

**PORTFOLIO COMMITTEE NO. 6 – REGIONAL TRANSPORT AND ROADS –  
SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTIONS – 26 October 2021**

**SQ01 Lower Hunter Freight Corridor**

1. Why has the Government released this at a time when face-to-face consultations can't be held due to COVID when the construction timeline shows the project is 10-20 years away?
- (a) How many people have registered for the MS Teams approach?
- (b) Why doesn't the Government use the Zoom platform which is much more user friendly?

**ANSWER**

I am advised:

The protection of the corridor is becoming more urgent as new development occurs within the region.

The consultation period started on 12 July 2021, just before restrictions were in place in the Hunter Region, and was extended to 27 September 2021. Transport for NSW received 230 registrations for three online engagement sessions. As COVID-19 restrictions ease, the project team will meet with individuals who wish to discuss the project.

The NSW Government has adopted MS Teams as its current standard for online engagement, not only because of its ease of use, but also because of its stronger security and privacy features in comparison to other platforms.

**SQ02 Lower Hunter Freight Corridor**

Why isn't there a discussion about costings for noise mitigation now, particularly as the area is high residential growth area?

(a) Noise impact summary at section 7.5.2 concludes that: "The strategic review of noise and vibration found that protection of the Lower Hunter Freight Corridor would not impact on existing noise and vibration levels." What review has been done in relation to building a train line rather than reserving a rail corridor?

i. Isn't this just kicking the can down the road?

ii. Why not do a proper quantitative noise assessment on the project now, before the corridor is locked in?

(b) The report proposes bushland as a buffer for noise. Where is the technical support for this?

**ANSWER**

I am advised:

Strategic noise modelling was conducted for the Lower Hunter Freight Corridor (LHFC) based on current noise and vibration emissions for rail operations within the LHFC Draft Strategic Environmental Assessment (the Draft SEA). The modelling concluded moderate level noise mitigations would be required and further identified specific areas along the corridor where these mitigation measures would likely be needed. This analysis identified that these noise mitigations would meet existing guidelines. The analysis also anticipated a reduction in future freight rail noise emissions. Detailed noise impact assessments will be required at the design development stage of the project.

The recommended corridor is separated from residential and sensitive receivers to the maximum distance possible as part of a suite of mitigations required to existing properties for future rail operations. In a small number of locations, the corridor passes through existing bushland, which according to the Strategic Noise Assessment can reduce the visual perception of future rail operations. This effect is in conjunction with other noise mitigations, including noise barriers that will be required to meet current noise guidelines.

**SQ03 Lower Hunter Freight Corridor**

What modelling has been done to address the significant mining history in the area – and the substantial risk of mine subsidence in the area?

(a) The presence of mining voids is likely to be impossible to fully identify – what risk mitigation is in place to deal with this?

**ANSWER**

I am advised:

The Draft SEA addresses the constraint of mining, both current and historical in the area, particularly in the section between Fassifern and Cameron Park. Liaison with the Subsidence Advisory Board has assisted in identifying areas of potential subsidence and investigations to date have recommended that areas with potential

mining voids and subsidence be further considered as part of the detailed design phase of a future rail infrastructure project. Mitigation measures such as those applied on recent Transport for NSW infrastructure projects in the area will likely be required in the detailed design stage.

#### **SQ04 Lower Hunter Freight Corridor**

What environmental impacts of the route passing through coastal wetlands and threatened lower Hunter spotted gums to the southwest of Holmesville and Barnsley have been assessed?

#### **ANSWER**

I am advised:

The Draft SEA describes the impact of the recommended corridor on biodiversity. The threatened Lower Hunter Spotted Gum is noted in the area to the west of Holmesville and the corridor has avoided this threatened ecological community to the greatest extent possible. The corridor has avoided areas of coastal wetlands in this area southwest of Holmesville and Barnsley. Avoiding areas of high ecological value and threatened ecological communities was an important consideration in the options development process.

Any requirement for areas to be cleared would need to be investigated as part of future design and environmental approval process together with appropriate biodiversity offsetting.

#### **SQ05 Lower Hunter Freight Corridor**

How will you be dealing with the proposed crossing of the corridor of the M1 north of Cameron Park?

(a) It appears to be at a very skewed angle, that could create the need for a bridge of 100m to cross it?

i. Has there been consideration of a perpendicular crossing?

#### **ANSWER**

I am advised:

The crossing of the M1 Motorway north of Cameron Park can comply with the design and rail operational requirements within the Draft SEA. The detailed design

of the bridge to enable this crossing will be subject to further detailed design when the rail infrastructure is required.

A perpendicular crossing of the M1 at this location would require considerable additional land outside the current government owned Special Purpose 2 infrastructure zoned corridor and would likely not meet the operational design requirements outlined in the Draft SEA.

