itself to exciting pictures and a brilliant narrative on my part. Here are the trends, and thinking about the issue that was raised before about the period between 2005 and 2007, you do see an increase in walking from 2001. Obviously this is journey-to-work data, so it is limited to trips that were made to work. As people who care about walking and cycling often remind me, journey-to-work data always comes from the census, the census always happens in August and we think the disparity between doing the census in August and February would be about 30 per cent for cycling and a smaller number than that for walking.

Cycling rates are heading north, but like walking it is coming off a reasonably low base. I hasten to add that these are journey-to-work numbers, so they are indicative of the broader picture but we should not consider them to be the broader picture.

Mrs PEULICH — These are the commuters, not the recreational riders?

Mr HOPKINS — Exactly. This slide shows seven key locations where we have been measuring cycling trends: Canning Street in Carlton is one of the big north entrances to the city, Footscray Road, Gardiners Creek trail no. 1, the Main Yarra Trail at Northbank and at Southbank, St Georges Road and the tram 109 trail. On the routes that are generally more commuter trails — St Georges Road, the Yarra trail and Canning Street — there has been a fairly strong growth. Gardiners Creek has had a fair bit of work done on it with the M1 widening, so it is a little bit hard to understand what is going on there. The trend is growth.

Mrs PEULICH — You will be able to tell us later on what the characteristics are of the popular trails that lead to greater usage?

Mr HOPKINS — Most of them depend on catchment destination and the directness of the trail. If you measure the Main Yarra Trail at Northbank, for example, you will get fantastic numbers, as that is where it comes into the city, but if you are further back — living in Heidelberg, for example — you are not going to take the Yarra trail, although you have good access to it, because it is a very circuitous route.

Thinking about the sort of elements that will encourage or discourage walking or cycling, as the previous materials have suggested, infrastructure is particularly important with cycling, much more so than it is for walkers, but community design is more significant for walking. In other words, if I am cycling, what I care about most is what is under the wheels; if I am walking, what I care about more is what is around me — do I feel safe and is this a pleasant environment to walk in? Infrastructure for walking does matter more for children obviously.

The way we are trying to respond in an infrastructure sense is by a series of networks. I am not asking you to read the fine print on this slide. VicRoads is working through a process at the moment of setting up network operating plans for areas, which are essentially about trying to look at a particular area and a particular road network and set a hierarchy for use within that network. What is a preferred public transport route? What is a preferred cycling route? What is a preferred general traffic route?

Sitting on top of that is the principal bicycle network, which is the map on the right of the slide. More recently we have done some work on principal pedestrian networks, particularly around activity centres, where we try to apply a fairly structured methodology to trying to develop pedestrian networks around local centres. We have taken that as far as we can in the state and have passed that over to local government. We are beginning to see some areas where local government is beginning to think about walking networks to support activity districts. Now I might pass over to Rob to talk about the governance and legislation of walking and cycling.

Mr PEARCE — I realise that time is running short, so I might try and get through this quite quickly. We have heard a lot about trends in cycling and walking and also about the sorts of things that need to be considered when designing environments to facilitate and encourage cycling and walking. I would like to briefly talk about issues of governance and legislation relating to cycling and walking and how that relates to decisions that can be made.

Just quickly, this slide is the result of some work that the department had done for it to look at the different range of actors and bodies that are involved in governance for walking. As you can see, there are quite a lot of different bodies involved. It really demonstrates the shared nature of responsibility for various aspects of providing for walking infrastructure and services. You can see that municipal councils and VicRoads are more heavily involved in a broad range of activities. As you move down the list departments and the federal government are more involved in funding and policy. Similarly, for cycling we can see a similar range of bodies that are involved; again municipal councils and VicRoads play a large part in the infrastructure provision for cycling. How do we bring that all together?