#### **SQ06 Lower Hunter Freight Corridor**

Why does the line cross west and east of the M1 Motorway?

(a) Wouldn't it be better to run to the west for the majority of the time?

#### **ANSWER**

I am advised:

Consideration of running the corridor to the west of the M1 Motorway, south of the Hunter Expressway overpass, was assessed during the options development process outlined in the Draft SEA. The constraints outlined in the Draft SEA included considerations of topography, slope stability, areas of previous mining and consideration of areas of significant ecological importance. Due to these considerations, as well as interface considerations with existing road infrastructure at both George Booth Drive and the Hunter Expressway, the recommended corridor is located on the eastern side of the M1 Motorway until north of the Hunter Expressway at Cameron Park.

#### **SQ07 Lower Hunter Freight Corridor**

What impact would the proposed route have on the future of the Federal Government's reservation of a long-term corridor for a "faster rail" passenger service along the NSW East Coast?

(a) Past studies have indicated a station to connect Newcastle and the Hunter to the east of the M1?

#### **ANSWER**

I am advised:

The Draft SEA notes that the Australian Government investigated high speed rail between Melbourne and Brisbane in 2010-2013 and identified a preferred alignment for the corridor. This study was a strategic study rather than a detailed

Strategic Environmental Assessment. While the operational requirements and design of a high speed rail alignment differ from the operational and design requirements of the LHFC, both can coexist within the same corridor.

The strategic need to identify and preserve the recommended LHFC will not preclude the Australian Government from continuing investigations to advance the preferred alignment for high speed rail to connect with Newcastle.

### **SQ08 Great Western Highway Upgrade, Katoomba to Lithgow**

What analysis/analyses has the government carried out to determine the costing of the Great Western Highway (GWH) upgrade from Katoomba to Lithgow?

(a) What is the cost of the upgrade from:

- i. Katoomba to Blackheath
- ii. Blackheath to Little Hartley
- iii. Hartley to Lithgow

(b) Do the above costs represent the total cost of the upgrade of the GWH from Katoomba to Lithgow?

i. What funding has been allocated to this project?

### **ANSWER**

I am advised:

(a) Transport for NSW has completed a Strategic Business Case for the Great Western Highway Upgrade, which has passed Infrastructure NSW assurance. The Final Business Case is set for completion at the end of 2021.

Current program estimates are preliminary.

- (i) The East (Katoomba to Blackheath) section is estimated at \$1 billion
- (ii) The two options under consideration for the Central section (Blackheath to Little Hartley) are both estimated at \$6 billion
- (iii) The West (Little Hartley to Lithgow) section is estimated at \$1.5 billion.

(b) The above approximations are preliminary, but represent the current estimate for the total upgrade from Katoomba to Lithgow

- (i) The NSW Government has invested \$2.5 billion towards the upgrade of the Great Western Highway between Katoomba and Lithgow.

The Australian Government has committed \$2.03 billion towards the East and West sections of the Great Western Highway upgrade, between Katoomba and Blackheath, and between Little Hartley and Lithgow, respectively.

### **SQ09 Great Western Highway Upgrade, Katoomba to Lithgow**

In numerical form, what is the cost comparison of the current surface and tunnel option from Katoomba to Little Hartley compared with the cost of a 19km tunnel from Katoomba to Little Hartley?

#### **ANSWER**

I am advised:

It is impossible to provide a like-for-like cost comparison of the current options between Katoomba to Little Hartley and a hypothetical 19km tunnel, as they are not comparable projects.

While the cost and required length of an extended kilometre tunnel has not been estimated, the dollar per kilometre cost for a 19 kilometre tunnel, based off current market rates, suggests a total cost in excess of \$10 billion, not including the required works to existing surface roads to address safety and traffic concerns identified in the project scope.

### **SQ10 Great Western Highway Upgrade, Katoomba to Lithgow**

What Cost Benefit Analysis/analyses (CBA) has the Government conducted on the GWH Upgrade?

(a) In numerical form, what is the BCR of the current GWH Upgrade Design compared with the BCR, including a 19km tunnel from Katoomba to Lithgow?

#### **ANSWER**

I am advised:

Transport for NSW has undertaken a comprehensive Cost Benefit Analysis encompassing wider socio-economic benefits as part of the development of the Strategic Business Case.

Transport for NSW initially ruled out an extended or separate tunnel under Medlow Bath due to unacceptable costs, technical feasibility constraints and environmental impacts, and because the existing surface corridor was sufficiently wide to accommodate additional lanes without significant property impact. As such, Transport for NSW has not conducted a Cost Benefit Analysis for an extended tunnel.

### **SQ11 Great Western Highway Upgrade, Katoomba to Lithgow**

What is the total area of land to be cleared of vegetation from Katoomba to Blackheath in the GWH upgrade?

(a) How, specifically, will Transport for NSW (TfNSW) offset the loss of vegetation?

(b) What studies were carried out to determine the loss of critical, threatened and endangered species (both flora and fauna) from Katoomba to Blackheath, including the receiving environment of the GWH?

i. When will TfNSW make all these studies available to the public?

### **ANSWER**

I am advised:

Impact to vegetation for the Katoomba to Blackheath section of the upgrade is being analysed as part of the environmental assessment, and is reviewed at each stage of the concept design development.

The extent of vegetation clearing, including National Parks and other vegetated land, will be known once the final Review of Environment Factors (REF) has been completed. The REF is expected to be completed and displayed for consultation early in 2022.

(a) As part of the revocation process for approximately 22 impacted hectares of National Park between Blackheath and Katoomba, Transport for NSW is negotiating with National Parks and Wildlife Service on the provision of either

compensatory lands adjoining existing National Park land or biodiversity offset credits equivalent to any impacts to the National Park.

Urban design and landscaping are also incorporated into the design to minimise impacts and improve amenity. Trees removed as a result of the program will be replaced within the corridor footprint.

(b) Transport for NSW is carrying out a full Biodiversity Assessment Report to determine the nature and extent of any potential impacts on flora and fauna and to identify mitigation measures that can be put into place to minimise impacts to the Blue Mountains environment.

i. The Biodiversity Assessment Report will be made available as part of the REF for Katoomba to Blackheath to be released for consultation in early 2022.

### **SQ12 Great Western Highway Upgrade, Katoomba to Lithgow**

As the water runoff from the duplicated GWH will be draining into two drinking water catchments between Katoomba and Medlow Bath:

(a) What studies have been carried out to determine the ecological impacts of this project and by whom/what organisations?

(b) When will the NSW Government make all ecological impact studies available to the public?

(c) What will be the estimated volume of water runoff into the water catchments from the duplicated GWH?

(d) What infrastructure will be required for water treatment before it flows into the catchments?

(e) What will be the annual cost of this water treatment and has this cost been included in the total cost of the project?

### **ANSWER**

I am advised:

(a) A surface water and ground water technical assessment has been carried out for Katoomba to Medlow Bath and Medlow Bath to Blackheath. Aurecon has been awarded the contract for the environmental assessment.

(b) The environmental studies will be made available as part of the REF for Katoomba to Blackheath to be released in early 2022.

(c) As part of the project, Transport for NSW will provide water treatment facilities designed to capture up to and including volumes produced in a 1 in 100 year rain event.

(d) Bio retention or sediment basins and gross pollutant traps will filter, capture and treat all runoff from the Great Western Highway.

The project team has inspected previous water treatment measures in place in the mountains and is consulting with Blue Mountains City Council to improve and adapt water treatment measures to ensure that captured water is discharged in a controlled manner.

(e) Generally, the maintenance of water control facilities will become part of Transport for NSW's maintenance budget.

### **SQ13 Dapto M1 Princes Highway Upgrade**

Will the Government ensure that the residents of Dapto and West Dapto have access to the M1 motorway by building off ramps from Kanahooka Road and Emerson road?

(a) What consultation has been conducted to date?

i. When were the dates of the consultations?

### **ANSWER**

I am advised:

This is a matter for the Minister for Transport and Roads.

### **SQ14 Dapto M1 Princes Highway Upgrade**

Are there any plans for the construction of on-off ramps on the M1 Motorway in the Dapto area?

(a) If not, why not?

### **ANSWER**

I am advised:

This is a matter for the Minister for Transport and Roads.

### **SQ15 Dapto M1 Princes Highway Upgrade**

Investigations into the upgrade of the M1 Princes Motorway have been in the 'preliminary stage' since 2013. When will Transport for NSW, Roads and Maritime, finally complete these 'preliminary investigations' in order to progress planning for improvements to the M1 Princes Motorway between Figtree and Dapto?

(a) What is the scope for these investigations?

#### **ANSWER**

I am advised:

This is a matter for the Minister for Transport and Roads.

### **SQ16 Dapto M1 Princes Highway Upgrade**

When will the study into upgrades on the M1 Princes Motorway between Figtree and Dapto be finalised?

(a) Will these findings be publically available?

#### **ANSWER**

I am advised:

This is a matter for the Minister for Transport and Roads.

### **SQ17 Dapto M1 Princes Highway Upgrade**

As part of the study, is the Government investigating the inclusion of:

(a) A southbound on ramp and northbound off ramp at Kanahooka Road?

(b) A southbound on ramp and northbound off ramp at Fowlers Road?

(c) On and off ramps, both directions at Emerson Road?

#### **ANSWER**

I am advised:

This is a matter for the Minister for Transport and Roads.

### **SQ18 Dapto M1 Princes Highway Upgrade**

What are the estimated costs associated with the construction of on-off ramps along a highway in NSW?