One mechanism that we have is the Transport Integration Act 2010. I would like to just quickly give you an overview of that act and how it relates to the issues that we have been discussing today. The Transport Integration Act 2010 sets out an overarching legislative policy framework for transport in Victoria. It sets out what transport is trying to achieve, and it also recognises that transport has broader social, economic and environmental effects and can influence those outcomes. In effect it is a legislative mechanism to try to drive integration across a range of modes and between various bodies that can influence transport outcomes.

I will not go through the framework in detail, but it sets out a framework, a set of objectives and decision-making principles that transport bodies under the legislation are required to have regard to. The key bodies to note that are established under the legislation are the Department of Transport, obviously; VicRoads; and the director of public transport, particularly in the transport space. Cycling and walking are covered under the definition of the transport system, which is a very broad definition.

Turning specifically to elements of the framework that relate to health and the built environment, there are a number of objectives — particularly around transport, land-use integration and safety, health and wellbeing — that relate to how we design our urban forms and how they support active modes of transport. I have just highlighted some specific objectives there.

Just quickly I note that the framework itself was developed after a broad stakeholder engagement process and a lot of the elements around active transport and around transport and land use planning integration responded directly to people saying to us that we need to be considering this in our decision making for transport.

The TIA provides a legislative mechanism to achieve integrated transport and land use outcomes, and one mechanism it provides is for the declaration of interface bodies under the act and the specification of the legislation as interface pieces of legislation. What this interface mechanism does is that bodies which are not necessarily in the transport space are still required to have regard to transport system objectives and decision-making principles in carrying out their own functions and powers under their own legislation.

The CHAIR — Can you give some examples?

Mr PEARCE — I have an example of the ministerial direction that I will get to. It is important to note that not every activity or decision is covered by the interface mechanism; it is only where the decision is likely to have a significant impact on the transport system that you would have to have regard to the transport system objectives and principles. The other important thing to note is the test — it is only that you have to regard to it. It is not a positive obligation to do everything that is necessary to give effect to the objectives and principles.

Mr HOPKINS — So a fairly routine example would be the consideration of a planning application by the statutory planning function of local council. They would need to give regard to the act.

Mr PEARCE — I will get to some further examples. Some examples of interface bodies are planning authorities under planning legislation, municipal councils, the Urban Renewal Authority Victoria and Parks Victoria. Ministerial direction 11, which was recently refreshed to reflect the requirements of the TIA, sets out the broad expectations of planning authorities when they are amending planning schemes. One of the things that has been incorporated into that direction is the requirement to have regard to the policy framework in the act, which hopefully could translate to considerations relating to active transport and cycling and walking being given greater prominence in planning scheme amendments where they relate to, for example, the design of built environments and the requirements that flow on from that.

Finally, and Michael touched on this before, another mechanism under the legislation — not only the Transport Integration Act but also under the Planning and Environment Act — is the referral authority mechanism. Both VicRoads and the director of public transport are referral authorities under that act, and this offers the opportunity for these bodies to influence the design of urban environments through their ability to comment on and possibly impose conditions on planning permit applications. In particular it is probably worth noting that VicRoads, under the Transport Integration Act, has as one of its objects seeking to increase the share of public transport, walking and cycling trips as a proportion of all transport trips in Victoria. That is an example of where VicRoads, as a referral authority, could be referring to a legislative object to influence the design of built environments.

That is a quick summary of the governance frameworks for the issues that we have been discussing. I will hand it over to you.

The CHAIR — Thanks. That was fairly detailed. Who wants to kick off?

Mr SCHEFFER — I have two questions. The first one is for Michael. I was interested when you talked about safety. The safety on public transport — how is that actually assessed, and what does the evidence tell us? Just before you answer, I am asking that in relation to us talking a lot about cycling and walking with a few comments in passing. For example, in relation to private cars, cycling and walking as distinct from train travel or trams or whatever, if you took an area randomly — let us say you are going from Oakleigh to Frankston on that line — how safe would that be and how would you assess that —

Mrs PEULICH — Sorry, from where to where?