#### **ANSWER**

I am advised:

This is a matter for the Minister for Transport and Roads.

### **SQ19 Dapto Station Upgrade**

When is the planned upgrade of Dapto Station scheduled to commence?

(a) What will these works entail?

#### **ANSWER**

I am advised:

This is a matter for the Minister for Transport and Roads.

### **SQ20 Dapto Station Upgrade**

Will the Government commit to expanding the Dapto station commuter carpark, alongside the upgrade?

(a) If not, why not?

(b) If so, how many spaces will the carpark be expanded by?

#### **ANSWER**

I am advised:

This is a matter for the Minister for Transport and Roads.

### **SQ21 Dapto Station Upgrade**

How much money will be allocated to the upgrade of Dapto Station?

#### **ANSWER**

I am advised:

This is a matter for the Minister for Transport and Roads.

### **SQ22 Dapto Station Upgrade**

Why was the decision made to not provide lifts at Dapto Station, despite The NSW Auditor-General's report into the Transport Access Program released in February 2019, which identified Dapto Station as having the highest needs ranking for an upgrade, out of all 44 intercity train stations under consideration for TAP 3?

**ANSWER**

I am advised:

This is a matter for the Minister for Transport and Roads.

**SQ23 Dapto Station Upgrade**

What would be the projected cost of this project, with the inclusion of the lifts that were initially part of the artist's impression for this upgrade, when it was first announced on 1 February 2019?

**ANSWER**

I am advised:

This is a matter for the Minister for Transport and Roads.

**SQ24 Dapto Station Upgrade**

Why has the Government made the decision to proceed with an upgrade to the level crossings at Dapto Station, despite Transport for NSW (TfNSW) Level Crossing Closures Policy that recommends that level crossings "should be closed wherever it is practical and cost-effective"?

**ANSWER**

I am advised:

This is a matter for the Minister for Transport and Roads.

**SQ25 Dapto Station Upgrade**

What plans does the Government currently have to ensure public transport is made easily accessible through the West Dapto area?

**ANSWER**

I am advised:

This is a matter for the Minister for Transport and Roads.

### **SQ26 Dapto Station Upgrade**

Does the Government admit that the current bus services catering to West Dapto are inadequate? (Bus services catering to residents in West Dapto do not run on Saturdays, Sundays or public holidays effectively forcing local residents to walk up to 45 minutes to Dapto shops).

#### **ANSWER**

I am advised:

This is a matter for the Minister for Transport and Roads.

### **SQ27 Dapto Station Upgrade**

Are there plans to provide additional bus services in the Dapto and West Dapto Areas?

#### **ANSWER**

I am advised:

This is a matter for the Minister for Transport and Roads.

### **SQ28 Dapto Station Upgrade**

Koonawarra Public School currently does not have a dedicated school bus route. Will the Government commit to establishing a bus route for this school?

(a) If not, why not?

(b) If so, when will this project be delivered?

#### **ANSWER**

I am advised:

This is a matter for the Minister for Transport and Roads.

### **SQ29 Regional Road Classification**

What is the total quantum of the projects recommended by the Independent Panel for a Priority Round of Transfers and reclassifications?

(a) What is the total quantum for the five recommended council applications?

i. Please disaggregate by Council

(b) What is the total quantum for TfNSW recommended applications?

**ANSWER**

I am advised:

This information is in the Independent Panel's Road Classification Review and Transfer Interim Report which is publicly available on the Transport for NSW website.

**SQ30 Regional Road Classification**

The report makes a note that TfNSW reclassification applications were not subject to steps A, B and C given they had previously been assessed as Category 1. When were these applications assessed?

(a) Who assessed these applications?

**ANSWER**

I am advised:

All submissions underwent a number of Gate Reviews prior to full consideration by the Independent Panel, in line with the Independent Panel Road Classification Review and Regional Road Transfer Priority Submission Guidelines. Transport for NSW assessed submissions in September 2020 and January 2021.

The initial Gate Reviews were conducted by the Independent Panel's support team as per the evaluation criteria set by the Independent Panel.

**SQ31 Regional Road Classification**

How were members of the Independent Panel selected?

(a) When did their employment commence?

(b) What are the terms of their contract/employment engagement?

i. Does their contract/employment engagement have an expiry date?

ii. If so, what is the expiry date?

(c) How much remuneration does each panel member receive?

(d) What other allowances are payable to panel members?

- (e) What is the total quantum of payments to panel members since the panel was first appointed?
- (f) How many of the Councils has the Independent Panel consulted with?
- i. How many were conducted online?
  - ii. How many were conducted face to face?
- (g) Why weren't all Councils consulted with?

**ANSWER**

I am advised:

(a-d) I refer you to the answer to LA 6263.

(e) At 30 October 2021, total payments to panel members were:

- \$410,117 for remuneration
- \$18,983 for disbursements.

(f) The panel held 27 consultation sessions with councils between June and August 2020. All councils were invited to attend a session which were arranged by joint organisation and geographic proximity of the councils. The schedule for the consultation sessions is published on the panel's website. 91 per cent of all NSW councils attended a consultation session. A consultation report has been published on the Independent Panel's website. Due to the COVID-19 restrictions, all consultation sessions were held online.

(g) All councils had the opportunity to consult with the panel, some councils chose not to attend scheduled consultation sessions. All councils have access to contact the Independent Panel through the secretariat. The contact details are listed on the Independent Panel's website.

**SQ32 Regional Road Classification**

When will the first transfer take place?

**ANSWER**

I am advised:

Transport for NSW is engaging with the local councils for all impacted roads to commence planning for the transfer projects, including the appropriate timing for transfer to occur.

### **SQ33 Regional Road Classification**

When will Councils be advised of the phased implementation approach to the program?

#### **ANSWER**

I am advised:

Councils will be advised following the NSW Government's consideration of the final report and recommendations of the Independent Panel.

### **SQ34 Regional Road Classification**

When will the phased implementation approach be taken to Cabinet?

#### **ANSWER**

I am advised:

The NSW Government does not comment on matters relating to Cabinet.

### **SQ35 Regional Road Classification**

How much funding is remaining for the full round?

#### **ANSWER**

I am advised:

The NSW Government allocated \$250 million in the 2021/22 Budget towards the cost of upgrading roads transferred under the program.

### **SQ36 Regional Road Classification**

What is the quantum of the reclassification in the Liverpool LGA?

(a) What program is this project funded under?

#### **ANSWER**

I am advised:

This information in the Independent Panel's Road Classification Review and Transfer Interim Report publicly available on the Transport for NSW website.

(a) No program funding is allocated, as the reclassification noted is from local to regional and does not impact state assets.

### **SQ37 Regional Road Classification**

What is the quantum of the classification in the Blacktown LGA?

(a) What program is this project funded under?

### **ANSWER**

I am advised:

This information is in the Independent Panel's Road Classification Review and Transfer Interim Report publicly available on the Transport for NSW website.

(a) No program funding is allocated, as the reclassification is a network adjustment and will be funded through existing budgets.

### **SQ38 Regional Road Classification**

What is the quantum of the classification in the Parramatta LGA?

(a) What program is this project funded under?

### **ANSWER**

I am advised:

This information is in the Independent Panel's Road Classification Review and Transfer Interim Report publicly available on the Transport for NSW website.

(a) No program funding is allocated, as the reclassification is a network adjustment and will be funded through existing budgets.

### **SQ39 Level Crossings**

Minister, you are the leader of the Nationals in NSW, your WA counterpart has backed the changes that are being called for by Madeline Bott and all the families who have lost loved ones, there's a 20,000 signature petition that will be debated in the Parliament in the next sitting week, when will you announce real action to improve level crossings?

## ANSWER

I am advised:

Level crossing safety is a very important area of focus for the NSW Government and part of our effort to achieve the *Future Transport 2056* commitment of zero fatal and serious injuries on our transport network.

From 2011-12 to 2020-21, the NSW Government has spent more than \$73 million through the Level Crossing Improvement Program (LCIP) to make level crossings in NSW safer, with the majority of funding going to regional NSW. This funding has supported numerous education and enforcement campaigns as well as upgrades to level crossing, includes:

- 67 major upgrades to level crossings including the installation of high-intensity LED lights, bells and retro-reflective boom gates with another 20 level crossings identified for upgrade in 2021-22 and 2022-23.
- 38 level crossing awareness and enforcement campaigns to raise motorists' awareness of the safety risks at level crossings and of the need to comply with the road rules.
- 24 'Don't rush to the other side' level crossing education campaign bursts in regional NSW to provide a timely reminder to motorists that level crossings should not be approached with complacency.

The NSW Government has also developed new policy positions in relation to building new level crossings, closing existing level crossings and reducing speed limits on approach to active level crossings. The three policy positions in relation to level crossings are:

- Building new level crossings is to be avoided wherever possible and all other options including grade separation and use of existing level crossings should be explored before a new crossing is proposed.
- Public and private level crossings should be closed wherever it is practical and cost effective to do so. Access can often be managed by a grade separation or by redirecting traffic via an alternate route.
- Speed limits on approach to level crossings actively controlled by flashing lights, or flashing lights and boom gates, shall be set to a maximum of 80 km/h.

In anticipation for the bumper harvest season, the NSW Government teamed up with GrainCorp to roll out 27 electronic message signs along key road harvest routes and an additional 18 of these electronic messaging signs will be placed at high-risk level crossings. In partnership with the ARTC, the NSW Government has also made 500 free signs available for order by local farmers in western parts of the State whose properties have passive level crossings on them, which they can install on their gates to help increase safety at level crossings.