Mr SCHEFFER — and if you travel the same distance in a car, what would that mean?

Mrs PEULICH — Oakleigh to Frankston? You would have to be Superman, wouldn't you? It is not the same line.

Mr SCHEFFER — Sorry?

Mrs PEULICH — Oakleigh to Frankston? You would have to be Superman.

Mr SCHEFFER — Sorry. Anyway, that route that goes along there.

Mr HOPKINS — I cannot tell you what the trends are at the moment, because I am just not across them. I am happy to take that on notice. Safety on public transport, in particular the train networks, is measured in two ways. One is the actual number of events that are reported to the police. Obviously statistics are kept there, and we have those segregated by line. Perceptions of safety are also very important as well, and part of the customer satisfaction monitor involves an ongoing survey of people's satisfaction with and expectations of safety. If they are feeling unsafe, it gets reflected in the customer satisfaction survey. I think that is reported every quarter. There have been track records.

Mr SCHEFFER — So every event that has put a person at risk or put them in trouble — if they report it, that is recorded?

Mr HOPKINS — Yes. And the police have those statistics.

Mr SCHEFFER — Okay. So we have that as a measure. Then what is the range of things? Anything from an assault to — what is in there?

Mr HOPKINS — Anything that the person has felt significantly unsafe about to raise it with the police will get reported. That will include everything from assaults to intimidation to — —

Mr ELSBURY — A drunk on the train.

Mr HOPKINS — Sorry?

Mr ELSBURY — Someone who is drunk on the train.

Mr HOPKINS — Someone who is drunk on the train, witnessing acts of graffiti and those sorts of things.

Mr SCHEFFER — Okay. So is it possible to make comparisons? I was interested when we were talking about the material there on relative safety and people having accidents while walking.

Mr HOPKINS — I do not know that it would be. If you get into a car, you are obviously going to be by yourself or with people that you know and presumably trust, so the sorts of risk exposures are quite different. The risk of a car accident versus the risk of feeling unsettled because you have witnessed something or have been harassed, it is hard to understand the relationship between the risk exposure and to compare the outcomes of those events, if you know what I mean. We have not tried to do that. I would need to think pretty long and hard about the sort of methodology we would use to do that. If you want to compare risks of accidents — of being involved in a train accident versus a car accident — those things are much easier to measure and much more directly comparable, so that we can do. Reports to the police, because of the very nature of what they cover — one would hope you are significantly less likely to be assaulted in your own car than on a train, but your risks of being in some sort of physical accident will be greater in a car.

Mr SCHEFFER — That is one. Just quickly, the other one is to Robert and is in relation to the Transport Integration Act. That overlap, and I cannot do justice to the way you explained it, between the Department of Transport having regard to imperatives in other bodies of legislation, could it mean, for example, that the DOT could say to planning authorities, 'We want to see a greater density in the built environment in the outer suburbs so that better public transport could be delivered'. Is that a reasonable kind of thing that you could do under the provisions you described?

Mr PEARCE — The provisions rely, firstly, on the need to make a decision, so there would have to be a decision that is in question. For example, it could be the decision of a planning authority around amending a planning scheme to include certain matters around density and the like. If, in the estimation of the planning authority, the increase in density is likely to have a significant impact on the transport system, which it may well do, then it is required to have regard to the range of objectives and decision-making principles that would allow them to make the best possible amendment to the planning scheme — —

Mr SCHEFFER — But that is the planning side of it — —

Mr PEARCE — Yes.

Mr SCHEFFER — Having an impact on the transport delivery. I am talking about the other way around.

Mr PEARCE — The other way.

Mr SCHEFFER — If transport could say, 'Listen, if we want to have much better coverage of transport across greater Melbourne, then we are going to have to make the density of housing much higher than it is now or we cannot do it'.