Recently, the NSW Government published the *Level Crossing Strategy Council Strategic Plan 2021-2030* to guide our work to further improve the safety of level crossings, and ultimately create a safe and efficient transport system in NSW.

Transport for NSW is engaging with industry and international experts to gain insights into potential technological options and solutions for level crossing safety improvements.

#### **SQ40 Level Crossings**

On the Transport for NSW website, it states: An evaluation of the LCIP [Level Crossing Improvement Program] conducted in 2014-15 found that it delivers a positive economic benefit and plays a substantial role in fulfilling the objectives and targets of the Level Crossing Strategy Council's Strategic Plan for NSW Level Crossings 2021-30 (PDF, 514.66 KB). How can a 2014/15 review of the Level Crossing Improvement Planning assess its performance against a strategy that hasn't been published before July 2021?

(a) Has there been a review of the Level Crossing Improvement Plan since 2014-15?

i. If so, when was it conducted?

ii. If not, why not?

#### **ANSWER**

I am advised:

The reference to the 2010-20 Strategic Plan on the Transport for NSW website was replaced by the Level Crossing Strategy Council Strategic Plan 2021-2030 (2021-30 Strategic Plan) upon its publication in April 2021. Transport for NSW will update

the website to reinstate the previous reference to the 2010-20 Strategic Plan and create a new section for the 2021-30 Strategic Plan.

The objectives of the 2021-30 Strategic Plan are to eliminate collisions, reduce near misses and minimise the impact of any incidents that occur at level crossings.

The Level Crossing Improvement Program (LCIP), as a critical component of the 2021-30 Strategic Plan, will play a significant role in fulfilling these objectives, which are also the ultimate goals of the program.

There has been no evaluation of the LCIP since 2014-15. However, Transport for NSW publishes a yearly report on its website detailing level crossing safety initiatives delivered by the LCIP and rail and road agencies in NSW. Transport for NSW will undertake a further evaluation of the LCIP after the completion of the current three-year LCIP 2020-21 – 2022-23.

#### **SQ41 Level Crossings**

How much funding has been allocated to remove and/or upgrade level crossing in NSW this financial year?

#### **ANSWER**

I am advised:

The NSW Government Level Crossing Improvement Program has allocated approximately \$6.7 million to upgrade priority level crossings in NSW in 2021-22.

#### **SQ42 Level Crossings**

What is the exact number of level crossings on public roads in NSW?

#### **ANSWER**

I am advised:

There are 2,769 road level crossings in NSW recorded in the Australian Level Crossing Assessment Model database. This number excludes any road level crossings within private rail yards and on non-operational rail lines. Of these, approximately 1,360 are on public roads.

#### **SQ43 Level Crossings**

What is the exact number of level crossings on private roads in NSW?

(a) What maintenance does the State Government do at Public level crossings?  
i. How much funding was allocated for the 2020-2021 financial year to providing maintenance at level crossings?

**ANSWER**

I am advised:

There are 1,409 level crossings on private roads and properties in NSW.  
In the financial year 2020-21, \$771,000 was spent on routine maintenance at level crossings within the Sydney Trains RIM managed area. This does not include major periodic maintenance or growth and improvement projects. Just over \$1.2 million was spent on maintenance at level crossings on the Country Regional Network.  
Further information regarding maintenance on level crossings is available on the Transport for NSW website.

**SQ44 Level Crossings**

Has the Minister attended the Grenfell site where Ethan Hunter and Mark Fenton tragically lost their lives in February 2021?  
(a) If no, when will you visit the site?

**ANSWER**

I am advised:

Since May 2021, the Deputy Premier and Ms Steph Cooke MP, Member for Cootamundra have met with Mr Hunter's family on three separate occasions. Since the first meeting in May, the Deputy Premier has also been in regular contact with Mr Hunter's fiancé, Maddie Bott.

**SQ45 Level Crossings**

What action has the Minister undertaken to address the level crossing where Ethan Hunter and Mark Fenton died in February this year?

**ANSWER**

I am advised:

The Australian Rail Track Corporation (ARTC) is the Rail Infrastructure Manager for the level crossing in question, and is responsible for its safety.

Immediately following the incident, ARTC conducted an assessment of the crossing and determined it to be compliant with the required Standards. Transport for NSW has requested that ARTC consider closing the level crossing and they have confirmed they are investigating this option. ARTC continues to work with the NSW Government on initiatives to reduce the risk to the public and rail industry at level crossings in NSW.

#### **SQ46 Level Crossings**

How many times has the Minister met with the following stakeholders since February 2021 in person or via phone or video conference?

- (a) Australian Rail Track Corporation
- (b) Australian Transport Safety Bureau
- (c) Council of Australian Governments (COAG)
- (d) Office of Transport Safety Investigations (OTSI)
- (e) Level Crossing Strategy Council
- (f) Local Government NSW
- (g) National Level Crossing Safety Committee
- (h) The Office of the National Rail Safety Regulator

#### **ANSWER**

I am advised:

Ministerial diary disclosures are published quarterly and can be found on the Department of Premier and Cabinet website.

#### **SQ47 Level Crossings**

Why did the Minister wait five months before writing to the Deputy Prime Minister seeking support for an acceleration in the NSW and Australian Governments' shared commitment to improving level crossing safety?

- (a) What has the Minister done since then?

#### **ANSWER**

I am advised:

The first meeting with the Hunter family was held in May 2021. The Deputy Premier was in regular contact with the former Deputy Prime Minister and his office about working together on the Hunter family's concerns and level crossing solutions until he left office on 21 June 2021. The Deputy Premier wrote to the new Deputy Prime Minister on 2 July 2021 to seek his support for a shared commitment to improving level crossing safety.

The Deputy Premier has asked Transport for NSW to explore technology which could complement and enhance existing safety treatments and programs. Transport for NSW is committed to researching what existing and emerging technologies can be applied to improve level crossing safety. Engagement is underway with industry and international experts, to gain insights into further potential options for level crossing safety improvements. If potential technology is identified, the NSW Government will work with stakeholders to undertake a trial in the new year. If the technology trial is successful, the NSW Government would support an immediate technology roll out, to improve level crossing safety based on identified needs.

#### **SQ48 Level Crossings**

How many times has the Minister written to the Federal Government to raise concerns about level crossings?

#### **ANSWER**

I am advised:

The Deputy Premier has written to the Federal Government twice, met with the Deputy Prime Minister in November 2021 and has had multiple conversations with both the current and former Deputy Prime Minister on this issue.

#### **SQ49 Level Crossings**

When will level crossings be upgraded?

#### **ANSWER**

I am advised:

The NSW Government Level Crossing Improvement Program funds upgrades to existing level crossings. Those level crossings identified as high risk and requiring

safety improvements, such as boom gates and flashing lights, are prioritised through the Program's methodology.

### **SQ50 Level Crossings**

Have level crossings been prioritised for upgrades?

(a) Which level crossing will be upgraded?

i. What will the upgrade include?

### **ANSWER**

I am advised:

The following 20 level crossings have been identified for upgrades between 2021-22 and 2022-23 under the Level Crossing Improvement Program.

- Wirrinya Road, Wirrinya
- Maxwell Street, Wellington
- Bulunbulun Road, Breeza
- Akuna Road, Parkes
- Overshot Road, Euchareena
- Convent Road, Borenore
- Kiacatoo Road, Condobolin
- Merriwa Road, Willow Tree
- Sheep Wash Road, Calwalla
- Goldfields Way, Old Junee
- Beni Street, Wongarbon
- Mid Western Highway, Caragabal
- Livermores Lane, Gregra
- Rutherford Road, Borenore
- Rainville Road, Grawlin Plains
- Pullaming Road, Nea
- Eugowra Road, Mugincoble
- Irrigation Way, Widgelli
- Blumer Avenue, Griffith
- Bushland Drive, Taree

The upgrades will include the installation of high-intensity LED lights, bells and retro-reflective boom gates, with new signage and line marking for both the rail and road.

### **SQ51 Level Crossings**

Has the reduction in the speed limit from 100km/h to 80km/hr occurred at all levelling crossings?

- (a) If not, why not?
- (b) If not, when will all speed limit changes be completed?
- (c) If so, how many level crossings have had a reduction of the speed limit approach?

### **ANSWER**

I am advised:

Transport for NSW has established a three year program to implement the speed reduction at active level crossings. The program commenced in November 2020 and is planned for completion in 2022-23. The new speed zones will be signposted in accordance with speed zoning guidelines and with supplementary 'railway crossing' signage where possible.

### **SQ52 Level Crossings**

On the Transport for NSW website it advises that 'The initial change to speed zones will take effect from late April 2021 and continue through to 2022/2023'. Why does it take so long to change the speed limits?

### **ANSWER**

I am advised:

As of August 2021, the program has identified 110 active level crossings for speed changes. Of those, 29 level crossings have had their speed reduction completed, and new speed signage is now in place on the approaches to these crossings. 28 level crossings were in the speed reduction implementation stage and the remaining 53 level crossings were undergoing speed zone review

### **SQ53 Level Crossings**

What work has been undertaken with NSW Rail Infrastructure to jointly assess new technologies which may be used to improve safety at public and private level crossings?

**ANSWER**

I am advised:

Transport for NSW is committed to researching what existing and emerging technologies can be applied to improve level crossing safety. Engagement is underway with industry and international experts, to gain insights into further potential options for level crossing safety improvements.