Mr HOPKINS — There is certainly the capacity for the department to make those sorts of arguments through the referral powers, although the referral powers relate to particular developments. In theory it would be possible for us to say, 'Your permit for this particular site should depend on a greater density', but if we were to do that as a referral authority, it is not an issue which I think the department would be able to defend in VCAT, for example, where that sort of thing would almost inevitably end up.

In making the local decision the council, or whoever the decision-making authority is, would need to have regard to the act. Again, it is having regard to the act, so questions about integration of land use and transport planning do not necessarily go into fine detail such as density.

The CHAIR — Can you think of some examples of how the Transport Integration Act, by its existence, has provided examples of decisions that would not necessarily have existed if the act was not there?

Mr PEARCE — Recent examples of decisions, for example?

The CHAIR — Yes.

Mr PEARCE — So, for example, in the planning space, what they have done?

The CHAIR — Yes.

Mr PEARCE — I suppose the most recent example is the ministerial direction change. What that aims to do is to create the strategic environment such that decisions which occur at a lower level, but which have to occur within that framework, will, hopefully, be made with greater cognisance of the transport system and its objectives. I cannot point to a specific example.

The CHAIR — Okay. Is there an avenue where the information about those planning decisions that are made is fed back to DOT so that you know what the practical consequences are?

Mr HOPKINS — Where the development is of a particular size it will hit certain triggers. Anywhere where either the director of Public Transport or VicRoads has been invited to be a referral authority we will be kept informed as to what decisions have been made and what factors have been taken into account. There is a way of seeing that. The extent to which people document and share with us how they have had regard to the act is not something we have pursued.

Mrs PEULICH — I have three questions. The first is in relation to the Victorian bike strategy. It is something that is of interest to me because of some of the localised issues along Beach Road in particular and the 8 kilometres of bike paths, or the bay trail that has not been completed, across Frankston, Bayside and Kingston. I was interested also to read the Auditor-General's report of last week, which gave the bike strategy a bit of a shellacking. I did not actually agree with some of the underpinning conclusions, like that infrastructure is not important. I agree with your contention that it is critical. But where I think he makes a legitimate point — and you have got to unpack the recommendations to get to it; I am not sure he has made it with the degree of clarity that I would have expected — and where there is room for improvement on the bike strategy is to set different targets for the different categories of users rather than lumping them all together.

Clearly in commuting there are some drivers, as you have identified, and I think especially where we build new roads and where there is capacity to build the bike paths along them, there is a wonderful opportunity to improve their statistics. But when it comes to the recreational users, I think the current terminology probably needs to be revised; I am not sure if there is an appropriate lingo. The serious recreational rider, and I think Andrea Coote calls them the lycra terrorists; I could not do that — —

Mr HOPKINS — Lycra warriors is not quite so — —

Mrs PEULICH — Warriors might be okay. They belong to clubs. In most instances I am not sure they are concerned about what is under the wheels, because they certainly like the scenic route of Beach Road and would probably prefer to claim it for themselves rather than the residents and beachgoers, including children. Addressing the conflicts between the different users in the different categories is really important if we are going to see the overall numbers grow, but I think it is also about setting different targets. We have the serious recreational riders and then we have the casual recreational riders, who are the mums, dads and kids. In terms of the bike strategy, when you guys get to reviewing it, my personal view is that setting different targets beneath the overarching target is really important if we are going to see those numbers improve.

Mr HOPKINS — Certainly since the strategy was released we have done quite a bit more research and we used what we had at the time, but with ourselves and VicRoads we had actually done some of that market segmentation. We have not necessarily set targets for each category, but what we have done is look at some of the different drivers behind the different categories. One of the things that we did was very much focus on the

commuting cyclists. Coming from the Department of Transport, it was a cycling strategy for transport. To the extent that we would pick up recreational cyclists, I think we always take the view that a recreational cyclist is potentially a commuter of the future.

Mrs PEULICH — Absolutely; especially when you have good infrastructure.

Mr HOPKINS — Clearly there are some different attitudes towards what would make me cycle between the different categories. I think it is a good point.

Mrs PEULICH — I just wanted to flag that. Who are criterium tracks used by?

Mr HOPKINS — From memory that is a particular sport. I do not think those are public tracks, are they?

Mrs PEULICH — They are not public tracks? That is fine. I will put that in abeyance.

I will come back to my second-last question. Congestion in the south-east, which is the area that I represent, was in my view a very significant election issue. I would contend that it was on an equal footing with public transport — but nonetheless a sleeper — because effective public transport is unavailable to significant tracts of the south-east. In Dingley Village we are 6.4 kilometres away from the nearest railway station. Poorly connected arterial roads are the bane of everyone's life, because where they are poorly connected you have the local roads being used by industry and business and things get very unhappy. Let me say that when it comes to health, not only does it generate high levels of pollution through congestion, obviously there are also mental health issues and so forth. Could I ask you to comment on that and the need to ensure that we actually have an effective connection of arterial flows in order to minimise those negative health impacts?

Mr HOPKINS — One of the things we did not talk about today because of the focus on walking and cycling was car-use trends across Melbourne. The only thing that is clear is that the picture is becoming more and more complicated. If you look at the Melbourne statistical district as a whole, you will see growth in motor vehicle use largely in line with or maybe slightly less than economic and population growth. For the past few decades it has generally been a little bit higher than economic and population growth. That is the global picture and most global pictures tell a story, but it is not by any means the whole story. We are seeing significantly faster growth in outer metropolitan Melbourne, often in parts of the road network that were up until quite recently rural roads.

Mrs PEULICH — Some of them still are.

Mr HOPKINS — We are seeing generally positive growth on the freeway network and a lot of that is happening outside peak hours. So you are seeing freight beginning to shift to off-peak. In areas of inner Melbourne — and here it does depend on traffic volumes — the number of vehicle kilometres being travelled in some places is declining. People's experiences of traffic are changing. If you look at the numbers for inner Melbourne, you would think that congestion was getting better, but then when you talk to people and collect data about what people are thinking and feeling, the picture is quite a different one. Particularly in established areas, where that picture is still evolving, it depends very much on making better use of thinking about the way we allocate road space between the users — the freight users, the private vehicle users and so on. To some extent that is what VicRoads' network operating plans are about. It is about saying we have got half a dozen parallel roads with no hierarchy of use. What we should do is allocate some of those to car traffic and that might mean something about the way we treat the road and the way we sign the road. In others we would discourage traffic to the point where we can actually encourage cycling and so on.

Mrs PEULICH — I am very much looking forward to the building of the Dingley bypass, which was really what I had in mind in particular, serving a very large tract of industry in Braeside and Moorabbin and so forth and also obviously bringing some peace of mind to local residents. In terms of unpacking the use statistics, which I think are fantastic, and understanding better the behaviours of different demographics in the population, the overall helicopter statistics are great, but in terms of drilling further down we need to understand how different categories of users are impacted. In particular I would like to draw your attention to the difficulty of building in alternate modes of transport to the vehicle amongst particular users. For myself, with my job — and I would imagine that for my colleagues who are not CBD-based it would be the same — I find it impossible to ride a bike or take public transport, because you would get about 20 per cent done in the day. I would imagine some shiftworkers may be keen public transport users and others may not, especially women. I am thinking also

of the self-employed and tradespeople — people who have flexible jobs and are required to move around. Is there any work being done by anybody else about how we can improve their health outcomes?

Mr HOPKINS — I am still surprised by the amount of statistics we got through today, but we do have quite a good breakdown by things like employment category — things like tradespeople and so on will have very different patterns that will often require a greater degree of driving. That is just how it is. I suspect that for a lot of people in employment categories that are much more car dependent because of the nature of the work, perhaps the public health answers are not necessarily in transport. Perhaps they are somewhere else. Transport as recreation — walking and cycling — —

Mrs PEULICH — That is right. That might be the area.