**SQ54 Fixing Country Roads**

During this week's Budget Estimates hearing, the Minister said 'I did announce a smaller round of funding for some councils across the State in relation to that project.' Which Councils were eligible to apply?

(a) How was the opening of Tranche 2 communicated to Councils?

(b) Were all Councils advised of the opening of Tranche 2?

i. If not, how were Councils selected?

ii. Why weren't all Councils informed that \$20 million had been made available?

**ANSWER**

I am advised:

There are 92 eligible local councils in addition to the Unincorporated Far West and Lord Howe Island that are eligible to apply. These councils are listed in the Fixing Country Roads Guidelines.

Eligible councils were notified about the opening of the round via email and information was on the program's webpage. Fixing Country Roads is a highly competitive program, with decisions on projects to be funded based on information and supporting documents provided in the applications. All proposals need to demonstrate how they meet the statutory purpose of the Restart NSW fund as well as deliver value for money.

Successful projects for Fixing Country Roads 2019 Tranche 2 were announced in December 2020.

**SQ55 Fixing Country Roads**

When were the successful LGA's for Fixing Country Roads 2019 – Tranche 2 announced?

(a) Was there a media release issued by transport for NSW?

**ANSWER**

I am advised:

Successful projects for Fixing Country Roads 2019 Tranche 2 were announced in December 2020. The list of successful projects was published on the program's webpage.

**SQ56 Fixing Country Roads**

Why is the latest Fixing Country Roads related media releases on the Transport for NSW website dated 11 December 2017?

(a) Have media releases from Transport NSW relating to the Fixing Country Roads been issued since then?

i. If not, why not?

**ANSWER**

I am advised:

The Fixing Country Roads webpage is undergoing review and will soon be updated with the most recent media releases.

Since December 2017, media releases have been issued in relation to the Fixing Country Roads Program and can be viewed on the Transport for NSW website.

**SQ57 Fixing Country Roads**

When will the review of the guidelines for this program be finalised?

(a) When will they be published?

**ANSWER**

I am advised:

Updated submission guidelines will be published when a new funding round for the program opens. Timing for the next funding round has not yet been confirmed.

### **SQ58 Fixing Country Roads**

In relation to the \$80.3 million that was diverted from the Fixing Country Roads program to Restart NSW, what is the name of the project or projects that received the diverted funds?

- (a) Has the funding been allocated out of Restart NSW?
- (b) Where was each project located?
- (c) What was the quantum of funding for each project?
- (d) Has the total quantum for each project been expended?
  - i. If not, when will it be?

### **ANSWER**

I am advised:

A total of \$80.3 million was redirected from unallocated funds in the Fixing Country Roads program in 2019 to support the delivery of priority infrastructure and road projects in the NSW Government's Drought Stimulus Package.

The \$80.3 million has been allocated outside of Restart NSW.

Information on the Drought Stimulus Package can be found on the NSW Government website - <https://www.nsw.gov.au/drought-stimulus-package> and <https://www.nsw.gov.au/regional-growth-fund>.

Projects under the Drought Stimulus Package are still being delivered across regional NSW. Grantees regularly report to the Department of Regional NSW on project progress. Projects under the Drought Stimulus Package are anticipated to be completed by the end of 2022-23.

### **SQ59 Taxis**

When will the Government release the work done by Transport for NSW, which will reveal which towns will lose taxis due to the reforms of the point to point industry?

### **ANSWER**

I am advised:

Consistent with the NSW Government response to the recommendations of the Independent Review of Point to Point Transport, the transport needs of local communities will be addressed on a case-by-case basis. This includes Transport

for NSW and the Point to Point Transport Commissioner working with key stakeholders to develop local point to point transport plans.

These plans will encourage community input and ensure that local transport needs are met, including identifying what could, if anything, make services more viable. Creating local solutions will allow for flexible options to meet demands and may include providing increased funding for community transport, reviews of current public transport services, or trials of initiatives identified by the community.

### **SQ60 Taxis**

Why has only \$42 million from the \$142 million industry assistance package been spent?

### **ANSWER**

I am advised:

The NSW Government is committed to providing assistance to taxi licence owners. More than \$145 million has been paid under industry assistance schemes to help taxi and hire car licence holders adjust to the point to point transport reforms.

### **SQ61 Taxis**

Of the 1258 applications made under the fund, 727 operators received no assistance. Why is that?

### **ANSWER**

I am advised:

The Taxi and Hire Vehicles Industry Assistance Panel, which was comprised of representatives of Transport for NSW, NSW Treasury, the Department of Premier and Cabinet and the NSW Taxi Council, was responsible for determining the hardship criteria for the additional assistance scheme.

Applications for payments were not granted under the Additional Assistance Payment Scheme for a variety of reasons including incomplete application forms, insufficient information regarding income and assets, as well as income and assets exceeding the eligibility thresholds determined by the Panel.