Mr HOPKINS — The thought of us trying to get plumbers to take the trains with a couple of toolkits just would not work.

Ms CALVERT — I might add to that. There is an additional issue around the impact of transport on air quality which has health impacts on people. There is work we continue to do in conjunction with the commonwealth government around standards for emissions from vehicles. We also have a trial under way for electric vehicles in Victoria which ultimately gives the potential of zero air pollution emissions from the point of the vehicle itself.

The CHAIR — I am conscious of the fact we are 25 minutes over time. Andrew has two questions and Johan has a request for data.

Mr SCHEFFER — I just want to ask for some data, and Keir will provide this information to you. I just wanted to get on the record some data around safety and public transport. I just want to know something about the measures, how you assess that and monitor it, the changes over time, strategies that improve commuter safety and comparisons with other states or comparable cities overseas. If you could put something together for us that covers that, that would be good.

Mr ELSBURY — Just in relation to people who are using public transport getting physical activity and its being the more outer suburbs that are not receiving that physical activity, do you think that has got to do with a perceived lack of reliability in the network out in those areas as well? I know I have got a bus stop just around the corner from my place. On the few times I have used the system, it has not exactly come off with flying colours. If I have got to get somewhere, I hop in the car. Do you think that is a major factor?

Mr HOPKINS — When you do surveys of people to ask them what they want in a public transport network, the first and foremost is always reliability. In the outer areas where you are going to be dependent, particularly to be picked up from your home, you would be dependent on a bus network. Traditionally the frequency of Melbourne's buses in the outer suburbs has been quite low. As you increase frequency, reliability becomes less of an issue. If you know there will be a bus within 20 minutes, you are a bit more likely to take it. If the bus is every 45 minutes, the consequences of missing the bus are significantly much worse. Reliability is definitely a factor that drives it.

Equally, in terms of just a spatial distribution, as you get further out from the core, lines tend to be further apart. There is more greater dependency on bus routes. Bus routes, which in many cases are the preference of a lot of the community, have gone for more spatial coverage than temporal coverage. In terms of having to split the resources between a very long route and a shorter route with greater frequency, often one of the things that has come out of the bus reviews that we have done over the past couple of years has been people seeing the bus network as a safety net. That drives decision making more towards geographic coverage rather than frequency.

Mr ELSBURY — Just as a final question, there is a lot of information here about people in the outer suburbs being willing to go further for their work. They are driving further, they are using vehicles a lot more — —

Mr HOPKINS — I am not using the word 'willingness'. I am saying 'do'.

Mrs PEULICH — They must.

Mr ELSBURY — They do. Do you think if we were to decentralise a lot of what is going on so that there were employment opportunities in hubs around the city, that would assist in people actually being able to undertake more physical activity and they would be more willing to take public transport.

Mr HOPKINS — We have done some modelling that looks at different urban forms. Let us assume Melbourne will grow by another 1 million people within a certain amount of time. Where we distribute those and where we distribute their jobs as well makes quite a significant difference to people's ability to use public transport and walk and cycle. An urban form that encourages people to walk and cycle will be a relatively decentralised urban form. But I have to say it is not so much decentralised as around several centres.

Mr ELSBURY — What I mean is you have the City of Hume saying it wants to have Broadmeadows as basically what it calls the capital of the north. You have each of the councils in the areas of Footscray and Sunshine being redeveloped with the potential of becoming a lot more than what they are — a lot less $2 shops and a lot more cafes and offices.

Mr HOPKINS — There is no question that that is a polycentric approach to Melbourne which would significantly increase public transport trips and walking and cycling.

The CHAIR — I thank all three of you for your presentation, in particular the excellent data. It has distilled a number of ideas about walking, cycling and other forms of transport.

Witnesses withdrew.